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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 3 November 2020

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 3 novembre 2020

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PRIVATE MEMBERS'
PUBLIC BUSINESS

EDUCATION STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT (FETAL ALCOHOL
SPECTRUM DISORDER), 2020

LOI DE 2020 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE L'ÉDUCATION
(ENSEMBLE DES TROUBLES CAUSÉS
PAR L'ALCOOLISATION FOETALE)

Ms. Wynne moved second reading of the following bill:
Bill 172, An Act in relation to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum
Disorder (FASD) / Projet de loi 172, Loi concernant
l'ensemble des troubles causés par l'alcoolisation foetale.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I return
back to the member for Don Valley West.

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: I just want to acknowledge
that as we sit in the House tonight, many of us—I think all
of us—are holding our breath in terms of what is
happening south of the border and hoping for a good
outcome tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to my private
member's bill, Bill 172, An Act in relation to Fetal
Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). If passed, this bill
would require boards of education to develop policies and
guidelines with respect to FASD, and teachers' colleges
and early childhood education programs would be
required to provide training with respect to FASD.

FASD refers to a range of conditions which occur in
individuals who develop permanent brain injury as a result
of prenatal alcohol exposure. Individuals living with
FASD and their families endure many, many challenges,
and one of the most significant is navigating the education
system. All children with FASD make their way into and
through the education system in one way or another, and
therefore the implementation of this bill would be one
concrete tool at our disposal that would improve learning
outcomes and, therefore, could change the trajectory of
students' lives.

Diane Malbin is an internationally recognized authority
on FASD, and here are a couple of ways that she describes
the effects of FASD. She says, "Most students with FASD
are 10-second kids in a one-second world. Slow every-
thing down for them. Students with FASD need someone
to explain them to the world, because the world does not
understand them and they can't explain themselves."

Mary Cunningham is an FASD educator and advocate
from Kitchener, Ontario. Here is one of her descriptions of
children with FASD:

"All students with FASD are not all the same and
exhibit a wide range of disabilities.

"Fortunately all students with FASD have a wide range
of aptitudes and abilities which must be developed if there
is to be any hope of a functional adulthood....

"Learn to see these students as 'hurt' rather than 'bad.'"

I want to acknowledge Mary and Diane, and all the
people who have worked for years to support children and
adults living with FASD, their families and support
networks. My former colleague Sophie Kiwala, who pre-
viously introduced a very similar private member's bill,
has helped enormously on and supported this bill that I
have introduced, and I want to thank her.

There are people listening today who have talked with
me, have helped me and my colleagues to better under-
stand the challenges of FASD: Len Whalen, who works
with the FASD Parent Action Group of Southeastern
Ontario; Steve Catney of Alliance Youth Services; Sharron
Richards of the Toronto FASD network; James Reynolds,
chief scientific officer of the Kids Brain Health Network;
Jeremy Istead, who was my former OLIP intern and is now
a member of the FASD ONE education action group; and
Brian Philcox and Bonnie Buxton, who worked for
decades and, in particular, promoted September 9 as
National and International FASD Awareness Day. All of
these people and the families and the communities deserve
our thanks.

My bill, Mr. Speaker, is about steps that we can take to
advance the understanding of what FASD is, how educa-
tors can recognize it and how school boards and schools
can better create environments in which students can
thrive rather than fail—which, Mr. Speaker, I think we can
agree is the point of a publicly funded education system.

Why do we need to take these steps? There is a high
prevalence of FASD among children in Ontario. One of
the shocking realities is that some research places the
prevalence of FASD at 2% to 4% of the population. That's
more common than autism spectrum disorder, more com-
mon than cerebral palsy, more common than Down's
syndrome or Tourette's syndrome.

According to Canada FASD Research Network, preva-
lence findings have not always been consistent because
FASD is a largely invisible disease. For reasons of stigma
and shame attached to the disability, because the symp-
toms are often complex and because of underreporting,
we, as a society, have missed these kids or misdiagnosed
them, Mr. Speaker. Even when children are diagnosed,

they still encounter professionals in the education system who lack an adequate understanding of FASD, and that leads to unrealistic expectations and insufficient support throughout their school career.

People living with FASD can exhibit complex disabilities including, among others, developmental delay, inconsistent performance, impulsivity, attention deficits, poor social skills, poor judgment. Those are the primary disabilities that can't be fixed. But these disabilities can then lead to secondary disabilities and outcomes, such as frustration, acting out, tantrums, mental health disorders, addiction, disrupted school experience, involvement with the criminal justice system. It's these secondary disabilities and outcomes that can be prevented or can be reduced if action is taken early.

