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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 20 October 2020

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 20 octobre 2020

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MAIN STREET RECOVERY ACT, 2020 LOI DE 2020 VISANT À REDONNER VIE AUX RUES COMMERÇANTES

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 19, 2020, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 215, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to the economic recovery of Ontario and to make other amendments / Projet de loi 215, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne la reprise économique de l'Ontario et apportant d'autres modifications.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'm pleased to rise today to participate in the debate on Bill 215. It's an interesting bill, Speaker. It is entitled the Main Street Recovery Act. However, anyone who expects to open up this bill and see measures to actually assist our main streets to recover is going to be deeply disappointed.

It is a very brief bill. There are five pages, thereabouts, and four schedules. I'm going to briefly give an overview of what those schedules include.

Schedule 1 and schedule 3 simply make permanent a change that was introduced during one of the first sessions, I think, that we came together as a Legislature to deal with the COVID-19 emergency. There was emergency legislation that was passed in a very fast-tracked process to enable deliveries in our municipalities so that they did not violate noise bylaws.

So schedules 1 and 3 prohibit municipal noise bylaws in connection to the delivery of goods to retail stores, hotels, restaurants and distributors. This is a measure that we supported in the summer in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, and certainly it's supportable now to make it permanent. It makes sense. Schedules 1 and 3 amend the City of Toronto Act and the Municipal Act so that all of Ontario is now covered by these legislative changes.

Schedule 2 amends the Highway Traffic Act. It clarifies that taxis, limos, Uber, Lyft and these kinds of services have to have licensed drivers in order to carry passengers for compensation. It also increases fines for Uber and Lyft drivers who are unlicensed. The fines used to be a range from \$300 to \$20,000, and now the fines are increased to \$500 to \$30,000, so there is a slight increase of \$200 on

the lower end of the fine and an increase of \$10,000 on the higher end of the fine.

Now, I just wanted to digress a moment, when we're talking about Uber and Lyft drivers, unlicensed drivers and the competition that the licensed taxi industry faces in Ontario from these ride services. I think all of us as MPPs have likely heard from taxi drivers in our communities about the challenges facing that industry because of Uber and Lyft, but also, and in particular, because of the insurance premiums that are skyrocketing that taxis are now being required to pay.

In my community, in London, there was a story in the London CBC—last week, in fact—about the skyrocketing premiums that taxi drivers are facing. London taxi driver Radovan Millinkovic says his rates have risen more than \$5,000 over the last couple of years. His premium increased from \$7,000 to \$9,600, so he's paying \$800 a month more than he used to pay. While the fines on unlicensed Uber and Lyft drivers will maybe, hopefully help the taxi industry, what taxi drivers were really looking for was some relief from these skyrocketing insurance rates.

Interestingly, the CBC reporter who wrote this story about the rate hikes for London taxi drivers contacted the Insurance Bureau of Canada to ask about these insurance rate hikes. The insurance bureau told CBC News that the reason that commercial insurance rates are going up for small business owners, such as independent taxi owner-operators, is related to the pandemic. Now, Speaker, I appreciate that the insurance industry has had some additional costs related to the pandemic; however, it is hard not to question the rate increases that have been imposed on independent taxi owner-operators and many other small businesses.

With a bill that's called the Main Street Recovery Act, one might have expected to find some measures in there dealing with insurance rates, because all of us are hearing from small businesses that have been told that their insurance premiums are, in some cases, doubling. Or in London, one thing that we are hearing more and more from small businesses, particularly those downtown, is that they can't get insurance anymore. There's no insurance available. There's no insurance company that's willing to insure some of these small businesses. This is not what we need at this moment in the pandemic; there are enough small businesses that are facing closure as a result of many other issues.

0910

This is an issue that this government could address to ensure that the insurance rates remain affordable for small businesses, but they chose not to do that and, as a result,

in London, we are seeing more and more taxi drivers going out of business.

In fact, Speaker, last fall, prior to the pandemic, more than a year ago, I wrote a letter to the Minister of Finance about this issue with taxi insurance. At that time, taxi drivers were seeing a 45% increase in premiums, which is taking taxi drivers out of business. In the city of London, approximately 150 owner-operators of taxi companies support an estimated 1,200 families, with the dispatch operators etc. who are involved in the industry. Those families are feeling the financial hit from these taxi insurance rates. So I think that taxi drivers will be quite disappointed when they see schedule 2 of Bill 215 only dealing with fines for uninsured drivers.

Schedule 4, the last schedule in this bill, amends the Ontario Food Terminal Act. That allows the terminal to sell a wider range of agricultural products, not just fruit and produce, and it also makes some minor changes to the governance of the Ontario Food Terminal.

This is supportable, certainly. However, I think that the government once again missed an opportunity. People who are involved in agriculture, our farm families, our food processing firms, understand that there has to be a distinction between food availability and food access. And while this amendment will help ensure the stability of food availability, it will do nothing to address food insecurity and also to support a sustainable local food supply.

This is something that I think we can all remember when the emergency measures were first imposed dealing with COVID-19, when community gardens were shut down. I'm sure you recall, Speaker, the outpouring of support for community gardens that all of us heard because the government had classified community gardens as being non-essential services, but we heard loud and clear from the people that we represent that community gardens are very much an essential service.

In London, we have 464 community gardens. There are over 1,000 Londoners who use community gardens and the majority of them say that the reason that they use community gardens is because it provides access to healthy food.

We know that food insecurity is a growing problem across the province; all of our communities are seeing food bank usage spike. The London Food Bank just reported that there has been a 10% increase in the number of London families who are using the food bank on a regular basis just in the last month—just in the last month, Speaker.

The executive director, Jane Roy, of the London Food Bank commented that they saw a pattern at the initial start of the pandemic. Food bank usage went way up, and then as people were able to access some of the financial supports, the CERB etc., food bank usage started to decline. Now that those supports are ending, they are seeing food bank usage spike right back up again. So the urgency of ensuring food access is very apparent in all of our ridings. That is certainly something that could have been included in this Main Street Recovery Act as a means of supporting some of those local food businesses that are

so vital in many of our downtown cores. Unfortunately, as I said, the government chose not to take that opportunity.

What's most interesting, Speaker, is that this bill is apparently the result of the government's analysis and interpretation of the input that was received over the summer and early fall from the Standing Committee on Finance. That committee heard presentations from about 500 delegations. There were 800 hours of testimony that were provided. Many, many, many recommendations were made, and this is what has come out of that.

Of course, when the minister introduced this bill, he did position it as one of the pieces of the government's approach to economic recovery and claimed that the government's main street recovery plan was informed by the input that was received during those hearings. What is curious, Speaker, is that this government's package of measures to address main street recovery actually has very little to do with the input that was presented to the Standing Committee on Finance.

For example, one of the most consistent recommendations that was made by deputants to the committee was to ensure commercial rent relief and a moratorium on commercial evictions. We used valuable debate time, valuable time in the business of this chamber, to discuss extending a moratorium on commercial evictions to the end of this month. In just a couple of weeks, it's going to start all over again. Many, many businesses are going to be in serious trouble and are going to be facing the prospect of eviction.

We also heard loud and clear about the need for commercial rent relief. Of course, we all heard last week the announcement from the federal government that there is going to be a revamped commercial rent relief program. I have to say, Speaker, we were all in our communities last week. It was interesting. I went to a physiotherapist on Friday morning, I picked up some dry cleaning on Friday afternoon, and both the physiotherapist and the woman in the dry cleaning store congratulated me on my advocacy for commercial rent relief. I had raised a question in the Legislature on behalf of Mustang Sally's, a restaurant in London West that was not able to access the rent relief that was under the previous program, the CECRA. There was a story in the London Free Press. The physiotherapist and the dry cleaner had seen the story, so they congratulated me for my efforts to get this commercial rent relief program in place.

While I'm happy to take credit, I had to point out that, in fact, there is no credit due to the provincial government, that this was the federal government's change in the program, because this provincial government has consistently refused to implement a meaningful commercial rent relief program that would actually assist businesses with some of those fixed costs that they are dealing with.

0920

The final points I wanted to make are the contrast between this government's main street recovery plan and the Save Main Street plan that the official opposition released earlier in October. Both of us were using the same data, in a sense. Both of us were using the input that was provided to the standing committee on finance, but we

came up with very, very different solutions. The reason is that the official opposition actually listened to what small businesses were saying when they came to present to MPPs about what they need in order to survive this pandemic and remain in operation when the pandemic is over.

What we heard was the need for a commercial rent subsidy—and we have proposed and we continue to urge this government to put that in place—a utility payment freeze, a ban on all evictions by commercial landlords in place until the pandemic ends, and also a made-in-Ontario sick days plan.

This is another issue on which this government continues to miss the boat. They do not seem to understand that paid sick days for workers is not a drain on business, it is a support for business. Businesses don't want employees coming to work sick because that means that there is a risk that their co-workers could get sick, that customers could get sick, and that's not good for business. Yet if employees do not have access to paid sick leave, then they face the choice of, do I go into work and take that risk of infecting my co-workers and my customers or do I miss being able to make my rent payment this month and then face an immediate eviction from housing? So you can certainly understand why workers, particularly low-wage workers without access to paid sick days, are in a very vulnerable position.

Our Save Main Street plan also includes measures to stop insurance gouging. We have called for an auto insurance grace period for taxis and car-sharing drivers, and stopping insurance corporations from denying coverage based on COVID-19. We also called for a limit on food delivery fees. We heard the Premier ask food delivery services to lower their fees, but this government has an opportunity to actually impose regulations to stop that practice, that 30% that food delivery services are taking off the top.

Finally, we also called for measures to address the necessary she-covery, because women have been the first and hardest hit by this pandemic, and without access to child care, without ensuring that children are safely able to go to school, women will continue to be unable to get back to work, and that is not going to save main street.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): We now have time for 10 minutes of questions and responses. The first question?

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'll just take off my mask here. Part of what's reflected in this bill, and I think it's worthwhile emphasizing once again, is empowering small businesses to pivot and take advantage of new opportunities to increase revenues. Speaker, you'll know from discussions with your own local businesses the challenges that exist at the present time, but it's important to highlight a couple of changes here: exploring options to permanently allow licensed restaurants and bars to include alcohol with food as part of a takeout or delivery order before the existing regulation expires, and also enabling community net metering demonstration projects to support local communities.

I'd like to ask the member—and thank you very much for your presentation—does the official opposition support these particular changes and the effect it's going to have in communities across Ontario?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Thank you for the question. I do note that the government's main street recovery plan includes a one-time grant of up to \$1,000 for businesses to purchase PPE and, yes, that is definitely something all of us have heard about, the need to enable businesses to have financial access to PPE.

But what I'm hearing from restaurants is it costs \$70,000 to get a covered patio tent that can withstand snow. Another restaurant spent \$20,000 to install new glass barriers. So while the \$1,000 is welcome, it is a drop in the bucket when you consider what restaurants will have to do in order to remain open through the winter.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I recognize the member for Niagara Centre.

Mr. Jeff Burch: I thank the member from London West for her thoughtful presentation. Over the summer, we heard from a lot of businesses who wanted greater clarity around the rules, and the member raised that concern when she spoke about food security. In our neck of the woods, it was speedways and pumpkin patches and those types of businesses that found the government's rules very confusing and tried to take advantage of the portal that the ministry had for reopening—you could submit plans for reopening—and never got any response; businesses across the province simply weren't getting a response from the government.

How important is that clarity and providing opportunities, and what could the government have done in this bill to provide greater opportunities for businesses to safely reopen?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I want to thank my colleague for the question. Absolutely, the government has failed to ensure clarity in communication, and all of us experienced that in the initial shutdown of non-essential businesses. There were all kinds of—we were flooded with questions about what is a non-essential business and why certain businesses were classified as non-essential. I used the example of community gardens. Thankfully, the government revised that closure and allowed community gardens to reopen. But it has been an ongoing challenge.

Last week, I raised concerns about pandemic pay. There has been a total lack of clarity around pandemic pay, who is eligible to apply for the pay, and why workers were denied the pay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Next question?

Mr. Stan Cho: I appreciate the presentation from the member opposite. I distinctly remember the question posed about Mustang Sally's because I remember responding to them. I also remember at that very moment that our Minister of Finance had been on the phone all week with Minister Freeland in a coordinated approach with Ottawa, making sure that relief that was provided filled the gaps where it was coordinated.

My question to the member opposite is simply: Do you feel that it's important to continue to collaborate with all

levels of government in these relief programs so there's not duplication and we're covering as much ground as possible? In the case of the commercial rent relief program, that is exactly what happened and that's why our \$300 million goes to actually fill the parts that are not covered in this coordinated approach to provide relief to great businesses like Mustang Sally's.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I appreciate the question, and certainly I use the example of paid sick days as a policy for which collaboration between the provincial government and the federal government would be very, very helpful, because right now the federal government is rolling out a program that will require workers who want to access those paid sick days to go through an application process. We have heard from advocacy organizations, like the Decent Work and Health Network, how critical it is to ensure seamless access to paid sick days, and that requires amendments to provincial employment standards legislation. So this would have been an opportunity for the provincial government to collaborate with the federal government, amend the ESA and provide access to paid sick days.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The next question?

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I'd like to thank my colleague from London West for bringing a lot of very important issues to the forefront this morning.

0930

One of the issues that my colleague highlighted, and I'm just going to reiterate what the colleague across the way has brought forward, is she-covery, and how important it is for single mothers who are in businesses to be able to go to work without worrying about how they're going to pay their bills. Can you highlight how this bill could possibly hinder a single mother or a single person to be able to get back to work in such an important business, like small businesses within our downtown area?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I would like to thank my colleague for the question. Certainly there is absolutely nothing in this bill that recognizes the gendered nature of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We saw hospitality workers, the first and largest group of workers to lose employment—we know that women are overrepresented in the hospitality industry, in retail sectors, and those were sectors that were very hard hit by the pandemic.

You know, Speaker, when a family has children who require child care or who are school age, and that child gets sick, guess who typically stays home with that child? It's the mother, it's the woman, so we need legislation that reflects the gendered nature of the pandemic.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Next question?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: My question to the member, in listening to her remarks: All of us have heard from small businesses in this entire pandemic, and the needs they have. Certainly there have been several pieces of legislation that we've introduced in this Legislature—some that would have been supported by the opposition; some not—to help these businesses. But some of the things that we

heard are getting onto Main Street, getting more digital and providing those supports.

I want to ask the member opposite whether or not she has advocated to her small businesses about the Digital Main Street platform, how many of her constituents have been able to uptake that and what her relationship is with her local BIAs in that situation.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: That is an excellent question, because it provides me an opportunity to recognize the Hyde Park BIA, which is in my riding of London West and is taking the lead on implementing the Digital Main Street program throughout the city of London. Hyde Park BIA is doing a terrific job advocating on behalf of the businesses in London West and, in fact, across the city.

They also collaborated with five key city of London organizations—Downtown London, the Small Business Centre, TechAlliance, Old East Village and the London Economic Development Corp.—to send a letter to the Premier and the Prime Minister talking about the importance of commercial rent relief. That is what we have not seen from this government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): We have time for a very quick question and a very quick answer.

Ms. Doly Begum: I'll give the opportunity for the member, who spoke very eloquently about this, to tell us a little bit more in terms of what the government can still do to help small businesses, even though we might have lost many.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I think I talked about some of the measures that could be taken: a commercial rent subsidy, a ban on evictions, a utility payment freeze, a fund for businesses that face historic barriers, a made-in-Ontario sick days plan, a cap on class sizes so that children can go to school safely, more child care spaces so that families have access to child care—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you so much. Further debate?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Speaker, it's good to see you in the Chair there today. It's a pleasure to be here in the House and to speak, as it always is.

It's my pleasure, Speaker, to join the debate this morning on Bill 215, the Main Street Recovery Act. I want to thank my colleague the Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction, and all the members of the team, for the tremendous amount of work that they have done putting together this important piece of legislation. I've seen first-hand how committed the minister is to small business and red tape reduction, and to his portfolio as a whole. In fact, a few months back, the minister and I hosted a virtual small business round table in Sarnia-Lambton with a number of businesses from Lambton county. We had a real great discussion about how our government could help support small businesses during the pandemic. I know that the stakeholders from my riding were really impressed on how engaged the minister was during that meeting.

Reading through Bill 215 and also the main street recovery plan, I can see the minister really does listen. It looks like there are a number of ideas from our discussion

in Sarnia–Lambton that made their way into the plan. I'm really pleased by that, and I know my constituents will be as well.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that small businesses really are the backbone of our local communities. It's no different in Sarnia–Lambton. Helping small businesses get back on their feet is critical to our recovery in Sarnia–Lambton and across this province.

Prior to the start of the pandemic in early March, there really was a lot of momentum building in our local economy in Sarnia. A number of new businesses were opening in Sarnia–Lambton. Vacant storefronts were being renovated. Developers broke ground on a number of exciting new developments. We actually saw population growth in the city of Sarnia for the first time in many years. And, I might add, in the town of Petrolia, where I actually reside, the population has just exceeded 6,000. I remember for years it was 3,500 or 4,800. The other day the mayor told me it's actually more than 6,000 now. All kinds of new housing development and exciting work, for example, in the petrochemical sector with Nova Chemicals spending over \$2 billion and with a lot of provincial money in there as well, has created thousands of jobs.

In Sarnia–Lambton, we've waited a long time for some of this investment and development to happen. Things were very optimistic, and, for the most part, I think they still are. In fact, despite the pandemic, I've actually had the opportunity to participate in a number of virtual grand openings thanks to the work of the Sarnia Lambton Chamber of Commerce. I look forward to the day, Speaker, when we can get back to in-person celebrations and ribbon cuttings, but until then, it's great to join new business owners in this Zoom world to help them kick things off. I certainly want to make sure our government is doing everything we can to keep the small business sector momentum going in our corner of the province.

But, Speaker, there were businesses that have struggled too. Stages 1 and 2 were very difficult for many of these. Just like all my colleagues, I've heard from many businesses about the challenges of now having to accommodate customers and staff safely in small places.

In my discussions with business owners, I've heard over and over again that they need a plan from the government that will help them meet these new demands, because they want to be open and they want to continue running the businesses that they love. I think Bill 215 and the main street recovery plan is going to be the blueprint they need to get the job done. In particular, Bill 215 and the main street recovery plan introduce a number of new programs and policy changes to help small businesses recover from the economic effects of COVID-19.

Included in the main street recovery plan, our government is proposing the following:

- a one-time grant of up to \$1,000 for eligible main street businesses, in retail, food and accommodations, and other service sectors, with two to nine employees, to help offset the unexpected costs of personal protective equipment;

- creating Ontario's Small Business COVID-19 Recovery Network, which links 47 small business enterprise

centres across the province as places where small businesses can access tailored advice and information on local, provincial and federal programs;

- investing in Digital Main Street squads to help small businesses grow online;

- investing in mental health supports for families, front-line workers, young people, children and Indigenous communities;

- developing Ontario's small business recovery web page to provide single-window access to small business supports.

Underlying all of this is our commitment in the main street recovery plan that small businesses will be able to apply for and easily access the support they need to reopen safer, rehire faster and re-emerge from this global pandemic stronger than ever before.

Mr. Speaker, there's nothing I like more from our government than when we make programs and services easier to access and use. Small business owners are going to appreciate this. They are already busy enough doing everything that needs to be done to keep their doors open and the lights on. The last thing they need are complicated programs and more forms from the government. Let's keep things simple. Let's get that information and support to the people as quickly and efficiently as possible. And then let's get out of their way so that these small business owners can do what they do best: do business.

0940

This really is a terrific plan put together by my colleague the Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction. I mentioned earlier how committed the minister is to this file. The minister has put forward this plan, the main street recovery plan, after more than 100 virtual meetings, round tables and discussions with owners, employees, economists and various stakeholder associations. It draws from across government to bring together a comprehensive package of legislation, programs and services to help more small and main street businesses recover from the economic effects of COVID-19, and it builds on more than \$10 billion in urgent relief provided through the COVID-19 action plan.

Something simple but important for small businesses are the new direct supports like the PPE, personal protective equipment, grants for small businesses and the small business COVID-19 recovery network.

The PPE grant is really a great idea. We all know how important PPE is to keeping everyone safe. The personal protective equipment grant—I'd rather say that than PPE; a tongue twister—of the main street recovery grant will help small businesses provide a safe place to shop for their customers and a safe space to work for their employees. This one-time grant of up to \$1,000 is for small businesses with somewhere between two and nine employees in various sectors like retail, food, maintenance and more. This grant will provide funding and cash flow relief to help these businesses with the greatest need to manage costs for personal protective equipment to help them stay safe and protect their employees and their customers as well.

Of course, central to the main street recovery plan is Bill 215, the Main Street Recovery Act. If Bill 215 is passed—and I’m optimistic that the opposition will give this bill the unanimous support it deserves—it will save many small businesses precious time and money that they can then reinvest in their businesses. Bill 215’s changes would achieve this by a number of measures: removing unnecessary burdens that are costly and time-consuming; and modernizing regulations to strengthen strategic supply chains, promote innovation and allow more businesses to pivot and take advantage of new opportunities to increase their revenues.

Among a number of those that I’d like to address is the grant that will provide funding and cash flow relief to help businesses with the greatest needs to supply Plexiglas, gloves and face coverings to help them stay safe, protect their employees and customers and increase consumer confidence and raise revenue. We are also recommending that small businesses consider using this grant to purchase Ontario-made personal protective equipment. I think it’s important to stress that, where possible, we should buy in Ontario. This will help boost local manufacturers and retailers while supplying small and main street businesses with quality personal protective equipment made right here in Ontario.

Some of you might ask, why would we fund small businesses when it’s needed everywhere? Providing these businesses with a grant to help with the cost of PPE—whether it’s for installing Plexiglas—will help them stabilize their cash flow, increase consumer confidence and enable more of them to reopen and stay open. This grant could help upwards of 60,000 businesses, it’s estimated, across this province, enabling more of them to stay open, keep people employed, sustain main streets and keep their diverse communities strong and diverse.

One of the questions raised was, part-time employees, would they count as full-time equivalents to come to the number nine? The answer I have here is any employee that receives a T4 or T4A from the government of Canada would be considered one full employee when a business applies for these grants. Employees that receive T4s or T4As and are recorded as half full-time equivalents by their place of business should be counted as full employees for the purpose of applying for this grant.

Our government is committed to helping small businesses of all sizes to recover from the economic effects of COVID-19 by providing them with a number of financial programs and non-financial services. This includes the \$2,500 Digital Main Street grant that is helping small businesses to develop new and stronger online presences and market their businesses using the latest digital tools.

I remember when this first started, one of the landscaping businesses in my area of Sarnia–Lambton was struggling to keep up because they had never bothered with an online market. They never had to. They had been in business for almost 100 years. Some of the newer ones with younger people had started, and they were really moving ahead, so they had to scramble and get online marketing. This would be something they could certainly

take advantage of. It certainly was recognized during the start of COVID-19.

How can small and main street businesses find the PPE to purchase? The Workplace Personal Protective Equipment Supplier Directory has an up-to-date list of Ontario companies and business associations that are ready to supply personal protective equipment—and some of these items are made right here in Ontario, I stress again. Small businesses can find this directory on the small business recovery webpage at ontario.ca/smallbusiness and use it to purchase PPE with the new grant funding. This will help, I say, boost local small manufacturers and retailers, while also supplying these businesses with quality Ontario-made PPE.

The Main Street Recovery Act is proposed legislation that would modernize regulations and remove unnecessary and costly barriers, to help more small businesses recover from the economic effects of COVID-19. These changes consist of a number of proposals from three ministries.

Permanently allowing 24/7 deliveries of goods across Ontario to businesses that include retail stores, restaurants and distribution facilities: This builds on temporary changes made to help keep shelves stocked at the outset of the pandemic this spring. This helps support economic recovery on our main streets and helps ensure that important goods can continue to be delivered to these businesses as efficiently as possible. Two previous pilot programs have shown that it may also reduce rush hour traffic in large urban areas, lower fuel costs for businesses and reduce greenhouse gases and other emissions, which I’m sure we’re all supportive of.

It also supports the distribution of local food and food products by increasing the range of products sold at the Ontario Food Terminal. Thousands of small businesses, from farms to independent grocery stores to restaurants, rely on the Ontario Food Terminal for their success. This helps support the recovery and growth of agri-food businesses across Ontario, enabling sellers to offer more products for sale to increase their revenues. At the same time, buyers and ultimately consumers would enjoy an expanded variety of local products for purchase.

The third item, supporting Ontario’s taxi and limousine industry by increasing fines for illegal operators: We’ve all read the headlines about certain companies and people being robbed or assaulted, and that’s certainly something that we would want to put a lid on. This would ensure that Ontarians are safe when they travel. These changes would act as a stronger deterrent to illegal operators, making it easier to protect those who are arriving at Ontario’s airports and terminals. Among other changes, this would increase the fine from \$500 to up to \$30,000 per offence, and it would help support the recovery of the taxi and limousine sector.

Bringing Ontario’s Assistive Devices Program into the 21st century: These changes would ensure that Ontarians, when they need their first or a new assistive device, would avoid unnecessary paperwork, and outdated timelines for small business vendors would be ended. By digitizing this process, small businesses that sell covered assistive

devices would be able to upload claims online and receive their payment in as little as one to two weeks instead of the normal eight weeks. That's something that I've certainly heard a lot about—clients who need those devices and the vendors say, "Well, I can't get my money." Some people don't even want to handle them, because they have to wait for so long. So that's really good.

The five pillars for renewal and growth include lowering costs by:

- reducing costly red tape;
- increasing exports by helping small business to access domestic and international markets;
- accelerating technology adoption;
- developing talent by helping small businesses in all regions and sectors to access and retain talent;
- encouraging entrepreneurship by succession planning and diversity.

0950

With that, Mr. Speaker, I see I'm winding my time down.

One example is, "What is Ontario Made?" Ontario Made is a \$500,000 program funded by the government of Ontario and supported by the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters. It will help the province's manufacturers regain and recover revenue lost due to COVID-19 by creating awareness of consumer goods made right here in Ontario.

This program includes:

- the Ontario Made logo that manufacturers can use to easily identify their made-in-Ontario products to consumers to help increase their visibility;
- launching a supportontariomade.ca website, which will connect consumers and supply chain partners, which I spoke about earlier, to manufacturers of proudly made-in-Ontario products in one directory, increasing awareness within our borders;
- promoting Ontario Made through social media and other digital newsletters to raise awareness.

One of the other items is 24/7 delivery—which I think is important, too—for goods across Ontario to businesses that include retail stores, restaurants and distribution facilities; supporting the distribution of local food and food products by increasing the range of products which are sold at the Ontario Food Terminal; and supporting Ontario's taxi and limousine service. These are some simple yet effective steps.

Our government is doing everything it can to make sure small businesses know that we will be there for them every step of the way on their road to recovery. Bill 215 and the main street recovery plan build upon all the great work that this government and all members of this Legislature have been doing over the last seven months. We are delivering new funding programs to help small business, we are amending regulations to make it easier for owners to run their business, and we are connecting business owners from across the province with experts who can help them with tailored advice, planning and tools to meet their needs.

Mr. Speaker, once again, I want to congratulate our Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape

Reduction and his team on delivering the main street recovery plan and Bill 215, the Main Street Recovery Act. This plan is going to help small business owners in Ontario and it's going to help jump-start our economic recovery right across this province, from Sarnia-Lambton to Windsor to Toronto to Ottawa and other parts of the province and the Far North; I know they've got their struggles there as well.

I look forward to businesses across this province reopening and rebuilding safer and better than before.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Your colleagues will now have up to 10 minutes to pose their questions on your presentation. I turn first to the member from Niagara Centre.

Mr. Jeff Burch: Thank you, Speaker, and thank you to the member from Sarnia-Lambton for the presentation.

Over the summer in finance committee hearings, we heard from many businesses, and I was a part of those hearings. I'm wondering why did the government choose not to give small businesses the support they were asking for in terms of direct rental relief, help with keeping insurance premiums under control and other measures that businesses asked for. Does the member not think that it would be more expensive in the long run if businesses collapsed than if we had just properly supported them to begin with?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you to the honourable member for the question. I remember many of those discussions as well, and I had a number of them with small business operators in my own constituency, the riding of Sarnia-Lambton.

I remember at the start of this, early on in March-April, when the Premier encouraged landlords at the time, he said, "Look, wouldn't you rather take 25% of the rent and get that and keep your tenants there?" Because I could never understand when there was talk of landlords evicting business owners. If you put someone out, who are you going to find to take over that business spot? If the last guy there couldn't make a go of it, how could someone else relocate there?

So I think what the minister of small business put together was a balanced program—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Response?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Okay. Thank you, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): When I say "response," you have 10 seconds to wrap up.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Oh, okay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member for Northumberland-Peterborough South.

Mr. David Piccini: Thank you, Speaker, and thank you to the member for his comments today. I was wondering if the member could talk a little more about agriculture. He has a similar riding to mine, and I know when we talk about expanding the local foods and food products by increasing the range of products sold at the Ontario Food Terminal, I think to my riding. We have saffron syrup. We've done incredible value-add in the community of Northumberland-Peterborough South, adding value to our agri-food products and taking them to market.

I'm just thinking, we have the world in Ontario. We have immense potential with our agriculture industry. I'm wondering if he can speak a little more about how important this is, to unlock the potential of agricultural communities like mine.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you, Speaker. I'll try to wind up sooner this time; I won't get reprimanded there.

Anyway, thank you to the member for the question. Yes, the Ontario Food Terminal: I've been there two or three times in my life since I've come to Queen's Park. I'd heard about the Ontario Food Terminal; I'd never experienced it. I was quite amazed when I made a trip there with our Minister of Agriculture, the critic at the time. It was before we formed government.

When I saw all the produce from all over Ontario that was processed there and went to the restaurants and the stores—I have a very successful market business in Sarnia, and they also have an outlet in London: Sunripe. That gentleman there, he makes a trip every day or two and brings all that produce back to Sarnia-Lambton, and delivers to the store in London. It's very well-accepted by the people there.

I think it's very important that we support our agriculture industry.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you. The next question goes to Mushkegowuk-James Bay.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: I want to thank the MPP for Sarnia-Lambton. My question today is that I've been hearing a lot of questions or concerns regarding insurance from owner-operators in my area. These are small mom-and-pop operations that own trucking. They're facing huge increases from insurance companies, which are gouging—and they have free range to gouge, by the way. The fact is that some of them, instead of paying \$5,000, they're up to \$15,000 just to hire another driver. I'm asking you, what is your government doing to help these owner-operators and to control these insurance companies that are taking advantage of the situation of COVID?

Mr. Robert Bailey: That's a good question. I was just reading this morning a different ministry than small business—but our actual Ministry of Government and Consumer Services, we've laid—I think there have been 26,000 complaints. Over 1,000 at least, somewhere upwards of 2,000 charges, have actually been fired to do with price gouging, just like the member says. I support what you say. There are instances of that out there.

If anyone who's watching today knows of instances of price gouging like the member spoke of, please communicate them to the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services. We will make sure—because there's a whole file on that in my book. I'm the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Government Services. That's why I was just reading that this morning, at about 6:30.

Charges have been filed. It's recognized by the government that there is price gouging. The Premier has warned business owners. There's only a few of them doing it, but they're bad apples and we should punish them.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I recognize the member for Carleton.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: I wanted to thank the member for his very informative speech this morning.

Main street is a very important part of Carleton, especially because prior to amalgamation, it consisted of a lot of very small communities. We have a Stittsville main street, we have a Manotick main street, we have main streets all over.

I know it is also Small Business Week right now, and as part of that, the main street recovery plan is essential to support small businesses during COVID-19. Our government and the Premier have made a commitment to help them through the recovery period and beyond.

I was wondering if you could maybe just expand a little bit on the proposals outlined in the main street recovery plan that can help struggling businesses like those in my riding of Carleton and across Ontario.

Mr. Robert Bailey: To the member from Carleton, I know your riding very well. I also know, even though it's an urban area, it has one of the largest rural area components combined in an urban area. I've been there a number of times.

A number of the proposals I outlined—I don't have the notes right in front of me, but the grant to small businesses of \$2,500, and of course the \$500,000—up to a fund of \$500,000 to help small businesses access talent and more diversity in their management system; and also the recognition that small business is the backbone of the Ontario economy; and how it's important that we've established this committee and the minister himself went out to travel the province. I think that was an acknowledgement by this government, by this Premier, of the importance of small business.

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The next question goes to the member from Niagara Centre.

Mr. Jeff Burch: One of the things that was not in this bill was around clarity. I asked the previous speaker a similar question. There was a portal that the government had for businesses like speedways and farms to apply for safe reopening, and they received no response from the ministry. I haven't seen that situation corrected, and I didn't see anything in the bill that would address the situation of clarity around safe reopening for businesses, which is crucial to their ongoing business. Why did the government not include that, and are there plans, as far as the member knows, to correct that in the future?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you to the member from St. Catharines—ahem. I'm losing my voice here this morning. This is way too much talking.

Interjection.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Yes. It wasn't the previous evening's activities anymore, Mr. Speaker, at my age.

Anyway, at this point, I know the minister is taking all those comments under advisement. There's a further rollout that's going to come as we further develop this. As we hear from members of this Legislature, as we hear from business owners and small business owners when they access these programs, if there are tweaks that we need to make to it, I know that that's something that the minister and this government will be open to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): We'll go to the member from Willowdale. You have a short time and a short answer.

Mr. Stan Cho: It has got to be a really great question, then, Mr. Speaker.

I appreciate the presentation from the member from Sarnia–Lambton. I remember visiting your riding and speaking to go a lot of small business owners who told our government at the time—this is pre-pandemic—that they were having difficulty paying the cost of just doing business, let alone given an uncertain global situation. I know the members opposite joke that, “Well, PPE—a \$1,000 grant for the smallest of small businesses is not enough,” but it’s the little things that absolutely matter to these small businesses. In the brief time remaining, I’m wondering if the member from Sarnia–Lambton can give his opinion on whether these little assistance programs for the littlest of small businesses are a waste or not.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): You have 10 seconds—make that nine, seven—

Mr. Robert Bailey: Well, it’ll take me that long to clear my throat.

Thank you to the member from Willowdale for that question. Yes, these littlest of things make a big difference to small business.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you, sir.

Further debate?

Ms. Doly Begum: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to Bill 215, the Main Street Recovery Act, 2020.

As this bill was introduced, I was honestly excited, because we have heard from businesses across this province, we have heard from so many mom-and-pop-shop owners, and we have heard from so many employees and so many workers across this province that we need support. This government has an opportunity—and frankly, it has been a little late, but they still have an opportunity—to do the right thing and help the people across this province.

As I hear members across the aisle, members from the government side, congratulate themselves—and we’ve just heard the member from Sarnia–Lambton congratulate the government on this bill, on this legislation that has been proposed, which, by the way, is four pages long. I’m sure those who have gone through it—it’s four and a half pages long and barely covers any of the necessary tools that businesses really need in order to recover. We need a plan that provides jobs, we need a plan that provides financial security and we need a plan that helps working people across this province. Mr. Speaker, we are facing a crisis right now. People across the country, across the world have lost their livelihoods, lost their jobs.

This government, over and over, will come here and complain that, “Oh, no, the opposition is at it again. They’re complaining. The NDP is going on again.” Well, what do they expect? You throw bread crumbs at us, at the people across this province, and did you expect us to come here and just sing Kumbaya and get along and say, “Do you know what? Great. Well done. Thank you for these four pages that barely do anything for anyone.” Did they

really expect us to come and sing Kumbaya with them? Well, I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, because I cannot do that. I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, because I care for my people across Scarborough Southwest and for the people across this province.

People are struggling. We have businesses across my riding in Scarborough Southwest that lost their business, that had to close down because they couldn’t keep up with their rent. We have people in our riding that were just barely holding on, that were trying so hard, and then finally, we had the federal government announce the rent relief program, and people thought, “Do you know what? That’s great.” But then what happens? You have to go to your landlord, plead to the landlord, and you’re at the mercy of your landlord to get this rent relief. There are so many small and medium business owners that did not qualify or did not have that mercy, did not have landlords who were willing to help them.

Do you know what happened, Mr. Speaker? Those businesses closed down, and we know once one of those small businesses closes down it’s hard to get back up. It’s really hard to get back up. It takes a whole community, it takes a whole family to come together. The amount of debt, the amount of savings, everything comes together to build that business, to put it together. But once it goes down, once they shut their doors, it’s hard. It’s tough to open those doors again.

Right now, this is what’s happening. We are seeing it over and over again, and this government is doing very little, just barely doing anything to support these businesses. Right now, when they had an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, this is what we get. We have hundreds and hundreds of pages; we have so many businesses that came forward during the last few months in committee hearings. We have heard from so many of these people who have run these businesses for decades and said, “Do you know what? This is what we need.” They have outlined these plans. And do you know what we did? We on the opposition, we the NDP, actually met with these businesses; we met with many chambers of commerce, and we put together a plan.

We had a plan that’s called the Save Main Street plan, which actually outlined a lot of the important, essential tools that could have saved many of these businesses across our province. And that starts with rent relief, Mr. Speaker. We had an amazing, comprehensive plan that actually highlighted many of the concerns that people brought forward.

Over the last few months, I had a chance to go across my riding, and whether we’re talking about Kingston Road or the Danforth Pharmacy, there are so many vibrant businesses by so many diverse owners who put their heart and soul into this, their blood and sweat. They put everything into this. What these folks were saying is, “We need support. We need help.” But instead, what we saw is this government not only put them at risk of going to their landlords for rent relief, we also saw these business owners being taken advantage of by insurance companies.

Over and over again, we came here and said, “Dear Premier, dear Minister, please listen. Here is what we

need: We need to stop these insurance companies from taking advantage of our businesses”—over and over again. But do you know what? No, “The NDP is complaining again. Oh, the opposition is going at it again.” Well, what do you expect us to do? We are here with a job to represent our people.

I want to help the government, just remind them again, because I feel like some members may have difficulty hearing it or sometimes they don’t really take these things seriously, because we are facing a crisis right now, and I want to give them an opportunity again to understand what these tools can be, that they can add to this bill and actually make it better.

1010

One of the things I have already mentioned was rent relief. Another one I want to point out is paid sick leave. I had my colleague from London West talk very, very carefully about paid sick leave which, when we’re talking about a lot of the people right now—and especially being the child care critic, I know for a fact that a lot of women across this province are having difficulty in terms of going back to their jobs. So people who have their jobs or who are trying to go back to work—a lot of these shops that are trying to open up again don’t have the ability to do that because workers are not able to go back to work. What happens is that a lot of these people will lose the opportunity to have the ability to keep those jobs, because they don’t have paid sick leave.

Now we have an opportunity, because the federal NDP actually recently negotiated very, very carefully and got the government to provide paid sick leave, so now the ball’s in this government’s court. We need this government to step up. We need the Premier to step up.

Over and over again, we have heard the Premier talk about businesses. We have seen the big placards that say, “Open for business.” This government’s really for business—well, prove it. For a government that claims to be for businesses, for a government that talks a lot about small businesses, this is your opportunity. This is your chance to actually show the people of Ontario, the small businesses of Ontario, that you can do better. You can actually help the people across this province by providing what they need.

When I looked at the schedules, and I think there are four schedules in this bill—one of the BIAs I was speaking with—the only thing I could say was that this is one of the saddest pieces of legislation I have seen during this time, because we’re facing a pandemic right now, we’re facing a crisis, and this is the best this government has to offer.

We have so many women across this province who own small businesses. Just recently, one Black woman opened up a beautiful store called O’Smile, and I had the chance to go visit. She has a zero waste policy, and she’s working really hard to help the environment and have a business where you can do refills for your dish soap, hand soap, hand sanitizers and all these sorts of things. She opened her business and it’s beautiful to see that, but these kinds of people who are working so hard to keep going, they’re just hanging by a thread. They need support. And not everyone is able to hang on.

Recently, on Kingston Road, we lost one of our dear businesses, Victorian Monkey, which is a nice little restaurant, a pub, a lovely place for a lot of my constituents. Victorian Monkey closed. Do you know why, Mr. Speaker? Because they just couldn’t do business anymore because a lot of their business was based on constituents being able to go inside their restaurant to eat and support them. When they tried to open up the patio, they were too close to residential homes and, therefore, they couldn’t actually go ahead and do that. So what happened? They kept losing revenue, and they couldn’t keep up. Just recently, they had to close their doors. I have another business owner right on the corner of Warden and Danforth, and he’s just holding on. He’s holding on, because he knows that one more month and he doesn’t know what to do, because he’s not able to keep up with the rent.

The worst part is that every time we hear about the fact that we’re providing support or there is no eviction for commercial tenants—this has to be paid off.

I will continue next time.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Yes, unfortunately, the clock was against you this morning. You didn’t have time to finish your entire debate in this matter, but it is now time for members’ statements.

MEMBERS’ STATEMENTS

SMALL BUSINESS

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: A couple of weeks ago, I held a forum for women entrepreneurs in Beaches–East York, because the east end of Toronto has an unusually high number of women entrepreneurs—shout-out to Colin Johnson and the Danny BIA for that research—and because it’s been widely recognized that the pandemic has caused a she-cession.

The smart, innovative, creative women who came together to support one another and to look for solutions had a lot to say about what they need most. Revenue is down; expenses are up. They need rent relief, and they need it right away. What they don’t need is this government boasting that red tape reduction is a plan for a she-covery.

Today, they need cash in hand from a government that cares. They need a ban on commercial evictions through the end of the pandemic. They also need the government to make transparent, evidence-based decisions.

Small businesses that were asked to close on October 9 don’t understand why they are seen as more dangerous than crowded classrooms or crammed buses, where people are told to take their chances. Dance studios that were closed have now been reopened by tweet, but what about yoga studios or small gyms that have spent thousands of dollars putting up barriers and have strict protocols in place?

We should be rewarding small businesses that have made investments in safety rather than shutting them

arbitrarily. We need evidence-based, transparent decision-making from this government. Small businesses in Beaches—East York and in Ontario deserve so much better.

WOMEN'S ACHIEVEMENTS

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: This month, we celebrate Persons Day, which marks the anniversary of the legal ruling that under the Canadian Constitution women were able to be included as qualified persons that could sit in the Senate.

The Famous Five is a very important story from my riding; after all, Amy Murphy, who had appealed to the Canadian Supreme Court, was from Cookstown, which is situated in Innisfil. Innisfil has a proud legacy of women of influence. In fact, this year, our mayor, Lynn Dollin, won the 2020 Women of Influence award by Municipal World.

It goes further, Mr. Speaker. As you may know, Deputy Chief McElary-Downer, who first started her career in policing with the OPP in 1981—she served there in several capacities, including in 1992, when she made history becoming the first woman to serve as the detachment commander in the rank of staff sergeant in Port Credit. Later, she came to serve in 2017 at South Simcoe Police and was the first female deputy police officer for South Simcoe Police.

Now, as you may know, she served as the aide-de-camp for the Lieutenant Governor here at the Ontario Legislature. She has served there for different Lieutenant Governors since 2002, and, as of this month, she has been named the chief aide-du-camp. I'm very proud of her. Congratulations, and I'm very proud to represent a riding that has so much history for progressing women forward.

CULTURAL FACILITIES

Mr. Jeff Burch: I want to tell you about one of the forgotten casualties of the ongoing pandemic: cultural clubs and associations, and the facilities and banquet halls they operate.

Cultural facilities in my riding and across the province provide immeasurable value to our communities and are integrated into their social fabric. They do everything from supporting seniors and youth to welcoming newcomers and raising money for food banks and other charities. Yet many are facing closure due to unprecedented fiscal constraints, with no end in sight.

Club Capri is an Italian hall in my Thorold neighbourhood. Formed in 1917 by a group of volunteers, the association opened their hall in 1960. This club has been hosting wedding receptions, fundraisers and other community functions ever since.

Due to the pandemic, they have had to close up shop, losing over 50% of their revenue as a result. They have lost nearly a quarter of a million dollars. In August, Club Capri applied for a Trillium grant and has yet to hear back. Without intervention, this cultural hall that has been operating for over a century is facing imminent closure.

Club Capri is just one example of many cultural halls and not-for-profits across Ontario on the brink of collapse. Make no mistake: The economic recovery of our province depends on the not-for-profit sector being able to continue to operate. Investment in cultural infrastructure is essential for the health, well-being and economic prosperity of communities. We must invest in these community hubs now or pay a much higher price for the fall-out when we lose them.

1020

SHANE STANFORD

Mrs. Robin Martin: I rise today in the House to express my deep sorrow as yet another death as a result of gun violence has occurred in my riding.

Shane Stanford, 33, was killed on October 7. This young man was part of the health and fitness team at the Central YMCA, just close here to Queen's Park, and had headed home after locking up the facility when someone drove by him in another car and opened fire. It was about 11:30 in the evening. Moments after the gunfire, his car unfortunately crashed into the side of a local home. He was pronounced dead at the scene, and was Toronto's 58th homicide victim of the year.

On last Wednesday, October 14, dozens of people attended a candlelight vigil in the community in honour of this fitness instructor. This young man worked with youth in the community and improved kids' lives, and it's very important to have people like him there. A long-time friend of his reported that he was one of those kids who looked up to Stanford. Stanford had family and friends who loved him. One of them said, "He had a beautiful soul."

Indeed, every life is precious, and Stanford's was treasured by his family and his community, who are struggling to come to terms with his untimely death. In the aftermath of this tragedy, I have re-engaged in conversations with community leaders about what else we can do, and I will continue to engage with them in the coming days. This tragic violence has to stop.

BLOOD DONATION

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure to rise in the House today to speak once again about Abigayle Lobsinger. Many people will remember Abigayle, who is Waterloo's toughest cookie. She has been fighting neuroblastoma, a rare and aggressive form of childhood cancer, for five years—most of her young life. Abigayle is remarkably strong and has had the support of her amazing and resilient family every step of the way. As part of her treatment, she has been receiving transfusions of blood and platelets, these days on a weekly basis. For Abigayle and her family, these transfusions are life-sustaining. Their significance cannot be underestimated.

Abigayle's experience highlights the need for constant blood donations from those who can give. According to the Canadian Cancer Society, over 900 Canadian children

are diagnosed with cancer each year. As part of their treatment, many of these kids require blood, plasma or platelet transfusions. These children—kids like Abigayle—need all of us who are able to step forward and donate blood. Canadian Blood Services has gone above and beyond to make sure that all safety protocols are in place to ensure that people like you and I can continue to safely donate. Donors are always needed. Please, if you are able, book an appointment online at blood.ca.

On behalf of all of Waterloo, we are sending our love and our positive energy to Waterloo's toughest cookie.

SILVERSCENES FILM FESTIVAL

Mrs. Gila Martow: Sylvia Lustgarten is a spunky 94-year-old who insists on being heard. She has adapted to using Zoom conferencing during this pandemic, and is managing quite well to keep up with her family, friends and interests. In fact, she is coping so well she is part of a committee to develop an international film festival on ageism. SilverScenes is a unique film festival that celebrates the older adult, in all their complexity.

Ageism is one of the final prejudices that is still socially acceptable. It's deeply ingrained, with economic, psychological, social and cultural factors that prevent its eradication. This film festival's goal is to use films as catalysts to provoke discussions.

SilverScenes is honouring Alanis Obomsawin, an Indigenous woman from the Abenaki tribe, who is an 88-year-old filmmaker still making feature-length documentaries. And she just won the Glenn Gould award, so congratulations, Alanis.

The festival will be highlighting three Ontario-made productions, including *The Cuban*, *The Art of Downsizing*, *100 and Counting* and, of course, a classic film from 1971, *Harold and Maude*, which is about a romantic relationship of a young man with a 79-year-old woman who's a Nazi concentration camp survivor. She teaches Harold about living life to its fullest and that life is the most precious gift of all. Certainly an important lesson for film lovers of all ages.

This is free. Sign up at silverscenes.org. We're all looking forward to participating.

FLU IMMUNIZATION

Ms. Doly Begum: Over the weekend, government members took to social media to encourage constituents to get their flu shots, while also sharing how easily they've been able to get theirs. Talk about privilege. Mr. Speaker, do they not realize that people in Scarborough and across the province are being turned away from pharmacies due to the extreme shortage of flu shots?

Yesterday, during question period, we heard the Minister of Health say, "We do not have shortages," but I'm hearing otherwise, and I know members of the government side are also hearing otherwise. This government was fully aware that this may happen. Ontario's population is

approximately 14.5 million, and yet, this government has only ordered 5.1 million flu shots.

I have constituents who have had to wait six hours at Shoppers Drug Mart only to be turned away after being told that there is no stock left. I had a senior constituent who shared with me how worried he is about the unavailability of the high-dose vaccine. Upon reaching out to his doctor and several pharmacies, he was told that it "disappears the same day they get it." Across from my constituency office in Cliffcrest, the Shoppers Drug Mart had a sign that said, "Our store has run out of the flu vaccine," and this was put up, which I have actually shared with the minister and Premier as well.

We know that this is a big task, but we also know that the people should not have to wait that long to get a flu shot. This government needs to be open with the public that they were not prepared for the second wave. Ontarians should not be caught in this mess just to be safe in this province.

SMALL BUSINESS

M^{me} Lucille Collard: I rise today to voice the concerns of businesses in my riding of Ottawa–Vanier, but also across the province. With businesses going into a second round of lockdown, many won't be able to make up for the lost revenue and will have to close doors permanently. These closures were announced without any kind of warning and we have yet to see the supporting data that shows transmission through businesses in Ottawa. Businesses such as restaurants, bingo halls that raise money for charities, and health and fitness facilities, for example, have shown that they care about their communities, because they've put in place all the required public health measures to protect the community. Many are questioning the recent restrictions right now. Health and fitness centres also provide care for the mind through their services, and we are starting to see alarming signs of the negative consequences of the closures.

In Ottawa and in my riding, people have demonstrated incredible support for small and medium-sized businesses for the future of our local economy, but we cannot rely on them to bear the whole weight of this. The proposed one-time grant of up to \$1,000 for selected businesses to offset the cost of PPE is clearly not meaningful help if you have to shut down.

I urge the government to act now and provide real support before we lose the local businesses that make up the backbone of our local economy.

DSV GLOBAL TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS

Mr. Parm Gill: I was proud to have both the Premier and the Minister of Government and Consumer Services in my riding of Milton recently to visit the team at DSV Global Transport and Logistics. I knew when I toured the DSV facility in my riding about a year ago during construction that this facility was going to play a huge role in Ontario's overall supply chain, but with the onset of the

COVID-19 pandemic, DSV has played a huge role in making sure Ontarians stay safe and fully supplied with personal protective equipment. Thanks to the tireless efforts of the DSV team, 42 million units of non-medical grade PPE have come directly from Milton in August alone. That is over 12 full tractor-trailers a day.

With 50 to 60 people picking and packing orders 24 hours a day, their teams are making sure PPE supplies are always available to those in need. That means more masks, more face shields, more cleaning supplies, sanitizers and gloves are being sent to help our schools and other institutions stay safe.

I want to thank the team at the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services for being hands-on in the facility to ensure a timely turnaround of PPE, while ensuring there are no corners cut when it comes to quality control.

Thanks to the work being done in Milton, our PPE supply chains remain strong, helping Ontarians stay healthy.

1030

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Donna Skelly: I rise today to express how pleased I am that the e-commerce giant Amazon has chosen Hamilton as the site for a new 855,000-square-foot fulfillment centre. The investment will create 1,500 full-time jobs and competitive hourly wages and benefits, and is expected to open next year. Employees at the warehouse will work with robotics to pick, pack and ship small items such as books, electronics and toys. The items will be sent from the fulfillment centre to a delivery station in Stoney Creek, where cargo vans will ship the products to customers.

This investment will bring the number of Amazon fulfillment centres in Ontario now to 10. The facility is being constructed in a major business park near the Hamilton airport in my riding of Flamborough-Glanbrook.

Flamborough-Glanbrook has seen unprecedented economic growth in the past few years. Last year, Germany-based logistics giant DHL announced it is expanding its gateway into Canada with a new \$100-million distribution centre at the Hamilton airport. The airport offers benefits to companies like DHL and Amazon that need to meet growing demands in handling capacity.

Amazon's investment in Hamilton is further evidence that business has confidence in Ontario's future. Our government, led by the Premier, has worked tirelessly to chart a path to economic recovery and to get people back to work.

QUESTION PERIOD

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My first question this morning is for the Premier. Despite repeated warnings, the second wave of COVID-19 is having a devastating impact on our long-term-care homes, and the Ford government seems unwilling or unable to provide some basic answers.

I'm hoping that the Premier can answer a question that the minister flip-flopped on yesterday throughout the day. Is there currently a staffing shortage in long-term-care homes in Ontario?

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

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the member opposite for the question and the opportunity to clarify. The staffing crisis was existing as we came to govern in 2018; it was pre-existing. Our ministry, the Ministry of Long-Term Care, which was formed in the summer of 2019, began to work aggressively on this with the report of Justice Gillespie, acknowledging the pre-existing staffing crisis. There is one effort going on there to stabilize the entire sector.

But another area where we deal with each home that is under outbreak or at risk for some reason is to make sure we have the lens on that home every single day, to understand whether their staffing is shored up, because, as you recognize, as homes do go into outbreak, some of the staff may have to isolate at home.

And so it is really a two-pronged approach. I know that it has been referred to as a flip-flop. I would just like to say that this is not a flip-flop; it's a clarification and an—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, I'll get to the effect of testing that's not going very well in this province on the outbreaks in long-term care in my next question.

But for this question: The minister yesterday actually insisted in this Legislature that there is not a staffing crisis in long-term care. Yet within the hour, she was insisting to reporters that she never even made such a claim.

The government's own bureaucrats, a hand-picked committee by this minister and, actually, the long-term-care commission as well have known that there is a 6,000-person shortage of PSWs in long-term care in our health system. The minister refused to actually articulate that number when asked about it in estimates committee the other day. So the question is: Why is the Ford government so utterly incapable of being honest about the shortage of staffing in long-term care?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw the unparliamentary comment.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I withdraw, Speaker.

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

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Once again, I will repeat that there are two issues here. The first is a sector-wide shoring-up that needs to be done, and that's why our government has taken the steps that it has: \$461 million to increase the per-hour wages of our personal support workers in long-term care. That's why we put out another \$30 million to hire IPAC specialists and provide that training. That's why this is ongoing, to provide the support that is needed to our long-term-care homes.

The other issue is the day-to-day analysis and, basically, scrutiny of our long-term-care homes so that we have

a fine lens on the homes that are at risk. This is exactly what we're doing, putting dollars behind it, developing a complete staffing strategy which will be informed by the expert panel that has already provided its report. That comprehensive staffing strategy will be complete in December, but we continue to work on a day-to-day basis. We're not waiting for that. That's why we continue to work with other ministries, including the Ministry of Health, to take the measures necessary as we move forward.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, with all due respect, I beg to differ. In testimony made public this week at the Premier's long-term-care commission, workers in long-term care—the people on the front lines who know what's actually going on, on the ground—talk about their frustration as this government ignored their pleas for help all through the summer.

I'm going to make a quote from their testimony: "When we met with Minister Fullerton in February" she "was very clear to us that she had a staffing commission, that she knew that there was a crisis ... that we needed to fix.... Her ... very own hand-picked staffing commission released their report" on "July the 30th. And that report has sat on the shelf, and not one ... thing has been implemented." That's from the testimony to the commission, Speaker.

When will the government stop running away from the tough questions and admit that their attempts to save money through the summer have meant that seniors have been put at more risk, once again, in long-term care?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: I reject the premise of that question. We have continually worked since day one to address the staffing crisis that was long neglected by the previous government and supported by the opposition today. We have acknowledged this. We've listened to our sector.

We brought in four emergency orders. We brought in regulatory amendments. We worked and consulted with the long-term-care sector to understand what their needs were, to be flexible and to be vigilant with this. We have the expert panel informing the recommendations. That is constantly being worked on.

There are many things that go on, on a regular basis, day-to-day, with multiple ministries, working with the Ministry of Health as the lead for the PSW reform piece. We know and acknowledge, and we've listened and we've collaborated, and we continue to do that not only ongoing to provide the necessary staffing for capacity, but also to deal with the urgent COVID situation. This has been ongoing. We've never stopped.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. You know, every family, every single family who has lost a loved one in long-term care deserves answers to what the heck has been going on. Yesterday, the minister walked away rather than provide those answers. That same minister only days ago brushed aside all these horrible

deaths in long-term care as simply similar to a bad flu season. For months, she's ignored the pleas that have been coming from front-line workers and long-term-care operators.

Is this the Premier's plan to actually deal with the problems in long-term care: delay, dither and deny that there is actually a crisis happening?

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

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: I appreciate the chance to clarify. Certainly as a physician, as a parliamentarian, I lead with both my head and my heart. We need both to be analytical and compassionate. This is something that we need to understand the data.

My reference was to understanding the vulnerability of our residents in long-term care in previous years and under COVID. The fact that this has been happening in previous years and nothing has been done about it until our government has come and put the lens on long-term care I think speaks volumes to the commitment that our government and I have to our most vulnerable people in society.

To look at the questions that I've been asked for months, I'm happy to answer those questions. I'll continue to answer those questions. I will bring decorum and responsibility and transparency, and will continue to answer questions. Whether it's in estimates, whether it's in the chamber, whether it's through other investigations of the commission, I will continue to do my work every day.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Somehow, dodging questions at a press conference doesn't look like transparency to very many people. There's a crisis in long-term care, and the minister can't run away from that.

1040

Over the summer, they didn't hire the staff necessary to deal with the problems in long-term care, and they didn't prepare for the increased testing that was necessary. Today, the Globe and Mail reports that testing delays have had a devastating impact on long-term care—a devastating impact—with homes waiting literally days to get results.

The minister talks a good game about all the stats and all the data, but what's not happening is results on the ground. They can't get the test results back. Days and days are going by while they wait for the test results. This means they are losing opportunities to identify the outbreaks while they wait.

Is the Premier ready to finally admit that the government's delay and denial is putting seniors at risk?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you for the question. The testing is ongoing. I can tell you that the surveillance testing in our long-term-care homes is creating a stabilization in the homes across Ontario. Fifty-nine homes considered in outbreak have zero resident cases. An outbreak is defined as one resident or one staff member who has tested positive. In 59 of those cases, it's a staff member isolating at home.

We are confronting the issues in long-term care that have been so badly neglected for decades. I brought my

personal experience and my professional experience to politics because I care about long-term care. We can make a difference.

This COVID-19 is unprecedented. It's happening in our long-term-care homes across the world, but we are making progress. We are working with our best experts in Canada and across the world. We have experts here informing us, and I—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, instead of planning for the second wave, the Premier is sitting here and watching more outbreaks come through long-term care. He is watching the outbreaks take hold once again, especially in the for-profit facilities where it always seems that profits take the front seat while care for the residents is shoved aside. Instead of admitting that we're actually in a crisis in long-term care, the Ford government is comparing COVID-19 to the flu.

The minister has nice words, but it's not an improvement: 821 cases today, with a backlog of 24,000 tests. Only 24,000 tests were actually done. Eighty-seven long-term-care homes are in outbreak; 1,907 people died in long-term care. And yesterday, instead of giving people answers, and family members answers and front-line workers answers, the minister ran and hid.

Why is this Premier so incapable of admitting that there is actually a crisis in long-term care and it's time to put peoples' lives ahead of—

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members will please take their seats. Minister of Long-Term Care to reply.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Once again, we are confronting the realities of decades of neglect and, on top of that, COVID-19. We're investing in long-term care, building capacity, shoring up staffing and dealing with the emergency situation as well. We're not just looking at what needs to be done to prepare for an aging population. We're dealing with what is presented to us by the effects and the impact of COVID-19.

My heart goes out to all families, residents and staff who are impacted by this. We are taking active measures, working swiftly. We began work very early, at the end of January, looking at making sure that we worked with the Ministry of Health, our other ministries, our experts and the Chief Medical Officer of Health every step of the way. We have been taking action, layering on more layers of protection, understanding the dollars that are required for this and investing three quarters of a billion dollars to help protect our most vulnerable in long-term care. They are a priority. They are this—

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

SMALL BUSINESS

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Premier. Businesses that have had to close in modified stage 2 areas continue to wait on their piece of the \$300 million for their

survival. We have a second chance here to get things right and to save small businesses, the very backbone of our economy, but they need to know now how they can access these funds. This \$300-million announcement means nothing if there is no program to deliver it to those in need. Small businesses need a plan, not empty promises.

Will this government advocate to make the new commercial rent relief program retroactive to businesses that need it?

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

Hon. Rod Phillips: Thank you to the member for the question, and I appreciate she raised the previous program. It lets us point out the relative success of that program. Mr. Speaker, 62,000 businesses—62,000 businesses—employing over 600,000 Ontarians were supported for six months by that program. But we also heard from businesses. We heard about the challenges, and that's why we advocated to the federal government, who announced that the new program will be coming forward. It will be retroactive—to answer the member's question—and it will be dealt with directly to business owners. I think that's an improvement and I think we should commend the federal government for amending that program.

But we've also provided other supports. We know that businesses in the areas that are affected by the shutdowns have extraordinary additional costs. That's why we've committed to support the fixed costs related to property tax and energy. That program will be supporting those businesses, those grassroots businesses that this government has supported from the day it was elected.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: The CFIB says that only 50% of the businesses were even able to access that commercial rent support. That is not relative success. That means 50% of the businesses went out of business.

Last week a photographer travelled a short section of Queen Street West in Toronto to see the effects the COVID-19 pandemic has had on one of Ontario's most significant main streets. He took photos of 72 shuttered storefronts, up 20% from the last time he counted in August.

Speaker, these are our main street businesses. They're gone. They're done. Meanwhile, the government continues to dangle this alleged \$300 million in supports in front of their noses with no real program to deliver the relief. When will this government stop sitting back on their heels and actually deliver the direct financial supports that our small businesses need and that they deserve?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Only the opposition, only the NDP would say support for 600,000 employees was not helpful. But we agreed that we wanted to make it better, and that's why we worked with the federal government to design a new program, and we look forward to that program.

In the meantime, in addition to the billion dollars of support that was provided: \$50 million through the Ontario Together Fund; \$355 million in elimination of the

employer health tax, temporarily; \$175 million in electricity price support; \$57 million for the Digital Main Street program, and in addition to that, \$60 million just a couple of weeks ago by my colleague, the minister for small business and reduction of red tape, to help with PPE; and, yes, \$300 million that will be rolled out. We will support the businesses as they need to be supported because we understand small business, unlike the opposition.

MEMBER FOR DON VALLEY WEST

Mr. Michael Parsa: Yesterday, the member for Don Valley West—a proud Richmond Hill native, I might add—announced that she would not be seeking re-election in 2020. Would the Premier please comment on the member's legacy?

Hon. Doug Ford: Thank you for the question. Mr. Speaker, I want to dedicate my next minute to the former Premier, Kathleen Wynne.

Premier, I have the utmost respect for you. We may differ on policies. We may differ on political outlooks. But as a person, I have the utmost respect for you. You've walked a mile in my shoes. During the election, everyone always said, "How is Kathleen Wynne as a person?" I said, "She is super nice, unlike some other people who tend to be just mean and nasty-spirited people, vicious"—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Hon. Doug Ford:—"vicious, vicious people." I said, "Kathleen was never that way: always there, very kind, very polite, never took anything personal." And that's the way more people should act around here, Mr. Speaker. She blazed a new trail being the first woman Premier; she blazed a new trail by being the first gay Premier, and—

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

Applause.

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

The supplementary question.

1050

Mr. Michael Parsa: My supplementary question is back to the Premier. Premier, could you please elaborate further on your positive comments about the member for Don Valley West?

Hon. Doug Ford: You know, you sit back—and I say this respectfully to everyone. Anyone who's served as an MPP, as a minister, no matter what colour of party you come from, orange, blue, purple, whatever, there are certain decisions, and there is one person—as a matter of fact, there are only 25 other people in the history of this province who know how it feels when you're getting calls every single night. You have to make a decision. Kathleen, when you make a decision, you know: One decision, there are 10 other reactions. And then you make another decision: 10 other reactions, and you have to weigh them out. Certain times, the weight of the world is on your shoulders. Sometimes, you sit back and you balance it and you say, "No matter what I do, there's going to be an issue." But you have to go and show leadership.

Throughout the time the former Premier was there, she showed leadership. Again, we might have disagreed, but she showed leadership because she made a decision, right or wrong. And for that, I respect your service. I respect the years that you spent down here serving your constituents. So thank you, God bless you—

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Again, stop the clock. Stop the clock.

Are we ready to move on?

Please start the clock.

CANADA CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: All Ontario educational institutions should be places where students, no matter their religion or sexual orientation or ethnicity, may reach their full potential. That's why it's so troubling to see this government try to slip through a new plan to hand their friend Charles McVety the ability to grant new degrees.

Charles McVety has a history of making Islamophobic and homophobic statements, and of using Canada Christian College, of which he is the president, to host Islamophobic speeches. Why is this government using an omnibus bill about helping small and medium-sized businesses navigate and recover from COVID-19 to give the likes of Charles McVety the right to grant new degrees?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The parliamentary assistant to reply.

Mr. David Piccini: Ontario has a world-class, world-renowned post-secondary education system. From day one, this ministry has worked with all partners across our sector to continue to build that world-renowned education system. That includes establishing an equal playing field for our post-secondary institutions to compete and attract world-class talent from around Ontario and abroad. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: I'm speaking about Charles McVety; I don't know what he's talking about.

In the 1980s, the PCs stripped Canada Christian College of the ability to grant these degrees after years of scandals. The only thing that's changed since that is the rhetoric from Charles McVety: It's become more vile. And yet the Premier has personally welcomed Charles McVety endorsements.

Let's not mince words: Charles McVety has opposed a modern sex-ed curriculum, has spoken out against Muslims and has dragged the LGBTQ2S community through the mud at nearly every chance he gets.

Ontarians should be proud of our post-secondary system because of its commitment to equality and to acceptance. The Premier, of all people, should not be using the COVID-19 pandemic to legislate intolerance and hate. Why does this government continue to use the cover of a

pandemic to make good on backroom deals with the Premier's friends, especially when the Premier's personal friends are people like Charles McVety?

Interjections.

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

Again, the parliamentary assistant to reply.

Mr. David Piccini: I am very proud of our postsecondary, world-class education system, and I think it's important for the member opposite to understand something. The Postsecondary Education Quality Assessments Board is an independent review body that reviews all programs put forward to the government.

Mr. Speaker, we'll continue to work with all of our world-class institutions—universities, colleges, our Indigenous institutes, our private career colleges—to ensure Ontarians get the skill sets they need to achieve ever-changing jobs in our changing economy and continue to succeed in Ontario for years to come.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Mr. Randy Hillier: My question is to the Premier. Never in our long history have we seen such abuse and violations of our Constitution, our fundamental freedoms and our rights. As the Premier spouts we're all on the brink, the Minister of Long-Term Care refers to COVID as comparable to a bad flu season.

Along with these contradictions, however, he denies people the freedom of mobility, our freedom of assembly and our freedom to be with loved ones. But his laws are unconstitutional, and they will be tested. Tomorrow, I will host and gather with more than 25 friends—an offence under these authoritarian laws.

My question is, is the Premier—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I caution the member on his language. Place your question.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Is the Premier prepared to violate our constitutional rights to defend this fearmongering agenda?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Of course not, Mr. Speaker. We're doing no such thing.

I can appreciate that the member opposite has a different view on the best ways in which we, as a province and as an assembly, should be tackling the COVID-19 outbreak that has taken the lives of too many Ontarians, but as much as I respect the honourable member's ability to get up and ask questions that are important to him and his community, I can say very clearly to the member opposite that we will not stop doing all we can to make sure that the people of the province of Ontario are safe, that we have the absolute best results when it comes to COVID-19.

We have all been working very, very hard together. In fact, for the vast majority of this outbreak we have worked with unanimous consent of all members of this Legislature, including the member opposite, who approved almost all of the measures that we have brought forward.

I say very clearly to the member, I respect your opinions, I disagree with them, and we will continue to work very hard to make sure the people of the province of Ontario remain safe.

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: Again to the Premier—and just for the record, since May I have opposed many of these unconstitutional measures, and I'm on the record for doing that.

I'll be testing this law at 10:30 tomorrow morning in Queen's Park, directly north of the assembly. We'll be social, but we won't be masked. We'll be greeting people. If the Premier believes his laws are valid and not just scare tactics, he can throw the book at me tomorrow. Have Toronto bylaw, Toronto police come and charge me as the host and the organizer. The law must be tested in our courts, but I have doubt that he has the courage to defend it.

Speaker, again to the Premier: Will the Premier defend our Constitution or will he violate my rights? From here, it looks like he's just being a political yahoo.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the member to withdraw the unparliamentary comment.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Withdraw.

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Again, Mr. Speaker, I think the quality of the question really speaks for itself.

There have been a number of protests that have occurred during COVID-19 on a number of issues that have been very, very important to the people of the province of Ontario. We have not, of course, outlawed this behaviour. At the same time, it is our responsibility as a government, as legislators to make sure that we do all we can to keep the people of Ontario safe. We have all taken that responsibility very, very seriously on both sides of the House. We may disagree on how we get there but, overwhelmingly, that's what we have all been working towards.

Now, I respect the opinions of the member opposite. I completely disagree with what he is doing tomorrow. I do not believe it to be in the best interests of the people he will be protesting with, but it is our job to make sure that people are safe, and I hope the member opposite will do all he can tomorrow to make sure the people he is with are safe.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. David Piccini: Today, the NDP brought forward a destructive motion aimed solely at setting back all the progress the government has made at reducing the wait-time list for long-term care. It's an outrageous request at a time when the need for long-term care has never been more apparent.

Mr. Speaker, I got off the phone with many of the hard-working folks of all the long-term-care homes in my riding. The utilization rate at Northumberland Hills

Hospital for acute care patients is at an all-time high, and thanks to transitional bed funding from this government, we're getting people into the long-term-care supports that they need.

1100

Mr. Speaker, will the government stand up and outright reject this ridiculous proposal from the opposition?

Hon. Paul Calandra: I appreciate the question from the honourable member for Northumberland–Peterborough South. Allow me just at the outset to say yes, absolutely, we will completely reject this proposal from the NDP. At best, it's irresponsible; at worst, it's a destructive proposal.

What the NDP are proposing would see hundreds of seniors evicted from their long-term-care homes, would see hundreds of thousands of people lose their jobs, on a proposal that they are bringing forward today. Of course we will fight against that, Mr. Speaker. I can assure the member for Northumberland–Peterborough South that we will do all that we can.

The members opposite should try to explain to Yee Hong, to Mon Sheong in my riding, who are providing exceptional service to seniors, why they are no longer worthy of providing that service.

This is a destructive proposal, and this government will do all that it can. I encourage all members to vote with us against this proposal and protect our long-term-care homes.

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

Mr. David Piccini: It's really comforting to hear that, because I can't stress enough how dangerous it would be to accept this NDP long-term-care motion.

Mr. Speaker, I think of a conversation I had over the weekend with folks at Hope Street Terrace and Regency in my riding. They go to work every day to support the seniors of this province—seniors like a gentleman I spoke to recently, who served the Ontario public service with distinction, who just finally got admitted to long-term care thanks to additional beds this government has provided to the sector.

This reckless proposal is driven purely by ideology, with no understanding or actual ideas to improve the long-term-care sector. Will the minister stand in this place today and answer the question clearly? Will this government continue to build long-term-care beds, like the ones that have been announced in my riding over the past year, to make up for years of Liberal neglect, supported by the NDP?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Again, I thank the member for his question and his passion on this. I want to say again very clearly, Mr. Speaker, that we will be voting against this very destructive and irresponsible policy approach by the NDP.

I want to say to the people at home, to the seniors who are in long-term-care homes: This policy of the NDP would seek to evict hundreds of seniors from homes that they have come to rely upon. To the families who are relying on these homes for care, I can tell them that we

will continue to work for you to make sure that your loved ones are cared for. To the thousands of people working in long-term care, we value the work that you are doing. We will stand up against this reckless motion and make sure that you still have a job to go to.

To the member specifically I say yes, we will continue to invest in long-term-care homes. Yes, we will continue to open up new beds across this province, the likes of which we have not seen in over a decade, Mr. Speaker. I know there's a new facility in my riding of over 650 beds. There are facilities all across this province. They are doing good work. The people of the province of Ontario know they can rely on us.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Mr. Faisal Hassan: My question is to the Premier. Residents of York South–Weston have been waiting months for a COVID testing assessment centre and are extremely frustrated with the lack of availability and delays. My office is hearing from many residents, like Molly Lynn, Robyn Moreno and Tania, who have waited over 14 days to receive COVID-19 test results.

Toronto Public Health confirmed that my community is disproportionately affected by the virus and suffers from a lack of testing. What exactly is this government going to do immediately to rectify this dangerous failure?

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

Hon. Christine Elliott: Thank you very much to the member for the question. We have increased our testing services across the province. We are putting a billion dollars into testing, into contact tracing and making sure that people can be in quarantine for 14 days, if that's necessary. We have opened up over 150 assessment centres. We've also expanded into pharmacies for people who are asymptomatic. And we're constantly looking at other areas where we need to increase our resources.

If there is a need—and it sounds as if there is in your community—that is probably an area where we should be opening up either more pop-up assessments or more testing in pharmacies, depending on what the requirements are. If people are symptomatic, of course, they need to go to an assessment centre or another centre of its like.

We are going into communities where there is need. I've taken note of the response and the need in your community. We'll do whatever we can to get the resources there to be of assistance to your constituents.

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

Mr. Faisal Hassan: My question, again, is to the Premier. Cyndi Ferraro went to York South–Weston's new facility the day it opened. She is a personal caregiver for her mother-in-law living in long-term care. She is still awaiting her test results to comply with the home's policy, and that was September 28. She now is unable to care for her mother-in-law and provide the support and comfort she deserves.

Mr. Speaker, when a negative test result for caregivers is required every two weeks, those results are not timely

and in fact are out of date when they finally arrive. What does the Premier have to say to Cyndi—and her family—who says, “I am disgusted and saddened that this has happened. I now face the chance of losing another loved one without being able to see her.”

Hon. Christine Elliott: Well, in fact what has happened is we’ve increased our testing capabilities. We’ve also improved our lab testing facilities. There was a period of time when there was a backlog, but that has been covered. We are now at a point where we are able to do the tests within the required time frame and get those test results back out to people in a timely manner.

In the case of the person you just indicated, I would be happy to look into why they’ve been waiting for so long for the test results, but over 90% of our public health facilities are able to receive the tests within 24 to 48 hours of the test being administered. That is something that I’m happy to look at in your situation, but it certainly is not the case across the province, because we have greatly amplified our lab facilities as well as our test facilities to make sure that they can respond in a timely manner.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT

Mr. John Fraser: My question is for the Premier. Premier, the Select Committee on Emergency Management Oversight was struck with the intention of letting Ontarians know the government’s reasoning for the extension of COVID-19 emergency orders. Earlier this week, I wrote to the Chair of the committee requesting that members of the COVID-19 command table appear before the committee. The Premier also received a copy of this letter.

Ontarians deserve to hear directly from the body that’s giving advice to the Premier. So, Speaker, through you, for the sake of transparency, will the Premier designate members of the COVID-19 table to appear before the next select committee hearing?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. As the member knows, committees run themselves in this place, but I do appreciate the suggestion from the member opposite. As he knows, the Solicitor General has been before the committee on at least two occasions so far, and from my understanding has done an exceptional job of helping to explain the measures that the government has taken. I encourage the committee to independently do the review that is required, as this Legislature would expect.

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

Mr. John Fraser: We are looking forward at the committee to seeing the Premier at one of the committee meetings. In any event, the Premier has the power to designate someone, like the minister, to appear before the committee. That’s what is written in the motion. That means he can designate members from the command table. It’s his decision.

Ontarians deserve to know what advice the Premier was given, when he was given that advice, and what the evidence is that underpins it. COVID-19 is like a brush fire, and the longer that you let that fire burn, the more it spreads. There is a pattern of delayed decision-making in this government, whether it’s in long-term care in the first wave, whether it’s in migrant workers, whether it’s increasing testing or whether it’s the return to school.

So I’ll ask, once again: Will the Premier designate members from the COVID-19 command table to appear before the select committee?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, I think the honourable member would agree with me that it would be inappropriate for the government to direct committees in how they do their work, so we’ll leave it up to the committee to make that decision.

PROTECTION FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Mme France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la ministre des Soins de longue durée. On September 22, on behalf of St. Joseph’s Health, I asked the minister why health providers were having such trouble accessing PPE. She responded, “They have the PPE they require, including N95s.” It’s a fact.

1110

On Friday, St. Joseph’s received a two-page response from Ontario Health (North). It spells out the long list of hoops health care workers and long-term-care management have to jump through in order to maybe gain access to N95s or any other respirators, what Ontario Health (North) calls “a scarce and critical resource.”

This is embarrassing, Speaker. According to the Chief Medical Officer of Health’s directive number 5, if in proximity to a suspected or confirmed COVID resident, workers must be given an N95 or better on request. Can the minister please explain why her statement and the letter from Ontario Health are so badly disconnected?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you for the question. We announced just a few weeks ago, in the \$540-million package, the six to eight weeks of PPE that would go to our long-term-care homes from government. That would include N95s for the homes that are in outbreak.

This is an ongoing process, working with the Ministry of Health, working with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, working with our medical officers of health in the public health units to make sure that we understand the needs in the context of each home. That’s continually scrutinized, and the vigilance is there. But as you know, early in the pandemic, the global competition for PPE made it a big challenge not only for Ontario but across the world. I commend everyone who has worked in Ontario to stabilize that and create the capacity that we need here in Ontario, including through 3M.

These N95s are going out; I have confidence in that. And the PPE supply, the six- to eight-week supply, is there for our homes.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Sudbury, supplementary.

Mr. Jamie West: Back to the Minister of Long-Term Care: Like many people in Sudbury, I come from a career in mining. In fact, before the election, I spent 17 years representing mining health and safety concerns. Frankly, I've never seen anything like this.

If a miner or a surface plant worker needs a respirator in order to work safely, they get it. If they don't, the job stops. When it comes to long-term care, the women at St. Joseph's have been working with their employer to get the PPE they need for months—months, Speaker. They won't refuse to work because they know that a work refusal in long-term care would mean leaving someone's parent, sister or husband in need.

Why is the minister ignoring these women, and when will they have the N95 masks they need?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The parliamentary assistant to respond.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you for the question. It is important that you know that in long-term care, as of October 5, all 626 homes have eight weeks of personal protective equipment, so they have the inventory on hand at all times. The exception is gloves are two weeks and personal hand wipes are three weeks. This includes over 275,000 goggles and face shields, 12.5 million surgical masks, over 150,000 KN95 masks, 17.5 million gloves, 2.5 million gowns and the use of the Minister of Health's emergency operations centre.

No LTC homes, no long-term-care homes, have reported shortages to the Ministry of Long-Term Care at this time. I have more answers here if I get another question on it.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Dave Smith: Today, the NDP have tabled a motion that effectively demands the government close long-term-care centres across Ontario.

The last Liberal government, propped up by the NDP, did virtually nothing to grow our long-term-care system, but this proposal is simply offside. For an opposition party to advocate for fewer long-term-care beds and longer wait times is almost unbelievable.

Mr. Speaker, will this government please commit to rejecting the NDP proposal and instead continue to invest in our long-term-care system?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I can appreciate the passion that this irresponsible motion has evoked from the members of the government caucus, who have spent the last two years making up for the disastrous decisions and the bad policy of the previous government, supported by the NDP.

Let me be very clear: The proposal that the NDP have brought forward, which we will be debating later on today, is a proposal that would put hundreds of seniors out on the street, which would see thousands of people in these long-

term-care homes lose their jobs. This government will never allow that to happen.

I can assure the member for Peterborough that we will do everything in our power to make sure that that doesn't happen, that we will continue to support long-term care with the biggest build-out this province has ever seen and continue to support our personal service workers across this province. We value the work that people are doing in our long-term-care homes, and we will continue to invest in them.

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

Mr. Dave Smith: I really can't believe that we're at a spot where I even have to ask this question, because it's more important now, more than ever, that the province of Ontario continue to invest in people.

Ms. Catherine Fife: You should be embarrassed asking this question.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Scarborough Southwest, come to order

Mr. Dave Smith: We have continued building long-term-care beds so we can reduce wait times. Rejecting this irresponsible NDP proposal is an absolute necessity. Will the minister tell this House just how costly and damaging this NDP proposal would be to our great province?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Again, I thank the member for this question. I appreciate the passion that the members on this side of the House have on this, Mr. Speaker. We see some of the members of the opposition NDP laughing at the context of the question. They should go back to their communities and talk to the people at Yee Hong; they should go back and speak to the people at Mon Sheong—two fine examples of long-term-care homes that have been doing spectacular work in the province of Ontario. But more importantly, they should go back into their communities and explain to the residents of these long-term-care homes who will be evicted by this policy and the thousands of workers who are doing great work in these long-term-care homes why they no longer value them, where they're going to go.

Let me say very clearly to the member of Peterborough and to the opposition NDP, we will not allow this to happen in the province of Ontario. We will fight for those jobs. We will fight for seniors in these long-term-care homes. We will fight to improve conditions in our long-term-care homes. We'll fight to support our PSWs, and we will continue to build out long-term care like this province has never seen.

VACCINATION CONTRE LA GRIPPE

FLU IMMUNIZATION

Mme Lucille Collard: My question will be for the Minister of Health, en français.

En septembre, le gouvernement a annoncé qu'il lançait la plus grande campagne de vaccin contre la grippe dans l'histoire de l'Ontario pour adresser la deuxième vague de COVID-19. C'est une bonne initiative, sauf qu'on s'est rapidement rendu compte qu'il n'y avait pas de doses en quantité suffisante pour la demande.

Comment est-ce que le gouvernement peut faire une campagne sans s'assurer au préalable que les doses sont disponibles? Ça devient une situation très frustrante pour les gens qui veulent suivre les recommandations du gouvernement et aller se faire vacciner. Alors, quel est le message de la ministre aux Ontariens qui veulent maintenant se faire vacciner mais qui se font refuser parce que les doses ne sont pas disponibles?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Thank you very much for the question. I would say that the message should be that everyone who wants to receive the vaccine will receive the vaccine. We ordered 5.1 million doses of vaccine this year—700,000 in the previous year. I would say that this happens almost every year, that there are some occasions when some units don't have vaccines for a short period of time, but they are coming in on a regular basis. We have contracts with them. We have no recorded issues with supply; there is adequate supply. The supplies are coming in.

It's great that so many people are trying to get the vaccine this year. That's one of the key pillars of our fall preparedness plan. But the people of Ontario should not worry. There is adequate supply, and it is coming in on a regular basis in shipments that were agreed to months before we came upon this situation with COVID. This was ordered almost a year ago, so it is coming in. It will be in. People should just check with their primary care practitioner or with a pharmacy where they wish to receive the vaccine.

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

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Encore à la ministre de la Santé : merci pour la réponse. Cependant, j'étais dans ma circonscription la semaine dernière. J'ai voulu faire ma part puis me faire vacciner pour également encourager les gens de la circonscription à se faire vacciner. J'avais même réussi, en fait, à convaincre ma mère de venir se faire vacciner, elle qui ne veut jamais le faire. Parce qu'elle a 77 ans, je trouvais que c'était important.

Cependant, comme mon collègue d'Orléans l'a mentionné hier, il manque de vaccins. Puis, ce n'est pas un cas isolé, parce qu'à Ottawa–Vanier, il manque de vaccins aussi. Les endroits où, moi, j'ai téléphoné ne pouvaient même pas me donner un rendez-vous, même pour plus tard, parce qu'ils ne savaient pas quand ils allaient recevoir les vaccins. Alors on m'a dit de rappeler dans deux ou trois semaines.

1120

Si nous voulons que la campagne de vaccination encourage les gens à aller se faire vacciner, il faudrait peut-être que les doses soient disponibles. Que peut faire la ministre pour s'assurer que les bureaux de médecins et

les pharmacies reçoivent les vaccins qui ont été achetés par la province?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I would say to the member, through you, Mr. Speaker, that there is no lack of vaccine. We have significant, increased numbers of vaccine this year over last year. In fact, we have shipped 3.4 million doses of the flu vaccine already compared to last year at this time, when we had 2.7 million doses. We've already made more than 700,000 more vaccines available to Ontarians. But these are shipments that are agreed upon in advance that come in at particular periods of time. There's no shortage. There's no delay in shipments.

All I would ask Ontarians is to please book ahead. Book ahead with your pharmacies. Book ahead with your primary care practitioner. There are those doses available, including 1.3 million doses of the high-dose for seniors 65 and older.

We did make it a priority, when the first shipments came in at the end of September, to go to hospitals, long-term-care homes, retirement homes and other places of congregate living. But shipments are being regularly sent to pharmacies and to primary care practitioners.

There is no shortage. Just ask—

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

The next question.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Bhutila Karpoche: My question is to the Minister of Long-Term Care. Yet another long-term-care home in my riding of Parkdale–High Park is experiencing an outbreak. Lakeside is one of 87 homes in outbreak, and my office is hearing that Lakeside has now, tragically, had its first resident death due to COVID.

My constituent Katerina is worried about her dad, who lives in this home. The turnaround time for test results is slow, and the home is still reviewing its staffing gaps. Katerina fears that delays in action are putting her father at risk of getting COVID.

Why won't the minister make long-term-care homes a priority for expedited testing?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you for the question, to the member opposite. We indeed are making long-term care a priority for testing. That's been happening for many months now. This is something that our government is committed to, and it has demonstrated that over and over and over again.

Lakeside is doing well, and my heart goes out to everyone who is affected by this virus, but it is on our radar. We have measures in place to assist them. This is an ongoing effort on a daily basis, to keep our eyes on the homes that are in outbreak.

I want to just mention to everyone who is working so hard in long-term care: 96% of our homes are not in outbreak. A lot of energy is going to support the homes in outbreak, whether it's with relation to Ontario Health and

the hospitals, IPAC teams, whether it's community paramedics going in to assist, whether it's public health or the medical officers of health.

Let me reassure you that Lakeside is definitely under scrutiny. We are watching that home and making sure that it gets the support that it needs.

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

Ms. Bhutila Karpoche: Back to the minister: Like Katerina, hundreds of families are worried because delays in testing are preventing nursing homes from controlling the spread of infections.

Ontarians want to know what happened to the iron ring that the minister and the Premier promised to put around long-term care back in March. Almost seven months later, we're watching the government make the same mistakes because they refuse to accept that they are ultimately accountable for our long-term-care system.

Will the minister accept responsibility and develop a comprehensive plan that prioritizes testing for residents, staff and essential caregivers in our long-term-care homes?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the member opposite. Indeed, the long-term-care homes of Ontario are receiving priority testing; there is no doubt about that. That has been our commitment for many, many months.

In terms of the caregiver piece, I want to make sure that everyone understands that each resident has the ability to designate two essential caregivers to assist them, whether it's with feeding or support during the day, or emotional support. This is ongoing. We want to make sure that those caregivers are tested in an appropriate way.

Science and the processes are evolving to provide more and more layers of protection for our residents in long-term care, and so we're looking at different ways that we can expedite those tests for caregivers as well.

This is something our government takes very seriously, and I would also say the rapid tests that the federal government has approved will also be helpful and we're looking forward to getting those going.

HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

Mr. Stephen Blais: My question is for the Premier. The hospitality industry has been amongst the hardest hit as a result of COVID in Ontario. Restaurants and banquet halls across the province have been suffering with a mixed bag of reopenings and then closures, often with little notice. Tony at Premier banquet hall in York region says that he's about to go bankrupt, and he's not alone, Mr. Speaker. Tourism hospitality accounts for 81,000 jobs in York region, which is why the chamber of commerce has been calling for sector-specific programs to support the hospitality industry.

Yesterday, when asked about supporting hospitality in his news conference, the Premier said his answer was, "COVID sucks."

The government has no real plan for rent support. The government has no plan to help offset the cost of winter

patios. They have no plan for commercial insurance, and they have no plan to take action on the mob-like commission fees that food delivery services charge.

When is the government going to take sector-specific action to support the hospitality industry in Ontario?

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

Hon. Rod Phillips: I thank the member for the question. And he's right, and we have been clear from the beginning that we understand the pressure that is on small businesses, and banquet halls are one example. They are an area where we have made sure that—for example, the \$300 million of support that this government will provide for fixed costs that include property tax, that include energy costs, but also the supports that will be provided by the federal government, which include an expansion of their loans program, the extension of the rent program and the wage program.

But, Mr. Speaker, and I think the Premier was clear, this is a very difficult time. We understand, because we are a party that has supported small businesses and businesses like banquet halls. That's why we'll continue to be there to provide those supports and we'll continue to listen not just to small business, but to the opposition for their ideas and their suggestions about how we can support our small business.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Yes, my supplementary is for the Minister of Finance. The government has left restaurant owners to nearly go bankrupt while they're letting food delivery service companies charge mob-level commission fees and service charges on the most lucrative part of the hospitality business. While the government is happy to let multi-billion-dollar companies, American companies, wet their beak a little bit in Ontario's hospitality sector, they're letting mom-and-pop restaurants go bankrupt on main street every day right here in Ontario.

The government has received the advice of experts—there's a 500-page report on your desk today, Minister. They've received the advice of thousands of small business owners. These fees are choking what little is left of the hospitality sector in Ontario. Why won't the government support restaurants and the hospitality sector and cap these fees today? Stop dithering. Make a decision. Cap these fees today.

Hon. Rod Phillips: Again, I appreciate the suggestions from the member, and we're open to all those suggestions.

The standing committee on the economy and on finance travelled this province. It heard from over 500 witnesses. My ministerial colleagues hosted over 56 ministerial advisory groups, all of which heard this kind of feedback, and that's where our approach has come from. Mr. Speaker, \$11 billion of direct support for people in communities is part of a \$30-billion plan that this government unveiled. We are open to other initiatives and approaches. That's why we have provided money to support rent, that's why we have provided money to support PPE, that is why we have supported electricity costs and that's why we'll

continue to do more, because this is a party that understands business and small business, and we will keep listening.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: My question is for the Premier. Last week, I spoke with my constituent Larry Grace. In 2019, Larry's doctor left Thunder Bay. He's been waiting for almost two years for a family doctor or a nurse practitioner. He's 79 years old and cannot find primary care. He's not the only one. There are thousands of my constituents that can't find a family doctor or a nurse practitioner. What is this government going to do for people like Larry to help them find the health care they need?

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

Hon. Christine Elliott: Well, one of the key things that we're doing is transforming our health system, which we had started before the pandemic hit by creating Ontario Health and local Ontario health teams. That is really important to provide the kind of integrated care that the people of Ontario need—to make sure that they have care, whether they are in hospital, whether they're waiting for long-term care, whether they need home care.

And we're bringing together groups of people who practise in those areas. We're not creating an artificial group of people. These are actual practitioners in each of the geographic areas of Ontario—to make sure that people can get the care they need, whether it's primary care; whether it's social services that they need to be assisted with; whether it's nurse practitioners, mental health specialists, whatever it happens to be.

I'll be very pleased to speak about it more in the supplemental, but that's what we're bringing to Ontario—care for people in Ontario. Regardless of where they live, they will have that integrated care.

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

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: The next part of my question is for the minister.

Thunder Bay has a severe shortage of primary care providers. They've been patient. They've been waiting a long time.

I had the pleasure of meeting Pam Delgaty and Kyle Jessiman of the Lakehead Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic last week. Pam and Kyle want to expand their operation in Thunder Bay, and they have applied again for provincial funding. As it stands, many people are waiting more than two years to become patients of their clinic, and they specialize in servicing one of the most underprivileged neighbourhoods in our city.

What is this government planning to do to end the disastrous impact of the lack of primary caregivers in Thunder Bay?

Hon. Christine Elliott: We certainly know that Thunder Bay is under incredible pressure because they are the primary care providers for many people within Thunder

Bay and also for people who live more distant, who need to see specialists, who need to have different types of care. All of their health facilities are under pressure, so we are looking at ways that we can relieve them—part of it is by the Ontario health teams; part of it is by paying attention, of course, to applications such as those by Pam and Kyle to bring forward models that are going to be able to expand services in their area.

But the real difference here is with the local Ontario health teams being able to provide a wider bundle of care to more people with more specialties within it. We often talk about dealing with some of the social determinants of health—people who are under-housed, underfed, all of these situations which are all the more real during this time of COVID-19. But we are finding that having those social services groups there within the primary health care teams to wrap around people and provide them with that additional support—

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

WASTE REDUCTION

Mrs. Robin Martin: My question is for the Minister of the Environment.

Minister, I understand that you kicked off Waste Reduction Week yesterday with a big announcement about the Blue Box program, and I was wondering if you could share some of the details.

Hon. Jeff Yurek: Thanks very much for the question from Robin Martin, the member from Eglinton—Lawrence.

We kicked off Waste Reduction Week yesterday with a great announcement for the renewal and restructuring of the Blue Box program for the province of Ontario. It's going to make it more affordable for producers and consumers. It's going to be competitive for the waste processing sector. It's going to be effective and accessible for residents across the entire province and will achieve the highest waste reduction targets in North America.

We are going to expand the Blue Box program into apartment buildings, long-term-care homes, retirement homes, schools and municipal parks, and we're going to top it off with strict enforcement from RPRA to ensure that we work with producers to make those targets, and if those producers are refusing to move forward, there will be monetary fines associated with getting them into compliance.

Mr. Speaker, this is a great announcement by our government, led by Premier Doug Ford, to ensure that we are protecting our environment while growing our economy through the circular economy that we will be creating through this new program.

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

There being no further business, this House stands in recess until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1134 to 1500.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated October 20, 2020, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 111(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

QUADRANT CONSULTING SERVICES INC. ACT, 2020

Mr. Bailey moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr29, An Act to revive Quadrant Consulting Services Inc.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 89, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

FILIPINO HERITAGE MONTH ACT, 2020

LOI DE 2020 SUR LE MOIS DU PATRIMOINE PHILIPPIN

Ms. Begum moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 217, An Act to proclaim the month of June as Filipino Heritage Month / Projet de loi 217, Loi proclamant le mois de juin Mois du patrimoine philippin.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the member for Scarborough Southwest care to explain her bill briefly?

Ms. Doly Begum: June is an important month for the Filipino community. Every year, on June 12, the Filipino community around the world celebrates Philippine Independence Day.

Filipino Heritage Month in Ontario will provide all Ontarians, both today and in future generations, with an opportunity to learn about and celebrate the rich heritage and history of the Filipino Canadian community. It will also give Ontarians an opportunity to reflect on the roles and contributions of Filipino Ontarians in communities across our province, including the work of those Filipino Ontarians who are essential workers and health care workers in keeping Ontarians safe and healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic.

SUPPORTING ONTARIO'S RECOVERY AND MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS ACT, 2020

LOI DE 2020 VISANT À SOUTENIR LA RELANCE EN ONTARIO ET SUR LES ÉLECTIONS MUNICIPALES

Mr. Downey moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 218, An Act to enact the Supporting Ontario's Recovery Act, 2020 respecting certain proceedings relating to the coronavirus (COVID-19), to amend the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 and to revoke a regulation / Projet de loi 218, Loi édictant la Loi de 2020 visant à soutenir la relance en Ontario concernant certaines instances liées au coronavirus (COVID-19), modifiant la Loi de 1996 sur les municipalités et abrogeant un règlement.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the Attorney General care to explain his bill?

Hon. Doug Downey: Our government is supporting the volunteers, front-line workers, charities and community partners who are essential to Ontario's recovery. This legislation proposes liability protection for workers, volunteers and organizations that make an honest effort to follow public health guidelines and laws related to exposure to COVID-19. It would also maintain the right of Ontarians to take legal action against those who wilfully or with gross negligence endanger others.

LIFE SETTLEMENTS AND LOANS ACT, 2020

LOI DE 2020 SUR LES RACHATS DE POLICES D'ASSURANCE-VIE ET LES PRÊTS SUR L'ASSURANCE-VIE

Mr. Cuzzetto moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 219, An Act to amend the Insurance Act / Projet de loi 219, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les assurances.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: Currently, section 115 of the Insurance Act prohibits any person, other than the insurer or its duly authorized agent, from trafficking or trading in life insurance policies. The bill amends the prohibition so that it does not apply if the life insurance policy is sold or assigned by the original policyholder or a transferee, used as collateral security or donated to a charity.

The bill provides for a 10-day cooling-off period, during which time an agreement to sell, assign, use as collateral security or donate a life insurance policy may be cancelled. The Financial Services Regulatory Authority of Ontario would be required to provide oversight in respect of the transactions.

MOTIONS

LEGISLATIVE REFORM

Hon. Paul Calandra: Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice respecting electronic delivery of documents and a consequential amendment to the standing orders, and to make one further amendment to the standing orders respecting adjournment proceedings.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to move a motion without notice respecting electronic delivery of documents and a consequential amendment to the standing orders, and to make one further amendment to the standing orders respecting adjournment proceedings. Agreed?

Hon. Paul Calandra: I move that, where the standing orders refer to the delivery of copies of bills, ministerial statements, or compendiums of background information to opposition members or parties, this requirement may be satisfied by delivery by electronic means; and

That standing order 40(c) be amended by striking out “2”; and

That for the duration of the 42nd Parliament, standing order 36(b) be amended by striking out “to the minister” and substituting “to a minister” and by striking out “his or her” and substituting “a”.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Calandra has moved that, where the standing orders refer to the delivery of copies of bills, ministerial statements, or compendiums of background information to opposition members or parties, this requirement may be satisfied by delivery by electronic means; and

That standing order 40(c) be amended by striking out “2”; and

That—

Interjection: Dispense.

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

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Jacqueline Cormier from Val Caron in my riding for these petitions.

“Improving Broadband in Northern Ontario.

“Whereas people and businesses in northern Ontario need reliable and affordable broadband Internet now to work, learn and connect with friends and family; and

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“Whereas too many people can only access unreliable Internet and cellular or don’t have any connectivity at all especially in northern Ontario; and

“Whereas the current provincial Broadband and Cellular Action Plan has failed to provide northern communities with the same opportunities for economic growth, recovery and participation;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“To call on the Ford government to immediately provide a plan with dates and actions to be taken for every area of northern Ontario to have access to reliable and affordable broadband Internet.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and bring to it the Clerk.

ANTI-RACISM ACTIVITIES

Mrs. Robin Martin: I have a petition entitled “Combat Anti-Semitism.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas, on December 29, 2019, five people were maliciously killed at the home of an ultra-Orthodox rabbi during Hanukkah celebrations in Monsey, New York;

“Whereas the horrendous events that took place on December 29, 2019, in Monsey, New York, coincide with an upward trend of instances of egregious acts of anti-Semitic behaviour, including within the province of Ontario;

“Whereas anti-Semitism can manifest in various different ways and cannot be adequately countered if it cannot be properly identified; moreover, anti-Semitism is a multi-faceted problem that requires a multi-faceted solution;

“Whereas the province of Ontario prides itself on being a safe and welcoming place free from religious-based hate;

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

“Proceed as effectively as possible to ensure that all Ontarians are protected from discrimination and hate amounting to anti-Semitism by immediately passing Bill 168, the Combating Antisemitism Act, 2019, so that the government of Ontario be guided by the working definition of anti-Semitism and the list of illustrative examples of it, adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance plenary on May 26, 2016, when it interprets acts, regulations and policies designed to protect Ontarians from discrimination and hate amounting to anti-Semitism.”

I fully support the petition. I’ll affix my signature hereto and pass it to the usher.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Doly Begum: I have a petition titled “Temperatures in Long-Term Care Homes.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the province of Ontario requires a minimum but no maximum temperature in long-term-care homes;

“Whereas temperatures that are too hot can cause emotional and physical distress that may contribute to a decline in a frail senior’s health;

“Whereas front-line staff in long-term-care homes also suffer when trying to provide care under these conditions

with headaches, tiredness, signs of hyperthermia, which directly impacts resident/patient care;

“Whereas Ontario’s bill of rights for residents of Ontario nursing homes states ‘every resident has the right to be properly sheltered ... in a manner consistent with his or her needs’;

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

“Direct the Lieutenant Governor in Council to make regulations amending O. Reg. 79/10 in the Long-Term Care Homes Act to establish a maximum temperature in Ontario’s long-term-care homes.”

I fully support this petition, will sign my signature to it and give it to usher Ilhan.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Mr. Randy Hillier: I have a petition that’s signed by over 15,000 people. It’s a lengthy petition, so I’ll paraphrase some of it.

To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“No More Lockdowns.

“Whereas the threat of COVID-19 is now understood not to be a risk to the vast majority of people in Ontario; and

“Whereas present testing methods are defective ... due to their excessive false-positive rate; and

“Whereas countless small and medium-sized businesses have ... been lost” due to “the prior lockdowns; and

“Whereas millions of people have been denied proper medical attention and needed procedures; and

“Whereas global data now demonstrates that children are at extremely low risk of serious illness...; and

“Whereas a growing number of physicians throughout Ontario and the” western “world have recognized that COVID-19 is ... ‘a treatable condition;’” and

“Whereas a repeated lockdown along with the present ... ordinances contravene the rights and freedoms of the people as enshrined in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms;

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

“That the government of Ontario commit to not forcing the people of Ontario and businesses back into” another “lockdown....”

I support this petition. I will sign it and send it to the table.

ACCESS TO PERSONAL HEALTH RECORDS

Mrs. Gila Martow: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

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

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

“Whereas health information custodians continue to charge exorbitant fees for access to personal health records....”

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

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

Of course, I affix my signature, and I’ll give it to one of the ushers.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

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

I fully support this petition. I’ll be affixing my signature to it and providing it to the usher to deliver to the table.

MAGNA CARTA DAY

Mr. Norman Miller: I have a petition with regard to Magna Carta Day. It reads:

“Whereas the Magna Carta is a revolutionary document that influenced the English system of common law and was a precursor in the development of England’s—and later, Canada’s—constitutional monarchy; and

“Whereas the Magna Carta was instrumental in placing limits on the monarch’s power to overrule the law and protected the rights of ordinary people; and

“Whereas the document introduced key principles that hold true in democratic societies today, including equal justice for everyone, freedom from unlawful detention, the right to a trial by jury, and rights for women; and

“Whereas it is important for the Magna Carta to be honoured and remembered as a document that changed the course of history. The fundamental traditions of equality and freedom that characterize our democratic society—particularly that nobody, not even the crown, is above the law—originated in this important document;

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

“Acknowledge the importance of this revolutionary document by proclaiming June 15 each year as Magna Carta Day in the province of Ontario.”

I sign this petition.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: This petition is called “Time to Care.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

“To amend the LTC Homes Act (2007) for a legislated minimum care standard of four hours per resident per day, adjusted for acuity level and case mix.”

I fully support this petition, will sign my signature and give it to the usher to bring to the table.

FAMILY LAW

Ms. Donna Skelly: I’d like to present a petition.

“Bill 207, Moving Ontario Family Law Forward Act, 2020.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas family law disputes in Ontario are often time-consuming and onerous matters for families involved; and

“Whereas the Moving Ontario Family Law Forward Act includes common-sense changes to simplify Ontario’s family law system, allowing parents and guardians to spend less time on paperwork and court appearances and

more of their time making plans to support and care for their children; and

“Whereas, if passed, the Moving Ontario Family Law Forward Act would simplify and modernize the system, making it easier for families and loved ones to resolve disputes; and

“Whereas, if passed, Bill 207 would:

- make the family law appeals process clearer and easier to navigate;

- harmonize Ontario’s family laws with federal legislation, to make it easier for Ontarians to navigate the system and understand their rights;

- allow parents and caregivers to request certified copies of child support notices made by the online Child Support Service, so child support amounts can be more easily managed or enforced outside the province; and

- remove the requirement for family arbitrators to file arbitration award reports with the ministry, saving both time and money;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario pass the Moving Ontario Family Law Forward Act.”

I will affix my signature and hand it over to an usher.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: I have a petition entitled “Time to Care.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature to it and give it to the usher to bring to the Clerk.

VETERANS

Mr. Lorne Coe: I have a petition supporting Ontario’s veterans.

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

“Continue working hard across government to ensure assistance for our veteran heroes by modernizing and

investing in the Soldiers' Aid Commission by immediately passing the Soldiers' Aid Commission Act, 2020 so that additional assistance to help provide:

“—health-related items and specialized equipment ...

“—home-related items such as mobility-related renovations and repair costs;

“—personal items and employment readiness supports ...”

I affix my signature. It's dated October 20, 2020. I provide it to the usher.

ANTI-VAPING INITIATIVES FOR YOUTH

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Mary Johanne Leduc from Capreol in my riding for these petitions.

“Protect Kids from Vaping....

“Whereas very little is known about the long-term effects of vaping on youth; and

“Whereas aggressive marketing of vaping products by the tobacco industry is causing more and more kids to become addicted to nicotine through the use of e-cigarettes;

“Whereas the hard lessons learned about the health impacts of smoking, should not be repeated with vaping, and the precautionary principle must be applied to protect youth from vaping; and

“Whereas many health agencies and Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada fully endorse the concrete proposals aimed at reducing youth vaping included in” my bill;

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“To call on the Ford government to immediately pass” my bill, “Vaping is Not for Kids Act, in order to protect the health of Ontario’s youth.”

I support this petition. I will affix my name to it and send it to the Clerk.

OPPOSITION DAY

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I move opposition day number 1: Whereas successive Conservative and Liberal governments built a system where big, private corporations warehouse seniors in institutional facilities, and have failed to hold accountable for-profit long-term-care operators who did not keep their residents safe; and

Whereas more than two thirds of COVID-19-related deaths occurred in long-term-care homes during the first wave of the pandemic, with data revealing that COVID-19 deaths were more frequent in for-profit long-term-care homes than those operated by municipalities or non-profit organizations; and

Whereas not-for-profit long-term care means more money is available for care, not profits;

Therefore, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario calls on the Ford government to eliminate for-profit care from Ontario’s long-term care system.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Ms. Horwath has moved opposition day number 1. I look to the Leader of the Opposition to lead off the debate.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It truly is an honour to have a chance to speak to what I believe is an extremely important motion, and a motion that perhaps should have been debated in this House many, many years ago considering what we've watched happening with COVID-19 tearing through our long-term-care system—a system that has been on its knees for years and years.

I want to start by saying that we owe everything to the generations who built this province, to the generations who raised us, raised our families with love and without hesitation. These are the folks who sacrificed everything for us, and right now I would say that our province is such a great place because of them. When it comes to long-term care, what we're doing is entrusting the well-being of those folks to the caring, hard-working front-line caregivers and workers in long-term care. Yet despite all of the hard work that these dedicated people put into taking care of our loved ones, COVID-19 revealed an absolute disaster behind the walls of our province's long-term-care homes.

I want to just say that we all owe a debt of gratitude to the Canadian Armed Forces, whose report really did pull back the curtain on what was happening in long-term care.

More than 19 people have died of COVID-19—19 residents of long-term care. Thousands and thousands of families have been absolutely shattered. The second wave we all knew was coming is actually upon us, and folks, horrendously, are once again dying in long-term care. We need to take action to protect folks in long-term care, and we need to do it now. We have to staff up thousands of PSWs, put infection control specialists in every single home and ensure that we have enough N95s and other PPE to keep people safe in long-term care. That needs to happen right now. In fact, it should have been happening months ago.

Then, after we actually make it out of this nightmare that we're currently in, after we make it out of this nightmare together, we have to fix the long-term-care system for good, once and for all—a job that should have been done by the previous government but hasn't been done even under this government. COVID-19 absolutely ravaged our long-term-care homes and put home care clients at serious risk as well, because the system is nothing short of an absolute disaster, and it has been this way, as I alluded to, for decades now.

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A revolving door exists in long-term care, where underpaid and part-time workers are run off their feet in care homes that are so short-staffed that seniors and vulnerable people in long-term care are regularly neglected. How shameful is that, Speaker? Folks are sick. We have discovered through COVID-19 in a more public way—but many of us, certainly, on this side of the House, have known for years now—that people are literally losing their lives from dehydration, losing their lives from malnourishment, here in the province of Ontario, in provincially funded long-term-care homes. And of course,

they're receiving one-size-fits-all care that does not take into consideration their language or their culture.

As I said, we know that the problems in long-term care did not start with COVID-19. They go back decades, through years of Liberal and Conservative governments short-changing our parents and grandparents.

Over two decades ago, in fact, the Harris Conservatives cut one out of every 12 of its hospital and long-term-care staff, firing nearly 25,000 health care workers—a shameful legacy. They privatized long-term-care homes. That's what the Harris government did. That's what Conservatives did last time they were in office. They privatized long-term-care homes and literally sold off the care of our moms and dads to greedy for-profit companies. That meant that those companies were more interested in cutting corners, in reducing staff, in doing everything they could possibly do to make sure they had enough money to pocket the difference and satisfy their shareholders, their profit margins.

But after the Conservatives opened the floodgates of privatization in long-term care, Liberals like Dalton McGuinty and Kathleen Wynne and Steven Del Duca chose to let the private companies in in massive waves while they cut health care spending all long. They froze hospital budgets and stopped building desperately needed long-term-care beds. In fact, between 2011 and 2018, the Liberals only built 611 long-term-care beds, and in under 10 years, the wait-list for long-term care grew by 78%.

Of course, the Conservative government has made it even worse: Between 2018 and today, the Ford government has built just 34 individual beds—not homes, 34 individual beds—and over all these years, both Conservative and Liberal governments cut vital inspections in our long-term-care homes, blocked separate public inquiries to hide the problems and avoid responsibility. This government, of course, as we know, blocked a public inquiry into what was happening with COVID-19 in long-term care. The former government blocked a full public inquiry when they were in office, as well. That is not what the people of Ontario deserve, and that is not what our loved ones and family members deserve. The Ford government is even in the process of slashing long-term care by another \$34 million.

Speaker, no more: We cannot abide this system as it is any longer. We have to put an end, and we can put an end, to the days of short-changing our loved ones to pad the profits of private shareholders. We can invest in better care and better quality of life for our elders and more peace of mind for their families. That starts with completely overhauling long-term care to ban greedy corporations from the sector once and for all and make long-term care public and not-for-profit enterprises so that every single dollar goes to better care, better quality of life, better living, better supports, better peace of mind for family members, and not into the private profits of these companies. We should not be padding the pockets of these companies instead of providing care for our loved ones.

Imagine a system, just for a moment, where caregivers always have time to stop and listen, to spend a few

moments; time to offer comforting basics, things such as a decent meal that's not rushed and hurried, clean clothes each and every day after a warm bath—things that people would want to have their family members and loved ones be able to receive every single day in long-term care.

These are exactly the kinds of things that don't happen, Speaker, when profits in long-term care becomes priority number one. These are the things that are cut out. These are the corners that are cut.

The data from the first wave of COVID-19 shows very clearly that when a resident contracts COVID-19, they're more likely to die if they live in a for-profit facility. Of course, it's not only residents who have gotten sick and lost their lives. Front-line health care workers and PSWs—folks we rightly lionized as sheroes of the pandemic, who are predominantly women and especially women of colour—have also become sick and, in some cases, lost their lives to COVID-19. These folks are paid minimum wage or just slightly above it. Why? Because it's cheaper to do that. As a result, most of those heroes have to cobble together several positions in several different homes in order to make a living—part-time jobs with no benefits, no pension, no sick days. This is the legacy of Conservative and Liberal governments. This is what we've been dealing with for far too long in the province of Ontario.

When our long-term-care homes are actually focused on the quality of care and not on profit, like what we are proposing right here today in this motion, we can actually turn PSW jobs into full-time, well-paid, stable careers where the workers are respected, where the good jobs that the workers go to are actually also the good living conditions in which our loved ones are living out their last days and years. That's what long-term care should be all about. It would make life a lot better for the PSWs. It would make life a lot better for the residents of long-term care, our loved ones and seniors. It would make life a lot better for anybody who has a parent or loved one in long-term care, because you can have peace of mind that the only motivation of anyone in that system is to take loving care of the people who loved you. That's what long-term care should be about; not the greed of corporations that want to suck out the public dollar that's necessary to provide care for our loved ones in long-term care. It shouldn't be about that.

I know that Mr. Ford and the Conservatives believe that the privatization of public services is what needs to happen more in Ontario. In fact, that's what Mr. Ford said during the election campaign. He was going to leave no stone unturned in his hunt to privatize public services. So here we are. The Conservative belief that the private sector does everything better has been revealed as not the case. It's absolutely not true. With COVID-19, the reality has, I hope, finally come home to roost with the government members: that you can't simply believe without any evidence that your values around privatization of public services are the right thing, when the evidence clearly shows that in the case of long-term care, the folks who lived in—long-term-care facilities that were run for a profit were the ones where more outbreaks occurred and, tragically, more lives were lost.

We shouldn't be focusing on annual dividends or quarterly dividends of for-profit corporations. We should be focusing on the quality of life and the care that we give to our loved ones in long-term care. Everybody deserves to be at peace, knowing that we as a province are doing everything we possibly can to make sure that our loved ones are valued, that they're cared for, that they're actually thriving in long-term care, no matter how much money is in their bank accounts and no matter how much they have in their retirement fund.

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Speaker, these are our values. These are the values of New Democrats. We believe that public dollars need to be invested in public services like long-term care, especially when we know that these people—who, as I said, built our province and raised us, without hesitation and fully with love—deserve to have that kind of dedication, that kind of respect, that kind of value returned to them. To suggest that any public dollars in any way should be going to any other priority like the profit margins of for-profit companies—it just doesn't sit well with New Democrats, and for almost 30 years now, it's exactly what has failed the seniors in our long-term-care system.

Let's not forget: COVID-19 certainly did tear through long-term care. The tragedies were unbelievable. The fact that the same thing is happening right now—well, that's something that the government is going to have to live with. But I can say for certain that if we overhaul the long-term-care system, pull the profits out, use those dollars to provide a better quality of care, we will actually have a long-term-care system that we can be proud of, that we don't have to be afraid of having to go into or feel guilty about having to have a parent or a loved one go into, in terms of care. That's what I've heard for the last number of weeks and months, as I've talked to devastated family members—they tell stories of feeling guilty about sending their loved ones to long-term care, doing everything they can to try to provide that care at home until they're finally so exhausted that they have no choice and they have to rely, then, on the system of long-term care that people are literally scared to death to go into. These are the descriptions I've heard: people who are afraid to go into long-term care, people who are terrified of what's going to happen to their loved ones in long-term care, and, brutally, people who feel guilty because they ended up with no choice but to relegate their loved ones to a long-term-care system in Ontario that is more interested in providing profits to private corporations than it is in making sure that our loved ones get the dignity, the quality of care, the quality of life that they deserve—instead of having that quality of life ripped away from them.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Hon. Paul Calandra: I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the motion before the House today. I think I made it very clear during question period today, with questions from a couple of our members with respect to where we intended on going with this motion today, but I think it does bear repeating—some of the issues that we talked

about in question period today. I believe—and I think a vast majority of our caucus, if not unified in our entire caucus, believes—that this is an irresponsible and dangerous motion that has been brought forward by the NDP.

I'm going to go over a few of the points of why I believe that this motion is both irresponsible and dangerous, Mr. Speaker. First and foremost, let me say this: The people who have been working in the long-term-care facilities across the province of Ontario—I have the utmost respect for all of the work that they have been doing. I have had the opportunity, both with family and friends, to be in contact with residents in different long-term-care facilities, both in my riding and in other communities. I have always respected the work that they've doing.

Make no mistake about it, Mr. Speaker: What this motion seeks to do, as I said today in question period—and you can't have it both ways. What this motion seeks to do is close down long-term-care homes across this province and evict the people who are in those long-term-care homes. What would happen when you close down these long-term-care homes and evict these seniors? Well, they would have nowhere to go and you would put hundreds, thousands of—

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Fearmongering? Is that all you've got?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Order, please.

Hon. Paul Calandra: —people out of work.

The Leader of the Opposition laughs at that. She says “fearmongering.” So let's unpack that, if we can. What the Leader of the Opposition is saying in the catcalling that you're hearing back and forth, Mr. Speaker, is that no, they're not going to close down the long-term-care homes. What she's then suggesting, because she says I'm fearmongering, is that those long-term-care homes aren't going to close—so that means they're doing a good job, then, presumably, in many cases. But if they're not doing a good job, as this motion suggests, then clearly you have to close them down, evict the people who are in them, fire the people who have been working in those homes and do something different, as the member opposite would suggest.

You can't have it both ways. Out of the homes that are caring for thousands of seniors across this province, the vast majority of which are doing really tremendous work, either they are good—either they have done a good job for the people of the province of Ontario, for their residents—or they're not. If they're not, like the members opposite are suggesting—and anybody who supports this motion, quite clearly, is suggesting that they're not—then they would have a responsibility, I would say to the members opposite, to demand the immediate closure of all of these homes. Where would these seniors go? Where would the people working in these homes go? There would be nowhere for them to go.

The members opposite could have brought something different to this House. They could have recognized the fact that we're in a global health and economic crisis. Have

there been challenges in long-term-care homes across the province, in those that are run by municipalities, private homes, not-for-profit homes? Absolutely, there have been, and that's why the government and this Legislature have been moving quickly to try to address some of those problems, whether it was with the PSWs—not to stray too far, but I remember, in 2013, being on the line with the PSWs. They were on strike in the province of Ontario. The Red Cross PSWs were on strike. I remember listening to them at that time, hearing some of the concerns that they had.

The NDP act as though this is new to them. This is just something that they have discovered. But when they had the opportunity, in minority government, between 2011 to 2014, did they choose to do anything about it? No. Did they bring legislation forward? No. Did they look at the Liberal Party, who had made virtually no investments in long-term care in the last number of years of their mandate? I will give them credit: In the early part of their mandate, they did make some investments. But towards the last part of their mandate, the last 10 years, those investments dried up when we needed investments the most. Did the NDP come forward to this House and say, "We're going to do something different. We demand that you invest in long-term care. We demand that you nationalize long-term care in the province of Ontario"? No. So now, when it is convenient for them, when the cameras are on, when they think that there is the most advantage, they come up with a policy that would literally evict hundreds of seniors from their homes, and it is absolutely irresponsible.

There are other options. I know the Minister of Long-Term Care will be in this House answering some of these questions, and she and other members who are speaking are going to talk about all of the good work that has been done. But is there more work to be done? Obviously. You don't repair a long-term-care system that has been neglected for over a decade and a half overnight, and you certainly don't do it by closing down thousands of homes.

In my riding, there are two: There's an expansion of a brand new home that is coming in, a wonderful facility, and the expansion of another facility in Markham—the first long-term-care homes prior to us getting elected. The wait-list in my community was 118 years—118 years. Is that something that the opposition talked about in 2011? No. But this government took immediate action.

As I said, I'm going to let others talk about the action that we've taken.

I say very sincerely to the members opposite that I hope that in their consultations, in the debate here today, they will explain to the people of the province of Ontario what they intend to do with these homes that they are closing.

1550

And if it's not their intention to close these homes and fire the people who are working in them, the people who the Leader of the Opposition says are hungry profiteers—they're not. The people I met in long-term-care homes, both for-profit and not-for-profit and in community homes, weren't out there profiteering—just the opposite.

They were caring for people. They were doing their job, each and every day. They went to work wanting to accomplish good things. They cared for the people. They weren't out there saying, "How can I save a buck?"

If we have failed in anything, it's this Legislature that has failed over the years in not focusing more on long-term care prior to 2018. If we've failed the people in long-term-care homes, it's because the regulations prior to 2018 and the supports for PSWs didn't match the words, especially the words of the members opposite.

The better approach would be to look at what has happened during the pandemic and before the pandemic. Before the pandemic, you saw long-term-care homes being built across this province and in communities that were desperate for long-term care. It is a mark of success, and it's something that all of the members on this side of the House are proud of.

During the pandemic, were there issues? Absolutely—but issues that were brought in by a system that had been ignored for far too long. That's the reality. And you do not bring forward a motion, I don't believe, Mr. Speaker, that suggests that you simply close down and evict people, laying the blame on the people who are working hard each and every day.

The people that I met, the caregiver for my father-in-law in a private home after an accident—they were extraordinary. Extraordinary—the level of care that he got. The people who cleaned the rooms, the people who cooked the food—all out of work if this dangerous and irresponsible motion came forward, because that's what they're saying. It is very clear in this motion. You can't talk your way out of it.

I know that the NDP are ideologically driven to provide and say things that they know full well the people of the province of Ontario will never give them the responsibility to undertake, and I know it's easy when you're given that, Mr. Speaker. But this is not the way forward in the midst of a pandemic.

Let's address the issues that the people of the province of Ontario saw through the pandemic, because they were clear and obvious. We had problems with PPE. We addressed those problems. We didn't just manufacture problems in PPE. The fact that we didn't have local sources of PPE was something that was here prior to 2018, prior to COVID-19. It is something that we have started to address, that this government has addressed.

PSW wages: The minister will talk about that. I'm certain she's going to talk about PSW wages. I'm certain she's going to talk about the respect that we have for PSWs. I'm certain the minister will talk about the respect that we have for the people in our communities who are doing this work.

Make no mistake about it, Mr. Speaker: This motion today isn't just about closing down long-term-care homes. It's not just about firing people and evicting seniors from their homes. This is about more. The NDP are completely against the revolution, the changes that we are doing in health care.

What are the changes that we announced? We decided that when we came to office, we had to do better in health

care, to provide a blanket of care, to move the province of Ontario towards Ontario health teams—and we saw that in my community. A dramatic example of how beneficial that would be in my community came out of something that was terrible, granted. Participation House in my riding was a place that had an outbreak. The workers in that place went above and beyond the call of duty. They worked harder than any people I could ever imagine working, under very challenging circumstances. Markham Stouffville Hospital came in and helped Participation House, and Markham Stouffville Hospital came in and helped another long-term-care home in my riding that was in trouble.

Mr. Speaker, that is the genesis of what we're doing with Ontario health teams—one stop for people, blankets of care. Whether it's long-term care, whether it's support in your homes, your health system has you covered. Whether you need a test result, whether you need to see a doctor, your health system has you covered. We want to get rid of the disjointed health care system that came about through decades of mismanagement and those ignoring the system. I'm going to let other colleagues speak a little bit more at length on this.

I want to say very clearly to the opposition, it is your responsibility to explain to the people of this province who are in seniors' homes, to the people who are working in seniors' homes, what they will do, where they will go when the NDP, if they ever got their way, would close down these homes? Where would they work?

And to those who have family members inside long-term-care homes—to suggest that they are somehow bad people because they made the decision to put their family into these long-term-care homes—just the opposite. It is very difficult. It is a decision I know that families stress over. I also believe that families have a responsibility and are managing that responsibility to make sure that their family members have the highest quality of care.

I know the member for Northumberland–Peterborough South mentioned it. I know the member for Peterborough, in a question earlier today, also talked about it. You could see the passion on this side of the House.

The suggestion that somehow it is in the best interests of the people of the province of Ontario that we close down hundreds of long-term-care homes across this province, close down the homes that we are building, stop the construction of the new homes that we're building—if this motion was to pass and the NDP were in government, I'm somehow supposed to go to the long-term-care home in my riding, the one that has 325 beds, and say, "Lock the doors, close it down, because the NDP don't want this to continue." It's irresponsible. It's destructive. It's dangerous.

I truly hope that the NDP will reconsider this motion and be honest with the people.

If you want to close down these homes, then what are the alternatives? Where will people go? Why are the people who are working in these homes not adequate? What have they done wrong? What have the people who have researched and made the decision to go into a long-

term-care home in this province—what does it say to them when the NDP are saying that they made a decision that was the wrong decision?

Can we do better? Yes, 100%, we can do better. That's what this chamber should be seized with: How do we do better? What regulations need to be changed? How do we make sure—do what we did with PPE—that we have those resources for our long-term-care facilities?

I implore the members opposite to vote against this destructive motion today. I know the members on this side of the House—not only are we anxious to vote against this; we're anxious to go back into our communities and explain to people the difference between a Conservative government which invests in long-term care, which invests in PSWs, and an NDP opposition which would do just the opposite.

I'll let the Liberal record speak for itself.

Interjection.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I know the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek—I thank him, as always, for his contributions from the sidelines of this Legislature. I would suggest to the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek that today, given the nature of this motion, given the nature of what the NDP are suggesting, that the time-change bill probably isn't something that we should be seized with right now. But I will congratulate him for a good bill. Hopefully, that will get him in the House as opposed to on the sidelines.

Make no mistake about it—and I say this directly to the members opposite who are speaking: You have an opportunity to explain to the people of this province where these people will go, where the people in long-term care will go, where the seniors will go. Where will the people who are working in these long-term-care facilities right now go when you close down these homes on them—if you ever got elected?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Mr. Joel Harden: As I reflect on the importance of this motion today, I'm thinking about something I've learned in my two years in this great building: You can make up your own opinions to try to persuade this House and persuade the people of Ontario, but you cannot make up your own facts. You cannot mislead people, which the government House leader did this morning when he cited two homes in his riding potentially slated for closure that are non-profit—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Excuse me. The member for Ottawa Centre will withdraw his remark, his unparliamentary language.

Mr. Joel Harden: What remarks?

1600

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Withdraw, or sit down and get out. You have a choice.

Mr. Joel Harden: Withdraw.

The fact of the matter is, that government House leader this morning cited two homes in his riding that are non-profit that would not be covered by this bill. That's dis-

appointing. But you have to ask yourself why this government House leader and other members of the government, who are currently chuckling underneath their masks—why would they fight so hard to defend the profits of large, multinational companies that are paying PSWs poverty wages, keeping them on part-time shifts and giving them ritual abuse on a daily basis? Why would they fight so hard for them?

Friends of mine in the caucus attend the public accounts committee. At that public accounts committee, sometimes certain conflicts of interest are discovered—like Melissa Lantsman, who is currently the vice-president of the Progressive Conservatives of Ontario. Do you know what she registered to do on April 27? To be a lobbyist for Extendicare. In the middle of the worst moment of the pandemic, what does the vice-president of this party do? She registers to be a lobbyist for Extendicare.

What does that mean for Ottawa, Speaker? Let me tell you. In Ottawa, the epicentre of the worst outbreak right now is at West End Villa, owned by Extendicare, in Ottawa West–Nepean. Extendicare has made \$1.13 billion in revenue this year. In June, they issued a \$10.7 million dividend to shareholders. Some 20 people have died in this facility, 127 people have contracted the virus—but it has been a great paycheque for Melissa Lantsman and Lauren McDonald and Michael Wilson and Leslie Noble and other former staffers in this government, who, in the middle of a pandemic, when PSWs were working so hard to keep people alive, were trying to cash out and cash in.

That's what the people of Ontario have to understand. That's what we're dealing with over here. We're dealing with a government that, on the one hand, will say this is about closing homes—it's preposterous, Speaker. This is the party of Tommy Douglas over here. We wouldn't have medicare in this country if it weren't for the NDP. It started in Saskatchewan. We will fight to extend medicare while these folks over here are going to try to cut it. You will protect the profits of these big companies with your friends Melissa Lantsman, Leslie Noble, Lauren McDonald and the gang, and we will expose them.

Folks in Ontario, we are lifting up the rock to show you what's crawling underneath. Enough is enough. People deserve better. It's about care, not profit.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

M^{me} Lucille Collard: The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed a lot about our society, but it has been especially revealing of the extreme weaknesses that exist in the long-term-care system. And before I hear the criticism that is embedded in the premise of this motion, let me be clear that I'm not here to debate the past. We can always do more to improve. That's what I want to speak to today—how we move forward from here.

I agree with the principle of this motion, which is aimed at improving the system. In a system where profit is a priority, it is inevitable for care to come second. We need to recognize that fundamental changes to the long-term-care system are needed to ensure that care is always the number one priority.

What is needed is to ensure that our future governments will be fully responsible for long-term care, which will ensure that our parents and grandparents will be taken care of with dignity, putting all other considerations, such as profit, aside.

However, this is a complex issue that cannot be solved overnight. Building a better system requires substantial consultation and a gradual transition based on the recommendations of experts in the system.

In the meantime, our long-term-care homes need urgent support and realistic solutions that will keep safe those who we care for through COVID-19 and beyond. This long-term-care plan will do nothing in the short term for those currently in long-term-care homes; nothing either for front-line workers.

Last month, during a virtual forum, I heard from experts across Ontario about the changes we as a society need to prioritize to improve the long-term-care system. More recently, I joined a virtual round table to hear from the Ontario Medical Association. These doctors, having the well-being of patients as their only priority, had recommendations for a better way forward. The discussions were solution-driven, and the recommended results were about changes that can be implemented both now and in the long term to transform the current long-term-care system.

Our long-term-care system needs better integration with our overall health care system. Patients should have access to a health system that incorporates everything from geriatric medicine to palliative care to geriatric psychiatry. This type of care is best offered in person, when safe, but we can also leverage virtual care to ensure safety and accessibility.

We also need to prepare, protect and recognize individuals working in long-term care. Those working to take care of our family members work difficult and demanding jobs. They need proper wages, job security and proper training to support their mental health and that of their patients, among other things. New graduates in health care professions need to know that they will be supported should they work in long-term-care settings. Ensuring a strong and large workforce in long-term care will result in better care for our loved ones.

This motion addresses one important issue, but the elimination of for-profit care from Ontario's long-term-care system can take time. The homes battling new COVID-19 outbreaks and our loved ones trying to live through this crisis may not have all that time.

There are countless recommendations coming from experts across Ontario, and this government needs to listen. We need to act now to protect the current patients in long-term care and improve the system for the generations to come.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Mr. David Piccini: I appreciate the opportunity to rise today.

I just think it's important that everybody in the House is 100% clear of what is happening here today. As a global pandemic rages, as we deal with the global supply chain

crisis in PPE, as we work to support the staff in our health care sector, as we work to address the system that without question needs improvement after decades of neglect, as we work to address and unlock the potential of new beds in our long-term-care sector, as we're working together—"In this together"; we've heard the slogan—amidst the backdrop of all of that, the NDP want to shut down 42,000-plus beds and take them out of commission. They want to send people home. They want to lock the doors. Mr. Speaker, that's morally reprehensible. Their lazy plan is morally reprehensible. At this moment in time, they think the solution is to just close those doors. In the annals of parliamentary democracy and in the two and a half years I've been here, I've never seen such a misguided motion that just reeks of political opportunism. I find it very telling, and it shouldn't come as a surprise. As I said, as Ontarians have come together; as they have done PPE drives in their community; as the Premier stood there to ensure that Ontario responds, that we no longer are so dependent on global supply chains and we can be self-reliant; as the Premier rolls up his sleeves and issues a challenge to the manufacturing sector; as I see so many companies in my riding standing up tall to respond to the cause, bringing PPE into our long-term-care homes, this opposition wants to shut them down.

Mr. Speaker, we've put in years of repair to rebuild and advance long-term care in this province. We understand that the system is broken. We understand that a lot more work needs to be done. By contrast, we see a rash, campaign-politics-driven document that they have delivered eight months into a pandemic.

I just want to unpack a bit of that plan. The opposition have said they'll build at least 50,000 beds. Colleagues, my question to you is: Are those 50,000 beds before or after they close 43,000? What the Leader of the Opposition and the NDP have put forward is not a plan. It's a plan to have a plan. It's an uncosted, political-campaign-style document. It really reflects a lack of understanding of the system that we live within and doesn't actually offer tangible solutions to benefit long-term care in this province.

1610

The shutting and closing down of 43,000 beds is the backdrop of a massive capacity shortfall. When the Minister of Health launched Ontario Health Team Northumberland in my riding, we've seen a coming together of folks in the health care system, a partnering of our hospitals and our long-term-care facilities, to really unpack and address some of the systemic issues we've seen. We funded transitional bed funding to take acute-care patients.

In my question, Mr. Speaker, earlier today in question period, I talked about some systemic challenges in our hospitals with alternate-level-of-care patients, acute-care patients taking up emergency beds when they would be best served in long-term care—but not in the NDP's long-term-care plan. They'll have no beds to go to.

It's not surprising that their math is unclear at best. They don't even understand the funding that goes into

these beds. They want to increase the number of beds by two thirds and increase the funding by under a third. I'm not an economist, but I think Ontarians realize, after they saw the Swiss cheese campaign plan that was announced two and a half years ago by the NDP, that math was never their strong suit. If the opposition is truly so hell-bent on eliminating the private sector—they haven't come forward with a cost, a dime, a plan, anything on what this is going to cost.

Mr. Speaker, in my riding, we have Burnbrae Gardens in Campbellford, Extendicare in Cobourg and Port Hope. We've got Fosterbrooke in Newcastle, Pleasant Meadow Manor in Norwood, Regency Manor in Southbridge, Hope Street Terrace in Port Hope, Warkworth Place in Warkworth and Streamway Villa in Cobourg. These are some of the homes I've visited over the past two and a half years in office. Many of them are small homes. Burnbrae Gardens has 43 residents. Put together, these homes have 665 residents and house-proud constituents of mine.

The Leader of the Opposition calls them "warehouses." She calls the 43-bed facility Burnbrae Gardens and she calls the workers I've had the distinct privilege of getting to know—it's just a warehouse to her. Mr. Speaker, that's sad. It actually, legitimately saddens me to hear such reckless language from the Leader of the Opposition. Those 665 residents—she wants to lock them out. She wants to leave them on the streets. She wants to tell the workers, "We don't value you." Of course, that's not surprising; she calls them "warehousing."

The closure of a single care bed is a shame—but the 665 that I just mentioned would be criminal. What do they all have in common, Mr. Speaker? They're private; they're for-profit homes. Those homes have a number of residents in them that I know personally, have staff I've had the opportunity to sit with, like Melinda. Melinda has been on me on Facebook—in fact, she just called me right now. She's on me about a new build that Southbridge is building in Port Hope—state-of-the-art. It's private, semi-private rooms, which—we know that, before, the old ward-style rooms contributed to the spread of COVID-19. This government's push to private and semi-private—a brand new, state-of-the-art facility for those residents, for workers like Melinda. She has been a champion and an advocate. It's not anyone else I hear from—it's from the workers in these homes. They want this new facility.

The government is working hard to unlock the potential. After a decade of neglect, 611 beds were built. I am actively, right now, with the Minister of Long-Term Care and my constituency office and the great staff I have there, working to unlock 300-plus beds in our community. We have new beds under development or under reconstruction, as we speak, in my riding. But the NDP would lock the door, tell the construction workers, tell the labourers who are working there, "Get out of here. We don't want these beds built. We don't want these homes built." What's worse is they would put Melinda out of a job. Mr. Speaker, I can never support that. I will never stand for that.

Can we work as a government and as a system to better Melinda's life, to better the lives of the residents she cares

for? Without question, we can. Without question, we can come together to better our long-term-care system. But this reckless proposal by the ideologically driven members, many of whom I see are here today in full force, would put Melinda out of a job. Again, I was elected to stand up for my constituents, and I'll never accept that plan.

As we move to private and semi-private rooms, as we've given additional funding for transitional beds, as we've launched Ontario Health Team Northumberland, I've seen a community that has come together. I've seen manufacturers on the front lines to support our personal support care workers, to support our homes. I've seen an integrated system that now comes at the table—not driven on Bay Street, but driven at the collaborative planning table in Northumberland, with the health care experts who know what's best for our system. That's the plan our government has launched. That's the plan Minister Elliott has been working on. But to the members opposite, it's just a warehouse.

I'm so disappointed in this motion that has been put forward by the members opposite.

We got elected to this place to better the various industries that we proudly represent, to better the various sectors of our economy, and through transitional bed funding, through increasing the medium-sized hospital funding formula that's given them the ability to partner with our long-term-care homes, launching new state-of-the-art facilities in my riding, and actually getting beds under construction and building brand new state-of-the-art beds and long-term-care homes in my riding, we're doing just that. We're bettering the system. But, Mr. Speaker, to better it, it's going to require ideas from everyone, to come together.

All we've seen from members opposite is no plan. We've seen from members opposite a pink slip for Melinda to put her out of work, to close the homes in my riding that I proudly represent. I won't stand for that. Members on this side of the House will not stand for this reckless plan and this lazy, ideologically driven plan from the members opposite.

I'm proud to stand with Melinda. I'm proud to stand with the 665 beds that I mentioned earlier, all of the homes that touch the corners of the ridings that I proudly represent. I'll never let those constituents down. I will work with them to better our system, but what I won't do is put them out of a job, send those residents home and fundamentally worsen our system as the members opposite would propose.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): To all members on both sides of the House: We're using language this afternoon designed to push political buttons. I would caution and remind us that we're here for honourable debate. Unparliamentary language or push-button language is not going to be helpful this afternoon. We're here for quite a while yet, so I would caution everyone to use more parliamentary language and phrasing. Thank you very much.

Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Today, I am so proud of my leader and proud of my party for bringing this motion

forward. It's quite a simple motion, really. It takes the for-profit motive out of our long-term-care system. That's all it does. That's all that it will do.

I would like to bring you back to the 1950s, when Tommy Douglas, the father of medicare, wanted to change care. Care was going to be based on needs, not on ability to pay. So what did he first do? He changed our hospital system so that all of us, right now, can go to the hospital and receive top-notch care. Ontario has some of the best hospitals. Why? In huge part, because they're not-for-profit hospitals. They look after us. This is why they exist.

If we look at some of what Tommy Douglas wanted to do, he wanted to move the profit out of hospitals so that they would put an emphasis on care. This is what this motion is all about.

Right now, a for-profit long-term-care home's number one objective is to make a profit, and they are very good at it. They make hundreds of millions, sometimes billions of dollars, in profit. There's nothing wrong with making money, but not on the backs of frail, elderly people in our long-term-care homes. That's not okay.

1620

The number one goal of every single one of the long-term-care homes in Ontario should be to provide quality care to our loved ones. That should be the number one goal.

We have 52,000 hard-working mainly women in our long-term-care system. They do a fantastic job, but most of them work part-time, barely over minimum wage. Why, Speaker? Because corporations make more money when they hire part-time workers and when they don't pay them a decent salary. It's as clear as that.

But to provide quality care, you need continuity of care. To have continuity of care, you need continuity of caregivers. You need full-time workers that are paid a decent pay so that they stay in their job. Give them a few benefits with this, a pension plan and a workload they can handle, and you have a career and you have a strong and robust long-term-care system. How does it all start? It starts by taking the profit motive out of long-term care.

We will give ourselves eight years to do the transfer from the mostly for-profit long-term-care homes that we have now towards a not-for-profit long-term-care-home system, so that we make sure that the transformation is positive for every resident, for every worker, for every home. We will move towards a vision of Tommy Douglas's, where care is based on need, delivered by not-for-profit long-term-care homes—as simple as that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Mr. John Fraser: I'm pleased to be able to speak to this motion. I do have to say that this is just about the angriest I've felt during a debate since I've been here, and the reason is, there's a brush fire right now that's happening in our communities and in long-term care. Really bad things have happened, and there's a lot of risk out there, and what I've heard today so far, save from the member from Nickel Belt and the member from Ottawa–Vanier, is a lot of chest-thumping and finger-pointing.

Even the motion is not worded in such a way that we're addressing what's happening right now, and that's simply wrong. If I was tuned in—if I worked at a long-term-care home or if I had a family member in a long-term-care home—and I heard this debate, I'd be angry, really angry. That's the way I feel, and I'm sure that's the way other people will feel if they're watching this debate.

What we have is a motion that's clearly written with an intent about for-profit care, but also a political intent. Then we have the House leader saying that the NDP wants to evict people. Come on. Come on, man. Nobody believes that. I don't believe anybody in this place wants people to have poor care in long-term care. So why are we doing this? Why are we doing this?

There's no doubt that for-profit care was more risky for people who were there during this pandemic: 1,900 people died, two thirds of all deaths in Ontario—way worse than the OECD. We all know that. What we need to do right now is, we're going into a second wave and we know that testing's not where it needs to be, we know that staffing's not where it needs to be, and we know that in some cases infection control is not where it needs to be. That's what we need to be debating right now.

Four hundred homes, or almost 400 homes, is a lot of toothpaste to put back in the tube, and if we want to debate how to do that, we could do that, but it's not going to happen in two years or four years or five years or even, I suggest, eight years. The problem is, we simply are not focused on what the most important thing is right now. The government needs to focus on ensuring that the proper amount of staffing is there.

I know we're going to debate the member from London–Fanshawe's bill next week, Time to Care Act. We've all agreed on that in this Legislature. I see members on the other side who voted for that bill last time around—four hours of care. So are we going to vote again and support it and not do anything about it? Are we going to make PSW wages permanent? Are we going to give them full-time jobs? Are we going to do that? I'm not talking about "you." Are "we"?

I think members need to take it down a notch. Okay? There are people out there who are scared. They're living in the homes. There are people out there who are scared. They have family in the homes. There are people out there who can't get in to see their family because we haven't been ready for the second wave in long-term care. The debate today is important, but it's not the most important thing that we need to be debating right now. Maybe we can take it down a notch and think about those things that we need to do right now for those families who have a loved one in long-term care, because that's what needs to be done.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Unfortunately, the official opposition seems to want to make political hay by either twisting facts or making accusations or offering innuendoes that are both disturbing and, sadly, discouraging.

But I prefer to look at the facts and what they tell us. We have an aging population. We have a growing need for long-term nursing care. Indeed, that's why in our 2018 election platform we committed to 15,000 new long-term-care spaces and 15,000 redeveloped ones. Please note that we are well ahead of that schedule. Our long-term care ministry, which in itself is only 16-months old, is fast-tracking long-term-care builds and rebuilds right across this province.

Now, the pandemic came when we were within a year of balancing the provincial budget—a year ahead of schedule, I might add—and were finally regaining some fiscal traction, with record job gains and economic growth. Thank goodness at least it didn't happen two years ago when things looked bleak and our fiscal capacity to respond was so much less.

But despite the improvement in our fiscal standing, Ontario still has the greatest subnational public debt in the world. We just don't have the capital or the credit to buy up every privately owned long-term-care facility in the province and build every one needed in the future. That's pie-in-the-sky socialist extravagance from the Bob Rae playbook, which is to promise everything and hope you don't have to actually do it or you'll bankrupt the province.

Past governments didn't excel in operational excellence. Rae days aren't the only example. We all remember the billion-dollar gas plant relocation, one in my riding, and the outrageous cost of the Green Energy Act. Mr. Speaker, the mess in the long-term-care sector and neglect is a reality of the past Liberal government. We have to remember it was supported by the NDP. They supported every budget tabled by the Liberals, and that kept them in power. So the NDP and their leader have to share responsibility for the dire shape of the long-term-care sector that we've inherited.

But governments do excel at regulation, because they wield the power of the crown, and unfortunately, as the two red tape bills being debated this week show only too well, governments also excel at overregulation.

I'm very, very proud of my area, my riding, my region: We have excellent privately owned long-term-care homes in my riding of Hastings–Lennox and Addington. They're well run by dedicated personnel and committed ownership. Without them, we'd be back to the 1920s.

I know my mother and my mother-in-law spent their last years in the Caressant Care home in Marmora. It was and is a place of warmth and caring. I was always happy to visit, secure in the knowledge that these wonderful women were in a place that hugged them in their most golden years. The mother of one of my staffers spent the last decade-plus of her time in similar warm care in the Village Green nursing home in the hamlet of Selby. Staff was attentive and professional, and they always put the patients first.

Indeed, in my two counties of Hastings–Lennox and Addington, we have a few public homes, but mostly, we have privately operated long-term care, a combination of both. Thankfully, COVID-19 has been a stranger to all. Public or private, they are almost all totally COVID-free.

That's true across the riding, in Cannifton, Stirling and Deseronto, as well as Selby and Marmora, mentioned above, where our homes are. That reflects well, though, on the 19 local constituent municipalities where people have abided by public health guidance. They've stayed socially distanced and they've taken other advocated health precautions.

1630

Granted, my constituents are like many: They know when to enjoy themselves in gatherings, but they also know when and how to be careful and safe. Our long-term-care homes reflect that same approach because they're staffed by our same local, caring people.

Our biggest need locally, of course, as in many areas, is for new long-term-care homes and new capacity. With the aging society, that's understandable. But local taxpayers lack the funding that would be needed to build these from the public purse. Innovative plans are being welcomed by the Minister of Long-Term Care to fulfill our election commitment of 30,000 new long-term-care beds. Expansion and upgrades have been embraced, and private owners as well as public are rising to the occasion—the need for our aging population to have the care they need, when they need it.

Mr. Speaker, loneliness is one of the great illnesses—understated, if that's the right term. It's why long-term-care facilities do a great service by enabling our elders to live their lives in congregate settings with friends, socially interacting as humans are meant to do and fundamentally need to do. We're social animals. We need company and comradeship.

To build timely and adequate capacity and full-spectrum availability in our long-term-care sector, we don't need promises of pie-in-the-sky socialism. What we do need are all hands on deck and investment and personal commitment from all, both public and private.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Ms. Jill Andrew: We need to invest in long-term-care homes. What we know right now in Ontario is we have a 6,000-PSW shortage in our long-term care. That's 6,000 jobs that this government could fill today. We need a government that will invest in PSWs. When you invest in PSWs, when you make their jobs permanent full-time career jobs and not gigs, weaving together various jobs at long-term-care homes to pay the bills, when you keep them there permanently, when you give them a permanent pay increase, not only do they feel better about their work but they're able to deliver better support to our residents. That support also means that the residents' families, the essential caregivers who are often burnt out, also get respite, which they so desperately need.

To Toronto-St. Paul's and to all of you who are PSWs, who are RNs, family members I've spoken to, staff otherwise, thank you for doing the best job that you all have been able to do under really difficult circumstances. And those circumstances have included a Conservative government that did not provide enough PPE for front-line health care workers in St. Paul's and across Ontario. The

difficult circumstances that our residents, in my riding and across Ontario, have had to deal with could have been prevented, and that's what the NDP is here for today. We are saying that we must take profit out of long-term care and invest in our long-term-care system; invest in our seniors, in our aging adults, in folks in congregate care settings.

Part of that investment is ensuring that long-term-care homes are culturally relevant and that they're inclusive, especially to 2SLGBTQ elders who are sometimes so afraid of being discriminated against in long-term-care homes because of transphobia and homophobia that they have to go back in the closet. I want to say thank you to Lezlie Lee Kam, who is a member of the Senior Pride Network Toronto, for all the work that Lezlie has done alongside various groups of seniors that are supporting the call to reform long-term care.

I have a document here, Ontario Senior Pride's Submission to the Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission. I am hoping that when I hand it to the government today, you will actually read it, to ensure that all voices are at the table.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: We all know that many of us are here in this Legislature in this parliamentary democracy for many different reasons, but we have to remember the foundations of those that came before us, who paved the way for the legislation that we all represent, and to stay above board. It's the men and women who fought in brave uniforms for Canada to be a strong and united country, and it's many of those individuals, whether they survived the Depression or different world wars or were part of the peacekeeping missions, that are many of the residents in our retirement homes and our seniors' homes. It's many of these residents that I talk to quite often in Barrie-Innisfil. I know many people in this Legislature often go out to coffee chats—obviously, very much before this pandemic—to get input from those who fought to better this nation.

I think all of us also strive every day when we walk into this Legislature with the privilege we do have to be elected members for our community to do as best as we can and to create a better Ontario and bring more prosperity and hope back to this province. Long-term care is very much part of that fabric. We cannot look our seniors in the eye and say we did nothing. In fact, now we can point to many actions that this government has taken.

I spoke about her before, but Tollendale Village is a retirement home in Barrie, and Doris is someone I speak to there all the time. They were waiting for the development of another Tollendale Village, and thanks to this government, through the work that Minister Clark had done, we cleared a lot of that red tape, which will help develop a brand new seniors' facility with long-term-care beds. These are things that are happening, Mr. Speaker.

But there are things that get in the way, and we need to start putting aside that partisanship and start understanding that it's going to take all levels of government, and it's also

going to take profit and not-for-profit to make this a success, so that I can tell people like Doris that, yes, Tollendale Village II is a great example of projects on the go, but there are so many more across the province. In fact, her husband is in a long-term-care facility. He's at Victoria Village, and it's the same situation there. They've got lots of PSWs that are helping. We want to bring back respect to their work, and we owe it to those individuals to improve the system, which is very much what we're doing.

I spoke about IOOF in Barrie as well and the amount of work they're doing every day. I think of the PSWs that I speak to all the time, who obviously also praise this government for increasing the wages for PSWs. I'll name them now, just to name a few. It was PSWs like Ida, Gloria, Analyn, Helen, Michelle and Zenny. I know they work day and night to make sure that our seniors, who built a lot of the things we enjoy today, are comfortable in their home. Certainly that might not be the story for all homes, but we're striving to get there. We took swift action, and as the Premier often says, we're going at COVID speed right now, Mr. Speaker, because we owe it to these seniors to look them in the eye and say that we did anything we could, and we are doing that.

We have a Premier who's at the table with his federal counterparts, with Premiers all across this country, asking for more health care funding and getting that delivered so that we can work at the provincial and municipal levels, and the county level in my case in Barrie—Innisfil, to build a better fabric for our health care system and for these long-term-care homes, and to make sure that we're bringing in those additional beds. And we can go to our hospitals like I do at Royal Victoria hospital in Barrie and say, "Yes, we can take some of your acute patients and we can house them right now safely, as we're doing at IOOF, so those seniors have dignity of life and have good care."

But it takes all of us working together and many different solutions, including, as my colleague mentioned, both public and private coming to the table, increasing the funding for our PSWs, making sure they know what they're getting into in terms of training, and supporting things like the community care act and solidifying in legislation how many hours a personal support worker can work. That's something we've already passed in the Legislature. We've done it, and we're continuing to do it.

So I ask the members opposite to really understand what the achievements are of this government, and understand that it is going to take an all-pronged approach to get to where we need to be. We owe it to those seniors. We owe it to them to say that we've done everything that we can, that we've worked on all levels of government. We're not going to start shutting down beds. We're not going to start shutting down long-term-care homes. Instead, we're going to build up our province and build up our country to give that dignity and respect that all of our seniors deserve.

1640

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: The core reason we have had so many problems with long-term care is because

the system has been putting money ahead of the dignity of our seniors. My colleagues will point out and have been pointing out that, during the pandemic, 81% of the coronavirus deaths were linked to nursing homes and the largest amount of those were from for-profit homes.

My colleagues will also go into detail about shareholder profits at for-profit long-term-care homes. For example, the Toronto Star looked at three of the biggest private nursing home corporations, which paid out over \$1.5 billion in dividends to shareholders in the past decade. That is definitely not money going back into health care for our aging seniors. Even when companies said they would spare no expense during this pandemic, in my community, home care front-line staff are still being told to reuse PPE when visiting different homes. Profit is always a factor.

Let me highlight why change is needed in my community in long-term care—because everyone deserves to age with dignity. Yet problems like bedbugs, severe understaffing, or the case in St. Catharines this past summer of a for-profit nursing home where AC units were not available during the severe summer months—all of these are not new issues. Research shows that these private facilities provide inferior care for seniors compared to public facilities, in large part because the for-profit model incentivizes cost-cutting. It was almost mystical how these problems were brought to the forefront during this pandemic, and each time it seemed to be this big surprise for this government. However, experts, advocates and all of my colleagues had been ringing the alarm bells for years. We have to fix this problem.

When I hosted a round table with RPNs, PSWs and health care workers in nursing homes across St. Catharines, I heard about how inequitable their pay was versus in publicly funded hospitals. These front-line heroes are being run off their feet. They deserve more than just recognition. We owe them a system that builds on a promise that we will learn from the mistakes that this pandemic has taught. This government can no longer play pass the long-term-care hot potato and blame previous governments in this province. No more band-aid solutions; only real solutions for all.

Going forward, we can do one of two things. We can do more of the same—we can offer temporary solutions to permanent problems, hoping to get through the crisis now and hoping that it will sort itself out later—or we could do something better, and this is what I suggest. Listen to the experts, the advocates. Guarantee dignity for our seniors. Remove the profit from health care. And build a new system that puts every dollar—every dollar—into the care that seniors receive, not into the pockets of wealthy private corporations.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Mr. Stan Cho: I've been listening intently to both sides of the debate in the House. It's always an honour to stand, but particularly when it comes to talking about our seniors.

I will agree with one of the members opposite who said that seniors built this country and we need to give back and

we need to protect them. I think that's a common goal we have in this chamber. We do need to protect those who built the country we live in. This is the greatest place to live in the world, and we owe them a debt of gratitude for that. It's absolutely every member's responsibility in this House to make sure that that infrastructure, the ability to take care of our seniors is there. So while I commend the spirit, potentially, of what the members opposite might be proposing here, in reality, it's just not feasible.

We've seen this long-term-care situation growing and growing over decades. This isn't a problem that just arose overnight, and what I've learned is that these are problems that, therefore, cannot be fixed overnight. That's true for long-term care. That's true for red tape. That's true for any problem that our government is trying to tackle.

Speaker, I've now been at this Legislature—I've had the privilege of serving for 868 days; I'm not counting. I'm the luckiest rookie MPP out there, because I got to see how government financing works in my role as parliamentary assistant to the President of the Treasury Board, and in my honour and my privilege of serving as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance, I get to see how the revenue side of government works; I get to see the complexities and how siloed ministries across our government can be. It actually sheds a lot of light on why, maybe, in the history of our Legislature it's been difficult, sometimes, to put forward good legislation.

That's certainly not an excuse, Mr. Speaker, but I mention all of that because what the members opposite are proposing is simply not grounded in reality. It is ideological. It is something that, in practice, cannot be done. It cannot be flipped. There's no switch we can flip overnight and say, "The problem is fixed." That's certainly the case when it comes to our long-term-care centres. That's why our government is putting forward a plan that makes sense, that is going to address the deficit we have in long-term-care beds in a sustainable way—a plan that is adaptive, that is prudent, that considers the needs of our long-term-care sector while protecting those who are working so hard when it comes to protecting our seniors.

Our House leader is absolutely right: There are incredibly hard-working workers across this province who are serving our seniors. There are incredibly valuable long-term-care homes out there that are protecting our seniors. It's incumbent upon all of us to make sure that we protect those who are protecting those who built this great province of ours.

Speaker, I encourage all members of this House—and it doesn't matter what political affiliation we belong to, because it is a moral imperative upon all of us to protect those who gave us the opportunities we have in this Legislature. So I encourage all members to make sure that we support the legislation that can actually be delivered and result in the outcomes that we are expecting. The outcomes I'm speaking of, of course, are building a care system that makes sense.

I know a member from the independent Liberal Party stood up and claimed that he was angry and he'd never been so angry during debate in this House before when it

came to talking about our long-term-care homes. I find that a little bit strange, and I wish that member had been angry when that member was sitting and watched his party for the better part of two decades build 611 beds when it came to long-term-care homes. I was always taught, growing up, that actions speak louder than words. There, we have proof that not enough was done.

I'm no expert in the long-term-care field, and I don't believe that many of us are here in this chamber. That is precisely why we must be listening to the experts in this field. The experts are the ones telling us that you can't build a long-term-care bed overnight. I've heard reports that it takes up to 36 months to put the necessary infrastructure into place to build a long-term-care home.

I think our Premier and our Minister of Long-Term Care deserve a lot of credit for being able to, in those 868 days, announce real measures—real, prudent and adaptive measures that truncate that 36-month infrastructure building time, that put into place the funding and an actual plan to build the long-term-care beds that we need.

Willowdale has hit its provincial growth targets for 2041—2041. That means we are a quarter century ahead of our projected provincial growth targets. It is our responsibility as government to look at challenges such as this. We knew that the senior population was growing. We knew this for a very long time. It's not something we realized in 868 days; we've known this for decades. So we have a responsibility to be adaptive, to look to the future, and that's exactly what this government is doing when it comes to long-term-care homes.

Speaker, I'll remind the chamber that I'm very proud of my parents. They're the reason I'm able to stand in this chamber and represent my community. My parents are seniors now, as many of our parents are, as many of our relatives are. We have an aging population.

1650

I encourage all members of this House to work together, to admit when there is good legislation that is being introduced in this chamber. This motion is not one of them, and so I cannot support this. I encourage all members to think rationally about this very serious situation, to make sure that these homes get built for the great seniors in the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Mr. Faisal Hassan: It is a pleasure to rise, on behalf of the decent and hard-working people of York South-Weston, in support of the official opposition motion calling for the elimination of for-profit long-term care.

COVID-19 brought to light the broken system that is for-profit long-term care. On this side of the House, we have long been calling for reform to the long-term-care system. Having spoken to hundreds of long-term-care workers and families with elders in long-term care, I can say with confidence that the for-profit system is not working and is badly broken. Our recent COVID-19 statistics more than back up that position. Decades of frozen budgets, cutting inspections and increasing part-time, precarious staffing has been the legacy of both the Conservatives and the Liberals.

It is a fact that during COVID-19, for-profit long-term-care deaths are at a greater number than public, not-for-profit long-term care. The fact that the Canadian military and the Red Cross had to take over many for-profit facilities to assist in controlling COVID-19 is a symptom of a deeper problem. The for-profit sector thrives on part-time, no-benefits labour in order to keep their costs lower and their shareholders happy. We have heard countless stories of short-staffing at even the most expensive of long-term-care homes. When profit is the motive, stories such as staff being told not to change a senior's brief until a certain level is reached are the horrifying results of watching the bottom line.

This motion is one that will ensure that every dollar goes directly to better care, ensuring proper staffing with decent wages and a public long-term-care model that will provide seniors with the quality of life they deserve while giving their families greater peace of mind. Keeping our public dollars in a public, not-for-profit model only makes sense, and it provides seniors with the protections they so deeply deserve.

I fully support this motion, Mr. Speaker, and hope all sides of this House support protecting our seniors.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: Long-term care in Ontario needs to change. I think we all can agree on that. We need a new and progressive approach. The hard-working front-line workers have highlighted time and again, with reports, campaigns and demonstrations, that things are bad. The Ontario Health Coalition has spoken time and again about long-term care and how desperately things need to change. Families have spoken time and again, and they're heartbroken. They are totally frustrated and frightened.

There is no room for profit in long-term care. Every single cent needs to go to care. No one should be profiting from what many call abuse or even torture of their loved ones.

So many people have reached out to tell me their problems. More recently, John and Judy Peterson, who both had their mothers in long-term care, both felt they had to speak out because they were getting older and fear what lies ahead for them. Sadly, both their mothers have passed.

John shared his experience with a publicly run facility versus a privately run facility—because his mother was moved from a publicly run facility, when it was closed, to a privately run facility. Even though it was brand new, he said, "It was like night and day." There were small, frequent issues like his mother never having water available to drink, or the call button would be on the chair in her room while she was stuck in bed. "There was never enough staff, and the staff that was on duty were always extremely busy," said Peterson.

I've heard of ratios of one PSW to 35 people, and I've heard that on a regular basis. He said, "It's not the workers' fault. They have 100 things to do." John added that it felt like the care facility was run like a business and not a service. His mother developed bedsores from not

being moved enough. They were being treated, but then she was moved to a busier ward, and the bedsores progressed and were still there a year later, when she died.

Unfortunately, this is just one story. I have heard these stories time and again, and it is heartbreaking.

It is time to put the care back into long-term care and take the profit out.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Ms. Sara Singh: It's an honour to rise here today and contribute to the debate on this opposition day motion, which clearly calls on this government to do the right thing and take profit out of our long-term-care system.

It was interesting to listen to some of the arguments being made by members of the government and some of the malarkey, frankly, that they've been spewing here with respect to what this motion intends to do. This motion does not intend to evict people onto the streets; in fact, the government has been doing that quite easily on their own by failing to act in other areas—but I'll focus on the motion here, Speaker. What we're hoping to do—because we have a moment in history, right now, to change the way that our long-term-care system functions here in the province of Ontario—is to call on them to make these changes. These are not new asks; these are asks that have been here for decades.

Under previous administrations, we've seen what has happened to our long-term-care system, where profits have been the motive, and not care.

The government House leader asked where these people will go if we start to put those people first and not profit. Well, frankly, Mr. Speaker, I think that we could take that money that we've been peddling over to those for-profit care providers and put it into home care, making sure that people have opportunities in their community to age at home and receive culturally appropriate care, because right now that is not happening in the province of Ontario. People are not getting adequate care at home and in their communities, so they are forced to access systems that are probably not providing the level of care that they need, and they're doing so at a rate that is costing the system more than if we reinvested those dollars into the community.

I want to encourage the members opposite to really think about what this motion, in principle, seeks to achieve. I think we can work together on trying to fix the crisis in long-term care—because it's not a new one, and through this pandemic we have very clearly seen how broken our long-term-care system is. I really encourage the government to use what we have as a public policy window right now in the province of Ontario to regulate, to maybe re-envision and retool a system every single one of us, including myself, will probably access in our lifetimes, because aging and dying are a reality of life. We have an opportunity to do the right thing; I want to encourage you all to take that opportunity. For many people in my community in Brampton Centre, we saw the horrors in our long-term-care centres. The Armed Forces report was very clear about what was happening in Brampton and across the province—people being force-

fed, left in bed, not being changed—and because there is no regulation on what type of care people should be receiving, those things will continue. So again, you have an opportunity to do that.

In addition to those long-term-care homes being appropriately staffed and resourced—people want to age at home. They want to make sure that they can stay there and not end up in a long-term-care centre. That's going to take investments in PSWs in other systems.

So in addition to what this motion is calling for you to do, I hope that you will consider other measures to ensure that our long-term-care system is adequately resourced, so that every single one of us can access it and die and age with dignity.

1700

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: It's interesting; as I've been sitting and listening to the debate, it seems like this motion has propelled us into a discussion about when is the right time to be bold in the way that we create a circle of care for elders in our communities.

I've heard from the Liberals: They've said, "Not now, because there's a pandemic." But we've also heard from both the government and my colleagues in the official opposition that, for 15 years, there was no need to be bold either before the pandemic, so that is rather disturbing.

From the Conservative government, we also heard that being bold and creating the circle of care is "destructive"—that's the language they used. They said it was destructive for us to start a process to shift from primarily for-profit long-term care into a circle of care for elders in our communities that's non-profit. They said that was destructive. By all means—I think that's kind of wild.

For the NDP, however, what we're saying is very simple. We're saying that we've seen too much. We're saying that we've heard from experts and we've heard from family members that what's happening in a primarily private long-term-care sector is disturbing, to say the least, unacceptable and something that we need to change. That means that we have to begin addressing the root causes of what's been happening in the long-term-care sector, and we need to be bold and we need to do that now. For me, this seems like it's exactly what we have to be doing during the pandemic, with the second wave upon us—not something we have to wait until we get through the second wave, potentially a third wave, and then think about whether or not it's a good time to be bold and support our elders with the care, love and dignity they deserve.

I think this motion is not irresponsible, as the House leader on the government side claimed. I think what this motion is asking is for the government to lead with love, to lead with care, to put people before profits. For that reason, I fully—110%—support this motion, and I do so knowing that the other people who stand with me are all of the residents in Kitchener Centre who have called my office and said we need to do better for the ones we love.

I am so proud of this motion because it says that right now is the time to be bold and create a circle of care for the elders in our community.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm very proud to stand in this Legislature and add my voice and bring those of folks from across Durham region, specifically Oshawa, to speak about this motion. During this pandemic, I've been working alongside distraught families who are desperate to keep their vulnerable loved ones safe and healthy in long-term care, in transitional care and in congregate care settings. Many other grieving families have had to become activists while they are seeking answers and justice in the wake of so many COVID-19 deaths.

Speaker, this motion reflects the sincere calls that we are all hearing from our communities. They are desperate and very authentic calls that people are making to all members across this Legislature. That's why this motion says, "The Legislative Assembly of Ontario calls on the Ford government to eliminate for-profit care from Ontario's long-term-care system." I think it is imperative that we pass this motion but, more importantly, that we embrace the spirit and we actually make this change.

Orchard Villa long-term-care home, a Southbridge home, has been a terrible local example of harm and grief. Seventy-eight seniors died in that facility, and for years it has been a private, for-profit home with a terrible track record of orders and non-compliance. The stack of complaints is a tall one and the documented history of shoddy management is long and unforgivable, and yet they have been allowed to continue. Homes like this don't deserve public trust. They deserve to have their licences yanked and to have capable and caring management installed to care for seniors.

The government House leader and the government members paint a picture of tossing seniors out on the street; that is not what we're suggesting. We are suggesting appropriate, caring management. We are demanding responsible public care.

In the past 20 years, only two licences have ever been pulled—two. And they weren't pulled because of sub-standard care, which we know exists.

The NDP plan for seniors' care is thoughtful, responsible and reflective of the needs of our communities, and this Conservative government knows that, but clearly they're going to stomp and yell and make wild accusations because it is their donors and friends and allies who are making a killing off the care of seniors.

We have a plan to build 50,000 not-for-profit beds. We want trained and supported, well-paid staff. We want community spaces that reflect needs and what seniors deserve.

Private corporations have been allowed to operate with impunity, and that has allowed them to attract investors. That should not be the goal of long-term care; it should be care in the long term. Long-term care needs to be about better resident and patient outcomes. Right now, it's profit that is driving long-term-care decisions, but it should be care.

Nearly 2,000 loved ones have died, and this government has refused a public judicial inquiry. That only protects the private operators and corporations that would

have had to answer for their inaction and ill-preparedness. Speaker, we need accountability.

We need care to be at the heart of the decisions that we make. To me, this is a very clear opportunity for us to take the profits out of care and make this about families.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm pleased to rise and speak to a motion brought forward by the NDP opposition leader, Andrea Horwath.

I came across an article from May 16. It says, "Crisis in Long-Term Care Homes: For-Profit Nursing Home Chains Make Big Payouts to Shareholders, Execs." Do you know how much that was? A total of \$1.5 billion was given to shareholders and executives instead of going to who? Our seniors, wages for PSWs. Six months ago this was reported by the Star.

And then what happened? The military came in. The military came into our long-term-care facilities, and this is what they said about the type of conditions with their report: horrific conditions—think about this; our parents, our grandparents are there—cockroaches, rotten food, a lack of hygiene and residents crying out for help for hours. This is what the Canadian military reported and said about our long-term-care homes in Niagara and right across the province of Ontario. Whistle-blowers have been saying it for years.

To be clear, COVID-19 did not create the crisis in long-term care, but it has shone a bright spotlight on it for the world to see and our families—and sounding an alarm bell for years. Billions of dollars go to profit, not care for our seniors.

Last week, we learned that this Conservative government was aware that over the summer they were short 6,000 PSWs, yet they allowed this terrible understaffing to continue. The government allows for-profit corporations with Conservative board members and shareholders like former Premier Mike Harris to put their own financial gain over the care of our residents and the working conditions of PSWs and nurses.

Some 1,952 residents have died of COVID-19 in long-term care. Approximately 80% of all deaths are in for-profit homes. Enough is enough. It's time to address and fix this national disgrace. Seniors, our parents, our grandparents, our loved ones deserve access to quality care, and the workers who care for them deserve respect.

To be clear, the staff is doing the best they can with the resources they're given. The system is failing seniors and workers. Residents are going without medication, without food, without baths, without support for using the bathroom, or having to remain in soiled clothing, without dignity and respect.

This can change, and it must change. We must immediately hire more long-term-care workers, PSWs, nurses. We must pass the Time to Care Act, a bill introduced by my colleague from London—Fanshawe, to ensure a minimum standard of four hours for care. We need to ensure quick passage of More Than a Visitor Act, which was introduced by my colleague from Windsor West. And we need to see the creation of a seniors' advocate position,

as my NDP colleague from Kitchener Centre brought forward and debated yesterday.

Speaker, there is no time to waste. Lives have been lost; others are at risk. We must support this motion to remove profit from the long-term-care system and have the government once and for all care about people, not profits.

1710

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Miss Monique Taylor: I am pleased to speak to this motion today because I, like my colleagues, believe that we truly need to remove the profit from long-term care.

It's a simple fact that every single dollar in profit for private long-term-care companies is a dollar taken from patient care. When you're trying to maximize profits per resident, the only way to do it is to raise prices and cut service.

We all know that private long-term care drives staff wages down, erodes standards of care and packs as many seniors as possible into each home, and we know all of this was happening way before COVID-19. What COVID-19 did was show everyone outside of this Legislature—many who had not known the long-term-care system—what was really going on. It's common knowledge now. The private, for-profit long-term-care homes had the majority of COVID-19 cases and related deaths in Ontario. The report by the Canadian military shocked all Ontarians, even those who had no family in long-term care.

Let's unpack why, possibly, this government is so attached to private long-term care. Conservatives were the ones to privatize it in the first place. Perhaps the government is too proud to admit it was a mistake, or perhaps too many of the government's staff members are finding cushy jobs as long-term-care lobbyists. I think, at the last count, it was at least five senior staff people from the Premier's office and other ministers' offices who were lobbying for private long-term-care companies. Maybe it's the members themselves keeping their options open for their future careers, since the Conservative Premier who privatized long-term care, Mike Harris, made \$230,000 last year for sitting on the board of Chartwell.

Seniors and families in Ontario want a long-term-care system that serves them. They want a system that they can easily access and that treats seniors with dignity.

Long-term care is one of the highest call-drivers in my office. We have long wait times for access to beds. Even when they're on the crisis list, people who need urgent access to a bed are still waiting a long time. I get so many calls from people who are unhappy about how their home operates. They're worried about the care standards and neglect.

Our side of the House has offered many solutions over the years, like the Time to Care Act and the seniors' advocate bill—just a couple of examples. Now we're offering a solution that will help fix the crisis in long-term care at a structural level, eliminate private profits from long-term care, and ensure that every dollar goes into care, not profit.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Ms. Marit Stiles: I want to say, first of all, how pleased I am to be able to speak on behalf of my riding of Davenport and the many, many people who have contacted me throughout this pandemic who have family and loved ones in long-term care.

I want to share, as others have mentioned here, that we have now lost more than 1,900 Ontarians. We have seen all of those families shattered. With the second wave here, we need to protect seniors and the vulnerable. We need to do it now, as I think everybody here acknowledges. Then, after that, we really must fix the system. It's essential.

Long-term care should have always been included in medicare. We are now seeing the consequences of what profiteering looks like in long-term care and what it leads to.

The government opposite has insisted that this motion is irresponsible, and they're angry. Well, I'm angry too. I'm angry for the families who lost their loved ones. I'm angry for the families who haven't been able to get any accountability from this government—families like those who lost loved ones, in my riding, at Fairview Nursing Home just over the last few weeks. Over half of the residents of that nursing home contracted COVID-19, as well as many staff. We've lost at least three people, if not more now; we're waiting to see. I know that none of us in this room have been left untouched.

I want to mention a woman who has become a friend of mine, Annalisa Crudo-Perri. I've become friends with her because of her exceptional leadership in protecting publicly funded education. She and her five siblings lost their mother, Marta Crudo, on May 27 at Woodbridge Vista long-term-care home. I remember her talking with me over the phone over and over about that deep feeling of loss, but even more so the feeling they had that they had failed their mother. They did not fail her. This government failed her. The previous government failed her. And, I will say it, we all failed her by allowing profit to overcome patient care as a priority in long-term care. Everyone told them that this system was designed to fail. The experts have said that over and over. The data is there. The research is there. At some point, we all knew something bad was going to happen.

Last week, I hosted a town hall in my riding to hear from families, caregivers, experts and the many, many workers who are calling on this government to reform long-term care. They have been calling for it for years. They are demanding change, they are demanding accountability and they are demanding it right now. Why are the Conservatives so opposed to it? You've heard many of the reasons here today from my colleagues in the official opposition. What are they so afraid of?

We have a historic opportunity to take the step that Conservative and Liberal governments have failed to take over and over again. Now is the time. Let us not wait for more people to die, for another pandemic to come. Join us, and let's bring hope to those families and the residents of long-term care.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, I rise today, on behalf of my constituents of London—Fanshawe, to speak on this motion because everyone in Ontario has been in some way affected by what's happening with COVID-19, especially long-term-care homes, workers who go in and provide care, residents who receive that care and families who have loved ones in long-term care. It's a crucial time. It's a moment that we have in this province for this government to understand and acknowledge the gravity of COVID-19 and to make a choice about the future of our long-term-care health sector.

Ontario has one of the highest percentages of for-profit ownership in Canada. Nearly 60% of Ontario's long-term-care homes are owned by for-profits. Under the Liberal and the Conservative governments, they turned our precious public health care dollars into a profitable business. I want to make a case why it shouldn't be a profitable business.

I recently spoke to Janice. She's a constituent in London, and her dad resides in the Village of Glendale Crossing. After some complications, her dad is now requiring 24-hour-a-day one-to-one care. The home informed Janice and her family that they have two choices: They can provide that extra care for their father, or they can hire a private caregiver for \$14,000 a month. That's in addition to what they're already paying. Janice has now been forced to care for her father full-time, along with holding a full-time job. The Village of Glendale Crossing is owned by a for-profit company. Families like Janice's are forced to pay additional for staffing out of their own pockets, while companies like Glendale, for-profit companies, continue to see profits.

Every public dollar should be put into long-term care, not into for-profit companies. We should be spending every public dollar on front-line staff—not in the pockets of shareholders. We should be spending our public dollars on proper infection controls, proper staffing levels, renovating homes to meet modern standards to ensure that residents are not in ward rooms. We should not be putting our public tax dollars into long-term-care profiteering.

We need to look after the people who live in long-term care. We need to look after the elderly who are so vulnerable. They depend on us to do the right thing and make sure all the money that public long-term-care homes receive is spent on front-line care.

Speaker, I put this question to the government. I want to ask them today: How do they want to see the future of long-term care? Will they choose to put public dollars into for-profits, or will you choose to put public dollars into not-for-profits?

1720

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Ms. Doly Begum: I think it is a crucial time for all of us to be honest, Mr. Speaker, about the way that this pandemic has been handled in private long-term-care homes. I have heard from family members, caregivers and even residents who live in long-term care, and I have

shared in this House for the past two years their concerns and many of their ideas about how to fix them.

Throughout this pandemic, I have been reached out to by staff in for-profit long-term-care homes who are given one set of PPE per shift. This managerial decision made the environment not only unsafe for the staff members, but also for the residents. During the pandemic, PSWs took on overtime. There was an extreme amount of staff shortages, and it was so high that some residents were given one shower a month. If they were lucky, they were fed properly once a day, and after long months of separation from their family members, from their loved ones, they had five minutes a week of talk time with their family if the staff members could just take some time out of their extremely crazy workdays. While all of this was taking place, the same corporations that were managing these homes were able to pay millions and millions of dollars in profit to shareholders and investors. This is not just pure mismanagement, but it's inhumane.

Over the past six months, I have conducted dozens of phone calls with these homes, as well as staff members. Many staff members were afraid of losing their jobs, so they would call us and tell us not to share their names or information because they were afraid of losing their jobs. I was told about the unsafe conditions in many of the long-term-care homes even in my riding, but this is not a local issue. According to data reports, residents of for-profit long-term-care homes are 6.6% more likely to get infected compared to a non-profit home and 16.7% compared to a municipally run home. If these numbers don't speak to you, I don't know what will.

Today, I want this government to understand that that it is their responsibility as a majority government to fix the chaos. Yes, they did not cause this chaos—the Liberal government did—but do you know what? You have a majority government to fix it, and you can do that now. This second wave will tarnish everything.

Families who lost their homes and their loved ones deserve to see change. As much as the Premier is used to the business schemes and the lobbying of his for-profit care, for his friends and for their benefit, I would hope that he sees the light and the importance of the people who made this province, who built the foundation of this province, and does the right thing and votes for this motion today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Several of my honourable colleagues have already outlined the flaws on this wrong-headed, politically motivated motion. The contrast speaks for itself. The opposition's position is reactive, based on ideology, without any exercise in due diligence and without anywhere near a full understanding of the consequences of the actions that they have proposed.

We are confronting a new reality. We face an aging population. The average long-term-care resident is older, frailer and more medically complex than 10 years ago, let alone 15 or 20 years ago. The growth in the seniors population was not matched by any meaningful increase in capacity in long-term care.

The Financial Accountability Officer confirmed that the previous government ignored the long-term-care system in a report last year. That report stated that between 2011 and 2018, the number of long-term-care beds in Ontario increased by only 0.8%, while the population of Ontarians age 75 and over grew by 20%. That makes it clear that the previous government failed to act responsibly or proactively to deal with this problem. That 0.8% means they built 611 beds while the seniors population grew by 176,211 people. For a comparison, British Columbia, which is roughly a third of the size of Ontario, built over 900 beds between 2013 and 2017. Alberta, which is a smaller province than British Columbia, has built 1,227 net new beds.

The challenge of an aging population is a new one and has not been fully experienced by any other modern society in modern history. Added to the pre-existing strain on the sector, we have been confronted with the need to plan against a viral attack never before known to the world until now, and we've seen its tragic effect.

The previous government, supported by the opposition, set the stage for what we saw with COVID: the capacity in our long-term-care homes at 99%; the lack of building that had gone on with the previous government. I do sometimes wonder why no one noticed at that time, why no one acted at that time. We recognized the need to act quickly, and we have done precisely that. Our actions have been thoughtfully considered, informed by expert opinion and evidence against the backdrop of an evolving situation. We have taken a consultative approach; listened to sector representatives, residents and their families, front-line staff and their professional and labour organizations; and, through it all, acted as swiftly as possible.

We have listened. We have acknowledged the shortcomings in long-term care that accumulated over years of neglect, and we have recognized aspects and efforts that were done well and that contribute to the well-being of residents and staff. Before, during and after this pandemic, we have acted and will act to repair, rebuild and advance long-term care in Ontario.

Is any of this easy? Certainly not. The challenge is a daunting one, but we are hard at work, having committed more to long-term care than any previous government. Long-term care is a key priority for our government, and as Ontario's aging population continues to grow, seniors and their families expect that when they move into a long-term-care home, they will receive the kind of care that is always mindful of their needs in a caring, comfortable and dignified environment. They expect that because they deserve to know that they can receive the care they need, when and where they need it.

That's why, on June 20, 2019, the Premier announced the creation of a stand-alone ministry dedicated to long-term care in Ontario. Much work has been done since the creation of this ministry. That's why we committed \$72 million more to long-term care than in the previous year in last year's budget. That's why we invested an additional \$80 million to improve and maintain the quality of care and the overall resident experience in long-term-care homes in the economic statement last spring.

We have worked diligently across government and with sector stakeholders, and we have visited homes across the province and talked with residents, their families, loved ones, staff and the organizations that represent them, to help inform a path forward in the development of a strategy to modernize our long-term-care sector into one that puts residents at the centre of care. We have been putting in the work to ensure that residents receive access to the quality care that they deserve, in a safe, home-like environment.

That's what this has always been about: the residents. It has always been about the residents, and it always will be. The resident must be at the centre of the frame through which we view long-term care. Any attempt to look at long-term care through any other lens misses the point.

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Everything we have done, everything we will do moving forward, has been to improve the quality of life and care of residents. Every action we've taken during the pandemic has been to protect residents and ensure long-term-care homes have the resources they need to provide residents with the care they need.

The reality of long-term care in Ontario is that homes were operating at 99% occupancy with over 38,000 people on wait-lists. From 2015 to 2018, the wait-list for a long-term-care bed grew by more than 10,000 people—10,000 people in just three years. The current wait time for a placement in long-term-care homes is an average 145 days—that's almost five months—and, in some cases, more than that. All the while, the previous government, often supported by the opposition, sat idly by.

We committed to address the issues surrounding the wait-lists and the capacity issues, investing a record \$1.75 billion to build new beds and redevelop existing ones to modern design standards.

In the 16 months since the creation of the Ministry of Long-Term Care, our government has been putting the work in to build a 21st century long-term-care system, and we're seeing the results of that work come to fruition. In the brief period between the Legislature rising in July and returning back last month, we have seen the report back of an expert-led study on staffing in long-term care, knowing the crisis in staffing pre-existed our government. It will inform a comprehensive staffing strategy that will be announced by the end of the year, and as we develop this program going forward, we're also acting urgently to address the needs of our long-term-care homes affected by the impacts of COVID.

It's crucial to understand the problems that face long-term-care homes, and it's crucial that we understand the growing need for long-term-care homes to be understood for their needs. Unfortunately, the previous government, supported by the opposition in many instances, did not act. They did not raise the issue. When people were dying in long-term care in large numbers over the last few years, there was nothing. There was no voice from the opposition or the previous government.

The change in care needs of residents has placed a huge strain on staff in homes. We are committed to addressing that. This government is dedicated to that. We announced

a rapid-build project for homes that will account for 1,280 net new beds that will be ready for residents by the end of next year. We reported back on the Gillespie inquiry, as Justice Gillespie asked, and have 80% of her recommendations completed or under way. We took immediate action. As the Ministry of Long-Term Care, we listened to the sector. We heard from staff, we heard from families and residents, and we acted.

We made real progress in ensuring every long-term-care home is air-conditioned. In July, 360 homes were not fully air-conditioned, and as of the end of summer, 193 of those homes indicated that they had purchased and/or installed new air conditioning systems. A further 108 homes have indicated that they plan on making air conditioning upgrades in the next year. I can tell you that, as a family doctor, for almost 30 years this was never addressed. There were long-term-care homes across Ontario that languished in the heat. Residents, staff—never addressed; never, until this government put dollars behind it and committed to it. We are committed to modernizing long-term care and every action we've taken has put residents at the centre of that.

Just before the Legislature rose, we announced the creation of the modernized funding model that recognizes and addresses obstacles that have held up development, especially in mid-sized cities and large cities. Crucially, this will help develop and redevelop older homes with ward rooms where four residents share a room. The science has become clear that these rooms, built to standards from the 1970s, were a major driving factor in the spread of outbreaks.

I remind everyone here that COVID-19 was a new virus to the world. At the beginning of this pandemic, the science was pretty negligible. Over time, the evidence has evolved, and we have scientific experts providing evidence and understanding of what happened in wave 1 and informing us as we move forward.

Our work to ease and address the long-standing capacity problems in this sector is showing results. There are currently 129 active projects representing almost 9,000 new beds and almost 12,000 redeveloped beds. We are making progress, and we will continue to commit to making sure we drive forward to meet the needs of an aging population. This is a commitment our government has made and will continue to make. We have pursued innovative solutions to accompany that work.

Community paramedicine programs, in which paramedics use their training and expertise in non-emergency care roles, have been demonstrated through various areas across Ontario—and we are expanding that. They have been demonstrated to reduce 911 calls and avoidable emergency room hospital visits. I'd like to thank them for their work during the pandemic, their assistance at our homes, assisting with testing.

I value all the abilities and skills that all of our front-line workers have provided during this challenging time.

After much consultation and engagement with the sector and municipalities, our government has created an innovative, 100% provincially funded community paramedicine program for long-term care. We are looking

to partner with several selected municipalities across Ontario that will build upon their existing community paramedicine programs to provide additional and appropriate care for seniors in their own homes. We know that for the most part, that's where people want to be, but when they cannot stay home, we must be able to provide the resources for them. Again, our government began, as soon as we started as a new government in 2018, understanding that issue, and with a stand-alone ministry, we've taken swift action. We know that 24-hours-a-day care is necessary, seven days a week, and the community paramedicine programs can provide that through home visits and remote monitoring that is more responsive to changes or escalation in their health needs and conditions. The communities where this pilot project will run have not been finalized, but that work continues at a good pace and will be announced shortly.

All of that work has continued while the COVID-19 pandemic has unfolded. It's been said many times before, but it has to be remembered, that this unprecedented global crisis has created challenges never before faced. During this pandemic, we have examined and used every option at our disposal in the fight to keep our most vulnerable residents safe. We've taken significant action since the outset of this pandemic to protect long-term-care homes as they face unprecedented challenges due to this virus. We have learned from and adapted to a constantly evolving situation.

We implemented our aggressive COVID-19 action plan for protecting long-term-care homes, including rigorous testing measures. Testing is a key to defeating COVID-19, and the sooner we can identify cases, the better positioned we are to contain them and save lives. The rapid tests are evolving, and the federal government's assistance with processing those and making them available is very much appreciated.

Unfortunately, if we look back to where we were at the beginning of COVID-19, the global competition for tests and PPE was a challenge. But our government rose above those challenges and has developed processes for PPE and allowed manufacturing to be done here in Ontario. It is our government that is making this province self-sufficient in PPE production.

We have persisted, with every single challenge that we've met, to overcome them. It is that dedication, that commitment to residents, that commitment to our most vulnerable population—our elderly, our seniors—that drives the work we do in the Ministry of Long-Term Care and across government as we work with various ministries to accomplish our goal. We will get through this challenging time as we all work together to make sure that we do everything possible for our residents.

There are currently 86 homes declared in outbreak, and of these, 58 have no resident cases. I mention this because that was the reality that we were seeing—staff members contracting COVID-19, often with no symptoms, or asymptotically through community spread, and bringing it to the home.

As I mentioned, in early days, global competition for testing made it challenging, but we rose above it, and we are processing record numbers of tests.

I'm so proud of the efforts that our government has made to make sure that Ontarians are safe and protected, particularly our most vulnerable residents in long-term care.

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Surveillance testing works. It enables us to catch individual cases and take measures to prevent wider spread. It allows us to focus attention and resources on those homes and ensure that they have what they need to contain the virus and keep it out. Twice-monthly surveillance tests for all long-term-care home staff continue.

Besides implementing the COVID-19 action plan for protecting long-term-care homes, we issued four emergency orders, introduced three packages of amended regulations and announced \$243 million in emergency funding to support the needs of homes in the spring—and we've never stopped. Just as we started as a new Ministry of Long-Term Care in the summer of 2019, we have never stopped preparing for the future, dealing with emergency situations with COVID-19 and acting swiftly and decisively in many measures, with every single tool being used and even creating more tools as we went.

Facing a resurgence in cases, a second wave, we must be continually aware that this global pandemic continues to evolve. We know more about this virus and its spread every day. Our government has made adaptability the cornerstone of our approach. When the global pandemic was declared, I spoke of the importance of being vigilant and adaptable, and that is still true, which is why, as part of our fall preparedness plan, we are investing over half a billion dollars to protect residents, caregivers and staff in long-term-care homes from a second wave of COVID-19.

My heart, compassion and gratitude go to our front-line providers, our personal support workers, our nurses, our doctors, our pharmacists, our technologists, our community paramedics—everyone who has done what we never thought imaginable, to persist during the most challenging of times. Their courage is inspiring.

The investments that we have made include \$405 million to support operational pressures created by COVID-19, \$61.4 million for supports to help improve infection prevention and control in the homes, \$30 million for long-term-care homes to hire and train more infection prevention and control workers and, in addition, \$461 million to increase the personal support worker wages, the backbone of our long-term-care homes—not only the backbone, but the heart of our long-term-care homes. This will provide \$241 million in emergency funding to support the needs of homes in the spring.

I am grateful to all my colleagues, to all the committees and groups who have supported me, the ministry and our government through this process. It has really been a collaborative effort, with everyone rowing in the same direction.

Facing a resurgence in cases, a second wave, we must continually be aware that this global pandemic continues to evolve. Our government keeps adapting.

We are prioritizing early distribution of the flu vaccine to long-term-care residents and our vulnerable population, and working with every partner to get access to rapid tests.

I'll quote Lisa Levin, CEO of AdvantAge Ontario, which represents many not-for-profit and municipal home operators: "We still have a long way to go in this battle, but we are very encouraged by the government's willingness to put every option on the table to get through this and to do what is needed to build a better future for long-term care in Ontario."

The response of the staff at homes across the province has been remarkable, and I want to acknowledge their valiant efforts. I know that the care that they bring every day, all of the people working to make things better in long-term care—I know that they all believe in the residents. They believe in the people around them. They believe in making things better, and they believe in being determined to accomplish the goals they set and to get to the other side of this horrendous outbreak.

We face a daunting challenge, but we will be continuing to use every option to fight COVID-19 every single day.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate? Further debate?

Then I recognize the member for Hamilton Centre, the leader of Her Majesty's official opposition, and offer her the opportunity to exercise her right to reply.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I first want to thank and congratulate all of the members of the NDP official opposition caucus, who really did put on the record the horrifying realities of what's been happening in long-term care for many, many years now, as well as what's happened in the last several months, which is nothing short of terrifying for so many people.

I have to say that one of the things we took our time to do was actually put a plan together, unlike what this government has been doing, which is scrambling from one thing to the next and not really getting ahead of the problems in long-term care. I just want to assure folks who might have been watching this discussion that our plan is one that actually respects the people in long-term care. It is put together around the principles of providing every single opportunity to provide better care for people in long-term care. Unfortunately, what the government wants to continue to uphold is a plan that puts the priority on profit-making for profiteering long-term-care companies. We think that it's time for that failed system to end here in our province.

I want to assure people that our plan for not-for-profit and public provision of care will do nothing of the sort as what some of the government members suggested. Of course, we're going to make sure that there's a transition that makes sense, that's fair, but that does lead us to a better place when it comes to long-term care.

It's quite shocking that the government would use the kind of hyperbole they have to try to scare seniors, to try to suggest that the great long-term-care homes that are not-

for-profit, like the Yee Hong Centre, somehow are at risk from our plan. On the contrary: What would be at risk in our plan are those for-profit corporations that have been cutting corners, keeping staffing really low to put profits into the profit margin of their companies so that they can put the return on investment to shareholders that they believe in.

Interjection.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Again, it's troubling to hear members of the government bench laughing when we talk about the realities of what's been happening in long-term care.

What I can tell the government, and particularly the minister, who claims to be talking about evidence, who claims to be suggesting that she's acting on evidence—well, the evidence is that she commissioned a report, a study to be done on staffing in long-term care throughout the beginning of the summer. She received that report on July 20. Just a week before last, the front-line workers in long-term care called out the minister and indicated that not a single recommendation in the report she commissioned, that she asked for, has actually been fulfilled. The recommendations are sitting on a shelf, gathering dust, and they have been for months. So here we are in the second wave and the same tragedies, whether the minister wants to acknowledge it or not, are ripping their way through long-term care.

So, yes, get the profits out of long-term care. Every penny should be spent on the care of our loved ones. Make sure that our long-term-care homes are providing the kind of care that we can all be proud of—not only to ensure that people have a quality of life, instead of having quality of life ripped away, which is happening now, but also to make sure that the rest of us can have peace of mind that not only are our loved ones well cared for, but that we finally did the right thing in this province: got the profits out of care and focused on the care of our loved ones.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Ms. Horwath has moved opposition day number 1. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

A recorded vote being required, the bells will ring for 30 minutes, during which time members may cast their votes. Prepare the lobbies.

The division bells rang from 1751 to 1821.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The vote was held on opposition day number 1.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 33; the nays are 49.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I declare the motion lost.

Motion negatived.

Report continues in volume B.

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	
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Berns-McGown, Rima (NDP)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	
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)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Fullerton, Hon. / L'hon. Merrilee (PC)	Kanata—Carleton	Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Parm (PC)	Milton	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gravelle, Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Hardeman, Hon. / L'hon. Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hassan, Faisal (NDP)	York South—Weston / York-Sud-Weston	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor—Tecumseh	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hillier, Randy (IND)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Solicitor General / Solliciteur générale
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karahalios, Belinda C. (IND)	Cambridge	
Karpoche, Bhutila (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Kramp, Daryl (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Kusendova, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
MacLeod, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa (PC)	Nepean	Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries / ministre des Industries du patrimoine, du sport, du tourisme et de la culture
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Miller, Norman (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	
Mitas, Christina Maria (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
Monteith-Farrell, Judith (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Morrison, Suze (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Park, Lindsey (PC)	Durham	
Parsa, Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Rod (PC)	Ajax	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Piccini, David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines / Ministre de l'Énergie, du Développement du Nord et des Mines Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Roberts, Jeremy (PC)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
Romano, Hon. / L'hon. Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction / Ministre associé délégué au dossier des Petites Entreprises et de la Réduction des formalités administratives Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'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 AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX 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, Rudy Cuzzetto
Wayne Gates, Randy Hillier
Andrea Khanjin, Jane McKenna
Judith Monteith-Farrell, Michael Parsa
Randy Pettapiece, Donna Skelly
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Thushitha Kobikrishna

Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs / Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques

Chair / Président: Amarjot Sandhu
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeremy Roberts
Ian Arthur, Stan Cho
Mitzie Hunter, Logan Kanapathi
Sol Mamakwa, David Piccini
Jeremy Roberts, Amarjot Sandhu
Sandy Shaw, Dave Smith
Vijay Thanigasalam
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Julia Douglas

Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Présidente: Goldie Ghamari
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Mike Schreiner
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 / Greffier: Isaiah Thorning

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: John Vanthof
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
Will Bouma, Lorne Coe
Robin Martin, Norman Miller
Taras Natyshak, Rick Nicholls
Billy Pang, Amanda Simard
Marit Stiles, Nina Tangri
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

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, Gururat Singh
Nina Tangri, Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Kevin Yarde
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Thushitha Kobikrishna

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, Stephen Blais
Stan Cho, Stephen Crawford
Catherine Fife, France Gélinas
Christine Hogarth, Daryl Kramp
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: John Fraser
Deepak Anand, Toby Barrett
Will Bouma, Stephen Crawford
John Fraser, 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: Tanzima Khan

Select Committee on Emergency Management Oversight / Comité spécial de la surveillance de la gestion des situations d'urgence

Chair / Président: Daryl Kramp
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Tom Rakocevic
Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson
John Fraser, Christine Hogarth
Daryl Kramp, Robin Martin
Sam Oosterhoff, Lindsey Park
Tom Rakocevic, Sara Singh
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell