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Speaker: Honourable Ted Arnott  
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott  
Greffier : Todd Decker

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House Publications and Language Services  
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Service linguistique et des publications parlementaires  
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement  
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 27 October 2020

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 27 octobre 2020

*The House met at 0900.*

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

*Prayers.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### ONTARIO REBUILDING AND RECOVERY ACT, 2020

#### LOI DE 2020 SUR LA RECONSTRUCTION ET LA RELANCE EN ONTARIO

Ms. Mulroney moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 222, An Act to amend various Acts in respect of transportation-related matters / Projet de loi 222, Loi modifiant diverses lois à l'égard de questions relatives au transport.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Would the minister care to lead off the debate?

**Hon. Caroline Mulroney:** Thank you, Speaker. I will be splitting my time with the Associate Minister of Transportation.

It's an honour to rise in the House this morning to discuss in more detail the Ontario Rebuilding and Recovery Act, An Act to amend various Acts in respect to transportation-related matters, which I introduced last week. This bill is a package of legislative and policy measures that would, if passed, accelerate the planning, design and construction of key infrastructure projects to create jobs and lay the foundation for a strong economic recovery.

The Ontario Rebuilding and Recovery Act would support the construction of better-connected highways and public transit networks, transit-oriented communities and affordable housing.

Les mesures proposées nous aideraient à mettre en oeuvre plus rapidement des projets de transport qui amélioreront la vie des Ontariens dans toute la province. Nous voyons grand et allons de l'avant avec une détermination inébranlable pour atteindre nos objectifs ambitieux et relever les défis qui nous attendent.

We will sharpen Ontario's competitive edge and foster growth in the skilled trades and professional workforce while building healthier, safer and more prosperous communities. We are building more than just infrastructure; we are building a stronger, more resilient Ontario.

We've all experienced the disruptive impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the enormous changes to our day-to-day lives. From the beginning, the core of our government's response to this virus has been ensuring that the people of Ontario are safe and healthy. This will always be our top priority.

But I know that for many sectors, businesses, communities and families, it has been a very challenging year. Every corner of our economy has felt the enormous economic impacts of this virus. The province's transportation sector has been hit as hard as any.

In 2020, our national GDP is expected to decline by 6.6%. That's the first time that our GDP has shrunk on a yearly basis since 2009, and it will likely represent the sharpest single-year decline since the end of the Second World War.

We've also seen substantial job losses across many sectors. From 2018 to February 2020, employment in Ontario grew steadily, increasing from about 7.2 million to about 7.6 million. But this year, over the February to May period, Ontario employment declined by almost 1.2 million. These job losses represent the largest three-month employment decline on record.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to face elevated unemployment for a considerable time, with the unemployment rate not expected to return to pre-pandemic levels until after 2022. Youth unemployment has reached 28.9%, the highest rate among any age group. Compared with last February, part-time work was down 27.6% in May, while full-time employment was down by 11.1%.

Many smaller businesses are worried about their survival as well. According to a survey by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, 32% of small business owners are unsure if they will ever be able to reopen.

The numbers don't lie. Our economy is facing one of the most challenging times we have ever seen. While the situation may be dire, there is some good news for Ontario. We are on a path to recovery.

In September, employment was up by 168,000, building on the 670,000 over the previous three months. Nous réalisons des progrès, mais la route sera longue pour revenir à un rétablissement complet.

Dès le début de cette pandémie, notre gouvernement a pris des mesures rapides pour répondre aux défis immédiats de la pandémie.

Working in partnership with the federal government, we delivered on our commitment to support municipalities by securing up to \$4 billion in urgently needed assistance. That includes up to \$2 billion to support our province's struggling municipal transit agencies.

As Mayor John Tory, mayor of Toronto, put it earlier this summer, “This co-operation to make sure Toronto and all municipalities continue to respond to COVID-19 is exactly what people expect governments to do.” That funding, as he put it, was “good news” for Toronto’s transit system, which, in his words, “must keep going so that we can have as safe and effective a restart of the city and its economy as possible.”

We also introduced the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act, which lays the foundation to restart jobs and development, strengthen communities and create opportunities for people in every region of this province.

My colleague the Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction also recently introduced the Main Street Recovery Act, proposed legislation that would support small businesses’ innovations, modernizing rules to meet today’s challenges.

These are just a few of the many actions that we’ve taken to help get more people back on their feet as we continue down the path to economic recovery together.

#### 0910

Notre gouvernement reste déterminé à assurer le succès renouvelé de la province. Nous faisons tout ce qui est en notre pouvoir pour donner aux gens, aux familles et aux entreprises les outils dont ils ont besoin pour assurer leur avenir prospère.

Mr. Speaker, it’s not enough just to stop the virus. Rocco Rossi, president and CEO of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, put it best: “The economy and the health of Ontarians are interdependent, and both must be addressed together.”

While our government continues to take steps to protect people’s health and safety, the Ontario Rebuilding and Recovery Act is another building block of our made-in-Ontario plan for growth, renewal and long-term recovery.

Nous préparons le terrain pour que les projets d’infrastructure puissent démarrer sans retard important. Les projets d’infrastructure créent de bons emplois, permettent de mieux relier les collectivités par le réseau routier, le transport en commun et les services à large bande, et donnent un coup de fouet à l’économie.

Throughout history, we’ve seen how important it is for governments to respond to hardship through job creation. After the 2008-09 recession, Canada’s Economic Action Plan included significant spending increases and tax cuts designed to counter the effects of a worldwide economic downturn. After World War II, the booming economy was built on renewed public sector investment in infrastructure and other measures designed to stimulate growth. During the Great Depression, President Franklin D. Roosevelt famously enacted the New Deal, a series of programs, reforms and public works projects that included the largest infrastructure undertaking in American history. America built roads and bridges, airports and runways and more, all across their country. Most importantly, the unemployed were once again back at work.

In 2020, as we face a new challenge brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, the solution continues to be infrastructure. It’s time to get Ontario building. Andy Manahan,

executive director of the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario, said, “Making strategic investments in infrastructure has proven to be a good way to remain competitive in a global economy and foster a prosperous society.” Our government has always shared that perspective.

Nous améliorons la façon dont nous investissons dans les infrastructures afin d’offrir une plus grande valeur à la population de l’Ontario, en faisant des investissements intelligents et ciblés au bon moment et au bon endroit, en tirant le meilleur parti de nos infrastructures et en protégeant les services pour les générations futures. Et nous réalisons le plus important investissement dans les écoles, les hôpitaux, les transports en commun, les routes et les ponts, de l’histoire de la province.

Our 10-year, \$144-billion infrastructure plan will ensure that our province is ready for the future. That includes more than \$66 billion—nearly half of our entire infrastructure plan—for public transit, to bring improved service to communities, address congestion and provide more sustainable, convenient and affordable travel options for millions. It includes more than \$20 billion for roads to expand and improve our highway network, to better connect communities and help people and goods travel more efficiently and safely across our province, and billions more for new hospitals and health projects, schools and post-secondary institutions, social and justice infrastructure, and much, much more.

Non seulement ces projets amélioreront la vie quotidienne des Ontariens, mais ils créeront des emplois, feront travailler les gens et contribueront à relancer notre économie. Ils contribueront à fournir la stimulation économique dont nous avons si désespérément besoin.

Projects like our \$28.5-billion New Subway Transit Plan for the GTHA, which will transform the region’s subway system into a modern, integrated rapid transit network by expanding rapid transit across Toronto and York region—the subway plan alone is expected to support up to 20,000 jobs during the construction of the four lines, not to mention the economic benefits for the GTA, the province and the country, once completed. The Hurontario LRT in Brampton and Mississauga is another example of an infrastructure project that will both reshape the transportation landscape in their cities and help put thousands of people to work during their construction.

There are many other examples I could point to, and of course they are not limited to public transit. Our investments in highway projects also generate construction jobs in every corner of our province. Highway construction is such a significant part of Ontario’s economic engine. That’s why, just this year alone, our government is investing \$2.6 billion to repair and expand provincial highways and bridges.

In fact, for every \$100 million that we invest in public infrastructure, real GDP is boosted by \$114 million. Projects such as the widening of Highway 401 between London and Tilbury or widening Highway 17 from Arnprior to Renfrew will not only improve those highways for the thousands of drivers and businesses who use them every

day, but also help our economy recover. This funding will help address Ontario's decades-long infrastructure deficit that has seen our municipalities struggle to keep up with repairs to critical infrastructure like roads, sewers, hospitals and more.

Meanwhile, cities worldwide that have invested in state-of-the-art infrastructure projects that bolster public services are already reaping the rewards. We must act now to avoid a widening infrastructure gap and ensure our public infrastructure investments support our economic competitiveness.

Mr. Speaker, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed investments in infrastructure from important to absolutely critical. In a recent piece in *Policy Options* magazine for the Institute for Research on Public Policy, economist Jim Stanford wrote, "Great crises are frightening and dangerous. But a crisis can also be an opportunity. The capacity of Canadians to work, produce and care for each other will survive this pandemic. All we need is leadership and purchasing power to put those capacities to full use. Investing in public service, infrastructure and reconstruction will make our economy stronger and more resilient."

Mr. Speaker, our government is ready to show that leadership. We have a tremendous opportunity before us to help get Ontario back on its feet while addressing our infrastructure needs.

In their July piece, as part of Public Policy Forum's Rebuild Canada, Georgina Black and Anthony Viel of Deloitte point out that before this pandemic, Canada's infrastructure and regulation was already a weak point, holding back infrastructure and growth. As they put it, "Investment in infrastructure must be a priority for governments and business if we are to lay the foundation for Canada to thrive long term...."

"Taking inspiration from our history, government should look to infrastructure as a way to stimulate the economy, build resilience to environmental and economic shocks, and enable a new period of growth."

**0920**

This moment, according to Viel and Black, demands "higher ambition" and "bold action"—and that's exactly what our government is prepared to do.

Nous avons le plan d'infrastructure nécessaire pour y parvenir.

Highways, transit, long-term-care facilities, broadband: These projects are the ones that will make a difference in the lives of millions. But burdensome red tape all too often creates delays, and these delays prevent these projects from getting off the ground. That frustrates people, and it hurts our economy.

Addressing these types of delays is even more urgent as we grapple with the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. We need to realize the economic benefits of these projects sooner, to help us along the path to recovery. We need to accelerate the delivery of our infrastructure projects.

Earlier this year, we took the first steps, with the introduction of the Building Transit Faster Act and the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act. Those pieces of

legislation focused on eliminating roadblocks that have delayed significant transit projects in the past and supporting the development of vibrant, integrated, mixed-use communities around transit stations.

The Building Transit Faster Act, which came into force in July, includes measures to expedite the planning, design and construction process for the four priority transit projects by doing the following:

- enabling relocation of utilities more efficiently, while treating businesses fairly and ensuring that costs are not passed on to consumers;

- better enabling the assembly of land required to construct stations, conduct tunnelling and prepare sites, while treating property owners fairly;

- ensuring timely access to municipal services and rights-of-way;

- allowing the province to conduct due diligence work and remove physical barriers with appropriate notification to property owners; and

- ensuring nearby developments or construction projects are coordinated so that they do not cause delays.

Mr. Speaker, it's important to remember that these measures are not intended to change the outcomes of these processes, only their timelines. They will help us get projects built as quickly as possible, while still going through the processes of collaboration and respecting landowners' and homeowners' rights.

Thanks to the efforts of the Associate Minister of Transportation, the Transit-Oriented Communities Act, which was part of the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act, will allow us to pursue transit-oriented community opportunities along the new subway corridors. This approach will increase transit ridership, reduce congestion and emissions, and it will provide a mix of housing, including affordable housing, retail, recreation and community amenities like daycare spaces around transit stations.

Both of these pieces of legislation will help accelerate the delivery of significant infrastructure projects and put more people back to work faster.

Since we introduced both those acts, the response from industry and the business community has been incredible. We heard support from organizations like the Ontario Home Builders' Association and the Building Industry and Land Development Association, who called on us to apply it to other projects. And Jan De Silva, President and CEO of the Toronto Region Board of Trade said, "Building transit more quickly is a key priority, not just for the business community but for residents as well. Clearing unnecessary roadblocks to ensure key transit projects are delivered on time and on budget is critical."

Both the Building Transit Faster Act and the Transit-Oriented Communities Act will help us make great strides in delivering our plan faster for the people of Ontario. But these measures only apply to our four priority GTA transit projects. The rest of Ontario needs infrastructure built faster as well, now more than ever.

The COVID-19 pandemic means that we cannot afford to wait for the economic stimulus that comes along with

building major infrastructure. With our population expected to grow significantly over the next several decades, we need to set ourselves up to meet future demand. By 2041, Ontario's population is expected to grow by about 30%, and our infrastructure needs to grow with it. Modernizing our infrastructure network will help Ontario meet a growing population's needs and strengthen our economy, not just from a transportation perspective, but in areas like health care, education and more.

Nous nous sommes engagés à éliminer les obstacles à la planification, à la conception et à la construction de grands projets d'infrastructure publique, tels que les réseaux routiers et de transport en commun, et à soutenir la croissance des communautés axées sur le transport en commun. C'est ainsi que notre gouvernement renforcera les communautés, créera des emplois et augmentera les services essentiels dont la population de l'Ontario a tant besoin.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I want to discuss in more detail the three legislative proposals contained in the Ontario Rebuilding and Recovery Act.

First, we propose to amend the Building Transit Faster Act. As you know, this act came into force last July. It introduced new measures that streamline project delivery and support the accelerated completion of our four priority transit projects for the GTA. Those changes were welcomed by industry and by the market. As Anthony Primerano, director of government relations at the Labourers' International Union of North America put it, "Cost certainty is essential to create confidence in the market which will translate into needed construction jobs for our workers."

These amendments would enable the extension of measures in that act, as appropriate, to other provincial transit projects by providing regulation-making authority to name such projects. This would help ensure that Metrolinx can apply a clear and consistent legislative tool kit across various projects as we work to accelerate their delivery. It would also help remove the risks of these projects running over schedule and over budget by providing a backstop measure if we cannot reach an agreement with our partners.

Second, to support the accelerated and streamlined delivery of provincial highway projects, we're proposing amendments to the Public Service Works on Highways Act for provisions related to the relocation of utilities on highway projects. These changes would add a provision for a court order if a utility company fails to comply with a direction to relocate, just like the measures that exist within the Building Transit Faster Act.

**0930**

Third, we are proposing to extend through regulation the measures contained in the Transit-Oriented Communities Act to other provincial transit projects, including GO rail expansion and light rail transit projects, such as the Hurontario LRT. These amendments would allow our government to delegate authority to Metrolinx and other public bodies to enter into new types of commercial arrangements for transit-oriented communities as part of

new provincial transit projects. If passed, the Ontario Rebuilding and Recovery Act will give us the tools that we need to clearly and quickly communicate to municipalities and potential partners to speed up the delivery of transit-oriented communities.

Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear that these proposed measures, like the ones in the Building Transit Faster Act, are intended to be backstop measures only to prevent significant delays if we are unable to reach an agreement with our partners to deliver major projects. I want to reaffirm our commitment to collaboration with municipalities, Indigenous communities and organizations, the private sector and others. I think that we've demonstrated our ability to work very well toward our shared objectives of improving people's daily lives.

Finally, I want to say a few words about some of this proposal's non-legislative aspects. There is nothing more important right now than better broadband for many rural, remote and northern communities across Ontario. Last year, our government committed \$315 million over five years to expand and improve Internet and cell service in more unserved and underserved communities. The pandemic has shown just how critical these services are for millions of people and businesses.

This is an issue across Ontario, including in my own riding of York-Simcoe. Students, families and businesses, including farmers, struggle to succeed due to poor broadband and cell service. We need help. We need to help bring more businesses online, bring more online learning to students, increase and improve workers' access, provide more convenient virtual care to patients and so much more.

As part of our Broadband and Cellular Action Plan, led by the Minister of Infrastructure, our government is supporting efforts to identify and remove policy and regulatory barriers to broadband infrastructure deployment.

À cette fin, le ministère de l'Infrastructure finance l'expansion du réseau à large bande dans les collectivités qui en ont besoin dans toute la province et identifiera les leviers politiques qui soutiennent davantage d'investissements du secteur privé pour accélérer l'expansion du réseau Internet à large bande. Ainsi, nous pourrions offrir à plus de personnes, d'entreprises et de collectivités les services Internet et cellulaires dont elles ont besoin pour réussir et prospérer dans le monde post-pandémique.

Our government is working hard to build a strong community housing system that supports our most vulnerable citizens. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing will be taking steps to help expedite municipal infrastructure projects to support our efforts. He will be consulting with municipalities on the best ways to do that, including by potentially granting and delegating additional powers to municipalities to accelerate the delivery of local infrastructure projects.

Partnerships are a big part of the equation as our government takes steps to improve the way we do business overall to get better results for Ontario's people. Cutting red tape will bring these projects to market faster, leading

to lower housing costs and helping people keep more of their hard-earned dollars.

After inheriting 15 years of underinvestment in long-term care and a massive wait-list of seniors, our government is putting forward bold new solutions to turbocharge the development of long-term-care beds across the province. The Minister of Long-Term Care will be looking at ways to increase the availability and affordability of land and expedite municipal approvals for long-term-care development.

Already our government has a plan for new long-term-care homes, but we know that we have much more to do. To that end, we are proposing to leverage existing legislative tools, such as the enhanced minister's zoning order, to help address zoning, land availability and site plan approval concerns for priority long-term-care home development. We are breaking down historic barriers and accelerating the construction of urgently needed long-term-care projects and new and redeveloped beds. This project will lead to the building of additional modern long-term-care homes, providing seniors with the quality care that they deserve, and ensure that our most vulnerable citizens can live in a modern surrounding.

Nos personnes âgées ne méritent rien de moins.

But none of this can be achieved without a strong skilled trades and professional workforce. That's why the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development is working to help workers and employers seize opportunities by increasing apprentice registration and training opportunities through significant infrastructure projects. This will help us increase the skilled trades and professional workforce pipeline.

Nous savons que la demande de travailleurs dans les métiers ne fera qu'augmenter à mesure que la province poursuivra sur la voie du renouvellement, de la croissance et de la reprise économique. Notre plan aidera les gens à acquérir les compétences dont ils ont besoin pour trouver de bons emplois et de bonnes carrières dans les métiers spécialisés.

En ces temps difficiles, les Ontariens se sont engagés à faire leur part pour s'entraider. J'étais très impressionnée en lisant toutes les histoires et les exemples de personnes qui se sont rassemblées pour aider leurs concitoyens. Chaque jour, ils me rappellent que notre province va traverser cette pandémie, et qu'elle sera plus forte que jamais. Nous devons faire notre part en aidant à créer des emplois et à construire des infrastructures pour nous remettre sur la bonne voie.

La loi proposée aujourd'hui contient des mesures qui nous rendront plus concurrentiels à mesure que nous développerons les métiers spécialisés et la main-d'oeuvre professionnelle et que nous créerons des communautés plus saines, plus sécuritaires et plus prospères.

The Ontario Rebuilding and Recovery Act, if passed, will cut red tape and remove barriers in the planning, design and construction processes for major infrastructure projects. This will enable the accelerated delivery of significant infrastructure projects that will boost our economy and help put more people back to work quickly.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be part of a government that is getting shovels in the ground faster so that we can connect communities and stimulate economic growth. Premier Ford put it best when he said that "we have the people, the resources, and the tools to come back stronger than ever." Thanks to our municipal partners, thanks to our front-line heroes, thanks to Ontario's great people, we are in the strongest possible position to recover, rebuild and prosper. We won't stop until we get every community, every business and every worker back on their feet.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** The minister did say she'd be sharing her time. We turn now to the Associate Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** It is my honour to rise in the House today to talk about the Ontario Rebuilding and Recovery Act. If passed, it will advance infrastructure delivery to strengthen communities, create jobs and increase critical services for the people of Ontario. We are removing the red tape and other barriers in the planning, design and construction processes for major public infrastructure projects, such as highway and public transit networks, and supporting the growth of transit-oriented communities.

This proposed legislation builds on the historic progress made earlier this year with the Building Transit Faster Act and the Transit-Oriented Communities Act. If passed, we will apply these same principles to other provincial infrastructure projects, modernizing outdated approaches and enabling communities to benefit from our investments sooner.

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Our government remains committed to getting shovels in the ground quickly on major projects that will create thousands of jobs, providing more housing options for people and creating countless opportunities for businesses across Ontario. If passed, this package of legislative and policy measures will address the critical challenges that have held up projects in the past and help us realize the economic benefits sooner. By accelerating delivery, we can boost Ontario's economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, bolster the professional workforce and put more people back to work faster.

Smart, strategic and well-planned long-term investment in Ontario's infrastructure is the backbone of our future economic prosperity. The infrastructure investments we make today will determine the quality of our lives for generations to come. But when our government was elected, we inherited a stagnant approach to building the major infrastructure projects we need. Decades of inaction have left the province's public infrastructure in a state of neglect. It's time to equip ourselves with the kind of modern infrastructure we need to secure our future as Canada's economic powerhouse, and we must speed up the construction of these projects.

The evolving impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic make these investments even more important. The virus has changed our day-to-day lives and brought great hardship to so many of our communities. Before the pandemic, our economy was booming and employment

was increasing steadily. I know we will be able to return our province to this kind of prosperity. We did it once, and we can do it again. We are ready to rebuild what we've lost. Under the Minister of Transportation and the Premier's leadership, we will usher in a new generation of bold investment in infrastructure, getting more people back to work faster.

As Associate Minister of Transportation for the GTA, I know how critical the next decade is for this region. The forecasts for population growth in the GTA are astounding. It is expected to grow by 2.6 million people by 2031. That's almost 7.5 million people who will call this region home. By 2046, that number will climb to 9.5 million. That's exciting to think about, but from a transportation perspective, it should be a wake-up call for all of us.

I cannot overstate the importance of making the right choices and finding the right solutions now to prepare us for the future. The next decade will prove to be the most transformational and perhaps the most consequential of Ontario's history. The time has come for bold action. We need to make public transit a priority. It's efficient, environmentally sustainable, and it's a solution to the growing congestion issues plaguing the greater Toronto area.

We need to deliver a public transit network that gives people a realistic, convenient and affordable alternative to driving, and our government has a plan to do exactly that. Our \$28.5-billion New Subway Transit Plan for the GTA will transform the region's outdated subway system into a modern, integrated rapid-transit network that offers more options and reduces travel times to make life easier for the people. Our plan constitutes the largest subway expansion in Canadian history, which will bring significant relief for commuters across the GTA.

Our signature project, the Ontario Line, a brand new 15.5-kilometre subway, will double the city of Toronto's previously proposed Downtown Relief Line's length. This new line will allow someone travelling between Thorncliffe Park and downtown Toronto to arrive 16 minutes faster than today's travel times. For someone who lives in the area and works downtown, that's a savings of approximately 35 minutes each and every day.

Our plan for the Yonge North subway extension, spanning from Finch station to Richmond Hill Centre, will provide a much-needed and long-awaited rapid transit connection to York region. The predominantly underground Eglinton Crosstown West extension will increase transit access to Etobicoke. The province is also committed to establishing connectivity to Toronto Pearson International Airport, a significant economic hub not just for the GTA but for all of Ontario. And the three-stop Scarborough subway extension will finally provide the people of Scarborough with the modern subway extension they have been waiting for. After three decades of political squabbling and inaction, we are putting an end to the talk and moving forward.

But there is more to the GTA than Toronto, and more to our plan than subways. Each year, more than 110,000

new residents are settling in Peel region, part of the GTA's explosive population growth I mentioned earlier. As these communities continue to grow, it's vital that transit grows and expands to fit Mississauga's and Brampton's needs. That is why work is also well under way on the new 18-kilometre Hurontario light rail transit, or LRT, connecting Brampton's Gateway Terminal in the north to Mississauga's Port Credit in the south.

The Hurontario LRT will feature 19 stops in two urban growth centres with connection to four mobility hubs. It will also connect to other major transit systems, including connections to Brampton Transit and MiWay and GO Transit's Milton and Lakeshore West lines. This project will help make public transit an attractive, affordable and low-stress alternative for commuters and families throughout Mississauga and Brampton. It has the potential to transform the way people in Peel region travel.

To make this project a reality, last year our government signed a \$4.6-billion agreement with Mobilinx to design, build, finance and operate and maintain the project over a 30-year term. It's an incredibly exciting project for the people of Peel region, and I'm thrilled to see that it's happening.

We've also taken steps to offer improved service, additional trains and more choice for GO Transit customers across the GTA. Year after year, train after train, bus after bus, Metrolinx has steadily increased GO Transit service. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, new train service was up more than 20% since our government was elected. Now that work is taking on a whole new level of energy.

The GO Expansion Program is building a modern, comprehensive transit service that offers vast improvements to our network. It will change the way residents travel across the region and allow us to deliver more trains and more service that Ontarians deserve. More than a commuter service, GO Transit will offer expanded service with faster trains, more stations, and seamless connections within a regional rapid transit network.

In a post-COVID-19 world, transforming the GO network into a modern two-way, all-day service with trains every 15 minutes on core segments will be even more critical than before. We're building a GO Transit network that will take you to more places, get you there faster and give you more options to connect seamlessly to the network of subways, light rail transit and buses in the region.

More trains, more buses, new lines and new stations—wherever you look in the GTA and beyond, we are making improvements. But our plan is about more than just building transportation infrastructure; it's about how we build around it.

As Associate Minister of Transportation, I'm proud to be leading our government's new Transit-Oriented Communities Program. Instead of building stations in isolation, we are committed to building fully integrated, transit-oriented communities while reducing the cost to the taxpayer. This approach will allow for the development of vibrant, mixed-use communities built on lands already needed for station construction or lands already owned by

the government, like surplus lands at GO stations, all while saving taxpayer dollars.

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By combining transit planning, city revitalization, suburban renewal and walkable neighbourhoods, we can build thriving transit-oriented communities. And by partnering with third parties, TOCs will make it easier and faster for commuters to get to the places that matter most, by bringing housing, including affordable housing, and jobs closer to transit.

Our plan for the new GO station at Woodbine in northwest Toronto is a prime example. This new GO station will increase transit access to Humber College, University of Guelph-Humber and Etobicoke General Hospital. It will offer opportunities to live and work near a major employer and entertainment destination and create better access to the local community and jobs in a zone of significant employment opportunity. Thanks to our partnership with Woodbine Entertainment, it is expected to be built at no cost to the taxpayers.

This summer, as part of the COVID-19 recovery act package, we introduced the Transit-Oriented Communities Act to advance our TOC program for our four priority subway projects. That legislation will help us deliver these new projects for the communities along our new subway lines in an expedited fashion.

But now it's time to take the next step. The COVID-19 pandemic has made it clear that we need to do whatever we can to get our infrastructure projects moving in every corner of the province. We need to move faster and get Ontario back on the path to rebuilding and recovery. Expanding and accelerating our TOC program will help do that, and that's what this legislation will achieve, if passed.

This proposed legislation would amend the Building Transit Faster Act and the Transit-Oriented Communities Act, extending the authorities granted under both pieces of legislation for our New Subway Plan for the GTA to other provincial transit projects. That means we'll be able to accelerate the development of transit-oriented communities for other projects in other parts of the GTA and beyond.

The current legislative measures include the ability to speed up the process of land assembly for transit-oriented communities along our new subway projects by exempting them from the hearings of necessity process. These amendments would extend these authorities to other provincial transit projects, such as GO rail expansion, and allow our government to delegate authority to Metrolinx and other government agencies to enter into new types of commercial arrangements for transit-oriented communities as part of new provincial projects.

This would facilitate the accelerated delivery of transit-oriented communities and allow the province and its government and agencies to have a clear and consistent legislative tool kit across TOC programs, making it easier to communicate to municipalities and the private sector. This will also better connect these dynamic new communities and better prepare the province for the upcoming population growth.

As our population continues to grow, we will also need to increase our housing supply substantially. Across the greater Golden Horseshoe, people need affordable housing that improves mobility, helps reduce congestion and provides better access to jobs and employers. The University of Toronto Transportation Research Institute calls transit-oriented communities "an essential means of sustainably accommodating population growth."

Many of the zoning rules across Ontario date back to the 1970s or earlier, when we were building suburbs and households were dependant on cars. According to Ryerson University's Centre for Urban Research and Land Development, over 30% of the geographic space surrounding the 200 major transit hubs in Ontario is predominantly single detached homes in the suburbs and have room to absorb more density.

It's clear as we look for space to accommodate Ontario's population growth, we need not look further than along the province's transit corridors. This land represents a virtually untapped resource that can accommodate Ontario's projected population growth over the next two decades.

Since our government announced our plans to make transit-oriented communities a priority, the response has been tremendous. We are already seeing some municipalities take steps to work with Metrolinx and make transit-oriented communities a reality. They want our help to build more infrastructure, better transit and more affordable housing that reduces our dependence on cars, decreases congestion and helps us spend more time with our loved ones. We are fully committed to working in collaboration with municipalities and our private sector partners to achieve these ambitious goals. We've been listening, and our government is responding by expanding our transit-oriented communities approach to more than just subway stations in the GTA.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot return to the pre-pandemic status quo. We must push to innovate and build more resilient infrastructure that accommodates Ontario's growing population needs. Unfortunately, the battle against COVID-19 rages on, but I know that Ontario will emerge stronger than ever. Despite overwhelming levels of uncertainty, Ontarians have risen to the occasion, doing everything they can to support each other and stop the spread of this deadly virus, and we must do the same.

This unprecedented moment in history presents us with a chance to advance the province's infrastructure in ways that strengthen communities, create jobs and increase critical services. Our government will always do everything we can to set up Ontario for success and help people get back on their feet.

Today's legislation is another building block in our made-in-Ontario plan for growth, renewal and long-term recovery. We are laying the groundwork to ensure infrastructure projects can take off without any further delays. Accelerating these projects' delivery will boost our economic recovery and get more people back to work quickly. We're making smart investments that will benefit us today and for generations to come.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** We now have time for questions and responses. I turn to the member from University–Rosedale.

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** Thank you to the Minister of Transportation and the Associate Minister of Transportation for your presentation.

I have a question about the Safe Restart Agreement and the requirement that municipalities engage in fare integration conversations in order to get the second tranche of money that is allocated to them. In a Friday, October 23 briefing, the Ministry of Transportation said that fare by distance and zone fares are a priority for this ministry.

Minister of Transportation: Are zone fares or fare by distance a priority for the Ministry of Transportation?

**Hon. Caroline Mulroney:** I thank the member opposite for the question.

Our government, since the beginning of the pandemic, has been focused on the sustainability of public transit. Public transit never stopped during the pandemic. It transported our health care workers to the front lines to care for those who were affected by COVID-19.

The underlying economic models of public transit agencies have changed so much as we've seen ridership go down and the costs of operating transit agencies go up significantly—not only due to the fact of enhanced cleaning, and additional buses and subway cars are required to ensure physical distancing—which is why we fought so hard and negotiated with the federal government to ensure that the Safe Restart Agreement contained funding for municipal transit agencies. But we know that in addition to providing that funding, there's much more that we need to do. That involves engaging with transit agencies in a conversation about what we can do to make it more sustainable in the future—

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

**Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam:** First of all, I would like to thank the Minister of Transportation and the Associate Minister of Transportation for highlighting the importance of accelerating provincial transit projects. We understand that transportation-related construction is vital to Ontario's economic recovery, as a major driver of economic activity and a significant source of employment.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Transportation. Can the minister please tell us by how much, on average, the changes will accelerate individual transit projects?

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**Hon. Caroline Mulroney:** I thank the member for the great question. The applicability and the impact of these measures will vary, based on the nature and the implementation stage of each project.

What we do know, though, is that we can look at an example today like the Eglinton Crosstown LRT because it's a prime example of an important project that has faced years of delays due to time spent obtaining permits, licences and approvals. In fact, many of the provisions of the Building Transit Faster Act could have accelerated

aspects of that project. For example, approval requirements for road work on the road near Eglinton station resulted in a delay of 85 days—85 days of delay on construction due to that. In addition, removing a shed where the LRT interfaced with the GO expansion as well as additional negotiations to relocate took months to coordinate with the owner, resulting in additional costs.

That's why it's so important that the measures proposed and introduced in the Building Transit Faster Act and in this legislation are put in place, so that we can prevent unnecessary delays and we can accelerate the delivery of our projects, get shovels in the ground faster and create more jobs.

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

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** I'm following the matter of the replacement of the relief line with the new Ontario Line closely. What I've noticed, reading the Infrastructure Ontario reports, is that the main section of the line that would serve underserved, marginalized communities from Danforth to Eglinton has been delayed by two years; the financial close has been delayed by two years.

Is this government still committed to completing the entire Ontario Line by 2027?

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** Thank you to the member opposite for the question. I am, I think, more eager than anyone else to get shovels in the ground on our subway lines. Perhaps the Minister of Transportation may be a little more eager than myself.

But we have accomplished a great deal in two years. We have one plan that has been endorsed by the city of Toronto and York region. We have three procurements out in the market today to get those tunnel-boring machines to build launch shafts so that we can build this subway plan. I don't think I've ever seen a government so effective and act so quickly in expanding the subway system here in the GTA. I just want to thank York region and the city of Toronto, our municipal partners, for working together with us. Thank you.

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

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** I listened intently this morning, and I wanted to thank the Minister and the Associate Minister of Transportation for sharing that information with us today.

My question is for the Minister of Transportation. You spoke a lot, Minister, about funding to share for priority subject projects, and you also indicated that you have been working with the federal government to try to make this a reality for the people of the GTA. Despite the fact that the federal government has not yet committed their funding share for these priority subject projects, could you please share a little bit more about why there's such an urgent need to pass legislation to speed up these projects for the people of Ontario?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** The associate minister to reply.

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** Thank you to the member for the question. Over the last 15 or 20 years, there has been so little investment in real public transit infrastructure in the

greater Toronto area. We wouldn't be in a situation today where there's so much traffic and congestion, where, in a pre-COVID world, Line 1 was so crammed with people, especially during traffic hours, if we were consistently investing in our public transit system.

The people out in Scarborough want better access to public transit. The people in the west end of the city where I am from want better access to transit. Then, there are other neighbourhoods that simply do not have the same access to public transit that most people in the downtown core do. This is a thing that needs to be addressed now.

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

**M. Guy Bourgouin:** Merci à la ministre puis à l'assistante-ministre pour leurs discours.

Ma question : je voudrais savoir—vous le savez, dans les régions du Nord, l'hiver est arrivé. L'entretien des autoroutes est « concernant ». Vous le savez, j'avais amené un projet de loi pour essayer d'amener la 11 et la 17 à être équivalentes à la 400. Je demanderais à la ministre deux points : j'aimerais entendre votre solution pour que la 11 et la 17 soient entretenues comme la 400, et aussi, si vous pouvez élaborer, s'il y a des projets pour le deux-plus-un pour aider la situation dans le Nord puis améliorer nos routes sur la 11 en particulier.

**L'hon. Caroline Mulroney:** Je remercie le membre pour sa question très importante. Assurer la sécurité de nos routes à travers la province, mais en particulier dans le nord de l'Ontario, où l'hiver est difficile et a un impact sur nos routes, est très important pour notre gouvernement. C'est pour ça que, juste la semaine dernière ou il y a quelques semaines, j'ai annoncé des améliorations au système routier avec la construction et l'expansion de nos systèmes où les gens peuvent—our rest stop system. Nous avons ajouté un nombre d'endroits où les gens peuvent s'arrêter.

Nous avons parmi les routes les plus sécuritaires en Amérique du Nord, mais il y a toujours plus qu'on peut faire, et c'est pour ça que nous sommes toujours en train de regarder comment est-ce qu'on peut améliorer le déblayage et la sécurité des routes dans le Nord.

En ce qui concerne le deux-plus-un, j'ai eu une réunion juste avant la pandémie sur ce point très important. Je sais que c'est un dossier qui est avancé par certaines municipalités dans le Nord, et le ministère des Transports est en train d'étudier l'impact de ce système qui existe dans d'autres pays pour voir si on peut l'intégrer ici en Ontario pour améliorer la sécurité de nos routes, et particulièrement dans le nord de l'Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** I let you go a little longer because it was only eating into your next member's question anyway. So that's out of the time we had for that part of the debate this morning.

Further debate?

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** Thank you once again to the Associate Minister of Transportation and the Minister of Transportation for your presentation on Bill 222, the Ontario Rebuilding and Recovery Act.

We've seen sections of these bills before in Bill 197 and Bill 171. The essence of it is two main parts. Number one

is that Bill 222 allows the Ontario government to speed up any transit construction it wants using a variety of measures. Some of those measures do take away rights from businesses, municipalities and residents. It essentially expands what Bill 171 does, which speeds up transit construction for four transit lines in the GTHA, and allows that right to be expanded to transit projects as they see fit, most likely the GO expansion project, the Hurontario LRT project from Mississauga to Brampton, and potentially the third phase of the Ottawa LRT.

The second piece of the bill is around the transit-oriented communities piece. Essentially what Bill 222 does is it allows Ontario to quickly expropriate nearby land, near a transit project, for developers to move forward on the needed zoning changes to allow them to build big in return for partially financing station construction. There are two pieces to this. The government already has the right to exempt themselves from municipal zoning laws, and this bill essentially allows them to impose their own zoning requirements on a new piece of land. So that's the key differences here and they are the two that I'm going to address today in my time.

I do want to start off by sympathizing and agreeing with many of the concerns that the members opposite spoke about with a real need to improve transit in the GTHA. The GTHA has very long commute times, the longest in North America still.

It has a very serious issue right now where the transportation system still needs to operate, because essential workers—people who work in long-term-care homes, people who need to turn up to work because they have face-to-face jobs—are needing public transit to work, and public transit continues to hemorrhage money because fare revenue is down.

We have a huge need and opportunity to use public transit and invest in public transit, to do our part to increase ridership, reduce driver usage and do what we need to do to tackle our greenhouse gas emissions here in the GTHA and Ontario. The transportation sector, as many of you well know, is one of the leading contributors to greenhouse gas emissions, and in the fight to tackle climate change, public transportation is ground zero in that fight.

**1010**

It's also, I believe, absolutely critical that the transportation we do build, the transit systems we do build address the huge transit inequities that exist in our region. People who live in wealthier areas have access to faster transit, cheap transit, and people who live in racialized areas and poorer areas are often stuck with the bus. They face longer commutes, they pay a lot for it, and they often live very far from where they work or where they go to school, simply because they can't afford to live in a neighbourhood that's closer to where they frequent. These are huge problems that the GTHA is facing, and there are many core reasons why those problems exist. I don't see Bill 222 as being the way we are going to improve public transit in the near term and meaningfully in the long term.

Before I move to the two bills, I do want to spend a bit of time talking about some very pragmatic ways that we can address some of these key issues and improve public

transit in our region, to address some of the many concerns the two members opposite raised. One of the key ways to improve public transit, especially in the GTHA, is to have the provincial government step up and once again provide the matching operating and maintenance costs to transit agencies all across Ontario so there can be immediate service improvements on all routes and there can be more affordable fares. That is the number one way that this government can meaningfully improve people's commutes in the near term, from the member opposite's riding in Etobicoke to the very underserved communities in Scarborough.

This government has moved forward with committing \$1 billion, with a federal government match of \$1 billion, to the Safe Restart Agreement. It is a good step and a meaningful step forward in addressing the massive funding shortfalls that transit agencies have. It doesn't fully fill the gap that the drop in fare revenue has created, but it is a good step forward. If this government was truly committed to tackling congestion now, it would make that funding commitment permanent. If it did that, the concerns that these members raised would be significantly alleviated.

The second thing that this Ontario government could do right now to not only improve transit but to tackle the huge unemployment issue that we have in Ontario is the she-recovery. The economic recovery that we need to launch in order to get out of this crisis could also be achieved with near-term investments in public transit.

There is a decision that came last week at the TTC board—where the TTC desperately wants to buy more street cars, buses, Wheel-Trans vehicles and subways in order to simply maintain the transit system that we have. When we're talking about building the Yonge line extension and the three-stop Scarborough subway, we need to buy those subways now in order for there to be vehicles on those lines to get people from A to B at an affordable price. So the TTC put in a request to the province saying, "Can you match this funding so that we can buy the vehicles we need to do what this government professes to do?" The provincial government has so far said no. What that means is that the TTC could have bought 1,400 buses, but instead it's only buying 300, and what—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** I'm sorry to interrupt the member. The time for debate on this subject has expired this morning.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** You'll have an opportunity later on to continue, but after 10:15 it's time for members' statements.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### CHILDREN'S SERVICES

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** Everyone in this House can agree that the state makes a terrible parent. Children rise to a challenge when expectations are high. But for kids in

care, crown wards, the bar is incredibly low. For every 1,000 kids who age out of care, 400 graduate high school, 80 enrol in university, and eight complete those studies. That's not even 1%.

Jane Kovarikova, founder of the Child Welfare Political Action Committee, met with me in 2018 after I was first elected. I was immediately inspired by her story of determination and success. Jane aged out of care but never gave up on her dream of a post-secondary education.

Today, I rise to celebrate an enormous achievement in my riding. After many fantastic discussions with the Child Welfare PAC, Huron, Brescia, King's and Western University will offer 35 individuals who aged out of care the opportunity of a lifetime: financial resources they need for a university degree.

Education opens doors, inspires, and brightens futures. I'm incredibly thankful to Huron, Brescia, King's and Western University for their commitment to our community. This historic leadership illustrates how Londoners care about one another and promote a kinder, more just and brighter community.

To all crown wards who aged out of care, regardless of your age, Huron, Brescia, King's and Western University believe in you. We believe in your bright future.

Speaker, this is life-changing work, and it has been an incredible honour to be a part of it.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** To all members in the House, I know as you're entering now there is conversation going on. We do have important statements to make, so please, if you could keep the noise down.

We'll continue, with the member from Flamborough—Glanbrook.

## HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express how proud I am of the measures our government has taken to ease the pressures on the health care system in my hometown of Hamilton.

Days ago, our health minister announced that 60 transitional care beds will be added to St. Joseph's Villa in Dundas. I can't emphasize enough how significant this announcement is for health care in Hamilton and surrounding areas. The 60 additional beds will alleviate the stress on acute care capacity at the two major hospital systems in our city, St. Joseph's Healthcare and Hamilton Health Sciences.

The additional transitional beds will help reduce wait times by transferring patients out of acute care and into home care or long-term-care settings much faster. Building capacity is critical to reducing wait times at hospitals in Hamilton. This new reactivation centre will create more care spaces in Hamilton so patients can heal and return home sooner.

The 60 additional transitional beds will be moved into a renovated tower at St. Joseph's Villa. The community is overjoyed by this announcement. They've been working

on this project for more than a decade. And our government is going a step further. We are working with St. Joseph's Villa in an effort to fast-track this project. St. Joe's Villa is just one piece of a larger plan to create more than 230 transitional beds across Ontario.

I'm so proud to be part of a government that is taking action to ease pressures on acute care hospitals and is supporting ongoing efforts to end hallway health care in Ontario.

#### SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** Last week, developmental services agencies and families were shocked to learn, with merely one day's notice, that the Conservative government is seeking applications for individuals and stakeholders to take part in consultations about reforming the developmental services sector.

Last year around this time, a leaked contract showed the Ford government was looking to pay an external organization up to \$1 million to help find a way to make cuts—cuts that directly affect people with developmental or intellectual disabilities. We know that People Minded Business has been retained by the Ford government to carry this out.

Families and stakeholders were given virtually no warning about the upcoming sessions, and many scrambled to submit applications by the deadline with just hours of notice. Major organizations like Community Living Ontario received no direct communication from the ministry about these consultations, and I received numerous emails from individuals who were extremely upset by the secrecy of these consultations.

Agencies in the developmental services sector have not received a base funding increase in well over a decade. Families continue to struggle with wait-lists, lack of housing options, poverty-level ODSP and scarce support services available to them.

**1020**

There are many issues that desperately need to be addressed, but secret, hand-picked, behind-closed-doors consultations for the purpose of making cuts are wrong and disrespectful. Paying consultants \$1 million to reduce expenditures—also known as “make cuts”—while people struggle during a pandemic is disgraceful.

I'm urging the government to scrap this farce of a consultation and truly engage with the sector and individuals without trying to save money at their expense.

#### MUNICIPAL SOCIAL SERVICES FUNDING

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I'm pleased to rise and announce an important investment by the government of Ontario in Lambton county and Sarnia. As part of the government's ongoing efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing will be providing immediate assistance to Lambton county with

over \$1.2 million in social services relief funding. This money will go towards rent relief, the expansion of short-term rental supplements, emergency shelter solutions and much-needed renovations to the Haven Youth Shelter in Sarnia. This relief funding is in addition to over \$2.8 million in funding that was directed to Lambton county by the provincial government at the outset of the pandemic to support critically important social services.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say that our government is making these investments to help protect the health and safety of the most vulnerable people in Lambton county. As a government, we are working hand in hand with our municipal partners to make sure they have the tools and flexibility they need to keep people safe.

On behalf of the residents of Lambton county, I would like to say thank you to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for his continued support.

#### CANCER TREATMENT

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I met with members of the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network yesterday. They wanted to share their new patient survey with me. The report shows that the delay and cancellation of cancer care due to COVID-19 has triggered another public health crisis. Cancer patients, their caregivers and those awaiting confirmation of a cancer diagnosis are facing postponed and cancelled appointments, tests and treatments, causing heightened fear and anxiety even as the pandemic restrictions are lifted.

We need to get our health care system moving again in the interests of people's health. Safe and timely access to cancer care, including diagnosis, testing and treatment, must remain a top priority, even during the second wave of COVID-19. The report says that to save lives, cancer care and diagnosis must continue during any public health crisis.

Speaker, Ontario's pandemic plan must explicitly include essential cancer care. Cancer can't be cancelled or postponed. Cancer survivors want a system that never cancels treatment, tests or diagnostic procedures for cancer patients. I believe we can get there, but I have some serious doubts in this government's ability to get us there when they seem to prioritize pinching pennies and back-room deals for their friends. Cancer can't wait.

#### MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

**Ms. Mitzie Hunter:** It's an honour to rise in the House today to speak to an important issue facing our municipalities and the people of Ontario.

Last week, the government introduced Bill 218, which would revoke the right of all municipalities in Ontario to hold their local elections under a ranked-ballot system. The government opted to revoke this right unilaterally, without consultation. By doing so, the government is taking choice away from local governments like Kingston, Cambridge and Toronto, and reversing an election process that the city of London has already adopted and invested

in, taking choice away from citizens who already chose to opt into this system and to participate in it to elect their local governments.

I urge the Ford government not to rush this process. It's clear that the stakeholders didn't ask for this legislation. Many grassroots groups have been pushing for ranked ballots for years. Can the government demonstrate which local municipality, which mayor, which councillor has asked for this to be done?

Just last night, I attended a panel organized by Dave Meslin, founder of the Ranked Ballot Initiative of Toronto—and hundreds of others; I can speak first-hand to the strong opposition to schedule 2 of Bill 218.

What is the government so afraid of that they are rushing the bill through? No one wants to revert back to 1867—first past the post.

I will be voting against Bill 218, and the Ford government is urged not to jam through this legislation but instead listen to ordinary people.

#### WOMEN'S ACHIEVEMENTS

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** This month in Canada we recognize Women's History Month. October 18 marked the anniversary of the legal ruling that, under the Canadian Constitution, women were able to be included as "qualified persons" and could sit in the Senate. Emily Murphy, one of the Famous Five who fought for this recognition, was born in Cookstown, which is part of Innisfil today.

Innisfil has a proud legacy of female achievement. Lynn Dollin, the mayor of Innisfil, was the recipient of a 2020 Women of Influence in Local Government Award, from Municipal World.

Former South Simcoe Police Service Deputy Chief Robin McElary-Downer has served as an aide-de-camp for various Lieutenant Governors since 2002. McElary-Downer started her career in policing with the OPP in 1981. In 1992, she broke a glass ceiling and became the first woman to serve as a detachment commander in the rank of staff sergeant. In 1999, she was named officer of the year by the International Association of Women Police. After serving as chief adjudicator for the OPP, she joined the south Simcoe service as deputy chief, the first woman to hold that rank. Earlier this month, Deputy Chief Robin McElary-Downer became chief aide-de-camp to Lieutenant Governor Dowdeswell.

I'm very happy for her, and I congratulate her. I'm very proud to represent a riding that has so much history of women progressing forward.

#### NORTHERN AIR SERVICE

**Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell:** For Ontario's northern communities, air transportation is essential, a life line for many reasons. In Thunder Bay, our airport is a hub for most of northern Ontario. Planes flying in and out of that airport provide essential services, bringing goods and people to communities, and they ensure that our residents have access to health care. Medevacs, locum nurses, health

professionals, police officers, tradespeople, business people and miners are all on those planes and deserve to be safe. Many of our COVID tests need to be flown to Toronto because we don't have sufficient resources to complete them.

But airports across northern Ontario are in trouble. Since the pandemic, airport traffic and passenger numbers have decreased substantially. Now, nearly eight months later, that drop in revenue has them facing large fiscal deficits.

As the second wave continues to spread through the province and as we move closer to winter, northern airports are looking towards making hard choices about hours of operation and services. Frankly, it's not a pretty picture. While there has been some help from the federal government with wage subsidies to the airport in Thunder Bay, it was not enough. At the provincial level, we need to do something for airports and ensure that vital link to health care.

Now is the time for all of us at Queen's Park to step up and secure the future of airports in the north. The people of Thunder Bay, and all the people who live across northern Ontario, deserve nothing less.

#### TIM, CODY AND CHASE NADEAU

**Mr. Dave Smith:** I want to acknowledge three outstanding young men from the city of Peterborough. Just over two weeks ago, on October 13, Jesse Davis, the oldest son of a friend of mine, John Davis, jacked his car up to crawl underneath it to address an exhaust leak. The jack failed, and the car came crushing down on Jesse. His mother-in-law did everything she could to help, but Jesse was in a dire situation on the side of the road. Thankfully, Tim, Cody and Chase Nadeau happened to be driving by and realized something was wrong. They stopped, got out of their car and immediately, upon seeing the situation Jesse was in, lifted the car up enough that he was able to crawl out.

I can't thank the Nadeaus enough for their selfless and heroic act that day. It would have been so easy for them to have just driven by. Had they not stopped, I could be giving a eulogy this morning for Jesse. Instead, we're celebrating their actions. Jesse's father, John, has told me that he now considers the Nadeaus to be part of his family.

I know the last few months have been incredibly challenging for all of us. Thankfully, though, we still have selfless people like Cody, Tim and Chase willing to stop and help a complete stranger. Angels do walk among us.

#### OSGOODE YOUTH ASSOCIATION

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** I just wanted to take a moment to highlight a fantastic organization in my riding of Carleton. The Osgoode Youth Centre is a non-profit association that provides services to rural youth in Osgoode and surrounding areas.

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Normally, Mr. Speaker, students would be able to drop in to their after-school programs or attend summer camps when school is out, but with the pandemic, they, just like every other organization and association in Carleton and across this province, have had to change how they provide their services.

The one thing I can say about the Osgoode Youth Association, and in fact all associations in Carleton, is how resilient they are, and how willing they are to adapt to meet the needs of youth, students and people in the riding who need it the most. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the Osgoode Youth Association actually started doing online programs. One of the things they did was a virtual community cooking class. I was pleased to join that virtual community cooking class on a Wednesday evening a few weeks ago and share with the youth of Osgoode my secret chicken wing recipe and homemade coleslaw. The Minister of Labour, Minister McNaughton, is still asking for that recipe.

I just wanted to thank the Osgoode Youth Association for everything they're doing, and I look forward to joining them in December for my sugar cookie recipe.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our members' statements for this morning.

The member for Timmins has informed me he has a point of order.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Mr. Speaker, I—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Order. The member for Timmins.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Thank you, Speaker. I would ask that we have unanimous consent to stand down our leads as we await the Premier. I take it he is coming today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** We're not going to make reference to the absence of any member.

The member for Timmins has sought the unanimous consent of the House to stand down the leads of the official opposition. Agreed? No.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### LONG-TERM CARE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, my first question this morning is to the Premier. Tomorrow, the Legislature will debate an NDP bill, the Time to Care Act, for the fourth time in our Legislature. It's a bill that would set in law a requirement that each and every person who lives in long-term care is ensured to have four hours of hands-on care each and every day.

But we shouldn't be having to debate this bill yet again, Speaker. It should already be the law in Ontario that seniors get this kind of attention. It was one of several urgent recommendations, in fact, made by the government's own staffing study that was tabled three months ago for the minister.

The question is, we're in the midst of this pandemic and it has killed nearly 2,000 residents of long-term care, so why is the Ford government continuing to study a study that has solutions that we've brought to this House on four separate occasions in terms of long-term-care reform?

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

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** Thank you to the member for the question. I can assure everyone in Ontario that our government has been actively working throughout COVID and before COVID to ensure that the staffing in long-term care is where it needs to be, going forward. After many, many years of neglect by the previous government and from the opposition members across the way, we have been actively looking to shore up staffing, using measures through the Ministry of Health as the lead on staffing, understanding the report that was provided by our expert panel. Many of those measures are under way.

We are actively supporting our long-term-care homes to make sure they're getting the staffing they need on an urgent basis, as well as developing the staffing that will be needed as we build more capacity and rebuild and repair long-term care for a future generation of people needing the care, and those on the wait-list. This government has committed to long-term care, to advancing it, and will continue to do—

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, the Ford government and this minister haven't just ignored front-line workers and families of loved ones in long-term care, they've been ignoring their own experts. The government's own panel on long-term-care staffing called for urgent action—urgent action—three months ago to put staff in place and to set standards of care in long-term care. The Ford government responded by cancelling inspections and changing the law so that they couldn't be sued for failing to protect seniors in long-term care.

The minister either failed to protect seniors or was prevented from doing so. Either way, this minister should resign, and my question is, when will she?

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** Thank you to the member opposite for the question. When we understand the needs of long-term care and the complexities, not only of the capacity that we've been working on creating, the staffing that we've been working on creating, the emergency of COVID—we have been active ever since, dealing with, really, what was absolute neglect from the previous government. I do ask the member sitting opposite, where were you in the previous years?

**Hon. Bill Walker:** For 15 years.

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** For 15 years, you had opportunities to shore up long-term care, and you chose not to act.

Our government has created a stand-alone ministry. We are working with other ministries, working across government, and so much work has been done. The funding has been there, the \$540 million, almost three quarters of a billion dollars. We'll continue to work on this. Our work

isn't done; it has only just begun, and to repair, rebuild and advance long-term care, and I—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I will remind all members to make their comments through the Chair.

The final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Earlier this morning, I was honoured to join Cathy Parkes and Innis Ingram, two of the thousands of Ontarians who experienced the horror of having their loved ones locked away in long-term-care homes during the COVID-19 pandemic's first wave.

When Cathy and Innis and thousands like them cried out for help for their loved ones, the Ford government didn't just ignore them; they cancelled inspections and they blocked a public inquiry. And now they're even taking away their right to a day in court. They protected themselves and the Conservative insider lobbyists for private for-profit long-term-care homes.

Will the Ford government, at long last, do the right thing: fire this minister, make the investments that are called for by their own experts months ago, and stop blocking families who are seeking justice for the debacle that occurred in long-term care?

*Interjections.*

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

The Attorney General to reply.

**Hon. Doug Downey:** I'm pleased to stand and support my colleague in all the excellent work that she has been doing.

We are the first government to come forward with a minister of long-term care, Mr. Speaker. We were doing this before the issues arose. We are aware of the 15 years of neglect by the previous Liberal government, supported by the NDP all the way along, who are now shocked and appalled that, all of a sudden, there are challenges in the sector.

We are on this. It is a top priority for us. You've heard the Premier talk about it. We are doing everything we can to make sure that our loved ones are protected and we go through this difficult time.

Mr. Speaker, I stand, again, with my colleague, who is doing an absolutely fantastic job.

#### COVID-19 RESPONSE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is for the Premier, but I'd like to say I stand with the families of Ontario who went through hell through this year because their government didn't act to protect their loved ones.

But look, the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic is hitting Ontario families now, and it's hitting us hard. The experts have been rightly criticizing the Ford government for their lack of planning for the second wave, failure to invest, and confusing, sometimes incoherent, messaging.

Yesterday, we learned that the Premier's own MPPs are challenging the public health advice offered by the government. Then, amazingly, the Premier claimed that he

asked his MPPs to challenge the government's advice, and then one of his own MPPs said that that was not the case.

Speaker, can the Premier clarify what is happening, for worried families out there? Can they clarify what the heck is going on over there?

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

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. What we're doing is investing billions of dollars in keeping this province going and keeping the people of the province of Ontario safe.

The Minister of Health started off very early, ramping up testing from 40,000 all the way up to 50,000, Mr. Speaker. We've put significant resources into our health care system. We started building long-term-care facilities from day one. We started to move towards a blanket of care when the Minister of Health started, after 15 years of neglect, to bring Ontario health teams into place.

This government has been moving mountains. We've been working with our partners at the federal level; we've been working with our partners at the municipal level. And every step of the way, this member here has been an armchair quarterback. I appreciated the assistance that they gave us in the early stages. That assistance and that co-operation helped us bring down and make sure that we flattened the curve.

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I would suggest to the member opposite, join the rest of Canada, join the rest of us as we work toward one thing: keeping the people of the province of Ontario, keeping the people of Canada safe.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, it's not surprising that the Ford government doesn't like to have to account for its actions. That's the way the Premier rolls. But families are really looking for leadership. They're looking for leadership in this pandemic and they aren't impressed by the confusion that they're seeing from the government side—prominent MPPs like the parliamentary assistant to education simply ignoring the rules, and the restaurant that he ate at literally having to apologize to patrons for his behaviour.

The Premier said that he bases his decision on the best expert medical advice, and then he also says, "Write to your MPPs and lobby them to get the medical advice that you want." Who does the Premier think should be making the decisions on public health: medical experts or members of the Conservative back bench? Exactly who is making the decisions over there?

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** I guess now, finally, after all of these years, it's clear to me why it is that the people of the province of Ontario have only given the NDP one opportunity to serve in government. That question alone helps identify and clarify it all for me.

What we have is members of our caucus working hard on behalf of their constituents, working hard on behalf of the small, medium and large job creators in their riding. What the member opposite, the Leader of the Opposition,

is saying, and what she's saying to all of her colleagues—and thankfully, they don't listen—is, “Ignore your ridings. Ignore your constituents. Ignore the people who help keep this economy going. Ignore the people who have been working hard in long-term-care homes. Ignore the people who have been working on the front lines.”

Our caucus won't take that advice. We will continue to work for the people of the province of Ontario, and I suspect the people of the province of Ontario, when they hear that question from that member, it will be solid in their mind why they will never return to government.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** You can't on the one hand say that you're following medical expert advice, and then turn around and indicate by your actions that you're doing exactly the opposite, that you're working for lobbyists, that you're working for private interests in your riding. That's not how this should roll, and it's shameful that the government House leader refuses to acknowledge that what this government is doing is causing mass confusion and making us have a much more dangerous situation in this province than we should.

But here's where we're at: Community restaurants are being forced to publicly apologize for the behaviour of a Ford government MPP. Betty's Restaurant has more respect for public health than some of the members on the other side of the House. This is just the latest reminder, in fact, of this government's lack of planning for the pandemic's second wave.

We don't know who's at the command table, what data they're looking at, and the government's own MPPs are criticizing the government's response. Others are ignoring public health guidelines and encouraging their friends and family to do the same. When is this government going to get its act together?

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

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** I would say that we have been very candid with the people of Ontario since the beginning of this pandemic. We have always relied on clinical evidence, the medical officer of health and the many people who advise Dr. Williams.

We have Dr. Williams as our Chief Medical Officer of Health, but we also have the public health measures command table, which is led by Dr. Williams, of course, by Helen Angus, the Deputy Minister of Health, and by Matt Anderson, the president and CEO of Ontario Health. That's the command table. We also have the public health measures table that includes Dr. McKeown, Dr. Mowat, Dr. Feller, Dr. Gardner, Dr. Mackie, Dr. Roumeliotis and Dr. Spruyt.

We've also had numerous technical briefings and other briefings involving the mobile table, the command table, and many other technical briefings on some of the issues that we are dealing with as a government. That is important for all of the people of Ontario to know. The Premier has always said, “What I know, you will know,” and that is the way we have acted throughout advising the public.

## LONG-TERM CARE

**Ms. Doly Begum:** On Friday, CBC's Marketplace revealed that routine abuse and violations occur in most homes, and there are virtually no consequences for homes that break the law repeatedly. The report also highlights that for-profit homes, like Craiglee Nursing Home in my riding—in fact, in the two years that this minister has had this file, I have raised alarm bells about abuse like this, like in homes like Craiglee Nursing Home. It's actually, frankly, insulting to hear ministers ask where were we in raising these concerns, because it's insulting to the people of this province who have raised alarm bells about long-term care for many, many years.

In the past two years that I have been here, I have first raised issues about homes and the abuse. In this House, I asked the minister to extend the Wettlaufer investigation and accept the 91 recommendations from the report. All she's done is cut inspections and pass legislation that actually protects homes instead of the residents.

So I ask: Will this minister commit to taking immediate actions to address elder abuse in long-term-care homes and ensure that long-term-care operators are held accountable and residents are kept safe?

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

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** Thank you for the question. I would like to clarify a few points in your question. The first is inspections were never stopped. Inspections were continued. We worked with the representative groups to make sure that our inspectors were safe, that there were lines of communication with the inspectors into the homes. That was done with Public Health; that was done through the Ministry of Long-Term Care, the Ministry of Labour, the Auditor General's report in 2015 that recommended homes that were considered high risk to have high-risk inspections. This was a measure taken by the previous government with a report based on the Auditor General's recommendations.

Our government has made sure that the inspections are ongoing. Our homes in outbreak are receiving regular inspections—as I said, multiple inspections—looking at how we support our residents and staff in these homes.

There is zero tolerance for abuse or neglect, and there are channels to operate and stop that. We are taking every measure possible to make sure that our residents receive the highest quality they deserve and the respect—

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

**Ms. Doly Begum:** We know the previous government had failed, but right now, the responsibility—the ball is in the court for this government.

My office was contacted by Amanda, whose grandmother, Madeleine, was a resident at Craiglee until her death on September 20. She recounts the horrific conditions that Madeleine was found in, describing “the food left to rot in her room, the markings on her arms ... her refusal to eat, her weight loss, her incoherence and delirium. She would decline and the home would tell us that

she was improving.” Following Madeleine’s death, the family went to her room to find evidence of rats and cockroaches in her belongings.

I ask this minister again, because right now, people are not safe in many homes: What will she do to make sure that residents are kept safe in their homes and we do not have elders being abused in long-term-care homes? Because clearly they’re not doing a good job.

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** Thank you for the question. It is devastating and heartbreaking to hear stories such as this, and my heart goes out to the families, to the residents, to the staff.

Unfortunately, the system was broken, and it had been broken for many years. That’s why this government has made long-term care a priority. That’s why these issues that were long-standing and were exposed by COVID-19 in a fulsome way for society to see—for society to see the neglect that had occurred in these homes for many, many years.

Our government has created a stand-alone ministry to address this issue, not only the pre-existing problems, but the problems amplified by COVID-19. The inspectors, the public health integration, the public health information: It is a cross-ministry effort across government, across agency. We will put every measure, every tool into work, and we are doing just that.

#### MANUFACTURING SECTOR

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** Under the previous government, our manufacturing sector was battered by hydro, insurance, red tape and taxes. Hundreds of thousands of jobs in entire regions of our province were struggling. The latest challenge of our manufacturing sector has been COVID-19, which has put the health and security of our workers, supply chains and jobs at risk.

Will the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade update this House on our government’s support for a world-class manufacturing sector?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Thank you to the member from Barrie–Innisfil.

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With our support of the CME’s Ontario Made program, businesses across Ontario continue to line up to showcase their products and their Ontario spirit on supportontariomade.ca.

Through our Ontario Together Fund, we recently announced a \$2.5-million investment as part of Greenfield Global’s \$75-million expansion to make medical-grade alcohol for hand sanitizer at their plant in Johnstown.

An Ontario world-class workforce has the confidence of the pharmaceutical giant Roche, which announced a \$500-million investment to create 500 highly skilled made-in-Ontario jobs in Mississauga and to build a global supply chain hub.

Speaker, our government will continue to raise awareness of made-in-Ontario goods, to invest in manufacturers and our supply chains, and to attract good-quality jobs and investment at every opportunity.

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

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** Thank you, Minister, for that answer and the positive news. We look forward to visiting supportontariomade.ca and more Ontario Together funding announcements.

I know that in my riding, Jomi, Innovative Automation, SBS, Southmedic, Prodomax—all manufacturers—are stepping up to the plate.

It has been six months since the full onset of COVID-19 in March, so I wanted to ask the minister if he has other examples of manufacturers that stepped up to the plate and responded to the challenges of COVID-19.

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, the response from business owners and workers from across the province has been incredible. They have continued to demonstrate the best of Ontario’s spirit.

Recently, StatsCan showed that Ontario gained 168,000 jobs in September alone, of which almost 52,000 were in the manufacturing sector. With that milestone, employment in manufacturing in Ontario is now 17,000 jobs higher than pre-COVID-19 levels. This is a significant bit of news, but we know there’s much more to do.

Unlike the previous government, which lost over 300,000 manufacturing jobs, we worked to reduce business costs for manufacturers by over \$5 billion a year through lower costs, lower taxes and less red tape. Those fundamentals are still in place, which is why manufacturers continue to make Ontario their new home.

#### POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

**Ms. Laura Mae Lindo:** My question is to the Premier.

The Premier slipped arts and science degree-granting by Charles McVety into legislation that’s supposed to be about helping small businesses recover from the pandemic. The only reason anyone can come up with is because it’s a payback to a long-time friend of the Premier’s, even when that friend has made a career out of bigotry, homophobia, transphobia and—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I have to interrupt the member. You can’t impute motive. Place your question.

**Ms. Laura Mae Lindo:** Okay.

The government’s only justification for doing this now is that an independent assessment board will ultimately decide if McVety’s college has what it takes to grant these degrees. But that application has now mysteriously disappeared from the review website, and before it did, it stated that legislation was imminent.

Is the government ready to drop the charade and just admit that this is a favour to a long-time friend?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The parliamentary assistant, the member for Thornhill.

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** Thank you to the member opposite for the question.

I understand that there’s a process. There’s an independent review. I think everybody in the Legislature,

people at home who are watching, who work for a company, they understand that there are review processes. It's an independent process. We cannot interfere in an independent process.

In terms of the website, PEQAB has said that there was an issue with the web compliance of the application, and they are working to have it posted publicly again very soon.

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

**Ms. Laura Mae Lindo:** Back to the Premier: Until now, Charles McVety's college has only issued degrees in religious programs like theology, but their plan is to get into arts and science degrees.

Yesterday, the Faculty Association of the University of Waterloo wrote to the minister and to the Premier. They wrote, "I was shocked to learn that your government intends to allow the Canada Christian College to award 'university' degrees in arts and in sciences. The publicly-funded university model that we have in Ontario requires further investment, not dilution by enabling privately-funded institutions to offer poor programs on an apparently equal footing."

My question: Why is the Premier rushing degree-granting status through this omnibus bill for his buddy Charles McVety when real universities need further investment, and especially during this pandemic?

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** I think everybody here is aware that Ontario has a long, proud history of supporting all religions and religious institutions. We have a long, proud history of supporting our independent colleges and universities. Enabling legislation for private, faith-based degree-granting institutions has happened under governments of all stripes.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** My question is for the Minister of Long-Term Care. Recently, we learned of a memo sent to long-term-care homes in September that told them they were on their own when it came to ensuring that they had enough staff to manage a second wave of COVID-19. No later than yesterday, a resident of Ottawa-Vanier, whose mother is in a residence with confirmed cases, told me that testing was taking too long, with delays for testing and delays to get results.

The early recommendations of the long-term-care commission are addressing these exact issues. The commission said the province should implement its own existing staffing plan and ensure residents have better access to testing and faster results. Will the minister listen to the commission and put in place the staffing plan and improve testing and other recommendations without further delay and ensure that necessary funds are committed in the upcoming budget?

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** Thank you to the member opposite for the question. The staffing is a multi-ministry effort. The lead on staffing and the human resources is through the Ministry of Health. Our Ministry of Long-

Term Care had the expert panel report, which we have taken to heart and have been acting on, having input into the overall human resources strategy. We put dollars behind that, and we certainly appreciate the commissioner's interim report; an early report for guidance is very much appreciated and very much aligned, largely aligned, with what we are doing. And so we very much appreciate the importance on staffing, which we've said since day one, and \$540 million announced just a few weeks ago; \$405 million going to that to help with staffing supports and IPAC measures to give staff confidence in the long-term-care homes they work in. This work has been ongoing. We'll continue to do that work, and we thank the commissioners.

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

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** My question is again for the Minister of Long-Term Care. The number of long-term-care and retirement homes battling outbreaks in Ottawa right now is higher than it was back in April. I know the minister is fully aware of this, but it is difficult to understand that we have not done what was necessary to avoid the devastating effects of this second wave.

Having a stand-alone Minister of Long-Term Care, one would expect that proper attention and sufficient resources are devoted to provide effective care and protect the health of family members in these homes. The minister admitted yesterday that she knew since taking office at the head of the ministry that staffing was an issue. So what exactly has the minister done since then, and between the first wave and the second wave, to address the obvious challenges of the shortage of staff, to protect our long-term-care residents and their families?

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** Thank you for the question. As I've said before here in the chamber, we're addressing the long-standing neglect of staffing over many, many years by the preceding government, as well as dealing with the emergency situation that COVID-19 has caused in our homes. I can tell you that the vast majority of the 17 homes in Ottawa have no resident cases whatsoever. Our homes are doing very well; they are stabilized. We have the integrated response through the hospitals. We are shoring up staffing. We are using Red Cross assistance, and I thank them for their assistance as well.

We are using a multi-pronged approach to get rapid deployment teams, whether it's community paramedics, Red Cross, hospital, and actively working with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labour and others to shore up staffing overall. This is a two-pronged approach: one dealing with the emergency situation, one long-standing. And we will continue to do that. Our homes are getting the support they need, and an outbreak situation is somewhat misleading because the vast majority of those homes have no resident cases.

#### GOVERNMENT SERVICES

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed that now, more than ever, Ontario's programs and

front-line services need to be more convenient, reliable and accessible for the people and businesses of Carleton and Ontario. One way that our governments are successfully adapting to our new normal is by providing more digital services and embracing modern technologies.

**1100**

I'm proud to say that this government is ending 15 years of inaction on the part of the NDP-supported Liberals. In fact, just last week, the President of the Treasury Board launched Ontario Onwards: Ontario's COVID-19 Action Plan for a People-Focused Government, which will allow health care professionals to rapidly and securely access patients' health records, improve access to broadband and cellular services and reduce red tape for local businesses, among other things. Mr. Speaker, would the President of the Treasury Board tell the House more about how we are planning to move Ontario onward?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'm going to ask the independent members to quieten down over there.

Parliamentary assistant to reply.

**Mr. Michael Parsa:** I'd like to start by thanking the hard-working member for Carleton for that excellent question. The world has changed, and government must change with it. That's why we're expanding the range of programs and services available online, simplifying the government's role in people's lives and businesses. Ontario Onwards: Ontario's COVID-19 Action Plan for a People-Focused Government includes more than 30 projects that will change the way people and businesses interact with government. A parent, for example, could easily access their children's immunization records. A senior could securely share health information with caregivers.

Mr. Speaker, it's just the beginning. We're undertaking an across-the-board modernization of the entire government, and we are moving Ontario onwards.

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

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** I'd like to thank the parliamentary assistant to the President of the Treasury Board for his response and also just mention that I know that the people of Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill are well served by their hard-working MPP.

Mr. Speaker, it's great to hear that, unlike the previous government, this government is working for the people. We know that by improving access to programs and support for front-line government services, including health care and ServiceOntario, we are helping businesses and individuals make it through the COVID-19 pandemic.

One of the projects identified in the action plan focuses on a digital wallet, which Ontarians could set up for themselves or their business. I have heard that the digital identity wallet would allow me to share personal information while avoiding the need to scan and send identification insecurely through email. Through you, Mr. Speaker, can the President of the Treasury Board tell the House more about the digital identity wallet?

**Mr. Michael Parsa:** Absolutely, and I thank the member again for the question. Speaker, we're thrilled to

announce the development of the digital identity wallet to the people of Ontario. A digital identity wallet stores identity credentials on a smartphone or other device, helping people and businesses verify their identity any time, anywhere. A small business owner could cut through red tape, for example, by registering for licences and permits online. A farmer could register a farm vehicle online without needing to spend a day in their car.

Ontario Onwards is about making government services more convenient, reliable and accessible for the people and businesses of Ontario. Digital identity is just one of the many projects announced as part of Ontario Onwards: Ontario's COVID-19 Action Plan for a People-Focused Government, a plan that will make government more effective for Ontario's people and businesses. Speaker, it's an online world. We can't have an off-line government.

### FLU IMMUNIZATION

**Mr. Jamie West:** Residents from Sudbury and Copper Cliff are frustrated that they cannot get their flu vaccine in my riding. Jacqueline Trainor, a senior from Sudbury, said she can't find anywhere to get an enhanced flu shot. Another constituent who is a retired physician in my community said he tried to find a vaccine for him and his wife. They tried three pharmacies and one walk-in clinic. All four locations told them they had their orders on backlog and they couldn't even book an appointment until they had a better idea of when the vaccine would be coming.

This government's lack of planning keeps failing seniors. They failed them in Sudbury, they failed them in Copper Cliff and they failed them across Ontario. How could the Premier completely underestimate the demand for this year's vaccine and let down so many seniors?

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

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** In fact, we did plan for this pandemic. We ordered 700,000 more shots this year than we did last year. The orders are coming in. The orders were set virtually a year ago because we have to order them far in advance. We planned that they would first be delivered, when they first came in at the end of September, to long-term-care homes, to hospitals, to retirement homes that were participating and to other places of congregate care so that we could protect those vulnerable residents. We're also shipping to primary care facilities, to doctors' offices, to nurse practitioners and to pharmacies.

We have already received over four million of the virtual 5.5 million doses that we've ordered. They have been shipped out. They are being received on schedule. I'm very happy that people are going out to get the flu vaccine, many people this year that have never had it before. But that is why some are having temporary shortages. I'd like to speak to the fact that there are no shortages in my response to the supplemental.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Supplementary question: member for Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I have to say, Mr. Speaker, I find it insulting to hear this minister brushing off the real concerns of the people across Ontario. Front-line health care

workers, like our family doctors in Hamilton, play an important role in keeping us safe. That's why it's so distressing to hear from constituents and physicians alike who are unable—unable—to obtain flu vaccines.

A constituent recently received this message from their doctor: “We are terribly sorry to inform you that we will no longer be able to run our previously planned flu vaccine clinic. Please note that the flu vaccine shortage through public health is a systemic issue, and applies to all family physicians in the surrounding area.” Our constituency offices are flooded with calls and emails from people who cannot get the flu vaccine, and I can only imagine it's the same for the PC MPPs as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, what do the Premier or this minister have to say to doctors and their patients across Ontario who are trying to keep safe and healthy but are not able to get a flu vaccine because of this disastrous shortage?

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** There is no shortage. There may be a temporary shortage in some of the pharmacies. We take the concerns of nurses, doctors and patients across Ontario very seriously, because we know that every year thousands of people are put into hospital because of flu and some, unfortunately, die. So we are very pleased that so many people are taking this seriously.

We ordered over 700,000 more flu vaccines this year from last year, and through Health Canada, we've also been able to order an additional 350,000 doses. We have over 5.5 million doses that are coming to Ontario, so any shortage that's happening in either a doctor's office or in a pharmacy right now is a temporary shortage. We have no indication that there are any shortages worldwide. We are receiving shipments from global manufacturers on a regular basis. There are no backlogs. There are no delays. We are receiving the shipments, and people will get the flu shot—

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

#### DISCRIMINATION

**Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne:** My question is for the Minister of Education. Last week, I asked about schedule 2 in Bill 213 that would allow Canada Christian College, run by Charles McVety, to become a university and issue degrees in arts and science. I want to acknowledge the member for Kitchener Centre, who raised this issue first in this House.

As so many have now pointed out, McVety is a man who has repeatedly made vile comments about the LGBT community, about Islam and has propagated hatred. The fact that he is being rewarded either for that behaviour or for supporting the Ford campaign in the last election, or both, should be a cause for great concern for anyone who values democracy in our diverse society.

But, Mr. Speaker, the message that this action sends goes far beyond this specific case. In fact, it encourages institutions to rely on the protection of this government even if they insist on harbouring bigotry. Case in point, for some months, the Toronto Catholic District School Board

has refused to sanction at least one of its trustees for behaviour that appeared to be a breach of its own code of conduct. The board commissioned a report in 2019 concerning the trustee's conduct. The allegation was that trustee Michael Del Grande violated the trustee code of conduct by using similarly vile language as Charles McVety—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Thank you. The question has been placed, and I'm going to recognize the Minister of Education to reply.

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** What I said at the time is that the trustee's comments were unacceptable and deeply disturbing. We live in a province where we accept all people, from all walks of life, of all heritage, faith, orientation, gender, place of birth. This is the strength of our country, and I feel very strongly about this. That's why, in the health and physical education curriculum, the first curriculum I unveiled, we took significant action to counter homophobia.

**1110**

In fact, in the context of teaching young people about homophobia, we introduced in grade 2 a section specifically dedicated to seeing the visible and invisible differences to counter this form of bullying that exists within our schools.

We know there's more to do, but I have spoken out unequivocally and strongly against that trustee at the Toronto Catholic board, saying that it was unacceptable and urging the board to commission an investigation. We look forward to accountability for those students who have been offended by the comments made by that trustee.

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

**Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Well, Mr. Speaker, then I would ask the minister to ask that board to release the report so that the community can understand how and why trustee Del Grande was exonerated. This is a government that ran on objection to the very sex ed curriculum, the health and physical education curriculum, that you're talking about. So there is very little faith that this government actually supports those ideas.

Mr. Speaker, we have made great progress in our province and in our country on the recognition of rights of all people to be their authentic selves, but that progress has been hard won, and it's fragile. When people like Charles McVety and Michael Del Grande, who are privileged men in positions of authority, are still able to espouse hateful ideas with impunity, we all lose. It should not matter that Charles McVety supported Doug Ford in his leadership bid and in the 2018 election. It should not matter that Michael Del Grande was budget chief to Mayor Rob Ford. These men should be held to the same high standard that we demand of every child in our publicly funded schools. They should be expected to be compassionate, decent role models for all who hold them in high esteem.

I ask, Mr. Speaker, again, will the government refuse to expand the power of Charles McVety and will it release the report that went to the TCDSB—

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

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** We've had this question already today. Basically, there's a process in place; there's an independent review. We're all awaiting the outcome of that independent review and then we will be able to comment.

On this side of the House, I'm sure people will agree that we have a long history of supporting all religious institutions. In fact, all three parties, Mr. Speaker, have a history in Ontario of supporting all religions, all religious communities and all religious institutions.

#### ELECTRONIC SERVICE DELIVERY

**Mr. Norman Miller:** My question is for the Minister of Government and Consumer Services.

COVID-19 has had a tremendous impact on how much we rely on online services. More than ever, Ontarians across the province are using digital platforms to take care of personal and professional businesses online.

I understand Ontario Onwards: Ontario's COVID-19 Action Plan for a People-Focused Government will make this easier than ever. My constituents and all Ontarians want to know that when they use our online services or share data with the broader public service, their personal information is being protected.

This being Cyber Security Awareness Month, would the minister please explain what this government is doing to ensure that my constituents' data is protected?

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

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Thank you to the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka for that important question.

Mr. Speaker, as the threat of cyber crime grows and changes, so too must our defenses and preparedness. That is why our government continues to leverage the cutting edge of Ontario's cyber security expertise to protect our digital service platforms and the information shared with us by business and the public.

Earlier this month, in collaboration with Ryerson University, we held our first-ever virtual cyber security conference for the broader public sector, designed to support public-sector organizations to keep pace in an environment of rapidly evolving threats and increasing demand of digital public services. This conference explored the current and future cyber risks and focused on how to implement best practices and protect vital information systems. Our ongoing partnership with Ryerson will support government staff to operate safely online.

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

**Mr. Norman Miller:** Thank you, parliamentary assistant Bailey, for that response.

The uptake of digital services is not something new, and we saw significant uptake well before COVID-19. In fact, many Ontarians already provide their personal information to the government and government agencies. As with private businesses, Ontarians rely on the government to

keep their data protected when it is submitted and digitally stored.

Ontarians need to know that the government is keeping this information safe. Can the parliamentary assistant please tell this House and the people of Ontario actions this government has taken to ensure this data is being managed safely?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Thank you again to the member for raising this very important issue. It's important that Ontarians know that our government understands these concerns and is proactively working to address any threats to their personal information.

The initiatives I mentioned earlier build on the expansion of the province's Cyber Security Centre of Excellence, established last summer as a key part of Ontario's cyber security strategy.

COVID-19 has meant that more Ontarians than ever are relying on digital platforms to carry out their day-to-day tasks. With the increased reliance on these platforms, there is a strong need to protect the integrity of our data and the digital economy. That is why our government recently launched consultations with key stakeholders to improve the province's privacy protection laws, improve accountability and safeguard that information.

Our government is committed to protecting Ontarians and their data privacy.

#### SOINS DE LONGUE DURÉE

##### LONG-TERM CARE

**M. Guy Bourgouin:** Ma question est pour le premier ministre. Alors que la ministre des Soins de longue durée dit avoir tout fait pour éviter la propagation de la COVID-19 dans les soins de longue durée, les foyers du Nord attendent toujours de l'aide de la part de la province.

Le Foyer des Pionniers à Hearst compte 67 résidents. Il résiste à la pandémie avec seulement cinq infirmières et cinq préposés, qui font l'impossible pour offrir les soins 24 heures sur 24. De plus, il y a 63 aînés sur la liste d'attente et le temps d'attente est en moyenne quatre ans pour accéder aux soins qu'ils méritent.

Monsieur le Premier Ministre, croyez-vous que les personnes âgées du nord de l'Ontario méritent d'attendre quatre ans pour recevoir les soins dont ils ont besoin?

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

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** I appreciate the concerns across Ontario. That's why our government has been continuously working to address the capacity issues and the staffing issues in long-term care that were so badly neglected for so many years under the previous government.

We are working across ministries with the Ministry of Health, working with the reports that have come to us, taking active measures, putting funding towards the staffing, whether it's for personal support workers or for RNs, for the rapid tracking, for the nurses and the PSWs, the return of service—\$26 million to help retain and recruit

for our PSWs; \$52 million just announced in September; \$405 million just a few weeks ago to address the operational aspects and the staffing supports that are needed. This is multi-ministry, as I said before, and we will continue to work to address the concerns all across Ontario.

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

**M. Guy Bourgouin:** Monsieur le Président, le premier ministre a beaucoup parlé, mais sans livrer la marchandise. Le Foyer de Pionniers est parmi les quelques foyers à offrir des services adaptés pour la communauté francophone du nord-est de l'Ontario. À Hearst, on n'a pas de lits de transition, et les soins à domicile en français sont assez rares pour la grande population francophone de la région. Depuis 2014, le foyer demande à la province d'avoir 12 lits—12 lits supplémentaires. Ils ont eu des pourparlers avec l'ancien gouvernement libéral et ils ont soumis plusieurs demandes à ce gouvernement conservateur. La région a besoin de lits supplémentaires pour répondre aux exigences culturelles des personnes âgées francophones.

Le premier ministre va-t-il reconnaître les besoins des aînés francophones, et va-t-il agir aux demandes liées à la capacité, aux besoins culturels et à la demande des lits à Hearst, oui ou non?

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** Thank you to the member for the question. Our government values the cultural differences across Ontario, and we recognize the importance of long-term-care homes to be able to provide services in the language of the residents. That is why we have many homes that are staffed and supported in those measures.

We continue to create tools and efforts, and put funding behind it, to provide the retention and the pipeline of service providers, whether it's nurses or whether it's PSWs or whether it's other support staff.

I value our personal support workers and our staff in long-term-care homes, as does our government, and we are taking every measure possible to make sure that our homes have the support that they need and their cultural differences are respected and valued. We will continue to put respect and dignity for our residents at the forefront of our decision-making.

1120

#### COVID-19 RESPONSE

**Mrs. Belinda C. Karahalios:** Good morning. My question is for the Premier. During this period, it is important that the government avoid providing inconsistent or false information. As mentioned on Sunday, the Toronto Sun reported that the Premier had no idea that two of his MPPs—

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

**Mrs. Belinda C. Karahalios:** Withdraw.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** And place your question.

**Mrs. Belinda C. Karahalios:** On Sunday, the Toronto Sun reported that the Premier had no idea that two of his

MPPs signed a letter to the Chief Medical Officer of Health. On Monday, the Premier said that he knew the letter was coming and even urged it. Later, CTV reported a third version of the story.

I was hoping the Premier could tell us which version of the story is correct. Did he know and urge his MPPs to lobby the Chief Medical Officer of Health, or did he not know? And why are sources in the government providing different versions of the same story to the media and the public? Doesn't the Premier believe that inconsistent information to the media during a pandemic only works to erode public trust?

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

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think I answered this yesterday in the House. The member for Burlington and the member for Milton were responding to what was a difference of opinion between the mayors and the chief medical officer of health for Halton with respect to stage 2. The two members wrote to Dr. Williams in an attempt to help break that logjam, so that they could provide additional data. I think it's something that we would—hopefully, all members would act in very much the same way.

The member is quite correct in suggesting that the Premier had already spoken to the mayor of Oakville and was aware of the issue. Of course, the member for Burlington spoke with the Premier and let the Premier know that a clarifying letter to help break this logjam in Halton was coming forward.

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

**Mrs. Belinda C. Karahalios:** Another inconsistency in the information provided yesterday: The Premier said that he told local politicians in Halton to push back against the Chief Medical Officer of Health if they weren't ready for another lockdown, suggesting that it was the chief medical officer telling the Premier to consider this move. But the Chief Medical Officer of Health told CTV News that he made no recommendation and neither did any local Halton medical officers of health.

Which version of the story is correct? Why the inconsistency in information provided to the public? Is the government okay with confusing the public or not? Or is this the government's way of passing the buck?

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Again, I think it's actually fairly obvious that there is a growing disagreement between especially the mayors of Halton and their chief medical officer of health. If I'm not mistaken, the chief medical officer for Halton added extra measures beyond some of the measures that we had introduced in the region that the mayors were not supportive of, so there is a disagreement between elected officials in Halton and their chief medical officer of health. We, of course, encourage them to work together. I applaud both the member for Milton and the member for Burlington for trying to do their best to break the logjam between the two.

The member is quite correct: When there is an inconsistency between elected officials and medical officers of

health, it does raise problems, and it is our job to make sure that we close that gap. That's what we have been doing right from the beginning of this pandemic, relying on the advice from our medical officers.

Again, I applaud both members for doing what we would expect all members in this place would do when it comes to disagreements between their medical officers of health—

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

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** My question is to the Minister of Long-Term Care. Last week, I asked the Minister of Long-Term Care for action to contain the outbreak at Lakeside Long-Term Care. There are now three deaths, 26 resident cases, one hospitalization, and 10 staff and two essential caregiver cases. There are still delays in getting test results. Results of tests done three weeks ago were either not received at all or were received much too late to do any good. Why is the government allowing the outbreak to rage on?

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** Thank you for the question. We are making sure that our homes have the support that they need. All 626 homes are partnered with a local hospital to support them, making sure that the infection prevention and control expertise is available to our homes, taking every measure possible. The surveillance testing is being done on a rotating basis of every 14 days, and sometimes more frequently than that. The backlog has been cleared from the testing, and that is the Ministry of Health managing the testing, but I'm happy to speak to the aspects surrounding the testing in long-term care.

The backlog is an essential piece to understand. Now that that is cleared, the testing in our homes will improve to make sure that we have the rapid testing, to have all the tools that we need to really prevent COVID from getting in in the first place. It is an invisible intruder and that is something that the long-term-care homes across the world have been grappling with. But we will continue with the testing that is ramping up and is up to 50,000 tests possible per day. This is something that—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. And the supplementary question.

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** Back to the minister: Lakeside Long-Term Care has UHN as a partner already, and yet the outbreak continues. The government's own long-term-care commission's findings highlighted that homes across the province are dangerously understaffed, and so is Lakeside. The commission has urged the minister to implement a staffing study that has been sitting on her desk since July.

Will the minister commit to the staff, residents and families at Lakeside that she will implement the long-term-care commission's interim recommendations immediately?

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** Thank you for the question. However, I am going to push back on this continued

narrative that is absolutely misleading, that something has been sitting on my desk. It has not.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'm going to ask the minister to withdraw.

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** I will withdraw, but I want to clarify this. We have been active on this ever since we had the report. Work has been ongoing. This is a narrative that continues to pop up, and I want to express my sincere regret that this narrative continues despite the clarifications that I've given over and over again.

The work is continuing, always was, and will continue. We will advance long-term care. We will repair it from decades of neglect. We will rebuild long-term care. That means staffing and capacity and innovative programs and determination—much better than the previous government ever bothered to—

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

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** My question is for the Minister of Long-Term Care. At the beginning of the pandemic, the Premier said that an iron ring would be built around long-term-care homes. Despite his statements, unfortunately, thousands have become sick and died over the course of the pandemic. After months and months of dithering, the government finally announced that they would have a long-term-care commission because the Premier wanted to take urgent action.

Last week, the commission highlighted the urgency of the situation in long-term care, Mr. Speaker, and asked the government—advised the government—to fix the chronic understaffing in long-term-care homes. Moreover, the commission reminded the government that they know exactly how to do this already, that they've had a report since July telling them how to move forward with staffing in the sector.

The government now has two reports telling them exactly what to do to fix the staffing crisis in long-term care. When is the government going to take action?

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** Thank you for the question. I will repeat what I have said numerous times before: We have taken swift action all along, across ministries, across levels of government, working with the federal government to understand streams where we can work with them on providing the necessary training and retention for PSWs and support workers in our long-term-care homes, and across the health care sector, for that matter. This work has been ongoing, and we have been putting dollars behind it: improving the wages for our personal support workers, an increase of \$3 per hour, a \$461-million commitment; \$540 million put out just a few weeks ago to support the operations in our long-term-care homes; \$61.4 million to make sure that our homes have the necessary supports for infection prevention and control to encourage stabilization of our homes.

We continue to put out dollars behind the actions that we're taking to support our homes. We'll continue to do

the work, the work that was never done under the previous government.

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

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** My supplemental is for the minister. Clearly, the government's own commission doesn't think that's good enough, because they've asked for timely action on their advice to be taken, Mr. Speaker. This is their report, not my words.

But let's also look at what's in their report. They've included sentiments from people they've heard from as part of their review so far, sentiments like it's "devastating" and "emotional," that people are "lonely" and "depressed," that people feel "muzzled" and "trapped," that they're "broken-spirited," that the situation in long-term care was "terror awakened"—terror awakened, Mr. Speaker.

The government has asked experts for advice. Experts have given the government advice. When are they going to take it?

1130

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** Thank you to the member opposite for the question. We have been taking the advice of experts all along, whether it's our Chief Medical Officer of Health or experts surrounding virology or infection prevention and control. This has been ongoing, and we make sure that our homes have the support that they need. This is a challenging, unprecedented situation affecting long-term-care homes across the world. Our most vulnerable people are in long-term care.

I want to express my deep condolences to everyone who has been impacted by this. All of us have in some way, all of us have been touched by this, and we have to continue to do the work that is absolutely necessary to shore up staffing.

I appreciate the work of the commissioners to provide this guidance. This is something that we have been working on, ever since we started as a new ministry, with a sense of urgency, and I appreciate the input and guidance from the commissioners.

#### HOME CARE

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** My question is to the Minister of Health. Speaker, George White is living with ALS and relies on home care for bathing, toileting, feeding and transferring from his wheelchair to his bed, but the chronic shortage of PSWs at ParaMed has meant that George is regularly forced to sleep in his wheelchair, because there was no evening PSW.

Last week, he sent me this email: "ParaMed has reached a new record for service providers. Four out of the past six nights, they did not send a PSW to put me to bed! That means I've been in" soiled "diapers for at least 14 hours for those days, from 2 p.m. until 6 a.m." That is inhumane. Speaker, I agree.

Clearly, privatized home care is failing people like George White. Will this government agree to end the

unreliable, understaffed and unaccountable for-profit home care system and make home care public?

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Thank you to the member for the question. While I appreciate that George's situation is unacceptable, I don't agree with the solution that has been proposed by the member.

What we are doing, however: I can advise that we are putting in \$457 million to increase home and community care capacity as part of our COVID preparedness plan for the fall, because we recognize that there may be some people who can be cared for at home, which is where they want to be, instead of in hospital. But we know that we need to put more resources into that, and that's why we put that \$457 million into it, which will greatly increase the number of visits that will be available to people and the number of hours that will be available.

By the same token, we also recognize that there has been a shortage of personal support workers. While we're graduating thousands of them, there are also thousands of them who don't stay in long-term care, as personal support workers either in long-term care or in home care. That's why we are increasing their hourly rates, to encourage more people to stay as personal support workers, but we recognize that there are other issues that affect their working conditions and why they may not want to stay. We're still undertaking our discussions with the personal support workers' association and with other stakeholders to encourage more people to come in to work both in long-term care as well as in home care.

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

#### DEFERRED VOTES

##### SUPPORTING ONTARIO'S RECOVERY AND MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS ACT, 2020

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

Deferred vote on the motion that the question now be put on the motion for second 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):** We have a deferred vote on a motion for closure on the motion for second reading of 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.

On October 22, 2020, Mr. Downey moved second reading of Bill 218. Mr. Harris has moved that the question be now put.

The bells will now ring for 30 minutes, during which time members may cast their votes on Mr. Harris's motion that the question be now put. I will ask the Clerks to prepare the lobbies.

*The division bells rang from 1136 to 1206.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** A vote has been held on the motion for closure on the motion for second reading of 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.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker):** The ayes are 52; the nays are 34.

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

Mr. Downey has moved second reading of 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.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

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

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, the bells will now ring for 15 minutes, during which time members may cast their votes.

I'll ask the Clerks to once again prepare the lobbies.

*The division bells rang from 1209 to 1224.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** A vote has been held on the motion for second reading of 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.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker):** The ayes are 51; the nays are 33.

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

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Shall the bill be ordered for third reading? Shall it be referred to a committee?

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Yes, the standing committee on justice, please.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The bill is referred to the standing committee on justice.

#### NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Pursuant to standing order 36(a), the member for Scarborough Southwest has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Long-Term Care concerning abuse in long-term-care homes. This matter will

be debated today following private members' public business.

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

*The House recessed from 1226 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 a report on the intended appointments dated October 27, 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

##### NO TIME TO WASTE ACT (PLAN FOR CLIMATE ACTION AND JOBS), 2020

##### LOI DE 2020 SUR LA NÉCESSITÉ DE NE PAS GASPILLER DE TEMPS (PLAN EN MATIÈRE D'ACTION POUR LE CLIMAT ET L'EMPLOI)

Mr. Tabuns moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 224, An Act to enact the Climate Crisis Health Action Plan Act, 2020, the Ontario Climate Crisis Strategy for the Public Sector Act, 2020 and the Select Committee on the Climate Crisis Act, 2020 / Projet de loi 224, Loi édictant la Loi de 2020 sur le Plan d'action sur la crise climatique et la santé, la Loi de 2020 sur la Stratégie du secteur public de l'Ontario relative à la crise climatique et la Loi de 2020 sur le Comité spécial de l'action relative à la crise climatique.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'll invite the member for Toronto–Danforth to explain his bill, if he wishes to do so.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Thank you, Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity.

This bill incorporates three previous acts: one that would accelerate the adoption of green technology and emission reductions in the public sector, one that would prepare the health care system for the challenges that we're going to face in a hotter world, and a motion—now an act—that would set up a select committee of the Legislature to chart a course forward on dealing with the climate crisis.

## 2372830 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2020

Mr. Thanigasalam moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr30, An Act to revive 2372830 Ontario 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.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH MOIS DE LA PRÉVENTION DU MAUVAIS TRAITEMENT DES ENFANTS

**Hon. Jill Dunlop:** I rise to recognize October as Child Abuse Prevention Month, and today, October 27, as Dress Purple Day in Ontario. I thank the members of this House who are joining me in bringing awareness to this important cause by wearing purple today.

Every October, children's aid societies across Ontario, through Dress Purple Day, work diligently to raise awareness about the important roles individuals and communities play in supporting vulnerable children, youth and families. Whether you are a parent, aunt, uncle or part of religious or cultural organizations, you are helping to shape a child's future.

Child Abuse Prevention Month encourages all Ontarians to learn about the prevention of child abuse and neglect, the supports that are available to families and the responsibility that we all have to protect children and youth.

Child abuse takes on many forms. It can be physical, emotional or sexual. Abuse can also take the form of neglect, failing to provide a child with basic needs, such as food, shelter, medical treatment and safety.

Mr. Speaker, we all know children and youth are some of the most vulnerable members of society, and we all have a moral and legal obligation to protect and nurture our youngest and most vulnerable citizens. There is a saying, "It takes a village to raise a child," and it couldn't be more accurate. That is why I call on all Ontarians—neighbours, teachers, social service providers, colleagues, coaches and friends—to show that we are all part of a community that cares for children, youth and families facing challenges. Please report any concerns you may have to your local children's aid society. That's because all Ontarians have a duty, both a moral and a legal duty, to report suspected cases of abuse and neglect.

For professionals who work with children, know you're not violating privacy by reporting suspected child abuse and neglect. In fact, you have a special responsibility to protect a child's safety and well-being.

Assurer la sécurité des enfants et des jeunes est une responsabilité que notre gouvernement et les sociétés d'aide à l'enfance de la province prennent très au sérieux.

I want to acknowledge their efforts, especially the compassionate front-line staff who work every day to support the children and youth they serve. I also want to thank the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies and their CEO, Nicole Bonnie, for their work in raising awareness across Ontario and supporting children's aid societies in their efforts to make life better for those in need of their services. And I thank every Ontarian who is making a difference in the lives of vulnerable young people.

Although Child Abuse Prevention Month is coming to an end, our government's unwavering commitment to the safety and well-being of our children and youth continues. In fact, this commitment is at the heart of our plan to redesign child welfare, to modernize the system so it is more culturally appropriate and responsive to the needs of children, youth and families.

As a government, we want to and we need to do more to help children, youth and families be healthy and safe. We want children to grow up with their families and their communities whenever possible so they aren't experiencing abuse or neglect, aren't coming into care and will not need the protection services of a children's aid society. We want to support families so they can stay together, succeed and thrive, reunite them when it's possible and use out-of-home care only when necessary, and even then, only for a short period of time.

We're changing the culture from protection alone to prevention. This means getting parents, children and youth the help they need early, giving them a voice and putting them at the centre of decision-making regarding their care. This includes help like mental health supports, which I want to thank the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions for providing through the Roadmap to Wellness.

Dans notre vision, les services de bien-être de l'enfance font partie d'un éventail de services intégrés et coordonnés qui soutiennent les enfants, les jeunes et les familles de la manière la moins intrusive possible.

This includes more community-based services that help with needs at the beginning, before they turn into larger problems, a greater promotion of family-based settings and a system that sets up children and youth to give them the opportunity to flourish in adulthood.

To bring our vision of a redesigned child welfare system into focus, we will be:

- working with representatives of First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples and nations as well as urban Indigenous groups to develop and implement their own models for child and family services;

- shifting investments from protection services to community-based prevention initiatives that better serve all kids and families, including Indigenous, Black, racialized and 2SLGBTQ children and youth, as well as those with special needs;

- improving integration and coordination of services across the full continuum of child and family services, including those between children’s aid societies, local communities and schools, service providers, Indigenous partners and community-based organizations like women’s shelters and food banks;

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- enhancing access to supports for youth, including education and employment supports, to help them gain confidence and the skills they need to transition to adulthood successfully; and

- improving the overall quality of residential placements while focusing on family-based options like kinship, adoption and foster care.

I know this is quite a to-do list and I know it will take time, but we are committed to getting this right.

Mr. Speaker, government plans, programs and funding alone cannot ensure success for vulnerable children and youth. And government plans and programs alone cannot reduce or stop child abuse and neglect. That’s why we take the time to raise awareness of abuse and neglect during Child Abuse Prevention Month. Helping young people both in and out of the child welfare system and keeping them safe as they become successful adults is a collective responsibility.

I want to also take a moment to recognize and thank all our foster parents and families in the province for what they do. Last week was National Foster Family Week across Canada, and I want to acknowledge the role foster families play in the development of children and youth. Becoming a foster parent is not an easy decision, but it is a worthwhile one.

To the foster parents in Ontario, I want to say that you are incredibly important to every child’s life that you enter, and I want to thank you for opening your doors to those in need and for being the ones who believe in them.

I look forward to continuing our important work with our many wonderful partners to ensure our province’s children and youth are safe and have every opportunity to prosper. I urge all members of this House and all Ontarians to learn the signs of child abuse and neglect and to promptly report known or suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to their local children’s aid society.

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

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It’s an honour to rise today on behalf of our critic, Monique Taylor, and our entire NDP caucus as we recognize Dress Purple Day. Before I start, I just want to say that our critic is disappointed that she could not deliver this statement today, but she is in committee hearings. The member from Hamilton Mountain is a true champion of all children in Ontario, who puts children at the centre of all policy and program debates.

Today, October 27, is Dress Purple Day, organized by the Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies. Each October, Ontario’s children’s aid societies raise awareness about the rights of children and youth to safety and well-being, and the responsibility that adults and our community services have to help children, youth and families who may need support.

This year, the association is highlighting that Dress Purple Day is “more important than ever, since the pandemic has created additional stressors for families, and in some cases has increased risk for the well-being and safety of children and youth.” At this point, we should all understand that when women and partners experience violence, so do children.

According to a recent Canadian survey, domestic and family violence rates increased over 80% through the pandemic restrictions. And even before the pandemic, we struggled with access to children’s mental health services, with 28,000 kids on the wait-list. Now, due to the added stressors that kids are facing, that need has grown, and Ontario’s children and youth need more support than ever.

The OACAS has created a list of resources and supports to show people that there are places to turn when they need help. You can find those resources on the association’s website or by contacting your local children’s aid society. We have to acknowledge that it takes courage to ask for help and it takes access to resources.

As we all work together to move forward through these unprecedented times, I think it’s important to remember what conditions help children and youth thrive in our society. Does the family have stable housing? Is the child living in poverty? Are there enough adults in the classroom so that the child has somewhere to turn if they need help?

As legislators, we have a responsibility to support children and youth. This means doing our part as adults and listening to children if they come to us with concerns. It also means working to ensure that our children’s aid societies and other community supports have sufficient funding to provide services.

We must all acknowledge that there should be a renewed focus on early intervention and prevention. Children and youth in this province used to have a child advocate in their corner. It is our hope that the government will reflect on the rising cases of domestic and family violence during the COVID-19 pandemic, and see that reinstating the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth would benefit children and their families across the province. I want to acknowledge the work of Irwin Elman, our former child advocate, who to this day has continued to advocate for children.

Our critic and I would also like to acknowledge the good work being done by Child Welfare PAC, the Ontario Children’s Advancement Coalition, the Children’s Aid Society of Hamilton, Catholic children’s aid societies across the province, Family and Children Services of the Waterloo Region, which I’m very familiar with, oneROOF, Food4Kids, and, of course, the Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies. We also should acknowledge the emotional labour that these front-line workers do on behalf of children, and we are grateful for your leadership.

Our critic, Monique Taylor, always speaks about how it takes a village to raise a child. Recognizing Dress Purple Day gives us all a chance to refocus on the role we play as adults in children’s lives, as well as the work that we need

to continue to do to support children's aid societies, community organizations and families across this great province.

**Mr. John Fraser:** I'm proud to stand here today with my colleagues and wear purple to bring awareness and show support for Ontario's children's aid societies and Indigenous child and family well-being centres, and also to support the services that they provide to families and children and youth who are at risk.

I have some family background in this. My father, Jack, used to be with what was then called the Family Court, so he worked with children's aid societies and a number of other people to help support families and children who were at risk, or what they would call wards of the crown, wards of the court. In fact, I lived in what was then called the juvenile detention centre, which wasn't really a detention centre but a place for kids to be, when I was about two. So I know the importance of the work that's done in this field every day.

Back in the 1960s, my dad used to talk about the work that they did. He and his friend Jack Cutbill, who just passed away a couple of weeks ago—one had everything on the east side of the river and one had everything on the west side of the river. He used to recall, with a lot of pride, sometimes a bit of sorrow, the work that they were doing and how important that was to families.

So I just simply want to say to everyone out there who's working in child welfare: Thank you. Thank you for what you do. Thank you for caring. Thank you for putting children and families who are vulnerable at the centre of your work and the centre of your attention.

I know my colleague from Waterloo mentioned the child advocate, and I couldn't get through this statement without mentioning the independent child advocate as well. I think that she used a very good word in asking the government to reflect on reappointing an independent child advocate. I think it was a mistake to do that. I think it's something that the government can reverse its course on. That role is particularly critical for a small number of very, very vulnerable youth. It needs to be independent, and independent of the ministry.

Having said that, I just want to go back to thanking everyone who works at Ontario's children's aid societies and Indigenous child and family well-being agencies across Ontario. The work that you do is critically important. You're giving young people, who may not otherwise have a chance, an opportunity, a safe place to grow, to thrive, to learn and to be successful.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** It's an honour to rise today and say a few words on behalf of the Green Party for Dress Purple Day.

First, I want to recognize the important work of children's aid societies and native children and family services across Ontario. The services they provide to vulnerable children have become even more essential during this pandemic.

I think it's important for all of us in this House to remember how scary of a situation this is for young children. None of us has had the experience of viewing a

pandemic through the lens of a child: the closure of school and the uncertainty of never seeing your grandparents again; the rise in domestic violence; the economic stress at home. This pandemic has aggravated situations for children who are already facing uncertainty and mistreatment at home.

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Since the beginning of this pandemic, calls to the kids help line related to abuse have jumped by 19% to 26%. We must keep our most vulnerable children and youth at the forefront of our pandemic response and recovery measures. This means real funding for mental health, including the \$150 million that Children's Mental Health Ontario have called for. It means a provincial school lunch program so that every child has at least one healthy meal a day. It means reinstating the independent child and youth advocate to be a watchdog for children, including children in care. It means taking preventive actions to keep children out of care.

Speaker, it takes a community to raise a child, so let's get to work as the members of this House to invest in our kids and ensure they all have a voice and a home and a bright future.

## PETITIONS

### ABORTION IMAGES

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** It's a great honour for me to rise today and present the following petition on behalf of Katie Dean, Mark Konrad and hundreds and hundreds of Londoners who signed the online petition.

It's entitled "Call on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to Block Disturbing Anti-Abortion Images," and it reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas an anti-abortion group, the Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform, is distributing unwanted flyers to people's homes and displaying placards on major streets in London featuring horrifying and graphic images of aborted fetuses;

"Whereas regularly displaying graphic images on our streets and in our homes is traumatizing, difficult and misleading for women, children, and other vulnerable members of the community;

"Whereas the display of these images at crowded intersections creates a hazard and distraction to drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians;

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

"To support calls for an injunction based on the need to prevent a public nuisance, and should it not be possible to proceed with an injunction, to develop and bring forward legislation to prohibit the use of such graphic and disturbing images on flyers dropped in people's mailboxes or exhibited on placards used in the street."

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature and deliver it to the Clerks.

### HPV VACCINE

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

“Whereas human papilloma virus (HPV) causes cervical, vulvar, anal, penile, and head and neck cancer. Cervical cancer is almost exclusively caused by HPV; and

“Whereas in Canada, approximately 1,500 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer each year, and 400 women die annually from it; and

“Whereas over 85% of people will acquire at least one HPV infection in their lifetime. The virus is spread through any form of sexual contact and the rate of transmission per sexual encounter is approximately 40%, putting any Canadian who is sexually active at risk; and

“Whereas as of 2016, grade 7 students in the province of Ontario can receive the nonavalent HPV vaccine through public health vaccination programs offered in schools. However, between 2007 and 2016, only female youth were eligible for government-funded vaccination, and only the quadrivalent vaccine was provided. Thus, any females who completed grade 8 before 2007 and any males who completed grade 7 before 2016 were not funded to receive the vaccine, and are at high risk of developing HPV-related cancer; and

“Whereas the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC) wishes Canada to become the first country in the world to eradicate cervical cancer through vaccination, screening, and early treatment;

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

“(1) Include the nonavalent HPV vaccine in OHIP+ coverage, allowing all males under the age of 24 who were not provided the funded vaccine in schools before 2016 to get vaccinated;

“(2) Offer the nonavalent HPV vaccine free of charge to all males under age 26 and all females under age 45, through public-health-sponsored vaccination programs.”

Of course, I’m affixing my signature and giving it to a page.

### ANTI-VAPING INITIATIVES FOR YOUTH

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to thank the entire team at the Capreol Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic for collecting the names on this petition. It reads as follows:

“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; and

“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 Bill 151;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“To call on the Ford government to immediately pass Bill 151, Vaping is Not for Kids Act, in order to protect the health of Ontario’s youth.”

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

### SMALL BUSINESS

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** This is a petition for small business.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the previous government made Ontario the most overregulated province in the country which prevents businesses from excelling;

“Whereas the current COVID-19 pandemic has impacted small businesses the most;

“Whereas, without new supports, small businesses in Ontario will continue to struggle;

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

“To pass the Better for People, Smarter for Business Act and the Main Street Recovery Act to help small businesses in Ontario so that:

“(1) Small businesses in Ontario will be able to invest time and money in what’s important: recovering, rebuilding, and re-emerging from this crisis stronger than before; and that

“(2) Small businesses in Ontario will have more flexibility and supports to meet the challenges of the pandemic and pursue new opportunities.”

I fully support the petition. I will affix my signature and hand it to the Clerk.

### EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

**Mr. Jamie West:** I’d like to thank the OFL for collecting signatures. The petition is called “Don’t Take Away Social and Economic Rights for Women and Marginalized People.

“Whereas Bill 47 erased many of the legislative gains achieved through Bill 148, the fairer labour laws and working conditions that had a particularly positive impact on women and marginalized people;

“Whereas statistics show that women, particularly women of colour, are most likely to be employed in precarious work, and the Bill 47 amendments to the Employment Standards Act, 2000 and Labour Relations Act, 1995 create conditions that lead to a growth in precarious employment while also eliminating protections for millions of Ontario workers;

“Whereas Bill 66 further erodes women’s and marginalized people’s social and economic rights; and

“Whereas the Ford government continues to remove, cancel or freeze funding for other supports, programs and regulations that would increase women’s equality in the workforce and beyond;

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

“—reinstate paid sick days...;

“—reverse changes to daycare regulations that allow more children per caregiver;

“—reverse the retroactive cuts to funding for the Ontario College of Midwives;

“—reinstate funding increases to sexual assault centres;

“—restore the round table on violence against women; and

“—restore the child and youth advocate commissioner’s office.”

I fully support this petition. I will affix my signature and provide it to the Clerk.

#### EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT

**Mr. John Fraser:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Re COVID-19 Command Table to Appear Before the Select Committee on Emergency Management Oversight

“Whereas the Select Committee on Emergency Management Oversight was struck with a mandate to provide Ontarians with the government’s rationale for extending the COVID-19 emergency orders;

“Whereas the orders have been extended three times since the committee was struck, most recently until November 21;

“Whereas Ontarians expect transparency from their government;

“Whereas Ontarians deserve to hear what advice the Premier and his government are being given, when that advice was given and the evidence that underpins the recommendations;

“Whereas Ontarians should hear directly from members of the COVID-19 command table and be given the opportunity to ask questions about their advice and recommendations;

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“Whereas the Premier shall designate, as is within his power, members of the COVID-19 command table to appear before the Select Committee on Emergency Management Oversight in the form of a public hearing to provide a brief presentation on the advice provided to the Premier and his government, followed by questions from members of the committee;

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

“To demand the Premier designate members of the COVID-19 command table to appear before the Select Committee on Emergency Management Oversight in the form of a public hearing at the next scheduled meeting.”

I agree with this petition, and I’m affixing my signature to it.

#### VETERANS

**Mr. Dave Smith:** I have a petition that says:

“Whereas our veterans have made tremendous sacrifices to make our province and country a better place; and

“Whereas veterans and their families can face many challenges including post-traumatic stress disorder, physical injury, unemployment and homelessness, all while trying to navigate a complex support system; and

“Whereas the Soldiers’ Aid Commission was created in 1915 to support Ontario’s veterans returning home from the First World War. It was later expanded to support those who had served in the Second World War and the Korean War; and

“Whereas it is a sad reality that with each passing year, the number of living veterans who served in those wars decreases ... and while we will never forget their bravery and sacrifice it is time we honour a new generation of servicemen and women; and

“Whereas currently about 230,000 veterans live in Ontario. About 93% of those veterans served after the Korean War, meaning those in financial need have not been able to access funding from the current Soldiers’ Aid Commission.

“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, such as hearing aids, wheelchairs and prosthetics;

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

“—personal items and employment readiness supports, such as clothing and counselling.”

I fully endorse this petition, will sign my name to it and give it to the table.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mme France Gélinas:** I would like to thank Melanie Seguin from Hanmer in my riding for these petitions.

“Time to Care.”

“Temps pour les soins.”

“Whereas quality care for the 78,000 residents of” long-term-care “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” long-term-care “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” long-term-care “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;”

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To amend the” Long-term Care “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 name to it and send it to the table.

#### FAMILY LAW

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** This petition is entitled “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 time and money;

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

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

I affix my signature to this petition and will pass it to a page.

#### INJURED WORKERS

**Mr. Jamie West:** This is the “Workers’ Comp is a Right” petition.

“Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas about 200,000 to 300,000 people in Ontario are injured on the job every year;

“Whereas over a century ago, workers in Ontario who were injured on the job gave up the right to sue their employers, in exchange for a system that would provide them with just compensation;

“Whereas decades of cost-cutting have pushed injured workers into poverty and onto publicly funded social

assistance programs, and have gradually curtailed the rights of injured workers;

“Whereas injured workers have the right to quality and timely medical care, compensation for lost wages, and protection from discrimination;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to change the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act to accomplish the following for injured workers in Ontario:

“Eliminate the practice of ‘deeming’ or ‘determining,’ which bases compensation on phantom jobs that injured workers do not actually have” or access to get;

“Ensure that the WSIB prioritizes and respects the medical opinions of the health care providers who treat the injured worker directly;

“Prevent compensation from being reduced or denied based on ‘pre-existing conditions’ that never affected the worker’s ability to function prior to the work injury.”

I support this petition, I’ll sign it and provide it to the Clerk.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### TIME ALLOCATION

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** I move that, pursuant to standing order 50 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to 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;

That the Standing Committee on Justice Policy be authorized to meet on Wednesday, November 4, 2020, from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. to receive a 15-minute opening statement on the bill by the Attorney General, followed by 45 minutes of question and answer divided into three rounds of six minutes for the government members, three rounds of six minutes for the official opposition members and two rounds of 4.5 minutes for the independent member; and

That the committee be authorized to meet on Wednesday, November 4, 2020, from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. for the purpose of public hearings; and

That the Clerk of the Standing Committee on Justice Policy, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to the bill:

—That the deadline for requests to appear be 5 p.m. on Friday, October 30, 2020; and

—That the Clerk of the Committee provide a list of all interested presenters to each member of the subcommittee and their designate following the deadline for requests to appear; and

—That each member of the subcommittee or their designate provide the Clerk of the Committee with a prioritized list of presenters to be scheduled, chosen from

the list of all interested presenters, by 10 a.m. on Monday, November 2, 2020; and

—That witnesses shall be scheduled in groups of three for each one-hour time slot, with each presenter allotted seven minutes for an opening statement followed by 39 minutes of questioning for all three witnesses, divided into two rounds of 7.5 minutes for the government members, two rounds of 7.5 minutes for the official opposition members and two rounds of 4.5 minutes for the independent member; and

—That the deadline for written submissions be 7 pm on Wednesday, November 4, 2020; and

—That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 5 pm on Thursday, November 5, 2020; and

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That the committee be authorized to meet on Monday, November 9, 2020, from 9 a.m. until 12 noon and 1 p.m. until 6 p.m. for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

That on Monday, November 9, 2020, at 3:30 p.m., those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the Committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto; and at this time, the Chair shall allow one 20-minute waiting period, if requested by a member of the committee, pursuant to standing order 132(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Monday, November 16, 2020, and if the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed passed by the committee and shall be deemed reported to and received by the House; and

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

That, when the order for third reading of Bill 218 is called, two hours and 30 minutes of debate shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, with 60 minutes allotted to the government members, 60 minutes allotted to the official opposition members, and 30 minutes allotted to the independent members as a group; and at the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That except in the case of a recorded division arising from morning orders of the day, pursuant to standing order 10(c), no deferral of the third reading vote on the bill shall be permitted.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Ms. Khanjin has moved government notice of motion number 92.

Would you like to lead off the debate? I turn to the member from Barrie–Innisfil.

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** Over the past few weeks, when we're not in the Legislature, I take the time to speak to many local businesses and people who have many questions when it comes to the coronavirus and COVID-19. Many of the things that we're doing in this bill is a result of speaking to those individuals. Whether they came to the finance committee over the summer or whether we talked to them in our neighbourhoods, we owe it to all Ontarians to get straight to work, work together and wait no further to get this done because they're working hard, and they deserve that their taxes go towards a hard-working government and Legislature.

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

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** You guys aren't taking more time?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Well, they didn't say they were sharing their time, so further debate? I turn to the member from Timmins.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Mr. Speaker, it was like the one-minute waltz.

Anyway, I just want to take a little bit of time in order to go through this time-allocation motion that the government has put forward. I've got to say, we've had this discussion during the actual debate on the bill that there are a number of things in here that you really are left sort scratching your head as to what we are doing. What does making these types of changes have to do with what's going on in regard to the pandemic?

The government is saying that it wants to be able to stop the ranked-balloting system, something that was accepted by the people of London and is being accepted by other communities by way of referendum. I think the simple question we have to ask ourselves is, what does that have to do with the pandemic? There are people out there—and the member was correct in pointing out that businesses and individuals in Ontario, a number of them, are having great difficulty adjusting to the pandemic and the reality of what it has meant to their lives and what it has done to their businesses. But if you're a small business somewhere in Ontario or you're an individual somewhere in Ontario that's been affected by the pandemic, you say to yourself, "What does this have to do with my situation?" Clearly, it doesn't have a heck of a lot to do; it has to do with a ranked ballot system.

The city of London, some time ago, decided that it wanted to go the route of a ranked ballot. It was a decision that they made as a municipality. As I said earlier, during the actual debate on the bill—I made the point that the ability to decide how one municipality is going to deal with the election of their elected officials is a decision that they should have the ability to make. As a New Democrat, as a legislator and an Ontarian, I believe that is a decision best left to the municipality. How Toronto or Timmins or Hearst or London or Kitchener-Waterloo want to be able to deal with how they elect their officials at the council chamber and as mayor is going to be a decision that each municipality makes for their own reasons. Who are we as a Legislature to come in and impose the Premier's view on what it is that they can or can't do when it comes to how they choose their electoral system?

The second point that I would make is simply this. As I said earlier, unfortunately, our country has sent many people off to various—the First World War, Second World War, Korean War, police actions around the world, and many Canadians have died as a result of their service to our country. One of the underlying things that you learn as a soldier is that you go and fight not only to defend your country but to defend our way of life and our democracy. I served with the Royal 22nd, and, before that, I was with the Algonquin Regiment as a reservist, and they always instilled in us—to the soldier—that you serve because you're there to protect your democracy and to give the public the opportunity to make the decisions that need to be made about how we govern ourselves. It just seems to me, if we're all here—and I think we all agree; we all respect veterans. I think all of us on both sides of the House understand the valuable contribution and the sacrifice veterans have made to this country in order to give us the ability to make these decisions. I think, in respect for them, we have to say, "If London wants to do it this particular way and Toronto wants to do it a different way, that's entirely up to them." It should be a municipal decision.

The other thing is that the amount of time that we're going to get on committee by way of this time allocation motion is somewhat problematic, because what we're going to end up with is—cities like London that have already spent money in order to be able to put in place the ranked-ballot system are being told, by way of this legislation, that they're going to have to undo it, after having put in the system. And there are other municipalities that are going the way of moving to a ranked-ballot system. Like or dislike ranked balloting—to me that's not the issue. You may like it or dislike it. You may be in favour of first past the post or ranked ballot or mixed member proportional or whatever it might be. That's fair. The point is, the city of London, which has already made the decision, is now going to be told they've got to change their system, and we have a mere day at committee for them to show up. When they come, there are going to be three presenters at the same time making, essentially—I think they're all seven-minute presentations, if I remember the time allocation motion properly, and a total of one hour for the entire thing. So each presenter gets seven minutes, then the two official parties—the government and the official opposition—get the bulk of the time to ask questions, and then some time is allotted to the independents.

You would think that for a city like London, which has gone through the expense of putting in place their ranked-ballot system, they'd be afforded some sort of ability to come and make the argument why they think this is good or bad. I would think that they would think it's bad. I don't think it respects local democracy—and this from a government that says, "We're all about respecting local democracy and working together." This doesn't demonstrate that this government wants to work together. This demonstrates that the government wants to impose its will. Do they have the right to do that? Yes, they have a majority in the House; I do understand. But you also have a moral

responsibility, I believe, to live up to your words. When the Premier says—and I listen to the government House leader, my esteemed colleague, talk about, "We want to work together. Come on. Let's get on side. Let's do things together." I like those words. I think those are meaningful words. But you have to put meaningful actions to those words. Doing these types of bills—don't be surprised if the official opposition and, I would argue, probably the independents as well are opposed, because it has nothing to do with the whole issue of the pandemic and has everything to do with the government imposing its will, and I think that is just simply the wrong thing to do. We're going to have one day for all of the presenters to come in to talk about that, and all of the presenters to be able to come and talk about how we're going to change the way that we deal with liability in the province of Ontario.

**1550**

Now, the government says there is a problem, and we agree with the government. As a matter of fact, a number of our members have actually provided you letters to say there's a real problem because insurance companies will not insure certain groups and organizations, for example, to utilize public facilities in order to hold their events. It's somewhat to do with the pandemic, but not entirely. Insurance companies have been trying to lessen their liability to have to pay out claims, so they either raise their prices through the roof, or they say, "No, we're not going to insure you." Rather than dealing with this issue at the insurance side of the equation, the government says, "Oh, we know what to do. We're just going to limit the ability for people to sue and lower the threshold." You've got to ask yourself, "Why do it that way?"

The issue is, they can't get insurance, so let's deal with the insurance issue. That's really what's at question here. If you're a particular organization, let's say, the Special Olympics or anybody like that, as has been raised by a number of members who have talked about organizations in their ridings—well, let's deal with making sure they're able to get the type of liability insurance they need to operate, because clearly it's pretty hard to operate if you don't have liability insurance, in the event something should happen.

Now, the government is saying, "Oh, yeah, but this is not going to get in the way of us coming after the bad apples." Yes, it does. When you read this legislation and look at what the legislation does, it changes the threshold of when you can sue, so that an individual, a corporation or the government of Ontario, if they do something grossly negligent—in other words, they disregard the law or disregard what they were supposed to do by regulation when it comes to running their institution or doing whatever it might be—the government is now changing the threshold and lowering it considerably. All you have to have is good faith that you've done the right thing, and that you didn't want to put anyone in danger when it comes to what happened with COVID-19. We already know there are a number of lawsuits that are currently working their way towards the courts—some of them are in the courts now—where long-term-care facilities have been alleged to

have been grossly negligent when it comes to providing care to the people they were supposed to take care of.

There's a presumption in law that says that if I bring my parent, my loved one, to the long-term-care facility, in this case, there's a reasonable expectation they're going to follow the rules, the law, and they're going to do what has to be done to make my loved one safe. So the reasonable expectation threshold is one that's there to make sure they have to live up to their responsibilities under the law, and what the government is saying, "No, no, no, we don't have to have regard to that anymore—you know, as long as you tried."

Well, that's a very different threshold. The threshold is much, much lower. They've changed it so that if I wanted to go to court because my loved one was harmed or killed as a result of an action in a long-term-care facility or anywhere else, and it was gross negligence or there was complete neglect of the law, that in fact, you have an ability to get to court because you're able to prove or at least get the chance to go to court to make your case to prove that they didn't do what they were supposed to do, and there was a reasonable expectation when I brought my loved one there that there was going to be those safety protocols in place to make sure that my loved one is taken care of—proper care, etc. The government is now saying, "Oh, no, as long as you try," so the threshold is much, much lower.

I think we're not the only ones who have a problem with this. There are a lot of people in the public who have a problem, and the government is limiting the amount of time that we're going to committee. So you've got to say to yourself, "Why are they limiting the amount of time to committee?" They know they're going to get people pushing back. Yes, you're going to have some people coming forward that the government is going to line up to say, "This is great stuff. We love it." I expect we're going to get some of that. But there are going to be a lot of people who are going to want to come to committee to say quite a different story and what concerns them.

What about all of these families who are currently trying to get before the courts or are before the courts in order to have their case heard? They're now in the position—if this bill becomes law—that retroactively, they're going to lose their right to go to court. It just seems to me, for a government, again, that says, "We want to respect the public. We want to work with the opposition, and we want to work with the public"—that's not working with anybody. That's just you imposing your will and trying to protect yourself, because it's also the government that's protected by this legislation. The ministers and the deputy ministers and staff and others could be in a situation, if there was gross negligence, of not being held to account before the courts. I think there are a lot of people who would see that as not being very reasonable when it comes to it.

You would hope that the government would allow proper time at committee to be able to at least give people their say. The House is going to be here until probably the second week of December, according to the calendar. It's

not as if we couldn't have had a few more days of hearings in order to give the public the chance to have their say. The government, with this time allocation motion, is very much limiting the ability for people to come before committee to have their say. I just think, for a government that is trying to say, "We want to work with the public, and we want to be transparent," it ain't very transparent. You're not working very well with the public when you have a truncated process.

The government will argue, "Oh, yes, but we need to move on and get things done. We need to be efficient" etc. Well, you're going to get the bill, and instead of getting it by—what's the date on this thing? I think it's November 9—whenever it's ordered back to the House, which would be sometime after the 9th. The government could have delayed the whole thing by a week or two, and it wouldn't have made that much of a difference, in order to provide proper time to be able to have public hearings so that people can have their say and, more important, to listen.

The other point I want to make—I know there are a few other people who want to speak to this, and we'll have our other members speak to it. The government says, "I don't know why the NDP is mad, because we're just doing what British Columbia did." No, British Columbia didn't do this. If you read the emergency orders drafted by the government of British Columbia, they did not change the threshold when it comes to the ability to sue. They didn't go from "reasonable expectation" to "good faith." Essentially, they left the reasonable expectation principle within the legislation, and they provided some ability to protect people for things that were not in their control. I think we could understand that logic, if that's what the government had wanted to do. But the government has moved in a way that goes far beyond what they need to do to deal with this issue.

First, they should have dealt with the problem of insurance companies. The insurance companies are trying to find—before and during this pandemic—ways not to insure people or to raise the prices to the point of being unaffordable. I have, in my riding, and I'm sure a lot of you have the same thing, which is kind of related to this—you have small operators who own a mechanical shovel or snow removal equipment, and they need to have liability insurance to be able to get onto public properties to be able to do the work that they've got to do. If you're going to do the snow at the local mall or at the schoolyard or at the municipal lot or at the hospital parking lot or whatever, you need to have liability insurance. The insurance companies are now saying, "If you don't have revenue of \$700,000 to \$750,000, we're not going to insure you." Essentially, they're knocking all of these small independents out of the market. So if you own a piece of equipment that could be a million and a half bucks, two million bucks, and you can't work because you cannot get liability insurance to pay the bills—and the only way that you would be able to get insured is if you have revenue above \$700,000 or \$750,000. That's a case where insurance companies are saying to themselves, "I would rather deal with fewer players than more players and have larger

companies that have deeper pockets.” That’s essentially what they’re doing. As a result, all of these smaller contractors this winter are going to be out of business. And it’s already starting, because we’re getting the calls in my office—I’m sure you’re getting calls in your offices, on both sides of the House—where those small independent contractors can’t get liability insurance.

**1600**

Again, I say to the government across the way, is there a problem? Absolutely. There’s a problem on the insurance side. If the government wanted to work and do what they say they want to do, which is to work in conjunction with the opposition and work with the public and, “All together, let’s get the best thing done for the public,” well, let’s deal with the problem. Let’s deal with the actual insurance problem.

Those are my comments on this particular part of the debate. I know others want to speak, but again, I just have to say that it’s really sad that we’re not taking the proper time at committee to give those who are concerned about this bill the opportunity to come before committee and have their say. Does the government have the right to pass their laws? Of course they do. They’ve got a majority. I understand that. But at the very least, we should be listening to them. If I was the city of London, which spent a lot of money—not a lot of money, but some money—to get to where they went with the ranked ballot system, I would be somewhat upset at having to undo everything as a result of the government’s decision to enforce what they believe should be the system in municipalities when it comes to being elected.

With that Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the rest of the debate.

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

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I’m rising to speak to the time allocation motion on Bill 218. One of the things I find so offensive about Bill 218 is that the government is using the heavy hand of big government to take away a democratic right from local municipalities by taking away their right to ranked ballots. Now, with this time allocation motion, they’re actually going to limit public hearings to basically 15 people over six hours.

Speaker, I remember the day that the ranked ballot legislation passed in this House. I was here. I was sitting in the gallery right up there, and this place was packed full of citizens who wanted the democratic right to a ranked ballot. Now it’s being yanked away from them by this government, not even having the courtesy or the decency of having public hearings so that all those people who filled these galleries can come and be heard.

Quite frankly, I think we need that kind of public consultation, because the government members seem very confused about what ranked ballots even are. They keep trying to compare them to proportional representation. I want to be clear with the members opposite: Ranked ballots are not proportional representation. I want proportional representation way more than ranked ballots.

**Hon. Bill Walker:** You would.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I would want proportional representation. I think we need some committee hearings on this bill so that the members opposite actually understand what ranked ballots are. Maybe if we had more than six hours of public hearings, they would have a better understanding of what it is.

The members opposite are comparing this to the 2007 referendum, so let’s look at the public consultation that happened in 2007. Some 104 people participated as a part of the citizens’ assembly. They spent 30 hours a month working on it. They held 41 public consultations. Three thousand people in this province gave deputations orally and 2,152 gave written submissions. And this government is saying that 15 people can come in over six hours and give input into this bill. It’s wrong.

I find it offensive that the government keeps trying to put a price tag on it. The price of the fixed cost of bringing in ranked ballots for the city of London is 10 cents an elector. The public consultation costs increased it to \$2 per voter. That’s the part that the government is taking away, the public consultation part of it. I find it offensive that the government would actually put a price tag on democracy in such a way. I think improving local democracy is worth 10 cents, and I think if we had proper public hearings on this bill, that’s what person after person would say at committee.

I also find it outrageous that people who lost loved ones—the almost 2,000 people we’ve lost in long-term care—those folks won’t have an opportunity to talk about how their access to justice is being taken away.

I just want to read a quote from Cathy Parkes, who lost her father in long-term care. This is what she said about Bill 218: “It’s another kick-them-when-they’re-down moment.”

“It makes me feel like his death was just another number, another statistic and it means absolutely nothing.”

I’m sure Cathy and numerous other Ontarians who lost their loved ones in the first wave of COVID would like to come to committee and talk about how Bill 218 takes their access to justice away from them. But, Speaker, unfortunately, they probably won’t have time, because this bill is being time-allocated and we’re only having six hours of public hearings.

Speaker, that’s wrong. It’s why I’ll be voting against this time allocation motion. It’s why I’ll be voting against Bill 218.

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

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It is shocking, actually, to be standing in this Legislature in a pandemic and have to debate the pushing through, the time allocation, of a piece of legislation which most Ontarians find so offensive.

The process that was laid out by the member from Barrie–Innisfil around where this bill will go and how it will go to committee and that 15 people, for six hours, will have their opportunity to speak about Bill 218 is truly—it reminds me of when the member from Eglinton–Lawrence said that we have a glut of democracy in this province. This is so offensive to the people who we are elected to

serve. Don't let democracy get in your way of actually creating legislation that will help people in this province.

I do want to say, as an individual who was on the finance committee through June, July, August and September, where we had three delegations per session and then we all had a short amount of time to address the concerns of the deputants, it was really quite disrespectful to them as business owners, as leaders in their communities, to come forward where they actually had to compete for that time.

I want to tell the government something right now. I have 50 families who want to come and speak to this piece of legislation, because 50 family members died in a Revera home in Kitchener. Fifty families are waiting for justice. Fifty families read this legislation and reached out to the member for Kitchener Centre and my offices and said, "Please don't let this happen. Please don't let this happen," I have to say.

I want to tell you a little bit about why the legislation is actually so offensive.

#### *Interjections.*

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I don't know if our—

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

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** There are three major things, and I'm going to deal with two parts: one, the way that this government is addressing the negligence portion on a go-forward basis, and then I'm going to address the affront to democracy in how this government is repealing the ranked ballots.

For those of you at home, this is really important. Bill 218, the so-called Supporting Ontario's Recovery and Municipal Elections Act, redefines the definition of "person" in this piece of legislation. "Person" is defined expansively in the bill and specifically includes corporations and government. Make no mistake about it: Bill 218 is only about protecting those long-term-care homes and only protecting this government and their negligence in how they address COVID-19, particularly with regard to the 1,977 seniors who died in care.

The other part—and I'm just going to get to the legislation in a second—is that there is a major issue here that relates to money, to where tax dollars went during this crisis. Perhaps we might not have had a full picture of how bad it was in these homes had the Canadian Armed Forces not gone into these places and revealed the report. Now, I've read this report. I know the Speaker has read the report. When you read that report, if you have a heart, then you have an ethical and a moral responsibility to actually put measures into place to never let that happen again in the province of Ontario.

**1610**

There are three major for-profit long-term-care homes in Ontario. They are Revera, Extencicare and Chartwell. This was in the paper three months ago, so it's old news, but it says that Ontario's top private nursing homes could take home \$59 million in Ontario tax dollars following COVID-19 deaths, and two of the companies say that the

Ontario government's COVID-19 support helped offset their increased costs.

"Three of Ontario's biggest private nursing home companies are set to pay out up to \$59 million to shareholders this quarter despite hundreds of COVID-19 deaths at their facilities.

"Chartwell, Sienna and Extencicare are three of the province's biggest for-profit long-term care companies and also among the hardest rocked by the ongoing coronavirus pandemic."

Let's remember that in those for-profit homes where profit comes before care, three out of four deaths happened in Ontario. Let's remember that as we rush through a piece of legislation that protects those very corporations.

"According to the Toronto Star, the three companies have paid out over \$1.5 billion in dividends to shareholders over the past decade.

"But a new analysis of the corporate profiles of all three companies shows the three big nursing companies are forecasted to pay out as much as \$59 million per quarter.

"Paying corporate shareholders millions upon millions of dollars in the middle of a pandemic, while residents and workers were dying, is simply heartless." This is from the SEIU health care president, Sharleen Stewart.

"They could have used that money to hire more staff, to buy PPE, to upgrade infrastructure, or to give low-paid workers a permanent raise, instead, they did none of that."

So you have, really, a very clear picture of who this government is actually working for; this legislation actually enshrines their priorities: It is the corporations who are in the long-term-care business who did not follow through on their responsibility. There was no oversight on those corporations. Not only that, but to add insult to injury, tax dollars went into those homes and then were actually transferred to shareholders. This is happening in the province of Ontario, but what does this government do? They bring forward a piece of legislation that protects those corporations.

In Bill 218, the definition of "good-faith effort" is torqued by the government here. It is no longer required that the effort be reasonable in the circumstances, a key-stone of negligence law in Canada for the past 100 years. Instead, the standard is now subjective: Was the effort honest? In the words of one practitioner, the definition is not only confusing but also vacuous, given that the defendant must only establish an honest effort in meeting deficient standards.

I want to interrupt myself on this, because even today, we saw the government change the terms of reference for the long-term-care commission. Nurses and PSWs were nervous about coming forward because they are not protected. When the very people who are on the front lines, who are in these homes, some of them wrapped in garbage bags at the very beginning of COVID-19 because they did not have PPE, because that was not provided to them—when these people have the courage to come forward and speak truth to power, they are not protected. So what does this government do? They say, "Oh, we're just going to make it confidential."

PSWs and nurses and front-line health care workers in long-term care, especially in these corporate environments, are absolutely terrified to speak up. They do so on an anonymous basis, and the government says, “Oh, you’re just making that up.” But no, I want to be really clear: We believe the front-line health care workers when they have spoken truth to power. We believe they need to be protected.

The fact that the government has to make these confidential—now, of course, the lack of transparency with this long-term-care commission is appalling. The very people in this province who are just—their grief has no place to go. They were denied a public inquiry. The long-term-care commission is essentially happening behind closed doors. We find out things much later. And then the government brings in a piece of legislation which denies them access to the courts.

This is a government that is very well acquainted with the courts, you must admit. The midwives have had to take you to court, the teachers, even a student who wanted equality in the education system. You remember that student, Mr. Speaker. Even stickers on gas tanks had to go to court. But for the rest of the citizens in the province of Ontario who went through hell, this government has denied them access to the courts. It is a sad, sad day. It’s a very cold and rainy and dark and depressing day out there, and this legislation fits very much into that model, I have to tell you.

The definition of “person” is now expanded to corporations and governments, so you’re all protected—even the minister who took an oath to protect the very people in long-term care. The definition of “gross negligence” is enshrined in here. “Gross negligence” is not a concept in Canadian negligence law. Courts considered looking at using this standard in some circumstances 30 or 40 years ago, and in the end declined to do so. In other areas of law, this has been interpreted to mean an extreme departure from the standards a reasonable person in the circumstances would uphold.

I didn’t even get a chance to speak to this legislation, so I’m happy to be able to bring the voices of those 50 families who have shared their stories with us, with opposition members—I’m sure the government side has heard these stories. They are everywhere. You would have to be intentionally and actively not listening to people in your ridings to not hear this.

I’m thinking of Marie Tripp, who’s a family member. She shared her view. She said, “What Ford has put in this bill, that has nothing to do with long-term care, is stripping the rights of families being a voice for our loved ones who have passed in long-term care. This is not how I was raised by the generation before me. I was taught to stand up for what’s right and to fix the wrongs.” This Premier “should not be allowed to get this pushed through to protect the pockets of investors in long-term care. His job is to protect the residents of long-term care with clarity and accountability.”

Darlene Thomas is another family member. She said, “I am disgusted and appalled reading it. My grandmother

died alone and under deplorable conditions at Orchard Villa. We were not allowed to touch or even go close to her casket at her funeral. What sort of goodbye or closure is that? Now the government wants to protect these companies? How is it fair for families of loved ones that died or continue to live in these facilities? Where is the justice?”

“Where is the justice?” This is what the people of this province want. This is what the people of this province deserve. But what do they get? They get a piece of legislation which protects those corporations that, quite honestly, were neglectful of their duties—as was the government neglectful of their duties by not inspecting those homes.

The 2019 Auditor General’s report came out—and clearly, I need to get a new life because I did read it. In 2019, she reported that five seniors died in a long-term-care home. So this has been a crisis that has been—obviously, it is now part of the fabric of our province. We must fix it. Will Bill 218 fix it? Of course it won’t. In fact, Bill 218 will only enshrine the shameful and neglectful state of affairs in our long-term-care homes.

The fact that the people of Kitchener-Waterloo, at Forest Heights, and those 50 families who will never get an opportunity to speak truth to power—that is my job, right here and right now, and that is what every member of this NDP caucus does.

On the ranked ballots—my colleague and friend from Sudbury just received this today. People are just hearing that you’re rushing this legislation through, so they’re madly trying to get us to speak up for them. Ashley said, “Hi Jamie, I’m a resident of Sudbury concerned about the legislation to do away with ranked ballots.

“I am against this bill because I don’t believe the provincial government should be interfering in municipal elections. The government previously said this measure will keep the electoral process consistent across municipal, provincial and federal elections. This demonstrates to me the short-sighted belief that made-in-Toronto policies are the right fit for all communities in Ontario.”

She goes on to say, “For the next municipal election I’m already hearing people being discouraged from running because people don’t want a repeat of last time. In order to protect and respect the democratic process, the provincial government needs to amend this bill.”

**1620**

So people are paying attention. They see right through what this government is doing—and the fact that no member is willing to challenge the government on this. You’re willing to challenge the medical officer of health on when businesses should open and when they shouldn’t. You’re willing to challenge the municipal levels of government, but you’re not willing to look internally and have a real and honest conversation about what you are doing.

This is a sad day in the history of this province. People are going to remember it because we are not going to let them forget it.

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

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** The passage of Bill 218 will mark a very dark moment in our history. It will mark a very ugly milestone in our history. Some 170 years ago, the people of Ontario demanded responsible government, and they got it. Bill 218 ends responsible government as we know it. Bill 218 undermines and makes a mockery of the concept of ministerial responsibility. Bill 218 allows the government to conceal any incompetence, any wrongdoing, or any consequence or any remedy for incompetence and wrongdoing.

These are not the hallmarks of a responsible government. Let's remember, they have killed the concept of a public inquiry to find out why those thousands of elderly people died prematurely in long-term care. They've prevented people from learning and understanding what and how their actions may have contributed to the outcomes of COVID and their policies. They've also now removed any civil remedy for anybody who has felt that their policies may have been a contributing factor to the premature death of the elderly.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** And some people may laugh about 2,000 deaths over on the other side. I don't laugh about it. I think it's a tragic consequence of what this government has done, and they are refusing—refusing—to allow anyone to have any scrutiny over their actions.

This bill is called the supporting Ontario's recovery act. It is better stated as "concealing government actions through COVID," for that is its only purpose. Its only function is to prevent an inquiry into what has happened in COVID—not just for this government, but also for the broader public knowledge about how we ought to respond to crises. Should we respond the way this government has in the next one? We will never know, because we aren't allowed to examine and evaluate what has happened.

I find this just a brazen attack on responsible government, a brazen attack on the rule of law and a complete extinguishing of our concepts of common law. I am—the words cannot be found to describe my disappointment in those on the other side or for any member who would support this bill in any fashion. If there were spine and conviction, they'd be kicked out of caucus because they should be voting against this bill.

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

**Ms. Rima Berns-McGown:** One day, when the annals of this government are written, they're going to record the utter disregard that the government has for the people, the disrespect, because over and over and over again, they do end-runs around democracy. They shorten debate. They don't listen to what people have to say. Here, we have two instances of it: one where they are rubbing salt in the wounds of grieving families by not allowing them to sue the corporations that have permitted acts that resulted in negligence and the deaths of their loved ones; and secondly, by denying the right of municipalities to choose the way that they vote.

I would like to take a few minutes to read into the record some correspondence from my constituents about the way

that this bill is dealing with ranked ballots. This is from Andrew Butash:

"I'm writing to oppose electoral changes being shamelessly tacked onto the supporting Ontario's recovery act, which bans municipalities from using ranked ballots in their elections. This bill is about COVID relief. What on earth does banning ranked ballots have to do with COVID relief? This makes no sense whatsoever. It's a shameless attempt at simply banning electoral reform that the province doesn't like, and the fact that it is tacked onto the end of a bill about COVID relief makes it plainly obvious that they know" darn "well that this is completely ridiculous and are simply trying to hide it.

"Using a COVID relief bill to sneak this in is outrageous. It's an attack on our elections, the very foundation of our democracy, wrapped up in a bill that nobody wants to go against for fear of being seen as preventing an economic recovery for the province. There is no justification for this. Please work to get this changed or ... detached from the supporting Ontario's recovery act."

This is from Karyn Riehl:

"I strongly oppose the attack" the government is "making on democracy, and the disrespect" they "are showing to Ontarians by banning the use of ranked ballots.

"Now, in the middle of a pandemic, is not the time to power trip and take away an individual municipality's choice to either explore or implement ranked ballots. Trying to sneak it into Bill 218 and pass it as fast as possible is underhanded and wrong.

"Do the right thing and take it out."

This is from Sarah Hutchinson:

"I heard the Ford government is trying to ban ranked ballots for municipalities. I would like to state that I strongly oppose a ban on ranked ballots as I believe they are the most democratic way to elect officials.

"In fact," Sarah says, "I think ranked ballots should be expanded to provincial voting as well."

This is from Jeffrey Levitt:

"Hi Rima,

"It is so disappointing to see Doug Ford, once again, unilaterally interfere in how Toronto governs itself by proposing in Bill 218 to remove the power of the city to adopt a ranked ballot system of voting.

"This runs completely counter to the preamble to the City of Toronto Act, 2006 ... which recognizes the importance of provincial-city consultation, and that the city is fully capable of making decisions about how to govern itself..."

"How much more meddling by Ford in the city's government must we endure?"

"Rima, I hope you will speak up for the autonomy of the city, as envisioned in the preamble of the City of Toronto Act."

These letters indicate what many other people have expressed: There is just extreme distress at the disregard that this government consistently shows to the people of Ontario.

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

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** When I first heard that the government was going to try to meddle in municipal elections under the veil of COVID recovery, I wish I could say that I was surprised, but in the six months or so that I have been here, this is exactly the kind of tactic the government has taken each and every time. For a government that proposes that it is a government for the people, it has consistently and regularly demonstrated that it has no interest in listening to the people. A government that wants to be for the people will let the people at the most local level make the decisions.

Now, in perfect honesty, Mr. Speaker, I don't know that I would support ranked ballots in Ottawa, but I do know that I think that the city of Ottawa is a mature enough municipality, a mature enough order of government, to make that decision on their own.

1630

This is a government that will let cities like Ottawa and Toronto and London borrow billions of dollars. This is a government that will let those cities raise taxes. This is a government that will allow those cities to make any number of decisions each and every day of the week.

In fact, right now, as we speak today, the city of London is meeting, and an item on their agenda is to discuss the impact that this government bill will have on their local democracy. And it's not just about how they're going to go about choosing their city councillors and their mayor, their local elected officials; it's about what this bill is going to cost them as a municipality. I wonder if the government even bothered to call them to see, "Will it cost you money to go back?" They talk about the money they're going to save by stopping municipalities from changing the way they vote, but they haven't discussed at all what this might cost the city of London to go back to first past the post.

I'm very concerned and frustrated, Mr. Speaker, that the government continues to take this paternalistic view of municipalities, this father-knows-best perspective on how Ontarians run their cities. Is the government going to start intervening in snow clearing next? Are they going to stop cities from borrowing money to build infrastructure? We have elections at the local level for a reason: to give those representatives—councillors, mayors, aldermen, wardens etc.—the power and the ability to make these decisions. A government for the people would recognize the importance and the value of local democracy, and not continue to trample on it.

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

**Mr. Jamie West:** I'm pleased to rise to speak about this time allocation motion. I'm a little frustrated that we have to. The member prior talked about the Conservative slogan. I think maybe the slogan is short for "Forgot the people."

This debate—I was here Thursday morning when we first had the lead debate on it. We don't have debate on Fridays, as you know, Speaker. And Monday afternoon, I was here when they moved to close debate. That's how quickly they're ramming this through, when you talk about "Forgot the people."

When the member from Waterloo got up and talked about the 50 families who died in long-term care, the 50 families who don't have a voice, and that she hadn't had time to even speak to this debate, that talks about forgetting people.

I had a member, the member from Waterloo, read out this statement because I wasn't sure if I'd have time to get up to speak to this. I had one of my constituents from Sudbury, named Ashley, talk about her concerns with schedule 2 about municipalities and control and how municipalities elect their leaders. She thought the debate was just starting. She didn't know the government was ramming this through and forcing it through as quickly as possible. This time allocation—the government that proclaims that they're for the people and that I'm telling you have forgotten the people, completely forgotten the people—they are ramming this through basically in a day.

The government member led this debate with an hour on the clock and spoke for barely two minutes, because they're embarrassed by this bill. They're embarrassed, and they want it gone before the news reports on it, before people pick up on it, before people hold them accountable, and I guarantee you that everyone on this side of the House is going to ensure that you're held accountable and nobody forgets what you did here.

It's one day, and one day is generous because it's going to be six hours. About 15 people are going to be able to speak to both schedules—15 people. Most people won't be able to hear about it because the notice to even know that you want to speak about it is so short. They ram every single thing through. It's a Conservative trademark to rush through, to not listen to anybody and to do what they want.

The two schedules—the first one is on long-term care. The members before me talked about this, but I want to be clear: It's not long-term care; it's about liability. That's what this is proposed to be about. But it's really about protecting the crown, which is the Conservative government, and it's about protecting for-profit long-term-care centres.

I said earlier about the 15 deaths. There have been more than 1,000, almost 2,000 long-term-care deaths; three out of every four happening at for-profit long-term-care centres. The reason the members opposite, the Conservatives, won't make eye contact with me is because they know that nine former Conservative staff members are lobbyists for long-term care. They know that former Premier Mike Harris is sitting on about \$7 million worth of holdings in for-profit long-term care. They know that four of those Conservative staff members bailed on the Conservative Party and went to lobby for for-profit long-term care. They went in the middle of this COVID-19 pandemic because they knew the money was there—ching, ching, ching, ching, ching—and they chased the money. This is embarrassing.

With a municipality, you have voters out there—and I don't think the provincial level has any right to tell voters how to select their municipal leaders. It's none of our business. Municipalities can figure that out. Voters can figure that out. Voters are smarter than this government

gives them credit for. Voters are very, very intelligent. Quite frankly, in terms of saving money—there's only one out of the 444 municipalities that has ranked ballots, so you're costing that municipality a truckload of cash to switch back for an election that's going to happen two years from now. It has nothing to do with COVID-19; it has to do with ensuring that potentially Conservative-leaning members get elected at the municipal level. Don't pretend it's anything different.

You know you're ashamed of this. And we know you're ashamed of this, because the press release that was given out to CTV and CBC and the Sun and all the large media stations didn't even mention schedule 2, about municipal elections. You were hoping to skid it below—because you couched this as “COVID-19 recovery.” Nobody believes you. You get a gold star for creative writing on your titles, but your bill doesn't hold up to it.

This has nothing to do with COVID-19 relief. This has everything to do with protecting shareholders, protecting your buddies who are now lobbying for for-profit long-term care and ensuring that, at the municipal level, the Conservatives get to play “father knows best” again, like you did when you were first elected and you meddled in the middle of the Toronto municipal elections back then.

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

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** This is a tragic situation, when we are standing here defending, protecting for-profit long-term-care homes that should take responsibility for the neglect that occurred under the pandemic. Over 1,900 people, including workers who were in those long-term-care homes, died. And here we are, under the guise of a pandemic, making efforts to create legislation to defend—defend—long-term-care homes that have been earning profits on the backs of these vulnerable seniors. It's surreal that we have this kind of bill. We've called on this government to at least take that out of the bill. They've done some of this in the past with legislation, when there has been public pressure to do this, so it is something they could do. They're rushing it through, again, under the agreement that COVID-19 bills would get priority and we'd all get them through the Legislature. This isn't right.

What we need to be doing is—how do we avoid these lawsuits? That's the question this government should be asking themselves: How do you avoid a lawsuit in long-term care?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** The Time to Care Act.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** The Time to Care Act, Bill 13. There you go. If you implement four hours of legislated hands-on care per resident per day, you wouldn't have these lawsuits, because you'd have the workforce to deliver the care that's expected. When you take your frail loved one with acute, complex needs into long-term care, you expect a level of care—it's unspoken. Yet you're reducing that expectation, you're reducing that responsibility by putting this legislation through and making it possible for long-term-care homes to shield themselves from a lawsuit by making it impossible, so hard, for families to get justice.

1640

Does this government have the ability to put themselves in somebody else's shoes, in the shoes of that family member who watched their loved one deteriorate, who wasn't there when their loved one died alone in conditions that were truly deplorable? The Canadian Armed Forces pulled those sheets back and showed that to you, so why are we debating this bill here to protect for-profits, to protect negligence? There should be accountability for these families for the people who died, honouring those people, not stripping away the family's right to hold them accountable. It's an atrocity; it really is. Like I said, it's surreal that this is happening today.

For decades, there have been calls for changes to long-term care. Since I've been elected, I've been calling for those changes. I have been highlighting the problems. They're real. These are real people. Long-term care is a human service. We haven't done our job if we haven't protected those people and we haven't provided the tools for those workers who work so hard—and most of them are women, racialized women, who go in there—and men, too. I want to thank those workers for all the work they do. They've been called health care heroes. They have been health care heroes, not just during the pandemic but all the time.

When you go into health care, you do it because you care. You do it because it's a calling. You do it because you have a heart and you want to take care of someone. Not everybody can do that; not everybody has that in them. So when you are not giving workers the time to do that and then creating this legislation when you should be focusing on legislation like a seniors' advocate, when you should be focusing on legislation like the Till Death Do Us Part act, when you should be focusing on essential caregiver legislation, not just a policy but mandating those things, when you should be focusing on things like Time to Care, that is disappointing. That is truly disappointing.

That is one part of the bill that we think—hopefully when it gets to committee, you'll listen; you'll listen to the presenters and you'll take that out, you'll remove that piece from that bill so that justice can be done, so people can be heard, so the family member that people lost, their name won't be—it won't be in vain, all the suffering they have gone through. Put yourself in their shoes, I ask you. If there was such an injustice, if something happened to one of your loved ones and you knew there were problems there and somebody said, “Well, too bad. It was good intentions, or in good faith. You lose”—I think we can all agree that the worst loss in people's lives is the loss of a loved one. When you lose somebody you love so much and you admired them, you put them up on that pedestal—like your husband; let's just say that. You've spent 60 years with this partner, your wife. You worship the ground they walk on. Now they've gone through a tragedy and you can't get justice for them. How would that make you feel? Awful. It would make me sick to my stomach and bring tears to my eyes that that's okay. I have to say that I hope this government listens during committee. I hope so.

The other part of this bill is, again, that it's affected London, and it's the ranked ballots. The government

doesn't want ranked ballots. They want that removed. The city of London has actually put forward a motion in city hall, and here's one of the things they say: "The city does not support the proposed changes to the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, specifically related to the removal of the option for municipalities to hold a ranked ballot election." You know why? Because they went out and created a ranked ballot system in 2018. I remember when they started that process, and it was quite fast, actually. They did it very quickly and they wanted it to happen. They put it in place and it seemed to work.

Now, the other thing that they're saying in this emergency motion is that the city does "support the principle that each municipality should be able to choose whether or not" to use "first-past-the-post or a ranked" ballot election. So give them the choice. Give them the opportunity to govern themselves municipally like they should be, instead of interfering in what their actions are around elections.

Why would you want to interfere? What interest is it that you have in that interference piece, I ask myself? Did you call London and speak to the mayor and other councillors and get their feedback? How much consultation was done, if any?

I have to ask that question as well about the long-term-care piece. How much consultation was done on long-term care? You have a commission; did you consult the commission? Did you talk to the family members that lost loved ones? Or did you just talk to long-term-care corporations that had an interest in your bill? Did you talk to insurance companies that weren't going to give long-term-care companies liability insurance, and this is your way out?

Did you talk to the Minister of Long-Term Care? What does she say? What are her feelings on this? Because she keeps expressing that her heart goes out to these families. We need more action. You're in a tough space, I understand, but the way we measure the goodness of our society or the right thing to do is when you're in a tough spot and you do the right thing, even though there could be consequences.

But the consequences here are taking away a city's democratic right to pick what election process they use. The consequences here are turning your back on families who have suffered enough. That's just not right.

Tomorrow I'll be debating my Time to Care bill, and there's so much support and there are so many reports after reports. Just last Friday, the CBC reported on the 10 homes that have the highest infractions. In my riding, there were two, Earls Court and Glendale Crossing, and Caressant Care is just out in Woodstock. If everybody remembers, Caressant Care is where the public inquiry—that's where the majority of the deaths happened, and of course there was one in London at Meadow Park. That was the Wettlaufer situation.

These things are only a couple of years ago. Now the pandemic is here, and we have an opportunity to change the course of the future in long-term care so that seniors who are aging—we all know that's happening, in statistics. The demographics are in our faces. But this can be changed.

We need to have change. Just giving money out isn't going to work. You need a plan for it, and Time to Care gives dignity to the people who are receiving that care. It gives respect to the workers who are delivering that care. That's the least you could do. But I can tell you that Time to Care will actually fix more of the problems you have in long-term care. You're going to have fewer complaints from family members—check. Less work, right? That's great. You are going to have fewer complaints to deal with.

I just want to say, in closing, that I hope the city of London and all families and workers bombard this government with presentations, and you prioritize the people that you need to hear from, and not the long-term-care corporations and not the insurance companies, not those people. We know where they stand, but you need to know the people that you're affecting and what's happening, where they stand in this whole legislation, how it makes them—what happens to them.

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

Ms. Khanjin has moved government notice of motion number 92 relating to the allocation of time on 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.

**1650**

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, unless I receive a deferral slip, the bells will ring for—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** I guess I have a deferral slip.

"Pursuant to standing order 30(h), I request that the vote on government motion 92 be deferred until deferred votes on Wednesday, October 28, 2020." It's signed by chief government whip Lorne Coe.

*Vote deferred.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Orders of the day? I recognize the government House leader.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, I'm sure you'll find unanimous consent to see the clock at 6.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to see the clock at 6 o'clock. All those in favour?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Pacific time.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Pacific time—yes, of course.

Thank you. The clock is at 6.

It's time for private members' public business.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS'  
PUBLIC BUSINESS**

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT  
ACT (ELECTRONIC LOGGING  
DEVICES), 2020

LOI DE 2020 MODIFIANT  
LE CODE DE LA ROUTE  
(DISPOSITIFS DE CONSIGNATION  
ÉLECTRONIQUE)

Mr. Thanigasalam moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 223, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act /  
Projet de loi 223, Loi modifiant le Code de la route.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** I turn to the member from Scarborough–Rouge Park.

**Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam:** It is a privilege to stand here today for the second reading of my private member's bill, the Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Electronic Logging Devices), 2020.

I would like to start by expressing my sincere gratitude towards the heroes of Ontario, our essential and front-line workers. They have been working tirelessly since the beginning of this pandemic to ensure the health and well-being of this province. We must never take their work for granted. Moreover, we must also acknowledge the personal sacrifices they make for their jobs and, ultimately, for us. Indeed, this pandemic has made all of us more acutely aware of the importance of their work.

There's another group of workers whose job is equally as important and vital for the well-being of Ontario but who are often invisible to most of us: our great commercial truck drivers. They ensure that our supply chains stay strong, no matter which part of Ontario you live in. They ensure that our drugstores have the medicines people rely on and that our stores do not lack groceries. Just imagine what our province would look like if there were no truck drivers. When the trucks stop, so does Ontario. Our truck drivers are very much the unsung heroes of Ontario.

I have the incredible privilege to be the parliamentary assistant to my dear friend Minister Mulroney, and throughout my time in this position, I have had many discussions and meetings with truck drivers and their representatives. I also know many truck drivers from my riding of Scarborough–Rouge Park. They form the backbone of Ontario's transportation network and are passionate about their work.

A concern I have heard about countless times is the need to modernize the way that truck drivers and their carriers record their daily drive times. They explained that paper logbooks are an outdated and inefficient way of recording kilometres driven. That is why I put forth this bill, which will make electronic logging devices mandatory across Ontario on commercial vehicles and will replace the current paper logs.

Electronic logging devices are important tools that drivers and their carriers can use to accurately track,

monitor and record driven hours, in accordance with the hours-of-service requirements. Currently, the drivers are not permitted to drive more than 13 hours in a 24-hour period and must get at least 10 hours of rest. The unfortunate fact is that there are instances where some carriers have coerced drivers into driving more than their allowed hours and not given adequate time for truckers to rest in between drives. This is impermissible and also dangerous, not just for the drivers but for the people on the road.

We know tiredness and fatigue is one of the leading causes of traffic accidents. By ensuring that commercial truck drivers are adhering to the hours of service, we create a safer road experience for all. This would further ensure that Ontario continues to have some of the safest roads in North America, something that we are all very proud of.

Furthermore, by eliminating manual logs, we significantly lower and ease the administrative burden carriers have to go through when reviewing drivers' paper logbooks, which can take from an hour and a half to several hours, depending on the size of the business. The Canadian Trucking Alliance notes that as a result of the time savings that come with e-logs, truck drivers may be able to drive an extra 160 kilometres a week, translating into an extra earning potential of \$2,000.

Additionally, carriers tend to benefit from this modernization. The Canadian Trucking Alliance has estimated that carriers will achieve substantial savings in time and processing costs as a result of the transition from paper logbooks to electronic logbooks. This will be especially helpful for small carriers, where we know that every dollar and cent counts for their operations.

I was so pleased to hear this confirmed when I reached out to the Ontario Trucking Association before today's debate. Their chair, David Carruth, told me, "By replacing antiquated paper logbooks, mandated third-party certified" electronic logging devices "will improve the road safety performance of the commercial trucking industry by ensuring that all carriers required to manage driver fatigue follow the rules."

Mr. Speaker, in order not to burden this vital industry, the bill sets out that the e-logs used in Ontario will be the same devices used by federal carriers, regulated by Transport Canada. This private member's bill incorporates the existing federal regulations and technical standards in the e-logs that Ontario carriers would use.

Next, I wish to speak on something that touched my heart and that I'm certain also moved all my friends here. As we remember, in April 2018, Canada experienced a national tragedy when we learned of the Humboldt Broncos' bus crash in Saskatchewan, which took the lives of 16 young hockey stars. We often hear of "Where were you?" moments. This was one of those moments for me. I can clearly remember where I was and what went through my mind when I heard the news. As the words came from the television, I could feel my heart cry, and I was overcome by sorrow. I still remember the hockey sticks left outside the doors in my neighbourhood, the green and yellow ribbons people wore on their lapels and the outpouring of love across Canada.

1700

As the investigation into the accident proceeded, I was shocked and disturbed to learn that the truck driver did not have any paper logs to document his hours on that day and the 14 days that preceded the crash—none. Following this finding, the Saskatchewan Coroners Service recommended that commercial trucks should be equipped with electronic logging devices to ensure compliance with hours-of-service requirements. This helps to illustrate the real importance and tangible benefits we can see from the adoption of electronic logging devices in mitigating future accidents and making our roads safer.

Finally, as I was in the process of drafting this bill, I talked to a couple of my friends and family in Scarborough–Rouge Park. Their response was overwhelmingly positive and supportive. They explained the main safety benefits that come with e-logs. For example, electronic logging devices have the potential to reduce fatigue-related collisions in Ontario. Transport Canada estimates that electronic logging devices will be able to reduce fatigue-related collisions by 10% due to increased hours-of-service compliance. Additionally, the Center for Truck and Bus Safety of the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute has found that drivers using electronic logging devices had a significantly lower crash rate, an 11.7% reduction, and a significantly lower preventable crash rate, a 5.1% reduction, than trucks not equipped with electronic drivers' logs.

Secondly, they explained to me how e-logs will create a level playing field for carriers operating in Ontario. Since e-logs are untamperable and provide an accurate digital account of an operator's drive time, carriers will be compliant with existing hours of service. Moreover, they stressed how this bill will make their work better and safer on the roads.

Finally, this takes away the possibility of some employers having fraudulent logbooks and incorrect information, which would ultimately hurt our truck drivers.

In closing, I urge all my colleagues, government, opposition and independent members alike, to support this bill and vote for it. Electronic logging devices are another step we can take together to ensure that Ontario's roads remain some of the safest in North America. But most importantly, we must remember how this bill ultimately protects our heroes on the road from undue pressure or coercion to drive more than what is legally permitted. For all that truck drivers have done for us, not just during the pandemic but even before, we owe them this common-sense safety measure to make their work safer and better.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will be important for truck drivers not only living in my riding of Scarborough–Rouge Park, but also for all the truck drivers across this province.

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

**M. Guy Bourgouin:** Ça me fait plaisir de me lever pour débattre du projet de loi 223.

In a nutshell, the bill amends the Highway Traffic Act to require that operators ensure that each commercial motor vehicle that is under their control is equipped with an electronic logging device.

When it comes to safety, I'm all for it. I travel 10 hours just to come to Queen's Park every week. In my former job, I used to travel Highway 11 and Highway 17, so I know the dangers of Highways 11 and 17, especially right now. Here, the weather—you know how you consider it bad weather? We already had snow; in some places, they had three snowstorms. In fact, the roads were closed in some cases.

So we're for this, because I've seen time and time again, in stretches, trucks in the ditch. Why? Because they fell asleep on the road.

This is why we wonder, and I wonder, why this government had not responded to the multiple stakeholders who have requested implementation of rumble strips. When I made my private member's bill, the expert that was doing a presentation with me and speaking to media—rumble strips save lives. Yet Highway 11, Highway 17, in a lot of places—and they're isolated roads. You have to remember that Highways 17 and 11 are isolated—three hours without seeing anything.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Guy Bourgouin:** Oh, you see a moose, you see a bear. I'm telling you, you're far away, and a lot of it doesn't have broadband. We don't have—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Once you leave Hearst, it gets—

**Mr. Guy Bourgouin:** Oh, once you leave Hearst and you go to Longlac, then forget it, man. You're in a dead zone. So if you get stuck or you go in the ditch because you fell asleep, guess what? There is no service. And at night you might not see a vehicle for a while. So rumble strips are very important.

Une autre question que je me pose—puis, je suis en faveur du projet de loi parce que ça va sauver des vies. Ça va sauver des vies. Pourquoi? Parce que ce n'est pas juste les chauffeurs de camionnage—ce ne sont pas que des camionneurs qu'on parle. Ce sont les familles, ce sont les ceux des voyageurs, des commis, qui se promènent sur la route, puis tout d'un coup ils font des face-à-face, où ils arrivent puis—la majorité des accidents, il faut que vous comprenez, arrivent la nuit. Puis ça représente—je l'ai des chiffres, là—un pourcentage de 11 %, si je ne me trompe pas, si je peux retrouver mes notes. « Head-on collisions, especially at night, account for 12% of total accidents on Highway 11, but account for 69% of total fatalities. » Soixante-neuf pour cent des fatalités? Ce sont des face-à-face. C'est une réalité.

Ce qui fait que, quand on parle de sécurité sur les routes, il ne faut pas juste s'arrêter à des appareils électroniques. We should not just stop at electronics, we should look more—there's more to safety than just electronics.

Northern highways pose specific concerns: two lanes. When there are two lanes—we live this—there's no passing lane. Road maintenance required due to inclement weather. Like I said, we face this continuously.

Highways 11 and 17 are not only the entry point to northern Ontario, but they're also a lifeline. For communities like Kapuskasing, Hearst, Timmins, they're a lifeline. If these roads close, guess what? We're stuck. I've seen two days of road closures. You don't see that around here

in the south, do you? You don't see that around the 400. It would be unacceptable. Highway 11 and Highway 17 are Trans-Canada highways. When we stop for a day or two days, how many millions do we lose as a province—or a country, for that matter? And then, when there's a major action or snowstorm, well, we're left isolated.

We currently have 22 private area maintenance contracts. According to the Auditor General, after the performance-based AMCs were introduced, the winter maintenance service level across the province decreased, leading in some cases to hazardous driving conditions. Again, the highways need to be maintained better. Highways 11 and 17 should be at the same standard as the QEW and the 400.

But these boxes—the owner-operators in my riding will call them “boxes,” les boîtes électroniques. C'est certain que ça répond à un besoin, mais ça ne s'arrête pas juste là. Puis, who's going to pay for them? So you have to think. Yes, the big fleets have the money, but these owner-operators, the mom-and-pops, are already gouged by insurance. They have to pay, because of the insurance policies, and because they have to go through a fleet for training, even though the owner-operator has a son—because they're a mom-and-pop operation, some of their kids have been driving trucks since the age of 18. Now he's 36, and he can't get insured because he has to go through a fleet. Insurance imposes that they have to go through a fleet, so he pays between \$15,000 and \$30,000 extra, instead of paying \$5,000. Think about this: \$15,000 because the insurance company says, “You don't fulfill our obligations, our needs, so you're going to pay extra.”

1710

Vous allez payer—puis ça, c'est une réalité, là. Je peux vous nommer les deux personnes. Ce sont des personnes de mon comté. On parle de Monsieur Dorval.

**M. Gilles Bisson:** Oh, mon Dieu. Lequel?

**M. Guy Bourgouin:** Monsieur Dorval? C'est Gaetan Dorval.

**M. Gilles Bisson:** Oh, Gaetan? Oui, oui.

**Mr. Guy Bourgouin:** People like Gaetan Dorval from Kapuskasing or Peter Larocque from Haileybury are experienced drivers with over 20 years of experience driving and teaching others, but are unable to hire their children, even if they have gone above and beyond the requirements of the provincial mandatory entry-level training, or MELT.

Monsieur Dorval's son, like I said, began his training when he was 18, and he's now 36 and still uninsurable. Monsieur Larocque's son has also gone above and beyond the number of training hours required by the provincial rules. Insurers have told them both that they are well trained and should go get experience with large fleets, because they have more flexibility than owner-operators at small businesses. Again, they pay this extra crazy amount of dollars to be able to insure their kids.

A lot of these owner-operators, by the way—the forest industry is all tied into this. They've made their industry with owner-operators, so if we're killing these owner-operators—insurance is killing them, by the way. Why?

Because they can't afford the costs, so what they're doing is downsizing and downsizing, so they have only one truck. Some of the sons, their kids, say, “Well, I'm not getting into that business, Father. Sorry. I'm going into something else. I won't pay these insurance prices. It's ridiculous.” So what we're doing is, we're also killing the forest industry, because they're tied directly to the trucking industry, the owner-operators. That's the reality. Also—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Guy Bourgouin:** That would be something. That was my plan.

Let me be clear: Workers are remarkable. They're doing all they can. They are not the condition. There is a policy, and it's a legislative problem.

Last year, I tabled a bill that dealt with ensuring improved winter road maintenance on Highways 11 and 17. This was a matter of common sense. On November 19, your government voted against making northern highways safer, including three northern members in cabinet. The member for Scarborough–Rouge Park, who also voted against my bill, said, “It would be premature to pass this bill”—premature.

His colleague the member from Scarborough–Agincourt said that improving winter maintenance on northern highways was “a disservice,” saying it “would cost the taxpayers a great deal of money.” When people say that, because they travel on the 400 or the 401 and they see four- or five-lane highways—you come and take a ride in my riding or up north on the two-lane highway where you're following truckers—two, four, five, six truckers. You're heading to Thunder Bay, you can't see anything and they're right in the middle of the road. And you come to tell me and tell my constituents or any constituents up north that it's a disservice, saying that it would cost the taxpayer too much to have a two-plus-one.

I want to get to the two-plus-one. Multiple projects were brought forward, including the two-plus-one project proposed by the Going the Extra Mile for Safety Committee, the safety group in Temiskaming Shores. A two-plus-one has been successfully implemented in Scandinavian countries. It's more cost-efficient than the usual twinning of highways, and it's used in current road spacing. It makes sense. It saves lives, the same as what the member is proposing, but it is a lot more effective. It helps northern Ontario. It helps everybody in the province, of course, because of less road closures and better maintenance of roads.

It also included the use of rumble strips. I can't emphasize that enough. It's not a huge cost, but rumble strips save lives. The experts have demonstrated that. Everybody who drives on highways where they are, you feel them. If you fall asleep, you can feel them on the highway; you just get this rumble. It wakes you up. If you fall asleep, you would wake up.

That being said, we are supporting this bill. I think it's important. It will save lives; I agree with you. But we have to maybe amend it and look at what we are going to do for the smaller owner-operators who need help to purchase

this piece of equipment, because they can be very expensive.

Merci, monsieur le Président. Ça m'a fait plaisir de parler aujourd'hui.

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

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** I'm very pleased to rise today and speak on Bill 223. It's a private member's bill put forward by my colleague the member for Scarborough–Rouge Park. It's called the Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Electronic Logging Devices).

This is what I think a lot of us love about being in the Legislature and being here for private members' business: We get to learn so much. I'm not an expert on trucking. I've never driven—I don't know if I've ever even been inside of an 18-wheeler. But we're here to make our roads safer for both truck drivers as well as everybody else they're sharing the roads with.

We understand that the federal government has already put forward and has mandated already that truckers use electronic logging devices to keep a log instead of just a logbook by hand, and that's supposed to take effect on June 12, 2021. It's my understanding from the member who is presenting this today that the Ontario legislation will follow the federal. If this is to regulate trucks that are driving within Ontario—so there are different regulatory systems within the provinces and territories and for the entire country. What we're looking to do is to decrease red tape, increase efficiency, increase compliance and, of course, decrease fatigue for our truckers on the road. We understand that that can translate into more than 10% fewer collisions on the road.

I'm reminded that I was in Israel and I drove on a bus, and the bus driver had an electronic logging system, and that was over 10 years ago. So I think we're behind on a lot of electronic, virtual things, and what this pandemic is showing us is that we need to move very, very quickly to implement these types of efficiencies and changes that the public are demanding from us.

The US requires self-certification whereas the Canadian regulation is requiring third-party certification. That, we understand, will have less tampering, of course. FPInnovations is going to be the first body that will certify it, and we're expecting a very rigorous process.

I'm reminded of our Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. He's the member for Nipissing, and he presented a private member's bill that passed to demand better cellphone coverage. We just heard from the member for Mushkegowuk–James Bay. He spoke about the gruelling roads up north and how they already have snow, and I'm reminding everybody about cellphone service. It's not just Internet service so that people can work and learn from home, but as well, to have cellphone services on our roads up north so that people can communicate. How are you going to use this type of technology if you don't have some type of service up there?

I just want to give a shout-out to the Women's Trucking Federation of Canada. Their Twitter name is kind of cute;

it starts with WTF, but then it has a C7 at the end. They are advising and watching out for human trafficking on our roads.

I want to thank everybody who is presenting today and who is supporting the bill, and, of course, I'm looking forward to supporting it as well.

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

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** I want to thank the member from Scarborough–Rouge Park for bringing forward this great bill. This bill, if enacted, would amend the Highway Traffic Act to implement the use of electronic logging devices, also known as ELDs, on commercial vehicles in Ontario.

Speaker, as the expression goes, if you got it, a truck brought it. Trucks and their drivers are vital to our economy. This was highlighted by COVID-19. Our long-haul truck drivers were essential in keeping our stores stocked with food and medical supplies as well as essential PPE. I want to thank all of the Ontario truck drivers across this province who are bringing products to our communities each and every day.

**1720**

But, Speaker, these truck drivers have also experienced their own burdens of red tape. Truck drivers are currently required by the Highway Traffic Act to maintain a daily paper logbook. By moving away from these handwritten paper forms, this bill proposes to reduce red tape and of course make sure of the transition of this regulation into the 21st century.

At the same time, the measures proposed in this bill will increase safety for long-haul truck drivers and those who share the road with them. We know large trucks can be dangerous. According to the Auditor General, "Compared with an average motor vehicle incident, collisions involving commercial vehicles are more likely to result in a fatality."

Speaker, I reached out to Lesley de Repentigny—she is the president and CEO of DriveWise—to discuss this bill and, of course, ELDs. Lesley has spent her entire life promoting safety. She served as an air traffic control officer in the Canadian Forces, and her company, DriveWise, has been an industry disrupter that has delivered innovative solutions to improve safety in high-risk occupations. DriveWise trains 30,000 Canadians annually, including paramedics, firefighters, police, snowplow operators, bus drivers, heavy truck drivers and corporate fleets.

Lesley supports the implementation of ELDs, and of course this bill shows that we are listening. This bill will represent another move that our government is doing to change the regulatory process, to move it into the 21st century. This bill is an example of our government's commitment to reduce red tape and save money, both for the taxpayer and truck operators; increase accountability for operators; and protect individuals from unscrupulous employers, all while not compromising safety.

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

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Right off the get-go, I want to congratulate the member for Scarborough–Rouge Park for

this private member's bill. I've had the opportunity to put forward a number of private member's bills myself. A number of them were passed and successful, and I feel this one here is going to be successful as well.

It's certainly something that we can use on our highways, as the member from the opposition was speaking about in the northern roads. I haven't travelled a lot of them, but I have certainly read lots of stories and have seen some TV shows about them, and I certainly understand. He also spoke about the two-plus-one lanes, and I have observed some of them—not as far north as where he's speaking about, but I have seen some of them.

I want to congratulate the PA to the Minister of Transportation on bringing forward this piece of legislation. It's a very important change for the trucking industry in Ontario and has a number of benefits for provincially regulated carriers in this province. If this legislation is passed, the new provincial requirements for electronic logging devices, or ELDs, will be in alignment with the upcoming changes that federally regulated carriers will be required to follow as of June 12, 2021.

In short, Speaker, as has been mentioned by the PA to the minister, he is proposing that section 190(1) of the Highway Traffic Act be amended so that provincially regulated carriers ensure that each commercial vehicle that is under their control is equipped with an electronic logging device. The PMB also requires that this information being recorded by the ELD is made in accordance with the same Transport Canada regulations: the Technical Standard for Electronic Logging Devices, published by the Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators. These are very well-thought-out changes that will enhance safety and efficiencies in the trucking industry.

Maybe the Speaker would debate this, with his riding in Windsor, but being at at least the second-busiest land crossing border point in my riding of Sarnia–Lambton, I can see this as safer on the 401. The commercial traffic has been back to normal, more or less, for the last two months with COVID, but it's going to get busier again when we do finally come out of COVID, so I think that by shifting to a digital method of hours collection, truck drivers will have regained time that was previously spent filling out paper logbooks, as the PA spoke about.

These changes also help to make sure that carriers are operating fairly and no one is forcing their drivers to work over their allowable hours. He spoke about the Humboldt tragedy in Saskatchewan. Driver fatigue is a very real concern of mine. My riding of Sarnia–Lambton, as I said, sits at the end of Highway 402 at the second-busiest border crossing with the US for truck traffic. I knew I read that somewhere.

We have had a number of issues in recent years in our area, a number of crashes—just before the border there's a little bit of a dip in the road there—all of it attributed, according to the OPP, to driver fatigue. People just get mesmerized by that road and run into the tail end of the truck ahead of them. We've had a number of close calls and a couple of tragedies as well, but we've luckily maintained—it's getting better now. I don't know whether

it's because there's not as much vehicle traffic on there, and it's more the trucks. The OPP are doing a great job there to try and reduce those accidents. They've got overhead signs there that are also warning people. They've spent a lot of money on those as well.

Anything we can do to reduce the risk of future accidents is—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Okay. I guess I'm going to wrap up here. I could go on all day here.

Mr. Speaker, to wrap up, I want to congratulate the PA to the Minister of Transportation for tabling this important bill, and thank the Legislature for supporting it.

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

**Mr. Roman Baber:** I did not intend to speak to the bill today, but I read the bill again and I figured I'd share a couple of personal thoughts.

For 12 years prior to my election, I practised bankruptcy, commercial litigation and insurance law, and in my context of insurance work, I've come across a number of times where at issue was an incident involving a truck. Regretfully, the difference between an incident that doesn't involve a truck and an incident that does involve a truck is often a catastrophe versus a non-catastrophe, a fatality versus a non-fatality, and that creates a lot of issues in insurance and the law, and so I figured I'd weigh in very quickly.

I would thank my friend from Scarborough–Rouge Park and tell him that there's a very good possibility that the piece of legislation that we're going to pass today on second reading will save lives. Make no mistake about it: This piece of legislation will save lives. I'm grateful to you sincerely, and I encourage everyone to vote in favour.

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

**Mr. Stan Cho:** I see I have a lot of time left on the clock to speak to this bill. I know the member for York Centre was very passionate to get his comments on the record, and I'm glad he did because it's important to say that.

I also agree. I think this legislation is going to save lives, but it's also a good use of technology. We can imagine, in our constituency offices, if we were talking to constituents and keeping notes by hand, how inefficient that would be. This is going to lead to better outcomes, and I want to thank the honourable member here for bringing such great legislation to the floor of the Legislature.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Thank you. The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Oh, yes, the two minutes to respond. I'm getting ahead of myself. Oh, my.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Deduct my pay.

I return now to the member for Scarborough–Rouge Park for his two-minute rebuttal.

**Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First off, I would like to start by thanking all the members who spoke in support of this bill: the member from Mushkegowuk–James Bay, the member from Thornhill, the member from Barrie–Innisfil, the member from Sarnia–Lambton, the member from York Centre and, last but not least, the member from Willowdale. Thank you to each and every one of you for your support.

Also, I would like to take this time to thank all the members who are in support of this bill. I'm looking forward to working with each and every member here, to make our roads safer and to protect our unsung heroes of Ontario, our commercial truck drivers.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Thank you. As I was saying, the time provided for private members' public business has expired.

Mr. Thanigasalam has moved second reading of Bill 223, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Pursuant to standing order 101(i), the bill is referred to the Committee of the Whole House, unless the member has another preference to which—the bill could be sent to another committee?

I return to the member from Scarborough–Rouge Park.  
1730

**Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to refer it to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** The member would like to send it to the standing committee. All in favour? Agreed. That's where it will go.

Pursuant to standing order 36, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

## ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

### LONG-TERM CARE

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** The member for Scarborough Southwest has given notice of dissatisfaction regarding a question she posed to the Minister of Long-Term Care. The member for Scarborough Southwest will have up to five minutes to state her case, and a member of the opposition will have up to five minutes to respond.

I turn now to the member from Scarborough Southwest.

**Ms. Doly Begum:** This morning, I asked the minister a question regarding some abuse that we noticed in a CBC Marketplace documentary that aired at the end of last week. The home that was in that documentary was Craiglee Nursing Home, which is in my riding of

Scarborough Southwest. The reason I wanted to bring this up is because we have had many incidents like these.

The first thing that I want to address is what happened in Craiglee Nursing Home, where we saw an 82-year-old resident, a mother, who was abused. There was food stuffed in her mouth while she was in a vulnerable condition. This incident is very similar to many of the other homes—including Midland Gardens, where I've had PSWs reach out to me and talk about how they have witnessed things like this that have happened and they don't know where to report. They have seen repeated incidents where there have been no consequences.

This morning, I stood here in this House, asking the minister what the minister will do to address the abuse and the neglect that elders face in our province. My question was simple: It was about addressing, with specific steps, and making sure that there are real consequences—and it was also about making sure that we have enough training, enough support, and that care is done in a way that people who are in the last few years of their life are treated in a respectful, dignified way.

What I heard in the first response was that it was the former Liberal government's fault that we're in this mess. I couldn't agree more, but that's not what we are addressing right here, right now. People in this province are struggling, and what we saw in long-term care—that's a second crisis that's taking place alongside COVID-19. Around 1,900 elders died in long-term-care homes, and many, many residents who died during this pandemic did not die from COVID-19.

I heard the minister and, actually, many members of the government stand here and accuse members on this side of the House of—shocked that, where were we when all of this mess took place in long-term care?

So I wanted to take these few minutes to say where I was, because I found it insulting to me, but also to the people of this province—to all the family members, all the family council members, people who have been advocating for seniors. I found it very insulting to all of these individuals who have been fighting for the support that elders need in this province, who have been fighting so hard for many, many years now.

All of these concerns that we're hearing now are not new. What happened in the CBC Marketplace video is not from today or yesterday or this week or this month or this year; it's from April 2019. There are many other incidents that took place.

In this House just a few months ago, I stood right here and shared another story of an individual, where someone died from sepsis in this pandemic. I shared stories of people who were found dead in their dirty, soiled—I don't even know how to describe these conditions because they were just rotting there for days and days.

Sometimes when constituents reach out to me, sharing these stories of someone who found their brother dead in their bed and saw how food had been rotting there for days—sometimes I've had stories that are heartbreaking, and I come here and share these stories. But I get a minister who stands up here and asks me, where was I? I find that insulting. They have had enough time to address this.

I can't believe I'm out of time, because I'm just so furious and frustrated because of what's happening—

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

I may be out of order, but did you mean CTV W5 as opposed to CBC Marketplace, on the video that you referenced?

**Ms. Doly Begum:** It was CBC.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Okay. Then I'm out of order. There are two videos.

I'll turn now to the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health, the member from Eglinton–Lawrence.

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Thank you to the member opposite. I have said before in this House, and I think I'll just reiterate it now, that no individual and certainly no party has a monopoly on caring generally or on caring for the elderly in particular. I think I'm justified in saying that every member here cares; everyone does. We want to make sure because we all have friends and family who are elderly, who are in long-term care. We all care about these individuals and want the best for them.

Certainly, I myself have had my parents, who have now both passed away, in long-term care—at least my father was for many years—so I have seen the situation in long-term care for some time.

The member from Scarborough Southwest has asked a serious question about a very troubling situation, and I will give her a straightforward and clear answer. Any abuse or neglect of our vulnerable seniors is unacceptable; we agree. Everyone agrees. Under the Long-Term Care Homes Act, it is clearly stated, “Every licensee of a long-term-care home shall protect residents from abuse by anyone and shall ensure that residents are not neglected by the licensee or staff.”

To summarize, the operator of every long-term-care home has the duty to keep residents safe in the home, and this is absolutely unequivocal and unambiguous. This is not an option; it's not optional. It's a duty, it's an obligation, it's a responsibility, and it is established in the

law. That's in addition to any provisions in the Criminal Code of Canada, which might apply if the circumstances are truly egregious.

If any member of this House or anyone who is watching us here today is aware of a situation where a resident is not cared for properly and is not safe, then I urge them to contact the Ministry of Long-Term Care through the family support and action line, which is open seven days a week from 8:30 to 7 p.m. The number is 1-866-434-0144.

Our government ran on fixing long-term care, and since we've been elected, we have been focused on long-term care. We know that there have been many, many years—decades perhaps—of neglect that require significant rebuilding for our long-term-care system generally, and for capacity and staffing in particular. Those are some of the biggest problems. We know these are substantial problems that need to be addressed.

The staffing mix, staff training, staffing levels—all of these things need to reflect the fact that residents and their needs have changed significantly over time, and that residents who are now entering into long-term-care homes are older, are frailer and are, frankly, much more medically complex than ever before.

We know that the care and the needs of residents must always be the centre and the focus of long-term care. We're putting in the hard work to alleviate all of these pressures that have built up over many, many years, and that work is starting to come to fruition. We're putting real dollars behind that work, both for the problems caused by this pandemic and for those that have been growing longer. We know that now, more than ever, we must protect our most vulnerable residents and keep them safe.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield):** Thank you all for your co-operation this afternoon. There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried. This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 1741.*

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Gill, Parm (PC)	Milton	
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<b>Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
<b>Hardeman, Hon. / L'hon. Ernie (PC)</b>	Oxford	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hassan, Faisal (NDP)	York South—Weston / York-Sud— Weston	
<b>Hatfield, Percy (NDP)</b>	Windsor—Tecumseh	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hillier, Randy (IND)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
<b>Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)</b>	Dufferin—Caledon	Solicitor General / Solliciteuse générale
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karahalios, Belinda C. (IND)	Cambridge	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Kramp, Daryl (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Kusendova, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga- Centre	
<b>Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)</b>	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
<b>MacLeod, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa (PC)</b>	Nepean	Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries / ministre des Industries du patrimoine, du sport, du tourisme et de la culture
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
<b>McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)</b>	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Miller, Norman (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	
Mitas, Christina Maria (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough- Centre	
Monteith-Farrell, Judith (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Morrison, Suze (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
<b>Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)</b>	York—Simcoe	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
<b>Nicholls, Rick (PC)</b>	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée 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	
<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Rod (PC)</b>	Ajax	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Piccini, David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
<b>Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)</b>	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines / Ministre de l'Énergie, du Développement du Nord et des Mines Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Roberts, Jeremy (PC)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa- Ouest—Nepean	
<b>Romano, Hon. / L'hon. Ross (PC)</b>	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
<b>Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)</b>	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction / Ministre associé délégué au dossier des Petites Entreprises et de la Réduction des formalités administratives Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
<b>Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC)</b>	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	Minister of Infrastructure / 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	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)</b>	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	
<b>Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)</b>	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Associate Minister of Transportation (GTA) / Ministre associée des Transports (RGT) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
<b>Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)</b>	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
<b>Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)</b>	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Walker, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (PC)</b>	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Associate Minister of Energy / Ministre associé de l'Énergie Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Wilson, Jim (IND)	Simcoe—Grey	
Wynne, Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
<b>Yakubski, Hon. / L'hon. John (PC)</b>	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
<b>Yurek, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (PC)</b>	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs

**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, Gurratan 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**

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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