If we can confirm a diagnosis before a child is six, if the adults that a child lives with can get the information and training that they need, if the child can access a school program that understands FASD, then many of these really negative life outcomes can be avoided, and that's a good thing for the individual child, of course, but it's also a good thing for families, it's a good thing for schools and for communities. This is what Bill 172 is about: helping educators to help their students by giving them the tools that they need, by giving them the information that they lack in order to allow them to create environments where kids with FASD have a chance of succeeding.

Mary Cunningham, again, notes, "Success with FASD requires a whole school, whole board strategy." That's why this legislation, if passed, would require boards to:

- promote awareness and understanding of FASD;

- include established and emerging best practices to support pupils who have diagnosed or suspected FASD—and that's important, because the notion is not to wait until a diagnosis, but to have enough understanding in the system that when there's a child who is suspected to have FASD, some of the accommodations can be put in place; and finally

- identify strategies for providing accommodation for pupils.

The bill would require boards to work with parents and FASD support groups in establishing their policies and guidelines. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that it's critical that when school boards or any level of government is developing policies, they work with the people on the front line. In implementing such a policy, I believe that it's only possible to do so properly if teachers and early childhood educators are equipped to understand and to be aware of the signs and symptoms of FASD. So Bill 172 would also require teacher education and programs in early childhood education to provide that training.

Speaker, there's another aspect to this issue that I believe needs recognition, and that is the impact of FASD on Indigenous children. Recommendations number 33 and 34 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission call upon federal, provincial and territorial governments to make addressing and preventing FASD a priority. That's an added imperative, I think, that underlies the urgency of moving forward.

Let me address, Mr. Speaker, just for a moment what I am certain will be commentary from the government and the opposition, not because they are malicious, but just because I know them so well. They will say that we fell short and that we should have done more when we were in government; I'm just making a prediction here. Now, I understand that political critique. I understand it and I accept it, at least in part. It's not true to say, however, that we ignored this issue. The reason I mention this is it is my firm belief, having been in political office as long as I have now, that policy evolves. We are given the opportunity to put building blocks in place, and subsequent governments build on those foundations, so policy evolves.

In fact, in our budget in 2017 we made a \$26-million commitment over four years, and that's the first Ontario government to specifically allocate money to tackle the issue of FASD. We made a \$26-million commitment over four years to hire 56 FASD workers, support parent networks, increase access to FASD initiatives developed by Indigenous partners, establish a consultation group and a research fund.

1800

That work had begun and some of the workers had been hired at the time of the election in 2018, and my understanding is that at least some of that work has continued. As of this September, for example, \$3 million was invested by the government in many of the same initiatives that were begun in 2017. Now that's a good thing, Mr. Speaker, so I just want to put that on the table. I acknowledge that; that's a good thing.

So now we can talk about what needs to happen next. What's the next building block that needs to be put in place? That's what Bill 172 is about.

I've not done a search of Hansard to fact-check what I'm about to say, but I'm pretty sure that if you were to search my name and to count the number of times that I have said, "This is not a partisan issue," it would be way more than once. Every day in this Legislature, we debate issues that are clearly partisan. But most days, we're talking about issues that we can all agree are important, and we may even agree on solutions, but we make them partisan. Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to you that Bill 172 lays out some broad policy directions as a possible solution to some serious issues that we all agree exist.

Without the tools to recognize and accommodate FASD, our schools will never be places where these kids can thrive. We will continue to fail them. My hope is that we can find a way to take these next steps.

As one adult living with FASD said, "Accept me for what I can do, not what I cannot do." So, Mr. Speaker, I ask that we, as colleagues in this Legislature, look at what we can do, look at what we can do to take the next step to help people who are living with FASD to be everything that they can be.

I ask for the support of my colleagues today for Bill 172. I thank you again for the opportunity to bring forward this important issue.

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

Mrs. Robin Martin: I'm honoured to rise today to speak about this bill. This is an important bill, and I want to thank the member opposite for bringing it forward, although I have to say, or point out, maybe, that she does not know the members of the government as well as she might think she does, but more later on that.

I am proud to speak about our government's ongoing commitment to support children and youth with special education needs, including those with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, or FASD. I believe it's also important to remember when we're talking about FASD that we're not talking about just a diagnosis, but rather a person or, often, a child—a child who will have hopes and dreams and a future that hasn't yet been shaped, a child who, with the right supports, will grow up to pursue their dreams and contribute to their community in a meaningful way.

Our school system can and does help support students with special education needs and their families by ensuring that educators are aware of the strategies to accommodate the learning needs of children who have diagnosed or suspected FASD. That's because, at the heart of our public education system, is a shared responsibility to ensure that all students can succeed and all students can reach their full potential.

Each student with FASD has unique strengths and challenges, and needs tailored, individualized supports to help them thrive in many different parts of their lives, including their education. That is why it's our collective responsibility to ensure that each student reaches their full potential.

In fact, in Canada, there is at least one in 33 children who are born with FASD, and I believe the member opposite cited the stat from the World Health Organization's study that estimated prevalence of FASD among elementary students in Canada may range between 2% and 3%, which is much higher than previous estimates. What's more, we know that prevalence rates are increasing, and unfortunately, this condition is on the rise. With those increasing numbers comes an increased need, frankly, for meaningful supports in the classroom.

While there's no cure for FASD, there is good news: Research does show that early identification, intervention and diagnosis can improve outcomes for students with the condition. In addition to what science tells us about early identification, intervention and diagnosis, we've heard from advocates, parents and caregivers about the importance and the value placed on increased awareness of FASD among teachers and educators. This will also help to reduce stigma. In fact, stakeholders have specifically asked us to provide information to teachers about FASD, its signs, its symptoms and how best to support children who have diagnosed or suspected FASD.

Again, it's about commitment to supporting all children and youth, and that's why we're listening to parents, students, community groups and organizations about how to improve the education system as part of this commitment to supporting the lifelong success of children. Without question, helping our children reach their full potential and putting them on a path to future success is a top

priority for this government. We're listening and continuing to take action.

Bill 172 introduces amendments to the Early Childhood Educators Act and the Ontario College of Teachers Act to include education for teachers and early childhood educators about FASD in their programs. Under this bill, each school board across the province would be required to develop a policy addressing FASD. School boards would also be required to provide training to early childhood educators and teachers about FASD, its signs and symptoms, and how best to support families and children. Implementing these changes is expected to result in better academic performance and an improved school experience for children with FASD and their peers.

Speaker, I want to once again reiterate our commitment to ensuring that all students reach their full potential. We recognize that every student is unique, that each must have opportunities to achieve success according to his or her own interests, abilities and goals. Ontario has certainly come far in closing the gaps for many learners, but of course more work needs to be done for those students who struggle most. While it's important to end the stigma around FASD, it's also important the government continues to build capacity when supporting students with this condition.

Our earliest learners with diagnosed or suspected FASD are also enrolled in child care programs across the province, and we know that early intervention and access to support at a young age for these children is critical, so child care centres and home child care agencies are also required to work with these families to develop individualized support plans that accommodate the unique needs of each child. This helps ensure the program is inclusive and welcoming for all children.

In addition, EarlyON child and family centres offer high-quality, free drop-in child and family programs for caregivers and children. They deliver a suite of core services, including supporting families and making connections to specialized community services, and provide a welcoming environment where people can connect and work together on some of these issues. The staff in these centres can also help parents and caregivers respond to concerns about their child's development and help the parents or caregivers seek additional supports.

Speaker, students with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder already have access to a range of supports, including individualized education plans and transition planning that considers the long term and evolves to meet the skills and capabilities of each student. These plans identify the steps needed from the time the plan is implemented to the time a student is expected to leave the school for the student to attain his or her goals.

In addition to individualized planning, school boards continue to access diverse training opportunities on FASD, including FASD-focused conferences and presentations with partners and relevant community service providers. All school boards receive resources designed to help raise the bar and close the gap in achievement for all students, including those with FASD. Additionally, the

province provides special-needs resourcing to support the inclusion of children with special needs in licensed child care settings and in Ontario-funded child and family programs, such as the EarlyON child and family centres, at no additional cost to parents and guardians. These resources provide training, equipment and supports to enable the inclusion of children in child care and early-years programs, and are an important part of our supports for children with special needs, including FASD.

1810

I would be remiss not to mention the excellent work done by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services in supporting children with FASD and their families. I was so pleased to see the minister make an announcement on International FASD Awareness Day that our government is investing an additional \$3 million in annual funding to expand our supports and services for children and families impacted by FASD. This will mean an additional 26 FASD support workers to assist families. The workers will provide information, develop care plans, help families access resources and connect parents to support networks and diagnostic services.

We feel that this is an important issue, including for Indigenous children with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. There's a program for them: a child nutrition program. I just want to conclude by saying our government is committed to ensuring that children and students in Ontario will have the opportunity to reach their full potential, and that includes students who require accommodation with their educational programming. I'm proud of Ontario's current strength-based programs and services for students with FASD and proud to rise in support of Bill 172 in the House today. With the right supports, we hope that these children will succeed.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Good evening. It's an honour to rise today to join debate on Bill 172, Education Statute Law Amendment Act (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder). I want to thank the member from Don Valley West for bringing it forward.

As mentioned, this bill requires boards of education to develop policies and guidelines with respect to fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, or FASD, and it would require teachers' colleges and early childhood education programs to provide training with respect to FASD. These are straightforward policy changes that will go a long way to help students succeed and help school boards and educators support them in their learning.

I believe this is the fourth time this bill has been tabled in this place. In the last Parliament, as was previously mentioned, it was even tabled by a member of the governing party at the time. So I think it's fair to say that these changes are long overdue. Had they been passed under the previous government, a whole cohort of children could have been seeing vastly different outcomes.

But that doesn't mean it's too late to do the right thing now. I know that people living with and supporting those with FASD are eager to see these measures pass. I hope

that my colleagues here in the House will not only pass the bill today, but get moving on implementation and a funding package to support this important work, because the need is great.

Davina, a parent from Ottawa, wrote a number of us just yesterday to share why she supports this bill. She said, "As a parent of a child with FASD, I know first-hand how difficult school life can be, through my son's experience. However, I have also seen when collaboration, support and proper intervention" come, "then children with FASD can be successful within the education system." She concludes, "The biggest challenge that faces my son in our school board is a lack of understanding and a corresponding strategy on how to best help him."

Speaker, children with FASD experience its impacts in different ways, and like all people with exceptionalities, they have unique strengths, abilities and impairments that can impact their learning and participation in school. The effects of FASD are permanent, but people living with it can overcome barriers with supports, especially early in life. That's why parents and guardians of children with FASD are looking for our support to ensure that school becomes a place where those barriers are removed and where they grow and learn in ways that recognize their unique needs.

Now, some school boards already have policies in place and have undertaken really important work to help better support students with FASD; Keewatin Patricia District School Board, I know, is one of them. This bill would help formalize that work and help school boards learn from one another about how best to implement guidelines and supports. Our front-line teachers and education workers should be given the opportunity early in their careers to learn about FASD and how it manifests in the classroom, but government and boards should also draw upon the professional knowledge and expertise of teachers and education workers in developing these policies.

This bill is silent on the role of educational assistants who do much of the direct support for students with FASD. Any time we are talking about opening the Education Act or changing policies that affect our education system without consulting and working with our front-line staff, we are missing a huge opportunity to get these policies right.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to make clear that for there to be meaningful change in the way students with FASD are supported in our schools, any plan needs to be backed up by real funding. Private members' bills can't do that, but the government can and must. Sadly, what we've seen over the first half of this government's mandate are cuts to our education system under the guise of modernization. We've seen policy rolled out with an eye to saving money, and instead of working with front-line professionals to strengthen supports, we've seen attacks on teachers, education workers and their unions.

During this pandemic, the challenges facing all students with disabilities have only grown. For those kids who need routine, stability and teachers and EAs they are comfortable with, the constant shifts in schedule, staffing and

mode of learning are really, really hard. Staffing shortages have also meant less one-on-one time for those students. Of course, that pandemic can be blamed for many of these challenges, but the impact of them would have been far less if the government had taken the time over the summer to really work with our partners.

In closing, I want to thank the families of children with FASD for their tireless advocacy all these years, and I want to urge all members here to support this bill. And for those members on the government side, I want you to use your position to see that these needed policy changes are backed up with the funding to implement them; otherwise, these exceptional kids will be left waiting yet again.

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

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I take great pleasure in rising today to speak to Bill 172, and what an occasion and what a great debate we're having about children and young people and how we can improve their learning and education. I believe all students can learn; they just need the support of the system that will teach them. This bill makes important improvements and enhancements, and I thank the member from Don Valley West for bringing it forward.

Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder is prevalent amongst young people and students across our province, not just in cities but also in rural areas as well, yet the lack of awareness and knowledge of FASD means that it goes without detection and without intervention, with dire consequences for those young people.

I'd like to thank two important champions who have raised the profile of FASD in my riding of Scarborough–Guildwood, Brian Philcox and Bonnie Buxton. They have co-founded FASworld and have been in my office many times to ensure that I understand the implications of their work. They have worked tirelessly and creatively to bring awareness to the risks of alcohol consumption during pregnancy, especially in post-secondary institutions. There are so many leaders across this province carrying out important advocacy, both to elected officials but also, importantly, in their communities. I want to just thank Brian and Bonnie and wish them well.

Speaker, when I was first elected in 2013, I had the privilege to work on an all-party select committee on developmental disabilities and dual diagnoses. We toured the province, listening to many groups of individuals, and I can't forget the autism families who came forward to say that they need support. But also a constant was people who were speaking to us about FASD. I remember the stories that they told and how many young people end up in juvenile detention centres instead of getting the supports that they need to succeed in school, and that they are not diagnosed, that they are not treated for this condition. This bill is a good start to improve our system and get these young people the supports that they need so that they can succeed and be who they want to be in life.

So this bill will help to ensure the unique needs of students with FASD are met to support their development and to promote better outcomes for themselves in their future. I am so proud to stand in support of this legislation,

Bill 172, that my colleague has brought forward and reintroduced, of course, today. Thank you so much for the debate I'm hearing today in support of your bill.

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

1820

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very pleased to rise today and add a few words to the debate. It's a private member's bill: the Education Statute Law Amendment Act, specifically focusing on fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. We're having a very lively debate today. This bill was brought forward by a former education minister, a former Premier and somebody who knows a lot about the struggles a lot of our kids and their families go through.

I just want to mention that when I did some research as an optometrist—one of the problems with fetal alcohol syndrome is there are changes in utero while the baby is not yet born and still a fetus. The alcohol that the mother could be consuming is damaging the fetus' eyes; specifically, there are ophthalmological impacts. We all know how important vision is to all of our students. It's kind of a double-whammy that these students are dealing with: They're dealing with a real shock to their system—it's almost as though the child was born addicted to a drug—and then they have to go through that whole process.

There's the difficult situation for the families to deal with. Oftentimes, children can be in foster care, which is an added burden. I applaud people who rise up to the occasion and become foster parents.

Some of the recommendations that are suggested in terms of an educational environment for children with fetal alcohol syndrome are a structured environment, consistent routine, brief presentations, humour, compassion and patience. I would just say that's typically what adults, even legislators like ourselves, strive to have when we have our debates.

We understand what all that means. We understand the struggle that our students face specifically during this COVID pandemic—the students without special needs. So imagine, Mr. Speaker, the added burden for the families, the children and, yes, the educators and the staff at our schools, to deal with students who do have special requirements.

I think that this is something that deserves to be debated in the Legislature. I think that we all agree that we can do more—not just on the preventative side, which really hasn't been mentioned, but to support the children who do require that extra hand up, that extra bit of patience from their teachers and their educators. It takes a village to raise a child. It behooves all of us to be a little understanding when we see a child acting out in a grocery store or out on the street or in a park. This could be a child who just needs a little bit of extra patience, extra humour and extra compassion.

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

Miss Monique Taylor: It is my pleasure to rise today and speak to Bill 172, which would amend the Education Act to ensure better awareness of fetal alcohol spectrum

disorder. This bill would also ensure that teacher candidates and those in school to become early childhood educators are also taught about FASD.

This is an important bill for the FASD community, as they work to be recognized by the Ontario government. Back in February of this year, the FASD advocacy community hosted a lunch reception here at Queen's Park, which I was fortunate enough to speak to. It was a great event, and I was once again able to learn from the many FASD self-advocates and families that were in attendance here at the reception. They introduced themselves and they shared their challenges and triumphs when it comes to living with FASD. Most importantly, they expressed the need for greater support from the provincial government for people with FASD. It is these families that I think about while we debate this bill today.

FASD affects thousands of children, adults and families across Ontario. We simply need to do better by them. FASD is a unique disability, as it brings with it both the need for accommodations and a heavy stigma. The stigma must be broken. We need to demand more empathy and supports for individuals with FASD.

When it comes to getting that support, the barriers seem endless. First, it's very difficult and expensive to get a diagnosis for a child with FASD. Then, families have to fight to get accommodations and supports in schools because our school boards are in need of more funding and educational assistants. During COVID-19, this situation is even more challenging as schools move into a mix of online and in-person learning.

Once a person with FASD turns 18, they get placed onto long wait-lists for Passport funding and supportive housing, which could take many, many years. At each stage in their lives, people with FASD face challenges and need support, but instead face barriers.

As I mentioned, this bill is important, and it should have been in place years ago. The member who introduced this bill could have put measures in place when she was the Premier, as she has stated. This bill was introduced first in 2017, again in 2018, and there was an opportunity to put it in place back then and to bring broader supports for all children with disabilities. There is no excuse that it was not done.

The way our system is designed now, only certain children get real supports based on their diagnosis. Families tell me that their children would benefit from behavioural therapy, speech language pathology and occupational therapy, among other services, but for FASD families, accessing these services is very difficult.

If this bill had been brought forward years ago, my constituent Dawn would not be facing the challenges that she's facing today. Dawn has twin boys, both with FASD, and they're in grade 2. Her boys can't sit with masks on all day in class, nor can they cope with online learning—they tell their mom they don't like strangers in their home. Due to the lack of resources in her school, she is forced to home-school her sons. It is challenging, but Dawn is resilient and so are her sons. But they should not have to face this challenge alone; we should have supports in place

for Dawn and her sons now, during COVID, and throughout the regular school year.

This bill could go a long way towards getting those supports in place. It is one step, but it is a good step. At each stage in their lives, people with FASD face challenges and need support. People with FASD have a lot to contribute to our province; they just need us, as legislators, to understand and accommodate them. They deserve inclusion.

I hope this bill passes, and it is only the start to the process of better supporting people with FASD.

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

Mr. John Fraser: I want to say that I'm supporting my colleague's Bill 172—that's not a surprise. But I want to thank her for bringing it forward, and Sophie Kiwala, who brought it forward in the last Parliament.

When you're in government, you become acutely aware of the things that you wanted to do more of. That should not be a barrier from putting it forward in a subsequent government and people moving it forward. If you look through even road projects, we see how it goes from one government to another. But that's not why we're here.

When the member was talking about children ending up in the juvenile detention system, I know that for a fact, because my father used to be with the Family Court in the 1960s, and it was happening then. The really sad thing is that it's happening right now.

We have the information. We know what we need to do. We need to equip educators with the tools so that they can recognize this and support those children. It's just simply the right thing to do. It's not a partisan thing, and it shouldn't be. It should continue to be built upon from what happened four years ago, what's going to happen now, what's going to happen in five years, because when it comes to FASD and other developmental disabilities, our work will never, ever be done.

I want to thank the member from Don Valley West for bringing it forward again in this Parliament. I hope that all my colleagues can support it.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: For a few seconds, I will bring you back to 2012. We had just had the first FASD conference in Sudbury, in northern Ontario, focusing on the needs of people, their advocates and children living with FASD in northern Ontario. Out of this conference came a five-point strategy dealing with health promotion, disease prevention, diagnostics, early identification and intervention—I got them a little bit out of order—again, focusing on the needs of the north.

The member from Don Valley West was the Minister of Education at the time, and I was and continue to be the health critic for the NDP. We brought this forward with the view that there was an opportunity to change things. Fast-forward eight years later, and if you look in northern Ontario, things have not changed. The only thing that has changed is we used to be at maybe 1% to 2% of kids with

FASD in our schools; we're now at 3% to 5% of kids with FASD in our schools. This is 2020.

1830

We have a private member's bill to take a step. The step would be really focused on the early identification. This is something that our teachers and educators can do. But the other steps—one big one is diagnosis. It is extremely difficult for somebody living in northern Ontario to get a diagnostic for their child. They often have to travel down to Toronto. If you come from Thunder Bay, a flight down to southern Ontario is very expensive to finally get a diagnosis—because without a diagnosis, there are very few services that are open to you. None of that will change unless we as legislators decide to make a priority of it and change it.

We have a blueprint to make things better for everybody in northern Ontario who is dealing with FASD, whether we talk about stigma, whether we talk about women knowing the effect of alcohol consumption during pregnancy, whether we talk about what early intervention can do for children who are diagnosed—they will get better, they will learn new skills and things can change. But none of this happens until this House decides it will happen. I hope today is the day.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member for Don Valley West has two minutes to respond.

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm glad to have been proven wrong, Mr. Speaker. I really appreciate the comments from the members for Eglinton–Lawrence, Davenport, Scarborough–Guildwood, Thornhill, Hamilton Mountain, Ottawa South and Nickel Belt. For the really substantive conversation, thank you very much.

Some of the comments that were made: I just want to focus on the idea that the member for Eglinton–Lawrence brought forward of FASD not being a diagnosis but being about a person. I think that's really important that we remember.

The member for Thornhill, I think, made a really good point about the need for better community understanding and compassion, but that only comes from heightened awareness.

Mr. Speaker, the member for Davenport raised the issue around EA training, and I think that's a very, very good point. I think when this bill goes to committee, there might be an amendment that would come forward, and we could include that. The other thing that is not in this bill is a remark or comment about professional development, because I think we've got in the bill the need for training of educators and early childhood educators, but ongoing professional development and professional development for people who are already in the system would be necessary.

The member for Nickel Belt raises good and solid issues around the north. I was actually Minister of Aboriginal Affairs in 2012. It was my experience in that portfolio that when I became Premier and we introduced an alcohol strategy and put the \$26 million in place to hire FASD workers—that was part of the experience that I brought and part of the reason that I wanted to do that.

There is much more to do, Mr. Speaker. I acknowledge that and I think that has been the theme that has run through the comments of all my colleagues in the House tonight. Thank you for the support that has been shown. I hope, Mr. Speaker, that this will mean that we can move forward and put that next building block in place and we can pass Bill 172 and move to a systemic change for kids who are living with FASD.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

Ms. Wynne has move second reading of Bill 172, An Act in relation to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). 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 decides it should go to another committee. I turn to the member from Don Valley West.

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: To the committee on social policy.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member wants to refer it to the committee on social policy. Agreed? Agreed. That bill will be referred to the committee on social policy.

Pursuant to standing order 36, the question that House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

COLLEGE STANDARDS AND ACCREDITATION

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I know you all want to get home and watch the presidential debate, but the member for Ottawa South has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Minister of Colleges and Universities. The member will have up to five minutes to debate the matter; the minister is here, and he may reply for up to five minutes.

We turn now to the member for Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the table, yourself and the minister for being here. I feel honoured that he's here.

I never thought I'd begin a late show in defence of the New Democratic Party. You heard in my question today that the latest revelation from Charles McVety was that he said, and I can elaborate on the quote: "The NDP hates Christians ... that we are second-class citizens" and that we "should be shunned." I don't know, he's maybe never heard of J.S. Woodsworth, Tommy Douglas, Stanley Knowles, Cheri DiNovo, the roots of social justice in this country. It's not exclusive to the NDP, but they have very deep roots.

It's not as offensive as those things that I'll get into a bit later, but I find it offensive, and it's a weak defence.

You know, when Jesus Christ was here, he didn't hang around with the Charles McVetys. He hung around with the poor, the marginalized, the outcasts, the sinners, the people who were on the outside. He didn't preach, "Shun the other religions," he preached acceptance and openness and mercy.

Interjection.

Mr. John Fraser: It's not funny. I know the member from Eglinton-Lawrence thinks it's funny, but it's not, because right now this government is poised to allow Charles McVety, who said, "Islam is not a religion; it's a ... hostile takeover," and has said so many hateful things about the LGBTQ community.

I sat in front of him in committee when we were discussing how families had changed and were different in Ontario—and we all know that, because we all have families like that—and the stuff that he had to say still makes me mad today. It still makes me mad today.

I know the minister is going to talk about process. Process would work if he didn't get a head's-up and he didn't get a promise and there wasn't a deal. That's not how process works.

As I said this morning, it's not about religion, it's not about God, it's not about faith, it's not about education—it's about money. Being able to grant degrees is going to create more income for Charles McVety. That's what's going to happen. That's the end result of this.

The other stuff is just odious and terrible. Even Bill Davis—Bill Davis—put an end to this when it was Mr. McVety's father. Even the Deputy Premier opened the door for the Premier last week and said, "I don't want anybody to think of my party in this way"—the Deputy Premier.

When I look across the aisle—because I know you're decent people; I know you're decent. When the questions are getting asked, people are looking at their desks. I know it's hard, but it's not right: You're sending the wrong message to a whole bunch of people in Ontario, and it's not worth it. It's just simply not worth it. It's not good for all of us in here. It's not good for your party. It really isn't, and you know it. The Deputy Premier did the right thing.

I was really disappointed the Premier couldn't stand up and respond to me today—two chances. We've been waiting for a week for an answer. If you're going to go forward with this, then defend it. Don't have everybody else defend it. It's not right; it's just simply not right. I find it really distressing that this isn't happening, and that's why I keep talking about it: because it's the wrong message to people. It's the wrong message to some people in here who are amongst us. It's the wrong message. The government needs to get rid of schedule 2 in Bill 213.

1840

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The Minister of Colleges and Universities has five minutes to respond.

Hon. Ross Romano: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to respond, and I thank the member opposite for giving me the opportunity through a late show to speak about this matter, because this is an important matter.

What's important from my perspective—and I mentioned this to the member opposite in a small exchange we had after his question today. When we talk about procedural matters, it's important to know that process does really matter. Procedural safeguards in our rule of law and our system of legislation absolutely matter. They matter for lots of different reasons, so I'm happy that I have some time here to explain this—not happy specifically about the circumstances; what I'm happy about is having the opportunity to explain in a fulsome way what the process is. I appreciate that the member opposite will certainly want to hear that.

In order to respond in a fulsome way to the question: You've heard me say over the last several days that any time any individual across this province and across any kind of a democratic society wants to apply for a kind of licence or a designation—if an organization applies for a designation, just like the process that we're dealing with right now—there has to be a process. There has to be a process people know how to follow and adhere to.

In our province, under the system that we have in our colleges and universities, if an organization wishes to obtain the designation as a university—in this case, by the way, this particular institution has degree-granting authority in some capacities already, but that's beside the point. In order to get to this level, this status that is being sought, you've got three options.

A private bill: Somebody rises in the House and introduces a private bill, and it goes straight to committee. It's not a very open process—not at all.

The second option is ministerial consent. I spoke about this at length as well. Under the ministerial consent process that existed before I became Minister of Colleges and Universities—which I heard about at length from all of the college sector. They had a real problem with the process because it lasted upwards of three years—at least around two years—in order to obtain an approval. You would have to go through numerous steps, and ultimately, the minister would almost always send the matter to PEQAB, an independent advisory board. That took months and months and months—lots of red tape.

We changed it. I said, "This is silly. Let's just have the applications go directly to PEQAB. Take the minister right out of the equation. Take the politics out of the equation. Have the application go directly to PEQAB." That's what we did. We changed that in last year's fall red tape bill.

There were two institutions that were seeking degree-granting authority and university status in a fulsome way: Algoma University—my alma mater, as a matter of fact—and OCAD University. We said, "Let's just put them in the bill," because that is another element of red tape, and it was the fall red tape bill. So we put them all together and we blended the process of option 2, which was ministerial consent, with a legislative process. We got to this fall red tape bill this year, and we had three institutions seeking virtually the same type of relief: They would like to have that status.

Now, I can appreciate where some of the concerns that have been raised come from, but it's important that, procedurally, we follow the same process. When an

application goes forward from an institution—and I'm not sure if the member opposite, respectfully, is completely appreciating the circumstances here—there is not an opportunity to stand in the way of an application being made.

I have a great deal of respect for everything we do in this House. As a former lawyer—well, currently still a lawyer—when I stood before a court and when I spoke to the court, I had nothing but the utmost respect for the profession, for all those who stood before me, and the same exists when I stand in this House. The history of this House and what it all means—I respect that process; I respect that we must adhere to a process.

We must have a process that is there that everybody can follow. No matter what the circumstance is, there has to be a process. We have taken a ministerial consent process, we have taken a legislative process, which is the most fair and accountable process that we possibly have, Mr. Speaker, and we have married those together. I am asking everybody here to just respect the process.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): There being no further matter to debate, I deem the earlier motion to adjourn to be carried. This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1846.

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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 / Greffier: Tonia Grannum

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Présidente: Catherine Fife
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: France Gélinas
Deepak Anand, Jill Andrew
Toby Barrett, Stephen Blais
Stan Cho, Stephen Crawford
Catherine Fife, France Gélinas
Christine Hogarth, Daryl Kramp
Michael Parsa
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Deepak Anand
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: John Fraser
Deepak Anand, Toby Barrett
Will Bouma, Stephen Crawford
John Fraser, Laura Mae Lindo
Gila Martow, Paul Miller
Billy Pang, Dave Smith
Jamie West
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Isaiah Thorning

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Présidente: Natalia Kusendova
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Aris Babikian
Aris Babikian, Jeff Burch
Amy Fee, Michael Gravelle
Joel Harden, Mike Harris
Christine Hogarth, Belinda C. Karahalios
Terence Kernaghan, Natalia Kusendova
Robin Martin
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tanzima Khan

**Select Committee on Emergency Management Oversight /
Comité spécial de la surveillance de la gestion des situations
d'urgence**

Chair / Président: Daryl Kramp
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Tom Rakocevic
Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson
John Fraser, Christine Hogarth
Daryl Kramp, Robin Martin
Sam Oosterhoff, Lindsey Park
Tom Rakocevic, Sara Singh
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell