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Lundi
23 novembre 2020

Speaker: Honourable Ted Arnott
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 23 November 2020

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 23 novembre 2020

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Good morning. We're going to begin this morning with a moment of silence for inner thought and personal reflection. Let us pray.

Prayers.

ROYAL ASSENT SANCTION ROYALE

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that, in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to certain bills in her office.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. William Wong): The following are the titles of the bills to which Her Honour did assent:

An Act to amend the Children's Law Reform Act, the Courts of Justice Act, the Family Law Act and other Acts respecting various family law matters / Loi modifiant la Loi portant réforme du droit de l'enfance, la Loi sur les tribunaux judiciaires, la Loi sur le droit de la famille et d'autres lois en ce qui concerne diverses questions de droit de la famille.

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 / 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.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Jim Wilson: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should continue to support planning work for the redevelopments and construction of both the Collingwood General and Marine Hospital and Stevenson Memorial Hospital in the town of New Tecumseth, given the government's commitment to modernizing Ontario's health care system and ending hallway health care and given population growth projections for Simcoe–Grey.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for Simcoe–Grey; he has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Thank you for this opportunity to address one of the most pressing matters in the riding of Simcoe–Grey. Members will know that I've been advocating on behalf of Stevenson Memorial Hospital in Alliston and the General and Marine Hospital in Collingwood for many years. Both of these facilities and the dedicated people who work in them have served my constituents and vacationers to our part of the province very well for generations. Unfortunately, both hospitals are now struggling to meet the needs and demands of families and visitors to our fast-growing communities.

Both hospitals require significant investment if the government is going to meet its goals of ensuring a safe and comfortable environment for patients and ending hallway health care. Both hospitals are long overdue for redevelopment. The communities they serve are meeting their responsibilities and are raising their local share of the necessary funds. In fact, the Stevenson Memorial Hospital Foundation is in the midst of a \$43-million capital campaign, and I am pleased to report that they're halfway to meeting that goal.

Stevenson was built in 1964, and there have been no major renovations since. Its emergency department was designed to handle 7,000 visits annually; last year, almost 40,000 people came through the emergency room doors. This can't continue. In 10 years, the population that Stevenson will serve is expected to grow from the current 75,000 to 100,000. The hospital's outdated infrastructure is not meeting the needs of patients, visitors or staff.

We were all pleased to learn this past summer that Stevenson received stage 1 approval for redevelopment. The hospital will soon submit a stage 2 plan. It's imperative that this next step move forward expeditiously. The hospital's proposed expansion would see the facility grow by more than 127,000 square feet, making room for 47 beds, up from the current 38. The plan is to submit a design as all single-occupancy rooms. There would be new birthing suites and a dedicated entrance for the emergency department and one for the general public—all critical, knowing what we have faced with COVID-19. The draft plan would triple the number of parking spaces and preserve the heliport while also putting in a new ambulance garage.

As I've said, the ER is attending to five times more people than it was designed for. This results in patients waiting on stretchers in the hallway rather than in dedicated treatment rooms. Everyone knows this is not optimal patient care at any time, let alone in 2020. Privacy and confidentiality are compromised and professional staff are challenged to do their jobs.

Stevenson has attempted to create negative pressure rooms to manage and isolate patients with serious and infectious diseases. COVID-19 has forced the hospital to quickly mitigate these serious issues but they are not a permanent solution. Negative pressure and single-occupancy rooms are critical to the management of outbreaks like COVID-19.

Birthing suites need modernization. Women in Simcoe county are entitled to services that reflect standards that are set by the province and are available elsewhere.

Mental health services at Stevenson are delivered in a building that does not meet current accessibility standards and challenges the cornerstones of privacy and dignity. Upgrading the Mary McGill building is not physically or financially viable. Mental health patients certainly deserve better.

Surgical patient rooms are below space standards required to meet infection control and privacy. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care requires modern hospitals to have 80% private patient rooms, a standard that Stevenson does not and cannot meet without redevelopment. Undersized patient units result in medical equipment being stored in hallways, contrary to best practices and the Ontario fire code. Operating rooms are severely dated and too small for modern surgical practice. Upgrades will require a wholesale redevelopment that can only be accomplished through expansion.

It's impossible to upgrade the current HVAC system, which of course is well below current standards. As a result of the dated infrastructure, properly heating and cooling the building is a struggle. Critical airflow is compromised, impacting patient and staff comfort and ultimately the quality of patient care.

The main building needs a massive investment in modern sprinkler systems to meet fire regulations. This will require facility-wide work best completed as part of an overall modernization. The local fire chief has put Stevenson on official notice that the building is in contravention of the Ontario fire code.

The hospital electricity systems are at capacity. Keeping up with investment in information technology and digital advancements in medical equipment is extremely challenging. New cabling and IT equipment has to be integrated into spaces not designed for this kind of infrastructure, which, frankly, didn't exist when Stevenson was built.

0910

Turning to Collingwood General and Marine, the hospital was founded in 1887, and the current building was developed on the original site in the 1950s. Its main deficiency is that it's simply out of space. It serves more than 60,000 permanent residents, in addition to millions of visitors to the region every year.

The 74-bed Collingwood General and Marine began working toward redevelopment 10 years ago, and the south Georgian Bay community is fully behind its plans. John Di Poce has generously offered to donate land on Poplar Sideroad, a few minutes' drive from the existing

hospital building. It is easily accessible from the neighbouring fast-growing centres of Wasaga Beach, Clearview township and the Town of the Blue Mountains, and it aligns with the new Highway 26 realignment.

Doug Measures, the mayor of Clearview township, has written the Minister of Health, pointing out, "The identified site borders our municipalities, utilizing quick easy access by the updated provincial and regional roads, the regional public transit service, and is well suited for medevac flight landings."

Speaker, when Ornge is required, the current hospital has a single flight path for helicopters. Safety regulations call for two flight paths. Power lines surrounding the current building interfere with the flight path. The emergency department is next to the heliport landing area. The hospital must manually close the air intake for the building so no fumes enter the building. The new site would not only have a proper air handling system, it would better meet today's safety standards.

In a letter of support, Jack and Susan Marley of Collingwood point out, "Each time the helicopter lands, two men are seen on the roof of the emergency area next to the heliport closing the air intake for the building so no fumes can get inside. The men stay on the roof until after takeoff when it's safe to reopen the air vents."

The new greenfield property is next to Georgian College, a bonus which would facilitate the hospital's vision of becoming a true learning campus able to develop the next generation of health care providers for small-town and rural Ontario.

Because the existing building is old, many of its systems require regular and expensive ongoing renewal. Inadequate floor-to-ceiling heights make the facility ill suited to modern clinical standards. Structurally, adding additional floors isn't possible. Most of the non-clinical staff have been moved into external modular buildings to free up whatever room is left for patient care and clinical needs. There are not adequate change rooms for staff.

Collingwood's mayor, Brian Saunderson, wrote the Premier and the health minister to say, "The current physical constraints of the aging facility do not allow for appropriate patient privacy and safety. There are no waiting rooms for patients within the emergency department, ambulatory care, diagnostic imaging, cardiorespiratory department, endoscopy, same-day surgery and other out-patient areas."

During this time of COVID-19, with 65% of in-patient rooms shared and new measures calling for more private rooms, CGMH is at risk of further bed closures in order to meet this need.

From a clinical perspective, the challenges are acute. Emergency department facilities for patients with mental illness or addiction issues are substandard. There is no space in the dialysis unit to expand. A closet has actually been converted in order to accommodate two additional dialysis chairs. Patient confidentiality is compromised because of open-concept areas divided only by curtains, instead of private rooms and recovery areas. There are no family support facilities, such as quiet interview rooms or

lounges for families in a time of crisis. You literally have to have your family meeting in the hallway surrounded by a whole pile of equipment that's stored there.

For all of these points that I've mentioned, it's imperative a redevelopment be approved in the near future. In the words of Wasaga Beach mayor Nina Bifolchi in her letter to Premier Ford, "Delaying will only lead to increased costs down the road and it will only place further strains on the outdated hospital facility we have, as well as the highly skilled people working there. We need your government to commit to the building of a new hospital for the people of south Georgian Bay."

Speaker, in conclusion, these hospital redevelopments in Alliston and Collingwood are essential to meeting current needs and future growth. My constituents are entitled to the same level of patient care and safety that all Ontarians expect and deserve. I ask all members to please support my resolution today that the government of Ontario continue to support planning work for the redevelopment and construction of both Collingwood General and Marine Hospital and Stevenson Memorial Hospital in Alliston.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mrs. Nina Tangri: I'm pleased to speak in support of this motion put forward by the member for Simcoe–Grey. I understand the member recently announced he would not seek re-election, and I would like to congratulate him on his 30 years of service to the people of his community and the people of Ontario.

Health care has always been top of mind for Ontarians and for our government as well. The COVID-19 pandemic, as we all know, has brought health care to the forefront of everyone's mind. We will continue to support the planning worked under way for both Collingwood General and Marine Hospital and the Stevenson Memorial Hospital. We're investing \$20 billion over the next 10 years in hospital infrastructure projects, which will create 3,000 new hospital beds across Ontario. Right now, there are almost 17 major hospital projects under way or in the planning stages. But building hospitals takes time. We need supports now, and our government recognizes that.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are investing \$351 million to add more than 2,250 beds across hospitals and alternate health facilities across the province. Recently, I was pleased to join the member from Mississauga–Lakeshore and the member from Mississauga–Erin Mills to announce what this investment meant for Mississauga and Etobicoke. Trillium Health Partners will receive up to \$21,825,600 in funding for up to 129 patient beds and an additional 12 critical care beds to help alleviate hospital capacity pressures and wait times. This includes up to 99 beds at the Mississauga Hospital, with 70 of them in the pandemic response unit; 36 beds at Queensway Health Centre; and six beds at Credit Valley Hospital. I would really like to thank the Minister of Health and the parliamentary assistant for their efforts in making this happen.

Last November, just two days shy of a year ago, we introduced Ontario health teams; the very first one was announced in Mississauga. These teams will provide better connected care for all patients by integrating services from primary care, home care, community care and hospital care to create a seamless system for patients, families and caregivers, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They were a key part of our plan to end hallway health care, which included prevention and health promotion, providing care in the right places, integration and improved patient flow, and building capacity. We're also taking steps to preserve the capacity we currently have by making sure patients are receiving the right level of care and enabling greater access to home care and community care services through the Connecting People to Home and Community Care Act.

Again, I will be supporting this motion and I thank the member for bringing it forward, and I look forward to seeing these projects, as well as others across the province, get under way and serve the communities where they are so needed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Ms. Sara Singh: Good morning to everyone in the House. I would like to start off by thanking the member for Simcoe–Grey for bringing forward this very important motion to help fund and increase health care capacity in his community—one that I'm actually very familiar with; I have a number of family and friends who live in the riding of Simcoe–Grey.

I'm very happy to support this motion, because across Ontario, we see that our hospitals are in desperate need of investment. As we know, in Brampton we are ground zero and we can very clearly demonstrate what happens when governments of the day neglect to invest in our health care system. In Brampton, we continue to see our ERs in code gridlock; we continue to experience what the member from Simcoe–Grey outlines as the lack of patient confidentiality, no rooms, no beds, no spaces. That's because for 15 years, the Liberals failed to invest in our health care system. But, Speaker, what concerns me is that even before that, Conservatives failed to invest in our health care system.

0920

I know that the member opposite has had an illustrious career—over 30 years—and is seeking retirement now, so I want to congratulate him on those accomplishments. He also served as a health minister during the Harris government when, actually, hospitals—several of them were closed and nurses were fired. At that time, those investments could have been made, but governments of the day chose not to.

But, today, we're happy to support this motion because we understand that in Collingwood and in New Tecumseth, the Collingwood General and Marine Hospital and Stevenson Memorial Hospital deserve funding, and that that fast-growing region in south Georgian Bay, which continues to grow at an exponential rate—actually, Speaker, it's the 12th fastest-growing sub-region in Ontario, with Collingwood and Wasaga Beach being the

main drivers of this growth—that those people deserve to see their hospital capacity increased and investments made from this province.

So I'm happy to support this because I understand what happens when we don't fund our hospitals and we don't ensure they have the capital expansion that they need: Those communities suffer, and people in this province deserve better.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: It's a privilege to speak to the private member's business brought forth to this House by the member for Simcoe—Grey.

Our government was elected on a commitment to both modernize and transform our health care system and end hallway medicine—or hallway nursing, as I like to call it—a health care system that was stuck in an era long gone, with Ontarians being treated in every unconventional place inside a hospital, like a hallway, a closet, an auditorium or even a washroom. This is the system that I knew far too well, a system that thousands of nurses and health care providers experienced for years day in, day out. This was the system that we inherited from the previous government.

With that in mind, as soon as we got elected, we got to work. We got to work to transform our health care system, build capacity within and make it one truly reflective of what Ontarians pay for through their taxes and what Ontario's patients deserve.

Speaker, we know that such transformation is a bold and ambitious plan, and we know that after years of neglect, meaningful and fundamental change takes time. That is why I would like to take a few moments to highlight and celebrate our achievements and investments in the region of Peel and in the city of Mississauga, a community that I am so proud to represent.

Just recently, Madam Speaker, to act on our commitments to the residents of Peel, our government unveiled our ambitious and bold 2020 budget, titled, Ontario's Action Plan: Protect, Support, Recover, which included \$572 million of direct commitments to our province's hospitals to help offset costs associated with our continued fight against COVID-19. With this plan came numerous provisions that directly benefit Peel region. Of particular importance is \$42 million for up to 232 new beds—I would like to repeat that—232 new beds for health facilities in Peel. Trillium Health Partners will be receiving 141 new beds across their three hospital sites. Outside of Mississauga is a further 87 beds to the William Osler Health System, with 41 beds at Brampton Civic Hospital and 46 beds at Etobicoke General Hospital. With these new beds, we are building hospital capacity to relieve pressure and to ensure Ontarians who need surgeries and other procedures are not impacted by potential future waves of COVID-19.

But we know that improving beds is only one part of a broader commitment to strong public health care in Ontario. That's why, in the context of COVID-19, this most recent budget also includes further supports for case and

contact management in Peel region, with up to 70 new management staff and an additional 10 public health professionals from lesser-impacted areas in the province being redirected to Peel. When public health units and municipalities can successfully trace confirmed cases of COVID-19, they can effectively limit spread, flatten the curve and protect the health care ecosystem from dangerous surges.

Another crucial part of Ontario health care is long-term care. Back in the summer, we took decisive action to get more shovels in the ground and to get to work building greater long-term-care capacity, the amount that Ontarians demand and deserve. This ambitious plan, in conjunction with Trillium Health Partners and Infrastructure Ontario, aims to add up to 640 new long-term-care beds by 2021. This means progress in months, not years—certainly not 15 years—a change of the norm in building that Ontario has not seen from past governments.

Madam Speaker, our government was elected on the belief that the status quo that pervaded our public health care system for so long was unacceptable. We were elected on the belief that our health care system was not reaching the potential that it could, especially when Ontarians in need were either treated in hospital hallways or suffering on long wait-lists. This approach to bettering our public health care system drives this government in the COVID-19 pandemic, as we work to ensure that it remains equipped and ready for any wave that may lie ahead and beyond, for future generations to rely on.

The commitments and investments I listed in Peel are just a few of the 70 major hospital projects across Ontario that are currently under construction or progressing through various stages of planning. In the same spirit, our government will continue to support the planning work under way for both Collingwood General and Marine Hospital and Stevenson Memorial Hospital, and I am happy to support this motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'm happy to say we will also be supporting the motion from the member from Simcoe—Grey so that Collingwood General and Marine Hospital, as well as Stevenson Memorial Hospital in the town of New Tecumseth, have an opportunity to move forward.

We wanted to add a few comments about hospitals. Everybody will remember that way back when the Conservatives were last in power—not this time, but the time before this—they engaged in hospital restructuring. “Hospital restructuring” were key words for “how many hospitals can we close,” and they were very successful in their goal of closing 28 hospitals. In the process, Ontario lost 7,000 hospital beds and, in the process, 6,000 nurses lost their jobs. That's a legacy that we still live with to this day.

Fast-forward through 15 years of Liberal government: For five years in a row, hospital budgets grew by zero. There was a freeze on hospital budgets for five years in a row. When they finally started to fund operating budgets in our hospitals again, the rate of funding was below the rate of inflation. So is anybody surprised that we end up

where we are now, when even before the pandemic, half of the 142 hospital corporations were full, at over 100% capacity? We now have people sick enough to be admitted into a hospital that are admitted into a hallway, a TV room, a shower room—or just at the end of any hallway, they put a little curtain and this is your room, with no call bell, no electricity, nothing. What used to be a TV room, a patient lounge or whatever else has now been turned into four- or five-bed wards.

This is the reality of Ontario. It started when the honourable member was Minister of Health. He oversaw a huge part of hospital restructuring that brought us to where we are now with hallway medicine. We are in 2020. We all know about the pandemic that is going on. The number of people whose surgeries have been postponed because our hospitals had to deal with a pandemic and were already full to capacity—when they were finally allowed to reopen, we did the calculations: 189,000 people were added to the wait-lists that are already months' long. Because you have to realize that even with the paid procedures—hip, knee, cataracts, all of those procedures that we keep wait times for—we already measure wait time in months, and now we've just added over 180,000 new cases to those wait-lists.

This is what the hospital system looks like in Ontario. It doesn't have to be like this. Lots of people who end up in trouble and end up in our hospitals—they do this because our home care system is broken. Why? I will bring you back to the member from Simcoe–Grey when he was last in government, where they decided to change our home care system to a competitive bidding system, where you saw big corporate for-profit companies outbidding the VON, the not-for-profit, strong home care system that we used to have in Ontario. They changed it for this competitive bidding model.

0930

What has a competitive bidding model brought us? Well, in the short term, they underbid all of the not-for-profits. Most of the not-for-profits either went bankrupt or closed up. VON in Sudbury went bankrupt; they lost the contract. The for-profit that got the contract rehired their staff at a lower pay without benefits, without pension plans, without any sick days, without anything. How long do you figure those people who were experts in home care stayed into those jobs? Not very long.

Fast-forward to now: The home care system cannot recruit and retain a stable workforce, and we have the broken home care system we have now, which means that people who want to stay in their home are not supported, end up in hospital and then we have the hospital overcapacity that we have now.

This member was there when all of those decisions were taken. I'm glad that, now that he sits as an independent, he has seen the light of day and sees how important our hospitals are and is pushing for those hospitals in his riding. We will be there with him. We will push for the good people of New Tecumseth so that they get the hospital care that they deserve. We all deserve good hospital care. I thank the member for bringing this motion forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Deepak Anand: I rise today to speak on motion 119, the redevelopment and construction of the Collingwood General and Marine Hospital and Stevenson Memorial Hospital in the town of New Tecumseth.

Years back, when my daughter was a couple of years old, we visited Collingwood and instantly fell in love with its natural beauty. There are many biking and walking trails in the vibrant town centre. In fact, we ended up buying a managed townhouse at Cranberry Resort near Highway 26. I loved the fact that we could enjoy the lake and the mountain together at the same time.

As my daughter grew, so the area did too. More and more people are looking to retire, settle or enjoy a vacation home in this slice of paradise. The Ministry of Finance actually projected estimates that the population of Simcoe region will grow to around 80,000 by the year 2031. This signals exciting times for the region: More people means more family means more jobs, homes, schools and prosperity.

The Stevenson facility was actually built over half a century ago, and the Collingwood General was originally built in 1887. Since then, they have invested in regular upgrades, small expansions and new facilities.

As the population increases, demand increases, too. I want to thank all the front-line workers and the hospital administration for doing an incredible job of meeting this incredible demand, especially during COVID-19, in these hospitals.

It is a basic tenant of our public policy: As the demand increases, supply must go up as well. This government understands that, and we are committed to ensuring that Ontarians have access to the high-quality care that they deserve. It is why our government is investing \$20 billion over the next 10 years in the hospital expansions and upgrades. The Minister of Finance has recently committed to adding over 2,250 beds across 57 health facilities.

Madam Speaker, you know the region of Peel, which I belong to, is the fastest-growing region in the province, with a diverse population aging, with a projected 61% increase in seniors between 2016 and 2026, and 38% of the population has one or more chronic conditions. I want to thank Premier Ford for listening to the community needs and your promise to address the needs of health care in Brampton. As recently announced, both Trillium and William Osler will receive funding for the new patient beds.

I want to thank all the residents and all the elected officials from Peel for working together during COVID-19 and supporting the community. I want to urge them, let's keep working hard for our residents not just during COVID-19, but post COVID-19 as well.

To the member and to the people of Simcoe–Grey and New Tecumseth, planning work is already under way for both Collingwood General and Marine Hospital and Stevenson Memorial Hospital. I want to assure you: Your government is here to listen and to act.

To the member: Thank you for your advocacy, and thank you for your commitment for 30 years. It's thanks

to you that we understand the importance of health care for our residents and we understand the need here in Collingwood as well. It will be a pleasure to support your motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Jeff Burch: It's a privilege to rise today in the House and debate the member from Simcoe–Grey's private member's motion 119, on the Simcoe–Grey hospital redevelopment.

The first time I heard the member speak in person was at an NDP fundraiser in my riding. We were celebrating the career of Peter Kormos, one of my predecessors. I know the member and Peter were friends. If Peter were here, he would give him a really hard time about the Conservatives' record on this issue, but my friend from Nickel Belt has already done that.

We've seen Ontario's hallway medicine crisis balloon over the last number of years. People spend hours waiting in ERs, frequently in hospitals that are run down, only to end up on a gurney in a hallway without a call button, without privacy. In my riding, in Niagara, some of the hospitals are rated on Ontario's most overcrowded list. Chronic overcapacity makes the patient experience worse, and it can lead to non-emergency surgeries getting postponed. It means there's a surge of new patients with nowhere to relieve the congestion.

In 2013, my own father was a victim of hallway medicine, as I've spoken about in this House. After suffering a stroke, he spent 36 hours in the emergency department after being sent to the wrong hospital, where they weren't equipped to handle strokes. He's now paralyzed, and my mother cares for him 24/7. This case is not an outlier; it's happening all over Ontario.

In my riding, a 98-year-old World War II veteran who flew Lancaster bombers in the war—I've spoken about his case here in the House before. After suffering a fall, having head injuries and a suspected concussion, he sat for two hours in emergency. He was then declared fit to sit. He sat another six hours due to overcrowding. The family asked for a gurney, but none were available. It's one of hundreds of stories I've heard in the Niagara region alone. Hospitals from across this province are in crisis, and it's past time to tackle it. It has been this way for many, many years.

The motion before us today is looking to reconfirm support for the planning work for the redevelopment construction of the Collingwood General and Marine Hospital and Stevenson Memorial. It's my understanding that Collingwood General is nearly 66 years old. Stevenson Memorial Hospital was built in 1964. Both of these facilities have been allowed to sit without adequate planning to redevelop them.

In June, the Stevenson Memorial CFO revealed that the hospital had spent nearly \$800,000 on COVID-19 expenditures and faced \$600,000 in lost revenues. So the situation obviously is serious in my friend's riding, as it is in many of our ridings. I have hospitals in Welland, Port Colborne—my friend from Niagara Falls, in Fort Erie—

that are in desperate need of attention. It's high time that we start to take a look at these things.

I'd also mention, Speaker, that it's not just about bricks and mortar. We had a new hospital built in St. Catharines a number of years ago. The problem was it wasn't staffed properly. You can have all the bricks and mortar, you can have a big, shiny new hospital, and it doesn't matter one bit to patients if there aren't the staff in those hospitals taking care of the patients. That has not happened for many, many years. I know it's not completely this government's fault, but it's certainly the fault of governments over the last 15 years. It's a situation we need—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you. I return to the member for Simcoe–Grey for his right of response.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I want to thank the members for their support of this matter, which is so important to my constituents.

Speaker, over the last 30 years that I've been in this House, governments have funded all of the hospitals around Simcoe–Grey. Owen Sound got a new hospital. Barrie has had two new hospitals. During my time, Newmarket has had a couple of billion dollars put into it. I opened the new hospital in Barrie in 1996. I opened the new hospital in Orangeville in 1998. Everybody around me has been done, except for the riding of Simcoe–Grey, so I'm very appreciative of the members who spoke and I understand that all parties will support this resolution.

0940

I do want to tackle a bit of history here, Madam Speaker, because they say I closed 28 hospitals; I think Dalton McGuinty had it up to 35 at one time. Well, let me tell you how they count these things. In the Grey-Bruce health system, there were six hospital corporations on seven sites. I amalgamated those hospital corporations into one corporation. So you went six hospitals, seven sites, one corporation—they call that five closures, as part of their 28. All of the hospitals are still open.

On University Health Network, I amalgamated the hospital corporations of the rehab hospital, Princess Margaret, Toronto Western, the orthopaedic, Toronto General, and one or two others; seven hospital corporations into one, and they call that six closures. All of the hospitals are open.

The only hospital I remember closing was Wellesley, and it needed \$68 million of work. We ended up closing that, moving all of its AIDS and HIV services down to St. Mike's, which was running Casey House at the time—experts in that. We built a state-of-the-art long-term-care facility on that corner at Wellesley and Church. It's there today.

I also—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Name the 28 hospitals. You can't name them. It's false history.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you, the member for Simcoe–Grey. The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

Mr. Wilson has moved private members' notice of motion number 119.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? That is carried.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BETTER FOR PEOPLE, SMARTER FOR BUSINESS ACT, 2020 LOI DE 2020 POUR MIEUX SERVIR LA POPULATION ET FACILITER LES AFFAIRES

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

Bill 213, An Act to reduce burdens on people and businesses by enacting, amending and repealing various Acts and revoking a regulation / *Projet de loi 213, Loi visant à alléger le fardeau administratif qui pèse sur la population et les entreprises en édictant, modifiant ou abrogeant diverses lois et en abrogeant un règlement.*

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Last time this bill was debated, the member from London West had just finished her debate and it was on to questions and answers. Questions?

Miss Monique Taylor: Speaker—who was our former speaker? Oh, Ms. Sattler, the member from London West. Speaker, I was here when she did her time on this bill and of course, as usual, always articulate, always speaking to the real issues that we know that the people of Ontario face and that we don't see reflected in this bill. I mean, it's no different than any bill that we've already been watching here in this House that talks about business in the title, but doesn't see it reflected in the actual legislation that this government puts forward.

So I will ask the member, what does she not see in this bill that would be important for the she-covetry throughout the province as people, and particularly women, are struggling with employment?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'd like to thank the member for Hamilton Mountain for her question. Certainly, there have been numerous missed opportunities for this government to step forward and address the need for a she-covetry in this province.

We know that women have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Women therefore need targeted assistance to deal with the pandemic, and particularly to get back into the workforce. We just saw a study by RBC this weekend that confirmed that women are not getting back into the workforce at the same rate that men are.

Certainly, we know that women carry the burden of looking after children. Caps on class sizes, a significant increase in the number of child care spaces: these would have been important initiatives that would have assisted with the she-covetry.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Like many members in the chamber, I've hosted some virtual round tables with the small business community, particularly, recently, with the region of Durham recovery group. What we discussed was the effect that Bill 213 would bring, particularly the removal of red tape, on small and mid-sized businesses within the town of Whitby, but more broadly within the region of Durham. I wonder if the speaker opposite would speak specifically to the effect in her riding of the removal of the regulations and the effect of making the situation overall in the province of Ontario far more productive for small businesses, but more importantly for hard-working Ontario families.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Unfortunately, there is virtually nothing in this bill, Bill 213, that assists businesses to respond and recover from the impact of the pandemic. We have been hearing in my riding, and I'm sure all members have been hearing in their ridings, from business owners who need direct financial support. This government has heard over and over again from MPPs on this side that this is what business is asking for. This is what they asked for during the summer hearings from the Standing Committee on Finance. This is what they are emailing our offices about. They are calling our offices. They are telling us, when we speak to business owners, that they need direct financial support to deal with the impact of the pandemic.

This government is offering a \$1,000 fund for PPE; the average cost of PPE is \$20,000. What good is \$1,000 going to do for a struggling small business that is hanging by a thread?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions?

Ms. Suze Morrison: Thank you so much. It's interesting to be here. I have to admit, I wasn't present for the member's initial debate. We're here on a Monday doing questions and comments on a debate that took place last week and, with the reality of social distancing in the House, it means some of us, unfortunately, miss some of the really great debate that happens.

To the member from London West, who I so enjoy listening to in debate as often as I can: For those of us who weren't present last week when you gave your initial remarks, if you could highlight, perhaps, the top one or two messages that you want to make sure that the government members really get across from your initial debate.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I appreciate the question from my colleague and wanted to share with the viewers and MPPs who are here in this Legislature today that the main message I conveyed on Thursday when I spoke to this bill is that it has 29 schedules; it's a grab bag of measures that affect different ministries. But the reality is that none of it matters because this bill includes schedule 2—a bill that legislates the ability for Canada Christian College to be able to grant university degrees in arts and sciences. It legitimizes an institution that was founded by someone who is Islamophobic, homophobic, transphobic. Why is this government feeling that legislation is an appropriate place to legitimize that kind of bigotry and hate?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions?

Mr. Aris Babikian: The Better for People, Smarter for Business Act is expected to save businesses time and cost

in regulations and policy for business. Is the NDP against the government helping businesses reduce regulatory burdens and making it easier for businesses to create jobs in Ontario?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Listen, the official opposition would like nothing better than the government to step up and start helping businesses in the province of Ontario. That is why with every bill that this government has brought forward claiming that it is a bill that is going to assist businesses, we have highlighted the fact that it's not addressing the real needs that businesses have brought to our attention. They need direct financial support. Their workers need paid sick days. They need a moratorium on commercial evictions. Of course, we have heard after a gap of one month that this government was finally dragged into doing the right thing on a commercial eviction moratorium, but even what they did is going to exclude hundreds and thousands of businesses in this province.

We want to respond with what businesses are saying they need in order to get through the pandemic, and this government continues to refuse to listen.

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The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions?

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: I did hear the debate of my colleague, and what was so clear—and you said so well—was that we have these regulatory changes, and we have this one schedule that's just something that none of us can support. It is sort of a pattern that this government does: put something that we know this side of the House could never support in a bill with a bunch of regulatory changes.

I had a couple of meetings with small business last week and spoke with the chamber of commerce. They are very concerned we are not doing sufficient things for small business in this bill or in the budget. So I'd like to ask the member: Can you explain what you would like to see in a bill to help small business?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I very much appreciate the question from my colleague. We, the official opposition, released a plan, our Save Main Street plan, that really focused on what businesses need to make it through the pandemic and still survive on the other side.

One of the first things we hear from small business is their need to be able to keep their workers on the payroll. Many of these workers have been with them for years, and they don't want to lose them. They want to have those workers available for when we get back to the new normal in Ontario. So a ban on evictions, a direct commercial rent subsidy, paid sick leave for workers—these would be very important measures that would assist small businesses.

We've also heard about the need for a utility payment freeze. This government thinks that deferring taxes and then collecting the bill—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you.

There's not enough time for another question. Further debate?

Mrs. Belinda C. Karahalios: I'm happy to join the debate on Bill 213 today to express why I will be voting no to this piece of omnibus legislation unless substantive

amendments are made, and I will explain why the bill, as a whole, is problematic.

This bill amends 46 different acts already in existence under 29 different schedules. There are two things that immediately jump out at me when reading this bill. First, bizarre—the bill is very, very bizarre. Second, this bill perfectly embodies the motto: What the government gives with one hand, the government takes away with the other. Let me repeat: What the government gives with one hand, the government can take away with the other.

It's curious that the government is trying to change 46 pieces of existing legislation at a time when they believe no one is looking because of their mishandling of COVID and their repeated lockdowns and shuttering of businesses that are putting people out of work.

Let's take a closer look. The government is granting three Christian colleges the ability to grant additional degrees and granting them the status of universities. Tyndale Christian college, Redeemer Christian college and Canada Christian College are all to become universities. The way the bill is presented, it almost corners these three colleges into acting against the very principles they promote.

In the same bill that is to grant these three colleges university status, the government wanted to have all churches and places of worship give up their right to perform marriages, free of government intervention and control. That is an attack of religious freedom. Freedom of religion means places of worship are to be free of government intervention. This bill, as drafted, crushes that principle—a principle that this government and many of its members have, in the past, during campaign time, professed to support.

So how did the government put these three Christian colleges into this predicament? Let's look at the lobbyist record—public for all Ontarians. Tyndale and Redeemer are represented by employees of the lobbying firm Loyalist Public Affairs, founded by Chris Froggatt, who, multiple news reports have shown, has had a close working relationship with the government and the Premier in the past, providing them with political advice, leading the Premier's election readiness advisory committee and, of course, infamously handling communications with regard to the Premier's attempt to appoint his close personal friend to run the OPP—an interesting, or bizarre, choice. The Premier claims that, "No one influences my government. No one influences my cabinet." This bill would seem to contradict this tough talk.

The third school, Canada Christian College, is run by the Premier's close friend Charles McVety, so presumably a lobbyist was not necessary. What did these Christian colleges get in return for their representation?

What the government gives with one hand, the government takes with the other, because in the same bill, as currently drafted and originally intended, this government is imposing itself and all future governments on the practice of marriage in Ontario.

One schedule of this bill, schedule 3, eliminates the automatic election for someone to take their spouse's surname after marriage. That isn't reducing a burden, despite

what the bill's title says. It creates a burden. It forces people to now use the burdensome process of legally changing their surname rather than simply assuming their spouse's surname. Instead, newly married people will have to legally change their name by getting a police check and filling out an application with about 29 sections. I don't understand why this is necessary. The current law allows a person to leave their surname as is after marriage or assume their spouse's. What is the issue? Why make it harder?

Second, and more alarming, Speaker, is another schedule of the bill, schedule 8, that grants cabinet new powers on the practice of marriage in Ontario. Specifically, it gives a cabinet minister of this government—or any future government, which is important to note—the power to (1) create a code of practice that everyone who can solemnize a marriage in Ontario would have to comply with, and if they do not, their authority to conduct a marriage could be cancelled at the minister's discretion; and (2) it gives a cabinet minister the power to unilaterally cancel the registration of anyone who can marry a couple in Ontario when it is not in the public interest.

It's very bizarre and very troubling. It rips away freedom of religion from places of worship and puts it entirely in the hands of one cabinet minister.

More troubling, the bill doesn't bother describing what the code of practice is. It doesn't provide a description of what the public interest is. As a result, we don't know what the rationale is for proposing a standard of “in the public interest” and a code—or new concepts—on conducting marriages. That's left for a later date to be created and changed at the whim of a cabinet minister in this government or any future government—no debates, no vote, no discussion. Ontarians are to trust this and every future government blindly on this. Well, I don't think blind trust is something that should be given to this government especially, or to any government for that matter.

I also know that it's safe to say the definition of “in the public interest” created by this government and some of its ministers would not be the same as what I believe “in the public interest” is, or what Ontarians believe, for that matter.

I also think it's safe to say that the leaders of those three Christian colleges would not agree with this government on what it believes is in the public interest. Is it in the public interest to threaten that you're going to bring down the hammer on the people of Ontario if they don't listen to the Premier? I would say no, but the Premier believes it. In this bill, was the government drafting the threat of a new hammer, a hammer on anyone who solemnizes a marriage in Ontario, including those in places of worship and religious institutions?

Churches and other places of worship will now have to comply with a code of practice and a government-defined definition of what “in the public interest” is when performing marriages. This code can be changed whenever this or any future government wants by a single cabinet minister. This is not freedom of religion; it is a direct threat and attack to freedom of religion.

On October 20, I released a public statement opposing these two sections. Not surprisingly, on October 23, the Minister of Government and Consumer Services put out a statement on social media stating that the schedule would be amended at committee but only after it passed second reading. Governing by social media appears to be the new standard in Ontario for substantive government changes to policy traditions in this province. Speaker, that is not good enough. The claim was that the schedule was created to deal with fly-by-night marriage officiants. The minister wants us to believe that Ontario is the new Las Vegas. Where is the public outcry on this issue? Is the government going to present statistics on this growing issue they say is driving this? But the fact is, if that was the intention, it would have been drafted right into the language of the bill, right up front, rather than using broad language like “in the public interest” about a broad tool like a code, both of which are to be created and changed at a later date by one single cabinet minister of this or any future government.

Amending this section at committee is not enough. The very inclusion of such a broad tool in this legislation shows that this government does not uphold the authority of religious institutions or religious freedom, and furthermore it does not take the legislative process that this provincial Parliament is here to conduct seriously. It is another example of how this government wants to move the legislative process out of this Parliament and into the hands of the executive branch, to be decided behind closed doors without a debate or a vote, just like Bill 195. The very inclusion of this code and “in a public interest” are direct threats on freedom of religion and on churches and other places of worship.

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These sections should be entirely removed from the bill, Madam Speaker, not just changed. I fear that whatever tool is created in committee to change schedule 8 will be so broad that it will be the starting point of a slippery slope, attacking freedom of religion in Ontario by this or any future government.

In the minister's social media post and in the past, members across the aisle have campaigned on telling their constituents that they're for freedom of religion, that the state should leave places of worship alone. But once in power, they threaten and attack freedom of religion by including broad language like this in bills that have nothing to do with marriage. It's bizarre. As soon as they're called out on it, they immediately buckle and profess once again that they're for freedom of religion—very bizarre. This bill then tries to throw a carrot to Christian colleges, but the carrot from the government comes at a cost. What the government gives in one hand, it takes away with the other.

It's funny, Speaker, because last year when I proposed my private member's bill against voter fraud, the government House leader said that political parties get to run themselves. He felt there shouldn't be any laws against the conduct of internal political party hacks who want to commit voter fraud. But now this bill says that that same government that thinks political parties are above the law, the

same government that believes it can fine someone for having 10 people over for Thanksgiving, believes that churches and other places of worship don't get to run themselves when it comes to the practice of marriage. So this government presents a code of practice or conduct on those officiating marriages, but they reject a code of practice or conduct on political parties and political operatives on voter fraud.

You know, it's interesting, Speaker, because in retrospect, since the bill was introduced on October 6, I thought we would have heard in some public way from certain members across the aisle. I thought, for sure, for such an attack on freedom of religion, we would have heard from members from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex or Niagara West, or any other politician from the government benches who cut their stripes and got their vote and status among the voters by professing to be defenders of religious liberty. I thought those members who profess to defend and speak out and promote religious liberty here to do just that, but they are nowhere to be found when it's their government stripping away and attacking religious liberty. They said nothing in the two weeks after the bill was introduced, and nothing since—crickets.

In conclusion, Speaker, I have to ask: What is the point of schedule 3 and schedule 8? What is the issue? Why can't we have it drafted right into the bill if it is valid, or why won't the government just remove those sections?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: To the member from Cambridge: This particular bill is designed also to help small businesses. When you take a look at the current situation right now with Peel and Toronto being in a lockdown, nobody likes that. I don't like that. I'm sure no one in this Legislature likes it. But the Better for People, Smarter for Business Act is expected to save businesses time and cost, in regulatory and policy to businesses.

My question to the member, respectfully, is, do you—we know that the official opposition, they're badgering us with regard to this particular bill. But again, as an independent, are you against businesses, whereby this policy will reduce regulatory burdens to make it easier for businesses to create jobs in Ontario?

Mrs. Belinda C. Karahalios: Thank you to the member from Chatham–Kent–Leamington for his question. Should we be supporting small businesses and all businesses? Yes, we should. Why are we putting these sections into a bill, then, about business? This isn't better for people; this isn't better for business.

Considering I'm one of the few people who are actually defending small business, who was previously on that side, the fact that you've locked down two regions and closed off small businesses, only allowing big box stores to open, makes me want to ask you: Are you against supporting small businesses?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions?

Mr. Jeff Burch: Thank you to the member from Cambridge. It's always great to hear her speak. She packed a lot of information in that 10 minutes; I'm going to have to get a copy of that for future reference.

I'm just wondering, this government has a really troubling record with overreaching on emergency bills, burying all kinds of legislation in a kind of stealth manner—ranked ballots, taking away a municipality's ability to run their own affairs; conservation authorities, that's been under attack in bills; and now, of course, this situation with McVety. What is she hearing from her constituents in terms of this Conservative government using a pandemic as cover to bury legislation in their bills in a stealth manner?

Mrs. Belinda C. Karahalios: Thank you very much to the member for Niagara Centre. Our great folks in the Hansard department will make sure that you have a copy, word for word, of my speech. So thank you for that.

My constituents in Cambridge, which includes North Dumfries and north Brant, they're extremely disappointed. We saw that back in July when I voted no on Bill 195, which is a bill that was really draconian and a complete government overreach. My constituents were, across all political stripes, quite happy about my vote on that bill. Believing that this government has let them down, they feel abandoned. They feel lied to.

I want them to know that I will continue to represent them until my term is up, and that I will continue to fight for what they want, which is keeping the small businesses open and ensuring that we are trusting individuals to do what they know that they can do: keeping things safe, keeping people healthy. It's such a disappointment because I have been conducting round tables for the last few weeks, and my small businesses are scared about what this government is going to do next.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Question?

Mr. Deepak Anand: Due to COVID-19, small businesses are struggling, and one way we can help these businesses is by reducing their costs. Our government has a target to reduce these costs to businesses by \$400 million, and that is why Ontario is at an A- grade in 2019, well above C+ in 2018. That's the change. This bill streamlines and harmonizes regulations with other provinces to make life better for the people and smarter for businesses, while maintaining health and safety standards.

Through you, Madam Speaker, my question to the member would be, what are the things in this bill that you support that will enhance and will make life better for our small businesses?

Mrs. Belinda C. Karahalios: Thank you to the member from Mississauga–Malton. We know small businesses are struggling. If the government had approached this pandemic in a way where they actually supported the vulnerable and those who actually needed support instead of just the two-week shutdown—okay, we get it. We don't know about the virus. We need to not overwhelm our health care system. We are now eight months, going into nine, of lockdowns and restrictions and no real, objective criteria being presented.

Let people get back to work. We don't need to be supporting them with all this money. We could be putting that towards the vulnerable if you let them get back to work. That's all they have been asking for this entire time.

People are struggling. People can't pay their mortgages. They cannot pay their rent. So is this bill needed? Unfortunately, it is, but those two schedules that I mentioned are not.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Question?

Ms. Suze Morrison: I listened intently to the member's remarks, and she specifically noted that this government doesn't deserve the blind trust of Ontarians. I would ask the member if she would care to elaborate from her personal experience why exactly this government does not deserve the trust of Ontarians.

Mrs. Belinda C. Karahalios: Thank you to the member for Toronto Centre. I'm grateful for that question. I think Bill 195 was a good example of not being able to give your trust completely to this government, or to any government for that matter.

Again, I have asked twice in this House for objective criteria for the reasons for lockdown. I got non-answers both times, once from the Solicitor General and once from the Minister of Health, unfortunately. We're asking for clarity. We're asking for transparency. Not just me, but we have members of the public asking. We have members of the opposition asking for clarity. So it doesn't matter what side of the political spectrum we're on, we are asking for clarity. We cannot trust you to make decisions when one week you're saying something, and then the following week you're saying something else. There are contradictions in everything that is being said. We, as people, as Ontarians of this province, need clarity.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions?

Mrs. Nina Tangri: I want to thank the member opposite for sharing her thoughts about this bill. The COVID-19 pandemic response bill that we brought forward allowed us to provide the relief for the businesses that we have talked a lot about today in the House: \$1.9 million in employee relief by allowing WSIB payments to be deferred; \$1.8 billion in property tax deferrals for businesses; \$6 billion in relief through the interest and penalty-free period for payments; and also, through the budget bill, where we allowed \$1,000 for PPE. We're allowing rebates for property taxes for our businesses hit in the areas, like in the hot zones—for example, Peel.

The COVID-19 pandemic relief bill was a bill that the member opposite voted against. Now, all of measures that our government is taking to support businesses, yet the member opposite speaks against those great measures that we have taken—I'd like to hear her response on what she believes is a better measure than a lot of the things that we are providing here right now.

1010

Mrs. Belinda C. Karahalios: Madam Speaker, this is the third government question, and each time they had an opportunity to ask me about what I actually spoke about, and each time they have not, because they're embarrassed. They know that this bill should have been for COVID recovery because of all the damage they've done to this economy—the recovery that's needed. They've snuck two schedules into this bill that have no place, and the questions I get are: "What do you support? Why did you

vote no against this?" I'm voting no because you put rubbish in a bill. That's why I'm voting no. There's no transparency, once again.

Ask me a real question that I can respond to. Asking me about what great stuff—how much money you're putting into PPE. Guess what? They want to get back to work. They don't want your money for PPE. They want to run their businesses the way they need to, to feed their families, to pay taxes, to support this economy, and to make sure we have enough money for health care and education. That's what Ontario wants.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Question?

Miss Monique Taylor: It is always fascinating to be in the House when the member from Cambridge takes on the government—a government that she used to be a part of and left for a reason. I would say this bill is probably just one more of those reasons why she pats herself on the back and said that she did the right thing.

It was very interesting to hear her speak about these schedules, the mess that they are going to make, how they are not better for people, and the interesting fact of why the government chooses to put this in a bill that's called Better for People, Smarter for Business.

Can she tell me anywhere in this bill that she actually finds measures that are better for business and smarter for people?

Mrs. Belinda C. Karahalios: Thank you to the member for Hamilton Mountain. I would love to be able to answer that question, but here's the thing: Not only wasn't there anything concrete in this bill, and there were two schedules, as I mentioned, that have nothing to do with COVID recovery or supporting people or supporting businesses, but it seems that I'm getting more work done on this side of the House, because when I was in caucus, when I made suggestions on bills, no one heard me. But now that I'm here, we've got the minister making changes on social media. So I'm going to say double thumbs up for that.

At the end of the day, if we have a bill that's supposed to be about COVID measures, we should be focusing on COVID—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you. Further debate?

Mr. Aris Babikian: This bill proposes to develop an online service for property-related information requests to ensure that information to inform evidence-based environmental decisions related to property transactions is available to businesses and citizens in a timely manner.

I assume the opposite member will agree that a more efficient and accountable way of reporting property information is to help our residents?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): I apologize. We were done with questions and answers; we were on to further debate.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Okay, we'll count that as debate.

Questions?

Miss Monique Taylor: Questions for the member? Is that what's happening, now that they've confused it all up?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Yes.

Miss Monique Taylor: That's fine, Madam Speaker, because I was going to take the opportunity to stand up and speak to Bill 213 anyway, but it's easy for me to transform that into a question back to the governing member.

As we've been hearing, there are a lot of poison pills within this bill. We know that schedule 2 is a problem when it comes to McVety. We know that the Marriage Act is a problem; we know that the transportation act is a problem—so many issues within this bill that are truly not better for people or smarter for business.

Can the member tell me the measures that he thinks are in this bill that will actually help people and businesses?

Mr. Aris Babikian: There are so many positive aspects in this bill to help our residents, our citizens and our businesses. It is time for us to put all our differences aside and work together to help overcome these difficult times during this pandemic. We can sit down and debate the issue and criticize each other, but the important thing is that we need to be more proactive. We have to provide more resolution to the needs of our residents.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): We've run out of time for debate on Bill 213 today.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): It is now time for members' statements.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Ms. Jill Andrew: It is an honour to stand on behalf of our resilient Toronto–St. Paul's, but make no mistake, our resilience must be met with this government's action and resources. We cannot be taken for granted.

I want to give a heartfelt thank you to our very own local community she-roses who created #one2giveTO. They and all of us in St. Paul's have shopped local to support our small businesses. We've donated essentials, helped seniors, neighbours on ODSP/OW who have run out of money between the cost of rent, food, meds and PPE. We've made phone calls to check in on the mental health of our loved ones. We've mailed letters to those without Internet.

Speaker, our resilience is waning. We cannot afford to get this lockdown wrong again. We have no more lives to spare.

St. Paul's needs no evictions—residential or commercial—during the full duration of COVID-19. We need real rent relief. We need housing for people in St. Paul's experiencing homelessness, paid sick days for all workers who are sick so they can stay home. Women without children, Speaker, also locked down in violence, need this government's help, too.

We need the Premier to explain the sense behind our kids and caring adults crammed in schools while the message is for us to stay home.

Speaker, St. Paul's needs help—more help than I could ever list in a member's statement. We demand truth, transparency and clarity from this Conservative government now. We are strong, but we cannot do it alone.

FOOD AND TOY DRIVE

Mr. Rick Nicholls: A few months ago, I spoke about the miracle that occurred in my riding of Chatham–Kent–Leamington back on May 16. Volunteers were able to collect over 678,000 pounds of food within just one day.

Part of that miracle was that it was not only put together in just three weeks; with the help of a huge group of volunteers, food was collected in a matter of hours. Since there was so much, it may have taken our riding a few days to sort through everything, but then another miracle happened.

You see, at this time of year, normal charities that are usually open are struggling due to the lack of volunteers and COVID-19 precautions. This past Saturday, my riding of Chatham–Kent was blessed with a new initiative. It's called The Gift. Similar to the miracle, people were encouraged to leave food and toy donations by their front door, where volunteers, following COVID-19 safety protocols, went to collect them. As so many items were donated, we still do not have a concrete number, but volunteers are busy sorting and counting.

Susan Fulmer from the Wheatley food bank spoke about how amazing Chatham–Kent residents are. She also mentioned that they received thousands of gifts and pallets of food, all to help prepare the Christmas hampers, which will then help those in need with a little boost this year. Again, organizations such as the Chatham Goodfellows, the Salvation Army as well as local Christmas hamper programs will be aided by this.

It's fantastic to see a community volunteering their own time to help the less fortunate so close to the holidays. Because of The Gift, I'm happy to say Merry Christmas.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. Jeff Burch: Speaker, I want to speak to you and all the members of this House today regarding an urgent, ongoing situation with the Niagara health system and across the province of Ontario. Hospital staff are being sent home without pay when exposed to COVID-19.

The Ministry of Health, under this government, has directed this change, and hospitals can no longer do straight pay for staff directed by the employer to go into isolation. This practice is a marked departure from the province's direction during the first wave, where staff in self-isolation would continue to receive their full pay. We've heard from front-line hospital staff who report that when exposed to COVID in the line of duty, they're sent home without pay when they self-report.

This change has the potential for dangerous consequences in our community. This government often talks about the hard work done by front-line health care workers, correctly calling them heroes, yet the actions from the

Ministry of Health now put them in an impossible situation.

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We know that the vast majority of families in this province cannot afford to go without an entire paycheque. One can clearly see the difficult decision a worker would face, to self-report possible exposure with the knowledge that doing so may mean your family cannot get by financially that month.

Sending front-line workers home without pay shows flagrant disrespect for their work, livelihood and safety. Beyond the safety of the workers, it creates a door for exposure in our hospitals and our communities.

The OHA, hospitals across Ontario, and health care unions have asked the ministry to restore hospital workers' pay and make them whole when they are exposed to this deadly virus. We must reverse this threat to their work and financial stability, and start treating them with the respect they deserve.

JOAN AND COLEMAN MACDONALD

Mr. Jim McDonell: My riding is blessed by many great community volunteers, but none greater than Joan P. and Coleman MacDonald.

Joan Barton, by many local standards, was a foreigner to Williamstown, travelling there from Vankleek Hill in 1954 to teach at Char-Lan high school. She met her husband-to-be, Coleman MacDonald, and raised their three children, Greer, Dawn, and Krista, on their bicentennial farm. The couple's motto was "Faith, family and friends," and their infectious love for enjoying a good time captured the spirit of Glengarry county.

As a teacher, Joan P. helped produce musicals and events that incorporated her musical talents, including 52 years as organist at St. Mary's. As an active member of our local food grains bank, Joan organized and produced the annual Irish stew musical. It was all about having fun and raising money for a good cause. Joan also served on the Charlottenburgh township council, the Williamstown Fair, the Glengarry, Nor'Westers and Loyalist Museum, and the St. Raphael's Friends of the Ruins committee for many years.

Both Joan P. and Coleman were avid curlers, organizing and supporting the local Lancaster club with enthusiasm and a generous welcome for all members, new and old, helping them generate activities such as their annual Boxing Day bonspiel. You were always welcomed by Joan P.'s big smile, and a Labatt 50 and a lame joke from Coleman.

Both Coleman and Joan were honoured by their peers. Joan was inducted into the Glengarry Celtic Music Hall of Fame, and Coleman into the Glengarry Sports Hall Of Fame for curling. They were leaders in their community, where their lively energy and good work continue to inspire respect and fond memories.

Joan passed away in 2009, and Coleman followed her this past June, both passing away in their historic Loyalist

home farm. Great neighbours and friends, rest in peace, Joan P. and Coleman.

ASSISTANCE TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Marit Stiles: It's a pleasure to speak, as always, on behalf of the great people of Davenport. As we have said many times in this House, the COVID pandemic is exposing existing gaps in income insecurity and in access to supports. From the beginning of the pandemic, people receiving assistance through the Ontario Disability Support Program have been sounding the alarms, calling on the province to boost benefits during the pandemic, particularly for those who don't qualify for federal benefits.

Mr. Speaker, everyone in this chamber is contacted, I'm sure, by people with disabilities, many of whom have been housebound because of their vulnerability to more severe illnesses from COVID-19 and are having to pay more for everything, from ordering groceries, to transportation, to personal protective equipment. Many of the people who have contacted me are desperate, deeply depressed, and as we know from recent media reports, considering terrible ends.

Simply put, it has been a nightmare. And now the government is putting salt on the wound, wasting \$1.5 million to hire fraud investigators. This is money that could help people on ODSP. But instead, the government has decided, at the worst time for thousands of people in our province, to focus on how many people they can kick off their very support in a pandemic. Mr. Speaker, when will the government live up to its responsibilities and respect the human rights and dignity of Ontarians living with disabilities?

LOGEMENT ABORDABLE AFFORDABLE HOUSING

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Le 10 novembre dernier, j'ai lancé un groupe de travail sur le logement abordable avec mes trois collègues municipaux de la circonscription d'Ottawa-Vanier. Nous avons décidé d'unir nos efforts afin de trouver des solutions étant donné la crise du logement qui affaiblit gravement notre économie.

La pénurie de logements adéquats, sûrs et abordables dans la province et, plus particulièrement, à Ottawa-Vanier est un problème majeur depuis plusieurs années, et la situation ne fait qu'empirer avec la pandémie.

Currently, more than 12,000 people—many are families with children—are waiting for housing in Ottawa. This is a 15% increase from 2017. Nowadays, if you want to have access to a two-bedroom apartment, you have to work two full-time jobs. This is not affordable housing.

The lack of adequate and affordable housing in Ontario is not an issue that we can put off any longer. It's not a partisan issue; it's a matter of human rights and human dignity.

Cette pandémie nous fait réaliser encore plus à quel point nous avons besoin de protéger et d'aider les

membres de nos communautés les plus vulnérables. Dans un pays comme le Canada et une province aussi prospère que l'Ontario, aucun être humain ne devrait avoir à choisir entre la nourriture et le logement. Nous pouvons faire mieux; nous devons faire mieux.

I call on every member of this House to join me and my colleagues at the city of Ottawa as we endeavour together to do everything possible to ensure that all Ontarians can have a place to call home.

HOLODOMOR

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I rise today to honour the memories of the Ukrainian Canadians whose ancestors died in the genocide of Ukrainians at the hands of the government of the Soviet Union in the early 1930s.

Starvation was the weapon of choice by the Soviet government against the Ukrainian people. This period in history is known as the Holodomor, a term derived from the Ukrainian words for hunger, “holod,” and extermination, “mor.” This deliberate, man-made famine took place from 1932 to 1933.

Soviet leader Joseph Stalin collectivized the agriculture sector and forced peasants to relinquish their land, personal property and sometimes housing to collective farms. He also deported kulaks—wealthier peasants—as well as anyone who resisted his policy of collectivization. Wheat and other grains were confiscated from farmers by the communist government. Some of it was sold for export to fund Stalin’s five-year plan.

As a result, millions of innocent people starved to death—28,000 people died per day at the height of the Holodomor, 31% of whom were children under the age of 10. What makes this man-made genocide so shocking is that it took place during a time of peace and was not the result of a war or natural disaster, nor was there any provocation by the Ukrainian people.

The Holodomor was denied, covered up and then ignored by the world for over five decades. Now, we recognize and remember what really happened. The fourth Saturday of November of each year has been designated as Ukrainian Famine and Genocide Memorial Day, Holodomor Day. This year, we will remember Holodomor on November 28. On behalf of the large number of Ukrainian people living in my riding and throughout Canada, we will never forget the Holodomor.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Mr. Kevin Yarde: It’s an honour to rise on behalf of the great people of Brampton North. Peel and Toronto are now in a lockdown because this government tried to save a buck by cancelling public health measures too soon, ignoring public health advice and refusing to expand COVID testing and contact tracing. We need direct, concrete financial help for businesses and workers impacted by this lockdown.

This government was warned over and over again that this was where the province was headed if the Premier

continued to nix public health protections. He didn’t invest in testing and contact tracing. He didn’t invest in smaller class sizes. He didn’t protect long-term-care homes.

Officials in Peel have previously said that there are some neighbourhoods in the region that are seeing much higher positivity rates than in other areas of the province—specifically, in Brampton northeast. It is not necessarily additional restrictions that we need; we need support and resources where COVID is spreading. In Brampton, our number-one source of spread is in the industrial settings amongst industrial workers. In Brampton, we have the largest food processing and transportation logistics centre in the country. They’re all considered essential workers, so none of these individuals are going to stop working with the latest restrictions.

What we need is an isolation centre so that people can safely isolate. We need sick benefits for workers so that people with symptoms don’t have to show up to work sick.

HOLODOMOR

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: As we begin National Holodomor Awareness Week, I join with Ukrainians in Ontario, in Canada and around the world to remember the victims of the Holodomor, the Ukrainian genocide.

Holodomor was a famine in which an estimated 2.5 million to 7.5 million Ukrainians, many of whom were children, were targeted and intentionally and systematically starved to death between 1932 and 1933 by the communist dictator Joseph Stalin. Soviet authorities confiscated all food grown by Ukrainian farmers. Although the harvest was rich, Ukrainian people were forbidden to touch it. Anyone, including children, caught taking even a stalk could be executed. Special squads were dispatched to search homes and forcibly take all food, ensuring a mass starvation would ensue. These targeted and intentional crimes turned Europe’s breadbasket into a land of immeasurable human suffering.

1030

To add insult to injury, this genocidal famine was denied, ignored and covered up throughout the 20th century. Despite decades of oppressive rule, Ukrainians refused to abandon their drive for freedom and independence.

Speaker, I remember that I was a staffer here at Queen’s Park when we hosted a Holodomor awareness night with the PC caucus. We heard narratives from speakers and survivors from the League of Ukrainian Canadians, the Holodomor National Awareness Tour, the Holodomor Research and Education Consortium and the Ukrainian Canadian Congress. Hearing these stories had a profound impact on me, so today I join all members of this House in solemnly marking the anniversary of this crime against humanity.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Today, Toronto and Peel enter lockdown to combat the rising numbers of COVID-19

cases in problem areas. Once again, our front-line and essential service workers are being called upon to support the province so the rest of us can stay home, isolate and reduce the spread of COVID-19. Speaker, the situation is complex and obviously less than ideal, but we must all do our part to ensure we get through this difficult time.

I want to extend my sincerest thanks to Ontario's front-line and essential service workers for their diligence and professionalism. I want to also call on all Ontarians to practice kindness and patience with one another.

This pandemic continues to be a defining moment in Ontario's history, and I believe we can get through it if we all work together.

MARC HOVINGH

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I understand the member for Algoma–Manitoulin has a point of order.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Yes, Speaker. I rise on behalf of the good people of Algoma–Manitoulin and across this province requesting unanimous consent for a moment of silence to remember one of our own: OPP Constable Marc Hovingh, who tragically passed in the line of duty. Marc will always be remembered as a loving husband, the best dad ever, a gentle giant with an infectious smile, a true champion, a man who had our backs and never wavered, a kind heart with a loving soul, a man of faith, a community man, a family man and a true blue ambassador to the force.

A safe journey home to Manitoulin Island today, Marc. To your loved ones and your family: You will forever remain in our hearts.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Algoma–Manitoulin is seeking the unanimous consent of the House for a moment's silence in memory of the OPP officer who lost his life, tragically, protecting us all. Agreed? Agreed.

The House observed a moment's silence.

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

QUESTION PERIOD

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Ms. Sara Singh: Good morning, Speaker. My first question is to the Premier. On Friday, the Premier announced long overdue public health measures to control the spread of COVID-19. Sadly, these measures come after months of delay and underinvestment from the Ford government.

It was a little over two weeks ago that the Premier rolled back public health measures and claimed, "We see the curve going down," even as those case counts were spiking in communities like the region of Peel.

Has the Ford government's health table estimated how much COVID-19 spread as a result of the government's refusal to recognize the crisis?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Of course, nothing could be further from the truth. The government has maintained its focus on halting the spread of COVID-19, not only in the summer but through the fall, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Health brought forward a very comprehensive second-wave program, which included substantial investments in testing. It included also investments by the Minister of Long-Term Care.

I would say to the member that progress has been made. While we continue to work a whole-of-government approach to flattening the curve, we do understand how difficult this is for the people in the city of Toronto and to the people of Peel. That's why we're going to redouble our efforts to make sure that we can flatten this curve, because I think those two communities, as well as the entire province, deserve that.

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

Ms. Sara Singh: The new lockdown measures imposed Friday will have devastating impacts in communities like Brampton, but it's all the more devastating because they actually could have been avoided if the Premier had not spent weeks and months denying and minimizing the threat posed by the second wave and ignoring the facts.

Speaker, is he prepared to admit that his government's inaction and denial has made this crisis far worse in the province of Ontario, and commit to an honest and transparent response moving forward?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the passion and the concern that the member opposite has with respect to her community. I think we're all on the same page in wanting to ensure that Peel region gets back on its feet as soon as possible.

We have redoubled our efforts working with the federal government, of course, and with Peel region and with our municipal partners in that area. We understand. That's why the Minister of Health has brought in additional contact tracers. That's why we brought in additional testing into Peel region.

This is a very difficult situation. It's difficult for the businesses there; it's difficult for families. We understand that, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Finance has brought in additional resources to help our small businesses, but ultimately what will work best for that community is if we all redouble our efforts and do what public health officials are saying. It is in our control, not only in Peel and Toronto, but across Ontario. It is in our control, whether we flatten this curve and we reopen Ontario for business as soon as possible, Mr. Speaker.

The member has my assurance and the assurance of the entire government—in fact, of the entire Legislature—that we will do everything that we can to get—

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

Ms. Sara Singh: Thank you to the government House leader for that answer, but do you know what? Numbers

are rising here daily. The Premier claimed that he was actually flattening the curve, but when we see those numbers rising—today, we hit record highs; in Peel alone, 535 cases. But instead what the Premier did was actually loosen public health measures while those case counts were spiking.

He claimed the public health officials backed him when they, in fact, did not. He forced them to sign gag orders so that they couldn't contradict him. I think that the people of Ontario deserve much better.

Will the Premier admit that, and commit to lifting the gag orders, provide an honest and transparent response, and put the interest of people and communities ahead of the political needs of this Ford government?

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

Hon. Christine Elliott: We have been putting the health and well-being of the people of Ontario first and foremost since this pandemic began, and we'll continue to do so.

The situation in Peel region is very concerning; I agree with you. Despite having stricter measures since about October 10, we're finding that the case numbers continue to climb. That's why it was necessary to move both Peel and Toronto into lockdown measures. As the member will know, to move into the red zone, the cases have to be 40 per 100,000. Right now, in Peel, they're at 179.4. Action has to be taken.

1040

We have been following this very closely since the beginning. We have been working with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, but also Dr. Loh, the medical officer in Peel. He is certainly in agreement with the steps that needed to have been taken. We are making sure that all of the members on the team, the pandemic task force, the health measures table and so on, are not required to sign gag orders or non-disclosure orders. They are free to speak. But everyone agrees that action needed to be taken, and that is what we have done.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Ms. Sara Singh: My question, once again, is to the Premier. The COVID-19 pandemic has hit all Ontarian families hard, but it's especially devastating in communities like Brampton. Brampton is home to thousands of essential workers. These are the people who have kept us going, and they have kept going into work so that others can stay home. These are our truck drivers, our cab drivers, warehouse workers or even front-line health care providers.

They deserve a lot more than just our thanks. They need actual support. They desperately need hospital services. They need testing. They need paid sick days so that they can stay home when they're sick. Why has the Ford government failed to provide any of this?

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

Hon. Christine Elliott: Well, in fact, we have provided measures at every step along the way for all front-line health care workers and front-line workers. As you have

indicated, the truck drivers, the other people that work in the supply chain, all of those people need our help and support. That's what we've been working on since the beginning. We have been supplying the personal protective equipment that people need. We have been making sure that people receive financial assistance if they need to, if they have been laid off work or if they have had their hours cut.

We are doing everything that we can along the way, ensuring for our front-line health care workers that they have the personal protective equipment, that they have the resources within the hospitals or care facilities, and making sure that we are expanding capacity, as well, for the people that we know are contracting COVID-19, as well as continuing with the surgeries and procedures that were postponed during wave 1.

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

Ms. Sara Singh: Working people in Brampton, who are putting their health at risk in a pandemic, shouldn't have to worry about basics like choosing between losing a day's pay or going to work sick. The Premier proudly scrapped paid sick days last year, and when New Democrats forced the federal government into creating a program, this Premier dragged his feet and refused to cooperate.

Will the Premier follow the advice of public health experts like Peel region's very own chief medical officer, Dr. Loh, and immediately establish a program to ensure that workers can take paid sick days if they need to?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The parliamentary assistant and member for Burlington.

Ms. Jane McKenna: Thank you for the question. On July 16, Premier Ford joined our government in a historic \$19-billion Safe Restart Agreement. This includes \$1.1 billion and 10 paid sick days. The federal government has introduced legislation, Bill C-2, that will provide access to paid sick leave. This bill passed first reading in the House of Commons on September 24. We're monitoring the progress on this bill, and we will be ready when and if this bill passes into law.

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

Ms. Sara Singh: The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed problems the Premier would rather ignore. Communities like Brampton, Scarborough, Weston, Jane and Finch have struggled for years with underfunding and second-class treatment. They don't need a lecture from the Premier about avoiding parties; what they need is hospitals and health centres. They need dedicated resources for testing and contact tracing during the pandemic. They need culturally specific outreach programs to spread the word and create awareness about COVID-19. They need the support to ensure that they can pay their rent, feed their kids and take a sick day if they're worried about COVID-19. When will the Premier do any of that?

Ms. Jane McKenna: Thank you so much again for that question. Unlike our government, which continued to work through COVID-19 for the people of Ontario, the

federal government prorogued the House. I clearly understand your frustration, as we have been waiting for months. We hope to have an answer soon for you. Thanks so much again for the question.

SMALL BUSINESS

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Premier. This morning, residents woke up in Peel and Toronto to a full lockdown. Everyone knows they have to do their part to stay home and slow the spread of COVID-19, but for business owners who have already had the hardest year of their lives, the news was devastating. We're coming into Christmas season, the time many businesses rely on to get them through the rest of the year, especially this year. Now business owners are having to close their doors without any financial help from the government. The Premier promised to "double the supports," but when you double nothing, it's still nothing.

Why doesn't this government think small main street businesses are worth saving, or even worth fighting for, and why are you so unwilling to help?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Associate Minister for Small Business and Red Tape Reduction.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: I disagree with the premise of that question. Look, we understand—there is absolutely no sugar-coating it—these are very tough times, unlike anything we have experienced. There is no family, there is no business, there is no person that hasn't been affected by this pandemic.

But that's also why this government has put forward unprecedented supports for businesses since the start of the pandemic. Just recently, the Minister of Finance released, and is now providing, over \$600 million in relief to support eligible small businesses. This application is online and available. It's very easy to apply to—one portal. Those eligible businesses that can also apply for the main street PPE grant can access this funding immediately. I urge all business owners impacted by these restrictions to immediately apply through this online portal and get the supports they need.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: Mr. Speaker, it is shocking that this government has not acted on direct financial support. If policies aren't implemented now to protect and support workers and business owners, especially small business owners, our economic recovery will be that much harder. But still this government refuses to offer direct financial support. In fact, they've actually made it harder for the small business owners, while giving big breaks to big box stores and huge corporations.

In a release, the CFIB suggested that the lack of support for main street businesses was "outrageous" and immediately called for the creation of a "small business first" strategy, something New Democrats have been calling for for months.

How many more businesses are going to have to close before this Premier and this government finally listens to

businesses, to workers and to groups like the CFIB and finally steps up with some real support?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Thank you once again for the question.

Our government understands that businesses need our support more than ever before. That is why we put forward immediate financial relief to the tune of \$600 million in direct support to these impacted businesses. On top of that, today the federal government has announced that they have opened online applications for rent relief, tenant-direct programs, 90% rent relief for those businesses that have been impacted. We have put forward a \$60-million PPE grant program to help those impacted with direct supports. We've also, in the summer, launched a \$57-million—the largest investment ever by a government to help businesses go digital; \$2,500 grants for main street small businesses to help them pivot to e-commerce online models to adapt to the new challenges of the pandemic.

Mr. Speaker, this government will continue to work with our small businesses and support them in their time of need.

INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

Mr. Stan Cho: My question this morning is to the Minister of Transportation. All too often we see politicians passing the buck to other jurisdictions when it comes to building infrastructure in Ontario. This has been an ongoing and deadly problem in my riding of Willowdale.

At the south end of my community, the world's longest street, Yonge Street, meets North America's busiest highway, the 401. For two decades—two decades, Speaker—Willowdalers have been asking their elected officials to redesign the interchange at Yonge and the 401, but nothing was done. This is not just a matter of easing congestion; this is about public safety.

Speaker, through you: Minister, can you commit to this issue so that we can work towards making Willowdale's streets safer and finally fix the ramp?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Thank you to the member from Willowdale for the question. This is a major interchange on the province's busiest highway, and I know how important this issue is to the people of Willowdale.

1050

Speaker, political gridlock often leads to gridlock on our streets, and as the member highlighted, this has led to a long-standing and dangerous problem in Willowdale. That's why I've directed the Ministry of Transportation to look into this, and I am pleased to confirm that our government has given stage 1 planning approval to improve the Highway 401 and Yonge Street interchange. In addition, the province will also fund up to 50% of the cost for the city of Toronto to conduct the environmental assessment.

I want to assure the member from Willowdale and his constituents that work is under way to improve this interchange and to reduce congestion for local traffic.

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

Mr. Stan Cho: Thank you so much, Minister. It's hard to stop smiling, because this is such great news for my constituents in Willowdale. From my first day in office, this has been something that I've been speaking to your ministry about. It's such an important initiative in Willowdale, and I'm proud that this government is working to end the culture of delay and mismanagement, to get rid of that political gridlock. Speaker, the former Liberal government had over 15 years to act on this issue, and they did nothing. In fact, it's one of the reasons that I ran for this very seat.

Getting transportation infrastructure built across Ontario is a priority for this government, especially as we look to Ontario's economic recovery following COVID-19. So, Speaker, through you to the minister, my question is simple: What does our recovery plan look like in Ontario?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Thank you again to the member from Willowdale for the question. We need to get Ontario building. We need to make bold investments in infrastructure to create jobs and to stimulate our economy.

We have a 10-year, \$144-billion infrastructure plan to ensure that Ontario is ready for the future, and nearly half of that money is in public transit, but a stimulus plan is only as good as the tools that drive it. That's why, last month, we introduced the Ontario Rebuilding and Recovery Act, which, if passed, will give us the tools that we need to get shovels in the ground sooner.

Speaker, this is the bold action that we need. It's the bold action that has been missing for years. The opposition has an opportunity with this bill to work with us and support this bill, so that we can ensure that Ontario emerges stronger than ever.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Ms. Marit Stiles: This question is for the Premier. Speaker, last week I asked the Premier about an outbreak at Begley Public School in Windsor that closed the school. In his response, the Minister of Education said, "Transmission is not happening within school." Well, sadly, Speaker, there are now 26 confirmed positive cases coming out of that school outbreak, and on Friday, another Windsor school was shuttered, this time in the Catholic board. The Windsor-Essex public health unit informed the public that "the entire school is considered high-risk for exposure to COVID-19."

My question to the Premier is this: With the evidence so clearly showing the increased risk of a second wave that was allowed to get out of control under his leadership, why were no additional measures announced to protect students and staff?

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

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Mr. Speaker, the Chief Medical Officer of Health of this province, including leading pediatric doctors, have been very clear that the plan we have unveiled is keeping kids safe, and that is so imperative. It is so important that we continue to ensure that schools remain open in this province.

In the context of F.W. Begley and the Greater Essex County District School Board, the local public health unit has yet to confirm if that transmission occurred in school or in community, and I think it is absolutely unacceptable that you would advance a message, absent knowing the facts, at a time when parents in that community are simply looking for those facts. That actually does not instill confidence in their institutions; it undermines it. So I'd ask for a bit of time for the local public health unit to provide that clarity, and I would ask for a better sense of adherence to facts.

In this province—here's a fact—99.95% of students are COVID-free in Windsor and every region of this province; 99.85% of students have never had COVID. That, Speaker, underscores that the plan we've unveiled, endorsed by the medical officer of this province, is working.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Mr. Speaker, the person who parents are lacking confidence in right now is the Minister of Education of this province. Our front-line education workers, school administrators and students themselves have worked tremendously hard to keep our schools safe, but it's been in spite of this government's lack of support. By October 26, there had been 1,770 school-related cases of COVID-19. The minister then said that transmission is relatively low and that his plan was flattening the curve. By November 9, we were up to 2,700 total cases. Today, there are over 3,800, and positivity rates among kids under 10 is going up, while testing and tracing have gone down.

Speaker, we know the government has refused to cap classes at 15 to reduce the risk. Will they at the very least ramp up the testing, tracing and screening in our schools?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: The Chief Medical Officer of Health has endorsed a protocol that leads the nation in every measurement the member has said.

In the context of testing, the Minister of Health has been clear that we have the most levels of testing of any province in Canada by far, and when it comes to the data points that underpin the success and the safety of kids—

Interjection.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I know they're inconvenient to you. I know that they undermine a narrative you choose to advance. But parents want the facts. Here's a fact that I think would instill a level of confidence: if they knew that 99.95% of students are COVID-free, that 99.92% of staff are COVID-free, that 99.7% of staff have never had COVID.

I appreciate that that may, for whatever reason, bring concern to you, but I think for most folks out there, they're pleased to hear that our leadership in public health and our school boards are working together to flatten this curve, to reduce the risk and to keep our kids safe, and that is a good thing we should celebrate in this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll remind members to make their comments through the Chair.

The next question.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. John Fraser: My question is for the Minister of Long-Term Care. Today, there are 101 long-term-care homes in outbreak in Ontario. Nineteen of these homes have double-digit resident cases. At Rockcliffe Care Community home in Scarborough, 98 residents have been diagnosed with COVID-19. Sadly, 12 residents have died. We've seen that when COVID-19 gets into a home with four-bed ward rooms, like Rockcliffe, or Starwood in Nepean, or West End Villa in Ottawa, it spreads like wildfire and it's deadly. Homes have been asking since July for a plan to move residents out of four-bed ward rooms to reduce the risk of transmission.

We built a field hospital in Burlington. We're doing that in Ottawa. Through you, Speaker, how is it that long-term-care homes don't have a plan for alternative spaces for residents to reduce the risk of COVID-19?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. Today, Rockcliffe Care Community home has 53 residents, so they are rapidly improving, and my heart goes out to everyone who has been affected by this.

The issue of how we deal with an integrated plan to either transfer residents from a long-term-care home early or transfer those who are ill and need medical care has been ongoing. Our ministry had a task force put together months ago to review this. This is an ongoing assessment involving our IMS table, our Chief Medical Officer of Health. There are many aspects to this, and we need to understand both the needs and the rights of the residents in long-term care and the various ways our community can provide support. The Windsor field hospital is an excellent example of how that can happen. It's a very valuable learning, and I've been in touch with them.

This is ongoing. We will continue to add measures. Again, my heart goes out to everyone who has been affected by this unprecedented challenge.

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

Mr. John Fraser: I appreciate the minister letting us know that only 53 residents have COVID-19 now. Twelve of those residents that no longer have COVID-19 are no longer here. So I ask you and caution you that minimizing things by saying that most of the homes aren't in outbreak, most of the homes don't have resident cases, most of the homes don't have double-digit cases is not respectful to those people who have lost a loved one. Our responsibility is not to protect the majority of people in long-term care; it's everybody.

It's been eight months. Across the river in Gatineau, in Ottawa, they've taken over a hotel. I understand what you're saying about residents' rights, but there's a right to protecting people. Homes have been asking for eight months for a plan, and there is none. There are fires burning in homes; not every home, but some homes are really burning. We knew that would happen, and I don't understand—maybe the minister can explain to me why there isn't a plan now.

1100

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the member opposite. I believe it's important to deal with fact, and that's why it's important that we put out information that's accurate: so that everyone can understand and be on the same page. That's what we've been doing all along.

I have tremendous respect for our front-line providers. I have tremendous respect for all our families and our residents in in long-term care. I also have tremendous respect for everyone who has been working around the clock for many, many months—almost a year now—to address these unprecedented challenges in long-term care, where our most vulnerable people reside. I will continue to do that as the minister, and I will continue to make sure that every measure and every tool is being used.

Our government has put dollars behind all these strategies: \$540 million; \$461 million for increased pay; \$243 million originally to help support health. The dollars keep rolling out behind the policies that we're putting forward to prevent more tragedy in our long-term-care homes. My heart goes out to everyone who is working so hard and who has been affected by this.

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Stan Cho: My question is for the minister responsible for small business and red tape reduction. Ontario has never faced a challenge like we've faced the last eight months with COVID-19. We know that this unprecedented challenge has required the government to make some difficult decisions, and, in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, many businesses in the province are required to close or significantly restrict services due to enhanced public health measures.

Speaker, through you, can the minister please tell this House how our government is providing much-needed support for businesses that have been affected by the new health restrictions?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Thank you very much to the member from Willowdale for his question, and I want to thank him for his advocacy and support for small business as we look for solutions to support them in this very difficult time.

There's no sugar-coating it, Mr. Speaker: The economic and the financial burden this pandemic has had on small businesses has been especially tough. Our government understands that small businesses are an essential part to our province's economy.

Supporting businesses impacted by the necessary public health restrictions in regions like Peel and Toronto—we're trying to help employers manage these very difficult times. Our government is now providing \$600 million in relief to support eligible small businesses required to close or significantly restrict their services due to the enhanced public safety measures. This is doubling our commitment. On November 16, we opened an online portal whereby these businesses can apply for a temporary property tax and energy cost rebates.

For the businesses subject to these new restrictions—

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

Mr. Stan Cho: I appreciate that the minister recognizes that these small businesses are the backbone of Ontario's economy, and that behind every single door of these small businesses is a hard-working family trying to provide for their loved ones. It is crucial that our government takes the action necessary to support these job creators.

Small businesses are the economic engine of this country and the largest job creator. We need to bring more jobs to Ontario to contribute to our recovery process, and that begins with supporting our small businesses, because we know that one day COVID-19 will be in our rear-view mirror.

Speaker, through you, can the minister explain how our government is planning to support our job creators and contribute to that strong recovery that we are looking forward to?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Thank you very much to the member for his question. Our government is taking steps to lessen the burden on businesses. In the 2020 budget that we put forward, we announced a variety of measures to help small businesses. We are going to be lowering property taxes on job creators, reducing the business education tax for over 200,000 businesses—over 94% of all business properties in Ontario. This will create \$450 million in annual savings for many businesses.

We are proposing to provide municipalities with the ability to cut property taxes for small businesses and a provincial commitment to consider matching these reductions. This will provide small businesses with as much as \$385 million in total municipal and provincial tax relief by 2022-23.

We are investing in initiatives that will support jobs now and will help to contribute to Ontario's strong recovery.

COLLEGE STANDARDS AND ACCREDITATION

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: My question is to the Premier. The Premier seems tied at the hip with Charles McVety. They've campaigned together. McVety sold memberships for the Premier and even helped him win the leadership of his party. That is why Ontarians are disgusted with schedule 2 of Bill 213.

The National Council of Canadian Muslims wrote to the Premier this morning, and they said, "The president of the college, Charles McVety, has expressed deeply Islamophobic views inconsistent with the Ontario's Human Rights Code.

"McVety has also expressed sentiments targeting other minority communities in ways that are abhorrent and condemnable."

My question: Will the Premier inform NCCM and all Ontarians that he is pulling schedule 2 from Bill 213, or will he remain silent in the face of his own bill that legislates a bigger hateful platform for his long-time buddy Charles McVety?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Colleges and Universities to respond.

Hon. Ross Romano: Once again, I'm happy to respond to the member opposite and to all the members opposite and everyone in this House and in the province of Ontario on the importance of procedural fairness in our system of laws in this country and in this province.

The PEQAB process is a very independent process. We've talked about that several times. There is no way to interfere with the PEQAB process; it's impossible. The application goes from the institution directly to PEQAB. PEQAB makes a recommendation to the government.

In order to make this even more transparent, in order to provide the most level of clarity, what we did was we also said we're going to legislate that whole process. That's what we're talking about. That's why we're debating this issue, Mr. Speaker. If the PEQAB process is completed, upon completion, then the legislation will be proclaimed into force.

You have the most transparent, fair, equitable process there is, because you know what, Mr. Speaker? Equality under the charter provides equal protections and benefits under the law for all.

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

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: Back to the Premier: Interference with independent processes are legislation like schedule 2 in Bill 213. That's actually interference in an independent process.

The NCCM letter details years of Charles McVety's hateful views. They write in their letter, "It is inappropriate, especially in times of turmoil and our public health crisis, for Mr. McVety to enjoy special privileges" as a bigot.

The Premier and his caucus have uttered not a single word to condemn the years of bigoted comments by their friend, party member and ally Charles McVety. It's about time that the Conservative caucus, especially the backbench and the members of cabinet who see themselves as inclusive and allies to diverse people, speak out against this bill.

Will the Premier grant his caucus a free vote on Bill 213, or will he force his caucus to agree with him and Charles McVety and toe the line on a bill that legislates and approves hate?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Ross Romano: It's really easy for the opposition to stand there and speak about interference and processes. They love the concept of interfering. They continually interfere with processes. That's what the opposition members do.

As a government, we have a responsibility to uphold the charter. The entire purpose and the principle behind the motion that has been brought forward by the member opposite, and originally by the Leader of the Opposition, who, unfortunately, isn't able to continue on with that

motion—but the entire premise of that motion is to violate the charter. The whole premise of the entire motion says we should do everything in our power to stop an institution from being able to apply through an independent process. It's illegal; it's unconstitutional. It has absolutely no merit.

The way motions work, unfortunately, is they're allowed to bring forward motions that have no constitutional merit and that, as by their very nature, are unconstitutional. But as individuals in government, we have a responsibility to uphold the rule of law. We have a responsibility to uphold procedural fairness. Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to do that because that's what we're—

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

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Good morning. My question is for the Premier. Researchers say we need more flood mitigation to prevent the cost of flooding from tripling over the next decade. Instead, your government is attacking conservation authorities, which will lead to less flood mitigation.

Municipalities are on the front lines of the damage. I'd like to quote the mayor of Milton: "These changes would hurt residents if housing is allowed to be built on flood plains—and who's going to pay? It will be our local taxpayers picking up the bill for events that could have been prevented."

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Speaker, this is why mayors, scientists and conservationists are sounding the alarm bells. So I ask, will the Premier listen to local leaders and remove schedule 6 from Bill 229?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply for the government, the parliamentary assistant, the member for Barrie–Innisfil.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Our government is helping conservation authorities achieve their goals, such as prevent much flooding. You just have to look at some goals that were achieved in the past, like in the 1970s, when the riverbank was hardened at the Grand River. That is proven infrastructure that helps flooding. But that is just building on big accomplishments that conservation authorities have made, including the accomplishments of our government.

Unlike the Liberals, we will not be disobeying conservation authority guidelines by building a personal pool, like their new leader, Del Duca, is doing—nor the members of the New Democrat Party, who don't even mention conservation authorities in their Green New Democratic Deal plan. Our government has a proven record of protecting the environment, whether it's the Living Legacy fund, whether it's the Oak Ridges moraine, whether it's the Niagara Escarpment and, most recently, the \$20 million we're giving to the Nature Conservancy, we're protecting the environment.

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: With all due respect to the parliamentary assistant, the Grand River Conservation Authority is holding an emergency meeting right now, this morning. They opened it by saying, "This will cripple our ability to protect the watershed."

Speaker, we have to be honest about this. This isn't about efficiencies or streamlining or economic recovery; this is about development in the wrong place at all cost. It will be the people of Ontario who will be left paying for the mess that this change will make—paying for it by paying more for flooded basements, paying more for home insurance, paying more in taxes to fix the infrastructure damage from increased flooding. Speaker, it is wrong.

So can the member opposite explain why they're changing things so the minister makes the decision, overturning the science-based and evidence-based decisions that conservation authorities make to protect us?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Conservation authorities can still provide advice, and we're enabling them to still provide advice. In fact, we're helping conservation authorities achieve their goal to prevent flooding.

The member mentions the Grand River. Frankly, the parts that weren't fortified by riverbank hardening are still flooding to this day, so perhaps we should go back to what was clearly working in the 1970s. Our changes clearly do this by helping less people have flooded basements. It's in our Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan where we talk about how to prevent people from flooding—and this is why we're making the much-needed investments.

Like I said, unlike the NDP, we do talk about conservation authorities and how to help them. Unlike the Liberals, we're not going to be carving up and making things look like Swiss cheese; we're actually protecting our environment.

ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING

Mr. Stan Cho: This province has again shifted regions into further restrictions and lockdowns to protect the health and safety of the people of this province. That means that events that were planned for months will face that tough news, that they won't be able to celebrate the way they thought they might. This is difficult and sad news, of course, for the hard-working people in those industries, for festivals and events, with the fraction of time they originally had to plan and the fact that they will have to celebrate under the restrictions of COVID-19, in those friendly formats.

Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries. Through you, Speaker: Minister, can you tell us how this government expects festivals and events to be able to adapt to these changing restrictions and still host a successful event?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: It's my pleasure to answer the member from Willowdale and his strong advocacy for his city. I know it can't be easy, going into a further lockdown in two of our largest cities in the province.

We often talk in this assembly about the health care crisis. We also talk, rightfully so, about the economic

crisis. Our ministry has been obviously every concerned with both, in addition to the social crisis that we've seen across the province at various stages of this pandemic. That's why the ministry worked hard in the early days of the pandemic to flow existing money for sunk eligible costs to festivals and events across the province of Ontario. In many cases, they were able to adapt, either through drive-in or drive-through entertainment or to go virtually and online. We flowed that \$9.7 million so that we could encourage people to safely experience their own province.

Right now, in Niagara Falls, we'll be continuing to support Winter Festival of Lights in their drive-through format. We were also able to help Saunders Farm in Ottawa during their Fright Fest, and of course, we have our existing program, ontario.live, to provide Ontarians—

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

Mr. Stan Cho: I appreciate the minister's sentiment that this has been a big impact on the festival and event industry not just during this pandemic, but also because the holiday season is around the corner.

I know that this program was announced last month, and it's hard to imagine that festivals will be able to adapt in time for the holiday season. I'm wondering if the minister can tell us how this government will ensure that the festivals and events industry will be able to celebrate this holiday season.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: It's a very important question. As we know, Ontarians are social people, and we love to gather. Unfortunately, right now in many places across our great province, we're unable to do that. That's why our government, on October 8, decided to flow \$9 million in festival and event funding for the reconnect program that would allow virtual, online, drive-through and drive-in entertainment. That money is starting to flow.

We are excited to be announcing that, over the next month and a bit, we'll be supporting festivals and events right across this great province, including right here in the city of Toronto. We'll have more to say on what those events are, but I think it suffices to say that as we move toward the holiday season, when many of us would rather be gathering with loved ones but unfortunately won't be able to, that there will at least be some Ontario content that they will be able to support and enjoy.

I'll just say right here that in the city of Ottawa, we're investing \$24,000 into the Jaipur Literature Festival for Toronto in 2020. It's three nights starting on November 27. The virtual event will be able to move forward with a silent auction and author sessions featuring local—

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

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Suze Morrison: My question is for the Premier. At the Fudger House long-term-care home, a 250-bed facility in my riding in Toronto Centre, almost half of the residents in the home have tested positive for COVID-19.

Since the outbreak was declared at the home in October, nine residents have died.

For months, the Premier has promised an iron ring of protection around our long-term-care homes, but it's clear that he's failed to protect seniors in long-term care. There are 97 outbreaks across the province. What does the Premier have to say to families who are anxious about the safety of their loved ones in long-term care?

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

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. We are making sure that we have an integrated process to assess and support our long-term-care homes that are in outbreak. I would remind everyone that "in outbreak" means at least one resident or at least one staff who has tested positive for COVID. Out of our 101 homes in outbreak, 47 have no resident cases; 14 homes have one resident case; four homes have two resident cases; one home has three resident cases. This is simply to provide the facts.

We must do more to add layers of protection, certainly, in areas where there is high incidence of COVID, because we know that is a driver of the cases in the long-term-care homes. That's why we've increased the testing in areas that are in red or lockdown or orange in terms of the weekly testing now of all staff. It used to be every two weeks. We are continuing to add layers, continuing to add measures and protect our residents in long-term care.

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

Ms. Suze Morrison: Respectfully, back to the minister, I'm not asking about the homes that have one or two cases; I'm asking about a home in my riding with 112 cases and what you are doing about it.

Fudger House did have zero cases of COVID-19 during the first wave of the pandemic, and now it has one of the worst outbreaks in the city. COVID-19 outbreaks are spreading rapidly in homes across the provinces. This weekend, 20 residents in long-term-care homes in Ontario lost their lives to COVID-19. It's heartbreaking to think about how devastating this must be for their families.

Experts warned this government months ago that without urgent action the second wave of COVID-19 would be disastrous for long-term care, but this government ignored that advice. Why has the Premier refused to act to save the lives of residents in long-term care?

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Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: I reject the premise of that question, absolutely. Our government has consistently acted swiftly.

My heart goes out to everyone who has been impacted by COVID-19 in Ontario, across Canada and across the world. This is unprecedented. This is a virus that can spread with no symptoms, and that's why the testing is so important.

I'd like to provide some accurate information. Fudger House now has 23 residents who are positive. My heart goes out to everyone who is on the front lines fighting this and everyone who has been impacted by it. But that's why

it's so important to continue to add layers with our testing of every week required for homes in these areas where there is a high incidence.

It's important to learn from our experts, and our experts are continuing to advise us on the measures we need to take. We are listening to that advice. We will continue to listen to the expert medical advice and take more measures as they present themselves. The testing and the rapid testing is one of those areas we will continue.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Mr. Stephen Blais: My question is for the Premier. COVID-19 testing still has not reached the levels that the Ontario government has promised. Hospital capacity is at a tipping point. Many in Ontario can't have access to the flu vaccine. Public health agencies and pharmacies are reporting shortages across the province. Deaths in long-term care continue to rise, and now nearly one third of Ontarians have returned to lockdown.

Mr. Speaker, my question for the Premier is simple: Does he still believe that his COVID-19 plan is working?

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

Hon. Christine Elliott: The short answer is yes, the plan is working. We set out our fall preparedness plan and we're following the measures of it. We have increased testing. Over the past weekend we did over 48,000 tests in one day. We are very close to the point of having tested six million Ontarians for COVID. That is far in advance of any other jurisdiction in Canada, so we're moving fast on that.

And in some areas where there are hot spots we are bringing in mobile testing. We are allowing people to come in without appointments at assessment centres because we recognize that in some of those hot spots it's a difficult situation for many people to either make a phone appointment or an online appointment. So we're moving, with COVID, to make sure we get to those hot spots, to try and get there in advance and to deal with it.

We're advancing our hospital capacity. We have created more than 3,000 beds since this pandemic began. We're increasing our capacity for contact tracing.

I'll have more to say in my supplemental.

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

Mr. Stephen Blais: My supplemental is also for the Premier. Last week, the Minister of Health told the Legislature that Ontario would receive 1.6 million doses of the Pfizer vaccine and 800,000 doses of the Moderna vaccine. Those numbers were quickly called into question by the federal government only hours later.

People make mistakes; these things happen, but coming off a flu vaccine program that has been less than stellar, the government can understand why Ontarians have questions about the COVID-19 vaccination program. In fact, we still have not clearly heard from the government their plans for vaccine distribution across the province.

My question, Mr. Speaker: When will the government present a clear and concise plan for the COVID-19 vaccine for Ontarians?

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

Hon. Christine Elliott: First, let me be clear. The numbers that we quoted were not incorrect with respect to the number of COVID vaccines we anticipate to receive. We know how many are going to be received by Canada. On a per capita distribution, the numbers that we indicated last week are the numbers. That has been confirmed through my office and confirmed with Minister Hajdu, the federal Minister of Health. So those are the numbers we expect to receive.

The distribution of that vaccine is going to be very, very important. We have a whole team of people who are set up within the Ministry of Health and the Solicitor General's office to make sure that as soon as we receive those vaccines, they are going to be deployed and into people's arms as quickly as possible; this is vitally important. There is no other issue that's as important as this. This is relevant to all Ontarians.

We want to make sure, of course, that our front-line health care workers are going to be in priority because they are the ones who are dealing with COVID-19 on a daily basis.

But rest assured, a detailed plan is being prepared with several ministries involved.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: My questions are for the Premier. An angry presser by the Premier earlier in March left Pusateri's with sanitizer all over their face. The Premier said, "You're done, you're gone.... If you're convicted, you could face ... a year in jail." So when a price gouging hotline was announced by the province, the Premier faced no criticism from the NDP, since consumer protection is always at the core of NDP values.

But last week, a CBC Marketplace investigation revealed that after 29,500 complaints from Ontario consumers in the last eight months, not one fine or charge was laid. That begs the question: Does the Premier think all 29,500 complaints from Ontarians were false, or is consumer protection not enough of a priority for this government to take real action?

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

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: To the member opposite, I thank him for this question, because it allows me the opportunity to share on behalf of the Premier and our government that we have taken action.

It's important to recognize that my ministry is working hand in hand with the Solicitor General. With the most egregious complaints, we refer them to police forces across Ontario. We have referred over 900 to police to investigate. Further to that, we also reach out and talk to the people that complaints have been filed against.

With that said, we are educating via letters and strongly positioned reasons why price gouging needs to be very

much addressed during the pandemic, and I'm very pleased with the efforts of my ministry in this regard. I would like to thank the Solicitor General as well for helping out with the most egregious offences.

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

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Strong talk again, but no follow-up and still no charges laid.

Just after midnight, Toronto and Peel region went into a second lockdown. Overnight, many residents of these regions will have lost their jobs. Many others will remain unemployed or their businesses will have lost a significant portion of their income. Right now, many Ontarians are living hand to mouth. They are already having a hard time trying to figure out how to feed their families and keep a roof over their heads. So when they have to pay more than \$30 for a pack of toilet paper or they are being gouged on other essential goods, it really hits them hard.

Again, we have heard strong words, but we have not seen real action to protect consumers from gouging. What real action is the Premier prepared to actually take to protect Ontario consumers during this pandemic?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Again, I would like to share with the member opposite that the real action that we have taken is the fact—starting with, we have a consumer protection hotline. I ask anyone who experiences a price that they feel is egregious to reach out and let us know, because we take immediate action. We work hand in hand with the Solicitor General. I can tell you that of all the complaints that have been registered, we have worked with police forces across Ontario. Over 900 complaints have been followed up with by police. That is a very, very impressive number, in light of the research and the investigation that has gone into this.

Over and above that, the action we have taken is working with people who have had complaints filed against them. Again, we work with them to understand what the situation is, and we absolutely educate not only the vendors but their suppliers in terms of the inappropriateness of price gouging. We ask everyone to work with us—

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

PROTECTION ENVIRONNEMENTALE

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

M^{lle} Amanda Simard: Ma question s'adresse au ministre de l'Environnement. La semaine dernière, la vérificatrice générale de l'Ontario a publié un rapport cinglant, extrêmement critique du gouvernement, soulignant entre autre l'inaction de ce gouvernement en matière d'environnement et le fait qu'il ne respecte même pas ses propres lois environnementales.

Rappelons-le que c'est ce gouvernement qui a éliminé le commissaire à l'environnement—en scappant du même coup les autres commissariats importants—et là, l'attaque sur l'environnement continue, comme la vérificatrice l'indique dans le rapport, avec le

gouvernement qui limite sévèrement le personnel du ministère, qui, effectivement, empêche le travail de protection de notre environnement, notre eau propre et notre air pur.

Alors, monsieur le Président, la question se pose : est-ce que le gouvernement croit réellement aux changements climatiques, oui ou non? Et si oui, pourquoi toutes les preuves de par leur action démontrent le contraire?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Member for Barrie—Innisfil and parliamentary assistant.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: This government takes the environment very seriously. In fact, we introduced a Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan, where we're making sure that we have emitters who are held accountable. We're making sure that there's more capacity in landfills by revolutionizing the recycling program. We're doing things like expanding the amount of green space by investing \$20 million in the nature conservancy fund. This builds on our legacy of things like the Oak Ridges moraine and the Niagara Escarpment.

1130

Frankly, when the Auditor General did her findings, she found a lot of things. For example, we have improved the Environmental Bill of Rights by encouraging people to use it as an avenue to give feedback, and she mentioned that in her report. There are other things that she mentioned in her report. For example, the Auditor General explicitly states herself in the report that not only has the government been compliant and been expanding deadlines, but also she points to the number of times that we have expanded deadlines.

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

M^{lle} Amanda Simard: Quebec Premier François Legault has announced his bold 2030 Plan for a Green Economy, which notably moves to ban gas-powered vehicles by 2035. Est-ce que ce gouvernement va suivre? Will the Ontario government follow suit?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I thank the honourable member for her question, and I encourage her to support our Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan. That plan clearly lays out a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. In fact, if it wasn't for Ontario's actions, the rest of Canada's emissions would have gone up. It's thanks to this province, this Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan, where we're protecting the environment, we're reducing emissions. Frankly, the federal government even accepted our emissions standards.

The other thing—it's record-setting—is we're also bringing forward the first-ever environmental impact assessment throughout the entire province.

This government continues its legacy of protecting the environment, so I ask the member opposite to start supporting our plan and actually stand up for the environment and support the Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: My question is to the Premier. I continue to hear from parents in my riding of Parkdale—

High Park who are upset that the government ignored expert advice on capping class sizes to 15 and instead forced the collapse of smaller classes into bigger ones, crowding our classrooms.

The mishandling of the second wave has parents worrying about the safety of their kids and the prospect of more disruption ahead. Parents want schools to remain open in the new year, but they want them to be safe. The budget has not allocated any new money for education.

Why is this government hoarding billions of dollars in unspent COVID relief money that should be used to keep kids safe?

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

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. It is this province that leads Canada in our financial commitments and investment: \$1.3 billion unlocked. Working with the federal government and working with our reserves within our school boards together provides a significant infusion of funding.

But the member is right: We are facing a second wave, and we'll need to step up our contribution. It's why we're working very well with the federal government to ensure that the next tranche of \$380 million dedicated for 2021 flows to school boards as soon as possible to further reduce classroom sizes, classroom sizes that have been reduced in all school boards in this province; to further hire more custodians, well over the 1,200 hired in this province; to hire more teachers, more than 2,700, because the Premier of this province has made sure that our classes remain small and the risk remains reduced for kids. That is a good thing. We'll continue to build it up, Speaker.

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

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: Back to the minister. Poor ventilation in schools is a long-standing issue, and the pandemic has highlighted just how urgently we must fix our schools. Now the Ford government is yet again refusing to release the updated facilities condition index on Ontario's schools, which would allow the public to assess whether the annual funding level for repairs is sufficient to fix Ontario schools.

Speaker, this is information collected using public dollars. Why is the government hiding this information?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: On the contrary, this question was posed by the education critic in estimates, and the ADM responsible suggested that the maintenance of schools has not increased; that backlog has not increased this year so far. That is a matter of the record from some weeks ago.

Having said that, the province has unlocked, working with the federal government and with the Minister of Infrastructure, an additional one-time \$700-million investment. That's on top of the 2.5% that we provide every year, meeting the requirement of the Auditor General to have 2.5% in renewal funding.

In addition, we have provided \$700 million for projects up to \$10 million to be completed by December 31, 2021.

That is going to make a material difference to reduce that backlog, to improve the state of schools, and just to make sure that our HVAC systems and air quality will continue to be improved province-wide.

PERSONAL SUPPORT WORKERS

M^{me} France Gélinas: My question is for the Minister of Health. At the end of September this year, it was announced with great news that PSWs working in the Ontario health care system would receive a \$3 pandemic pay increase until the end of March 2021. Many PSWs have reached out to me to say that they have yet to see one penny flowing to them, and long-term-care operators, including Extendicare in my riding, have also connected with me to say that they have not received any of the money that the government promised would flow, that they feel really bad that their PSWs are coming to them, asking them for this \$3-an-hour pandemic pay that they're not able to pay because the government has not flowed them the money.

When will the money flow?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I thank the member very much for the question, because we greatly appreciate the work that personal support workers do in the province. They are across all sectors, in hospitals, retirement homes, long-term-care homes, and in home and community care.

It's a problem, because a lot of people are graduating but aren't staying. That's why we've offered that additional pay of \$3 per hour. That is something that we are working on right now. People should be receiving that imminently, because they deserve it. We want them to stay.

We're looking at some other conditions that are important to them: working conditions, some of the other issues that they've been asking about. We're in regular contact with the association of personal support workers, and others, because we want them to come back and we want them to stay in place.

We are working on that solution now and the money should flow very quickly.

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

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We now have a deferred vote on government motion number 96, relating to the allocation of time on Bill 229, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact, amend and repeal various statutes.

The bells will now ring for 30 minutes, during which time members may cast their votes. I will ask the Clerks to prepare the lobbies.

The division bells rang from 1139 to 1209.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The vote has been held on government notice of motion number 96, relating to the allocation of time on Bill 229, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact, amend and repeal various statutes.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 53; the nays are 20.

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

Motion agreed to.

HEALTH CARE

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We have a deferred vote now on private members' notice of motion 117, as moved by Mr. Arthur. The bells will now ring for 15 minutes, during which time members may cast their votes. I'll ask the Clerks to prepare the lobbies.

The division bells rang from 1211 to 1226.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The vote has been held on the motion for private members' notice of motion number 117.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 18; the nays are 53.

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

Motion negatived.

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

The House recessed from 1227 to 1300.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Standing order 66(a) provides that the Standing Committee on Estimates shall present one report with respect to all of the estimates and supplementary estimates considered pursuant to standing orders 63 and 65 no later than the third Thursday in November of each calendar year.

The House not having received a report from the Standing Committee on Estimates for certain ministries on Thursday, November 19, 2020, as required by the standing orders of this House, pursuant to standing order 66(b), the estimates 2020-21 before the committee of the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Infrastructure, the Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, and the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility are deemed to be passed by the committee and are deemed to be reported to and received by the House.

Report deemed received.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill 214, An Act to amend the Time Act and various other Acts / Projet de loi 214, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'heure légale et diverses autres lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

CASTLEFORM HOLDINGS INC. ACT, 2020

Mr. Stan Cho moved first reading of the following bill: Bill Pr36, An Act to revive Castleform Holdings 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.

Introduction of bills?

Statements by the ministry?

Motions? Government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Speaker, if you seek it, I'm sure you'll find unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding the reappointment of the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to move a motion regarding the reappointment of the Chief Medical Officer of Health. Agreed? I heard a no.

PETITIONS

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I have very important petitions that I would like to share with the House today.

“Time to Care Act—Bill 13.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Whereas the provincial government does not provide adequate funding to ensure care and staffing levels in LTC homes to keep pace with residents' increasing needs and

the growing number of residents with complex behaviours; and

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

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

I fully support this petition, and I pass it to the usher to deliver to the table.

COMMUNITY PLANNING

Mr. Aris Babikian: Mr. Speaker, before I read the petition, I would like to thank the 149 residents of Scarborough–Agincourt who signed this petition. The petition reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Green Bud Inc. has applied to the AGCO to obtain a licence to open a cannabis retail store at 63 Silver Star Boulevard, unit C6;

“Whereas the store mentioned above is located at a close proximity to:

“—Yahu Community Association of Canada (dance programs for youth aged five to 12) 63 Silver Star Boulevard, units E2 and E3;

“—Music of May (music lessons for youth aged five to 12) 63 Silver Star Boulevard, unit D3;

“—Toronto Chinese Christian Short Term Mission Training Centre, 63 Silver Star Boulevard, unit D6;

“—Scarborough Community Alliance Church (youth and seniors programs) 139 Silver Star Boulevard;

“—Scarborough Community Alliance Church (youth and seniors programs) 135 Silver Star Boulevard;

“—Scarborough Chinese Baptist Church (youth and seniors program) 3223 Kennedy Road;

“—Sylvan Learning Centre ... 3320 Midland Avenue, units 201-203;

“—Brainchild Education Centre ... 3320 Midland Avenue, units 205 and 218;

“—Light and Love Home in Toronto ... 3320 Midland Avenue, units 215-216 and 223-225;

“—Scholars 101 Education Centre ... 3320 Midland Avenue, unit 120;

“—Positive Tutorial School ... 3300 Midland Avenue, unit 211;

“—Iron Tutor ... 3300 Midland Avenue, suites 208 and 218;

“—Tamarack Day Care Centre, 3315 Midland Avenue;

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

“To disallow the opening of Green Bud Inc. at 63 Silver Star Boulevard, unit C6, due to the potential health and safety risk it poses to youth, children, tenants, and seniors.

Furthermore, this location is not in the interest of the public.”

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

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Marit Stiles: The boxes of petitions keep landing in my office, more and more each day. This afternoon I’m presenting on behalf of Chris Tan of Pickering. It reads as follows:

“Don’t Increase Class Sizes: Preserve the Kindergarten Teaching Model and KIP.

“Whereas Ontario’s model for kindergarten, which includes a teacher and designated early childhood educator, is based on international research and created by experts, educators and partners in the field, and has been shown to provide lasting benefits for children’s reading, writing, numeracy, self-regulation and social skills; and

“Whereas larger class sizes negatively impact the quality of education, reduce access to teaching resources and supports and significantly diminishes teacher-student interactions; and

“Whereas the vast majority of parents, students and educators support smaller class sizes and the current teaching model of kindergarten and want the best education possible for their children; and

“Whereas the Kindergarten Intervention Program has been recently cancelled in the TDSB for 2019-20 as a result of the budget cuts introduced by the Ministry of Education, leaving vulnerable young students without adequate supports;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and the Ministry of Education to commit at the central bargaining table to reduce class sizes, maintain the current teaching model of kindergarten, and reverse all budget cuts to the TDSB.”

I’m proud to affix my signature to this petition as I support it, and I will table it with the Clerks.

1310

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I have a petition entitled “Stop Auto Insurance Gouging.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas some neighbourhoods across the GTA have been unfairly targeted by discriminatory practices in the insurance industry;

“Whereas people in these neighbourhoods are penalized with crushing auto insurance rates because of their postal code;

“Whereas the failure to improve government oversight of the auto insurance industry has left everyday families feeling the squeeze and yearning for relief;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ban the practice of postal code discrimination in the GTA when it comes to auto insurance premiums.”

I support this petition, add my name to it and give it to the usher to deliver to the table.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: I have a petition entitled “Time to Care Act—Bill 13.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: My petition is entitled “Affordable Housing.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas for families throughout much of Ontario, owning a home they can afford remains a dream, while renting is painfully expensive;

“Whereas consecutive Conservative and Liberal governments have sat idle, while housing costs spiralled out of control, speculators made fortunes, and too many families had to put their hopes on hold;

“Whereas every Ontarian should have access to safe, affordable housing. Whether a family wants to rent or own, live in a house, an apartment, a condominium or a co-op, they should have affordable options;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately prioritize the repair of Ontario’s social housing stock, commit to building new affordable homes, crack down on housing speculators, and make rentals more affordable through rent controls and updated legislation.”

Of course, I completely agree with this petition, will be affixing my signature to it and getting it to the table.

SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Miss Monique Taylor: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas in the absence of adequate services, parents of autistic adults experience significant stress in their efforts to provide the necessary care;

“Whereas there is a lack of respite crisis beds available for autism;

“Whereas there are approximately 15,000 adults with developmental disabilities waiting to be placed in a residential facility;

“Whereas the all-party Select Committee on Developmental Services, including ministers now serving in the Ford government, called for the elimination of all wait-lists in 2014;

“Whereas in the absence of adequate residential space, autistic adults in crisis situations are often placed in unsuitable facilities such as hospitals treating people with mental health issues;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services to provide the necessary funding to ensure all people with autism receive the support they need to avoid such crisis situations.”

I wholeheartedly agree with this. I’m going to affix my name to it and give it to the usher to bring to the Clerk.

ANTI-SMOKING INITIATIVES FOR YOUTH

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas:

“—In the past 10 years in Ontario, 86% of all movies with on-screen smoking were rated for youth;

“—The tobacco industry has a long, well-documented history of promoting tobacco use on screen;

“—A scientific report released by the Ontario Tobacco Research Unit estimated that 185,000 children in Ontario today will be recruited to smoking by exposure to on-screen smoking;

“—More than 59,000 will eventually die from tobacco-related cancers, strokes, heart disease and emphysema, incurring at least \$1.1 billion in health care costs; and whereas an adult rating (18A) for movies that promote on-screen tobacco in Ontario would save at least 30,000 lives and half a billion health care dollars;

“—The Ontario government has a stated goal to achieve the lowest-smoking rates in Canada;

“—79% of Ontarians support not allowing smoking in movies rated G, PG, 14A (increased from 73% in 2011);

“—The Minister of Government and Consumer Services has the authority to amend the regulations of the Film Classification Act via cabinet;

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

“—To request that the Standing Committee on Government Agencies examine the ways in which the regulations of the Film Classification Act could be amended to reduce smoking in youth-rated films released in Ontario;

“—That the committee report back on its findings to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and that the Minister of Government and Consumer Services prepare a response.”

I support this petition and hand it to the usher to deliver to the table.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Faisal Hassan: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Doug Ford,” the government, “is going in the wrong direction on the environment by ignoring our climate emergency and cutting funding to deal with the climate crisis;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to urge the government of Ontario to implement the Green New Democratic Deal to:

“—achieve net zero emissions by 2050, starting by cutting emissions 50% by 2030;

“—create more than a million new jobs;

“—add billions of dollars to Ontario’s economy;

“—embark on the largest building retrofit program in the world by providing homeowners with rebates, interest-free loans and support to retrofit their homes to realize net zero emissions.”

I support this petition. I will add my signature to it and give it to the usher to take to the table.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I forgot to mention the name of the person who sent these petitions. I would like to thank Karen Mathias for sending me these petitions.

“Time to Care Act—Bill 13.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

I fully support this petition, sign it and give it to the usher to deliver.

PHARMACARE

Mr. Faisal Hassan: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas prescription medications are a part of health care, and people shouldn’t have to empty their wallets or rack up credit card bills to get the medicines they need;

“Whereas over 2.2 million Ontarians don’t have any prescription drug coverage and one in four Ontarians don’t take their medications as prescribed because they cannot afford the cost;

“Whereas taking medications as prescribed can save lives and help people live better; and

“Whereas Canada urgently needs universal and comprehensive national pharmacare;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support a universal provincial pharmacare plan for all Ontarians.”

I support this petition. I add my signature to it and give it to the usher to take to the table.

1320

OPPOSITION DAY

COLLEGE STANDARDS AND ACCREDITATION

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: I move the following: Whereas disturbing incidents of hate and hate motivated violence have increased during the COVID pandemic and it is more important than ever that Ontario make a clear stand against intolerance and bigotry; and

Whereas the Ford government has attempted to grant Canada Christian College as administered by its president Charles McVety accreditation as a university; and

Whereas in a detailed ruling the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council found that Charles McVety “distorted facts and contained abusive comments” about 2SLGBTQIA+ people and has led hateful campaigns against that community; and

Whereas education leaders have stated that institutions that do not meet the anti-discriminatory and anti-hate speech principles outlined in the Ontario Human Rights Code should not get accreditation; and

Whereas Charles McVety has used the Canada Christian College as a staging ground for Islamophobic invective, urging followers to come to the campus to hear a “warning” about Islam’s plan for a “hostile takeover”; and

Whereas Charles McVety has said that Haitians practice “Satanism” and made a “deal with the devil” that he connected to the earthquake that killed 316,000 people; and

Whereas governments have an obligation to clearly and unequivocally oppose bigoted and hateful views;

Therefore, the Legislative Assembly calls on the Ford government to condemn the extreme and hateful invective of Charles McVety and oppose any efforts to make Canada Christian College into an accredited university.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): We return to the member from Kitchener Centre to lead off the debate.

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: I'm honoured though a little bit distressed that this is the motion that we are debating today. Schedule 2 in Bill 213 gives the power to offer degrees under Ontario's purview to somebody who is known to be Islamophobic, homophobic and transphobic. No matter how many times the government stands in this House, whether it's at question period or presumably during this debate, and suggests that we're just going to wait and see whether or not we're going to enact this part of the legislation, when we all know that Bill 213 is going to be passed in this House rather soon, I want them to know, and I want to make sure it's on record, that the damage is already done. The damage is already done.

We have Muslim community members, queer community members, children, parents, experts in the field who are writing to our offices and are saying that the damage is already done. The potential of skirting around independent processes to ensure that a friend be able to call what was a college a university, that is a problem that we need to face today.

I'm going to backtrack. Prior to being elected, I spent the majority of my career talking to people with power and privilege about the ways in which they would use that power and privilege to do good or they would use that power and privilege to discriminate. I am again in this House saying the same thing, this time to the government.

We are in positions of power and privilege. In the middle of a pandemic, the people of Ontario are not looking to this House in the hopes that we are going to allow Canada Christian College to become a university. They are not looking to this House and watching the OLA channel to find out if, in order to help resolve their health issues, we're going to ensure that friends of the Premier are able to give science and bachelor of arts degrees. That's not what they're hoping that we're going to do in this House with our power and our privilege.

To be so bold as to embed schedule 2 in a bill that is literally meant to help small and medium-sized enterprises navigate the second wave of this pandemic, that is a level of boldness that I literally did not think that I would see in this House.

In this debate, I want us to take a step back, to not talk about this partisan politics nonsense back and forth, but instead to focus on what the people of Ontario need from us during this crisis. And during this crisis, what they need is for us to stay focused on not legislating hate. Because we have report after report after report that is explaining to us that this pandemic is harming certain groups differently than other groups. That includes racialized folks, queer folks and our trans friends. No matter how many times we stand up in this House and we say, "I'm an ally," that does not make you an ally. Legislating hate does not allow you to claim allyship.

The people of Ontario are watching. They are watching this happen right now, in 2020. They didn't think that they were going to have to support us in a motion like this in 2020, in the middle of a pandemic.

My ask—and I am saying it from a place of so much love, to counter the amount of hate that is sitting in

schedule 2—is to not legislate hate, to pay attention to the fact that when you actually put into legislation the possibility and potential of allowing an institution that is known to create a space to perpetuate Islamophobia and to perpetuate hate against queer communities across the province, when you choose to do that, you can't call yourself an ally, and there are questions about your leadership.

There's an opportunity here. There is an opportunity to turn the tide: Pull schedule 2—easy-peasy. Maybe even put, in the space of schedule 2, an actual schedule 2 that just might help small and medium-sized enterprises in the middle of the second wave of the pandemic. What if we actually put in real supports—direct financial supports—for small and medium-sized enterprises? That would be something that you could do with your power and privilege. That would be something, Mr. Speaker, that the people of Ontario would be proud to see.

What they're not proud of seeing is schedule 2 as it stands right now, because we know what this can mean. Even if this government decides, "Okay, we're not going to enact it fully," they're leaving it in the cockles of history. They're leaving it in the history of Ontario that, in 2020, it was a good idea to allow an institution that has used their space to call themselves a university, give science degrees and bachelor of arts degrees and also invite homophobes, transphobes and Islamophobes to campus to teach the children.

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

Ms. Jill Andrew: St. Paul's sent me here to Queen's Park to represent our community as their MPP and the first queer and black MPP to sit in this Legislature. On their behalf and on my own, I cannot and will not ever support the Conservative government's scheme to legislate hate by way of providing accreditation to Charles McVety and his Canada Christian College.

St. Paul's has no room for discrimination, sir. We're not a monolith, but the majority of us do not condone racism of any kind, including anti-Indigenous racism, Islamophobia and anti-Black racism. We do not condone anti-Semitism. We do not condone xenophobia, and we certainly do not condone transphobia, transmisogyny and homophobia, all of which McVety embodies through his dangerous and discriminatory beliefs and actions.

In a detailed ruling, the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council found that Charles McVety, a former televangelist, had distorted facts and made abusive comments about 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, which has led him to even create hateful campaigns against my community. As they say, birds of a feather flock together, and it's no surprise that Charles McVety has stood shoulder to shoulder with his comrade in hate, anti-Semite Paul Melnichuk. During the Premier's campaign back in February 2018, PressProgress reported that our Premier accepted donations, endorsements from these men.

Ontario doesn't need vitriolic rate right now. Ontario doesn't need social conservatives pulling at the strings of our Premier behind a curtain. The scariest part is, I start to wonder if there even are strings. Why would the Premier

of Ontario create a clause, schedule 2—hidden, of course, in an omnibus bill, Bill 213—that provides a clear path to accreditation for this Premier's good friend and political ally, Charles McVety's Canada Christian College?

1330

This Conservative government knows exactly who he is, what he believes in and what his institution promotes. How can McVety confer science degrees when he undermines science? He's a climate change denier. For McVety, people like me and other 2SLGBTQIA+ community members in St. Paul's and across Ontario wouldn't exist. For people with McVety's beliefs, Coco, a Black trans woman who recently met her death in Toronto police custody—her death and countless others like her wouldn't matter and there'd be no accountability.

There are Conservatives in my riding—Conservatives who did not vote for me and probably never will—who have told me that they're embarrassed and angered by this government's silence on this very issue. We're in this Legislature to do the very best we can to uphold human rights. We are to do the work. We are to make the vision better for people, not worse.

As a child and youth worker, a teacher, I made a promise to every kid, every student I came across, that I would help create a world they could see themselves in with pride. Ontarians deserve a government and a Premier who sees the utmost of value in protecting their lives by creating legislation that does just that, a government with a provincial plan to eradicate hate—all forms of hate—and a plan that has both human and financial resources attached to it.

During COVID-19, when the government could be making real change to address the disproportionate impact that COVID has had on our communities—on queer, trans and gender non-conforming communities, that it's had on Black and Indigenous communities—at a time when this government could be putting forth real legislation to help keep the most marginalized people's nose above water, instead the Premier is doling out gifts for friends.

Wake up. Stop pandering to the lowest common denominators in your party, government. It's unconscionable, it's unacceptable, and I have to wonder how some of the members across the aisle sleep at night. But as the saying goes, the fish rots from the head down.

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

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: As I begin my remarks today, I think of priorities. What is the most important at this current moment? During this time of COVID, where folks are scared, businesses are collapsing from the lack of provincial support, families are pushed to the brink, and seniors suffer from neglect, isolation and that they'll lose their lives all alone in for-profit long-term care—those should be our priorities.

Canada Christian College's status is not a priority. It has no business being discussed at this time. Burying accreditation for this institution in an omnibus bill supposedly to help businesses stinks to high heaven.

Charles McVety and his vile comments are now afforded an infamy they do not deserve.

Everyone in Ontario has a right to be safe and respected. Discrimination and bigotry have no place here, yet there it is in Bill 213. Muslim youth encounter bigotry every single day, whether it's walking down the street minding their own business and getting yelled at by a car passing by; getting physically attacked; or we've atrocities like the murder of Mohamed Aslim-Zafis outside a mosque.

Look at Ontario now. Mosques have to install cameras. They have to hire security staff. When political leaders support those who attack others, they rubber stamp hate. Their silence emboldens fringe radicals. They dump gasoline over the fires of hatred. They condone it. They support it. This government has a responsibility to have the backs of Muslim Ontarians.

After thinking of priorities and action, I also think of ambivalence and non-action. I think of how far we've come as a province recognizing the rights for LGBTQ Ontarians. When all their world shows them is hate, when their political leaders don't denounce hate, the risk for LGBTQ youth is undeniable.

I am deeply, deeply concerned that not a single person, not a single soul on the government side has stood up. It's not enough to claim to support folks privately but refuse to use your voice in public. Virtue signalling by showing up at Pride parades, wearing a pink shirt, or tweeting is not enough. True friends are there to support folks in the tough times. Well, the rubber has hit the road. It's time to denounce the hateful invective of Charles McVety.

At this enormously difficult time of COVID-19, we should be focusing on loving our neighbours, looking out for one another, making sure everyone has enough and that people are as safe as possible. Condemning hate speech should be an easy choice.

There are times in life when you are called upon to make an enormous decision—a decision far greater and far more important than your individual life. This is one of those times.

Allies are bold. Allies care for others. Allies step up for others when it's uncomfortable, when it's difficult. People did not vote for their MPPs to remain silent. People did not vote for their MPPs to be this powerless.

I implore everyone on the government benches, I implore your better nature, I implore your integrity as human beings of decency and basic human kindness: Do the right thing. Stand up for folks who need you now. Muslims across this province are watching. The LGBTQ community is watching. Your actions today define this government.

I hope that the government members make a choice that they can live with.

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

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: I rise today to speak in support of the NDP opposition day motion, which calls on the Ford government to condemn Charles McVety and to

withdraw support for the expansion of the mandate of the Canada Christian College to that of a university.

Mr. Speaker, over the past few weeks, since the introduction of Bill 213, we on this side of the House have been making the argument that this institution led by this man is not worthy of the support of any government that purports to believe in an inclusive, civil society. By virtue of the homophobia, transphobia, Islamophobia of McVety himself, the apparent financial irregularities of McVety and his son, and the questionable quality of the academic endeavours of the college, we have argued that there is a formal process which he can follow and that that process should be allowed to run its course without the explicit or tacit support of government. The Premier and his government should denounce the attitudes and public statements of McVety, regardless of the support he showed individual politicians in previous elections, and they should withdraw schedule 2 of Bill 213. But we have said all of that repeatedly. What I want to do today is to reinforce why I believe that this is so very important.

Speaker, in 1990, at the age of 37, I came out as a lesbian to my family and my community and, if I'm honest, to myself. In the course of a very few weeks, I moved from the world of heterosexual privilege to the world of homophobic discrimination. People in my community in north Toronto would literally cross the street in order not to have an awkward encounter. My friends began to gather without inviting me, and my children had to fend off taunts at school. My world changed overnight.

When I ran for the office of school trustee in 1994, there was an active homophobic campaign run against me, and in every election since then, my campaigns have contended with homophobia, overt and covert. That's just the reality. Many of us have worked for years to change that reality to fight back systemic bigotry. But people like Charles McVety fan those flames. Why is that a problem? Not because of an adult politician's feelings or her election campaigns, but because he and his ilk make our society an unsafe place for our children and our youth.

The statistics are stark. LGBTQ+ youth are far more likely to attempt suicide than youth in general. One study estimated that 33% of LGB youth have attempted suicide, compared to 7% of youth in general. In Ontario, in 2010, 47% of trans youth had thought about suicide and 19% had attempted suicide in the previous year. In 2009, in Massachusetts, the department of education estimated that LGBTQ+ youths are four times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers.

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These are our children. Their mental health should concern us all. We need their intellect and their creativity just as much as we need the same from their heterosexual friends in order to build a thriving, prosperous province and country.

One of my early engagements after I came out in 1990 was to work with Lloyd McKell and John Campey at the former Toronto Board of Education on equity and anti-

racism policy and then on a campaign called Education against Homophobia.

Throughout my political career, I have worked to put in place policies and programs that will make schools, and therefore communities, safer, more inclusive spaces. Those policies introduced when I was Minister of Education and then Premier are still in place, and I hope that by now there are no directors of education in Ontario who would say, as one said to me when I was minister, that he knew of no gay students within his board. I wanted to say, "Do you live on another planet?"—but there you go. I hope there is no one in the education system who would make that statement now.

The safety implicit in those policies and even the laws that govern this province and country can be negated by the attitudes of opinion leaders. If the Premier of this province condones the hateful rhetoric and actions of a person like Charles McVety, that carries more weight than platitudes about inclusion. If laws passed by the government of the day support an institution that ignores science and seeks to marginalize whole segments of society, that negates the flowery language of multiculturalism. Muslim children are protected by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, just as any other children in Ontario are, but if their peers in the playground feel they have permission to make hateful comments because they have heard a friend of the Premier do the same, then that playground is no longer a safe place.

The members of this government cannot pretend they are not aware of these realities. They cannot pretend that what they are doing is not dangerous. They are consciously, wilfully, taking this action. If they continue down this path, each and every member of the government will have to explain to his or her constituents, the Muslim and LGBTQ+ communities in his or her riding and, most importantly, to their own children, their own grandchildren and extended families why they would support such bigotry.

We call on the government to reverse the course they are on and withdraw the legislative support for Canada Christian College and Charles McVety.

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

Hon. Ross Romano: Thank you to all the members.

I have said—we have said as a government—numerous times over the course of the last several weeks that we as a government do not stand for this, and not only do we as a government not stand for this, but there is absolutely zero place in the entire province of Ontario and this entire country, and hopefully nowhere in the world, for hatred, discrimination, Islamophobia, homophobia, any kind of hatred. We have a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to hate.

I perhaps am in the enviable or unenviable position of having been a lawyer, as I still technically am, since prior to entering into politics. I started my career as a lawyer. My initial position—I was a staff duty counsel at the courthouse in Sault Ste. Marie. As a staff duty counsel, I used to start my job every morning—I would speak to

every person who got arrested the night before. I used to speak to every person, and I had to ensure that they got due process. It was my job to ensure that they were treated fairly in the eyes of the law.

So when you hear me in this House stand up and quote section 7 or section 15 or any other section of the charter, I'm not reading it from a piece of paper. I've lived it and breathed it for the better part of my career, and I believe in it more than anything. When I say to you that under section 7 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms that every person "has the right to life, liberty and security of the person" and "not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice," I mean what I say.

When I stand before you and I say to you all that our courts—the Supreme Court of Canada, all the courts of appeal and all of our trial courts throughout this province and country—have been interpreting section 7 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms since 1982, when the Constitution acts were first put into existence by the federal government. Ever since, the courts have always interpreted section 7 consistently: Fundamental justice refers to freedom of process. Under section 15 of the charter, it guarantees equality freedoms for everyone, but it stresses that there are equal protections and equal benefits under the law and everybody is to be treated equally. But then it comes back to section 7 to dictate the process. That means something to me. That means a lot.

I was a duty counsel for my first 18 months in the practice of law, then I moved on to become an assistant crown attorney for another year, then I was a prosecutor for the city of Sault Ste. Marie, and then I went into defence practice. My entire career has been about serving the people through the Constitution acts, through our charter. That means a lot to me. The respect that I have referred to in this House for this place, this building, this House, and what it stands for, what our democracy stands for, what our Constitution stands for—just like I had the same level of respect every time I appeared in our court system. It means something.

As legislators, we have to uphold process. I'm not suggesting that we should agree or disagree with, accede to, or accept the views of any one individual. Whether you agree or disagree with them is not the point. In fact, to the contrary, the point of this legislation is to bring this discussion into this House for open debate and discussion in an open and transparent way.

I want to take you back to approximately 16 to 18 months ago, when I first became Minister of Colleges and Universities. You've heard me speak about this. I went out and I spoke to every college and university president. I thought it was important to speak to them all, to hear from them, Mr. Speaker. "How can we as a government help to make your sector better, to make you better as individual presidents for your individual communities"—communities that are represented largely by all of us—post-secondary institutions? There are 45 of them in this province. There were these sessions—we called them "breaking-bread sessions." I said to all of the presidents, "I can think of no better way to develop a real relationship,

a meaningful relationship with someone than to break bread together. So let's break bread together, and I want to hear your thoughts."

The most recurring theme that I heard from every college president—it's important to note that it's colleges, because they don't have that full autonomy and degree-granting authority as universities. So a college would have to apply to the minister or go through a legislative process to be able to deliver a new program or to get a university-accredited program or to become a university. They were telling me, "Minister"—and most of them just called me Ross. I would say, "Please just call me Ross. It's good enough for my mom; it should be good enough for anyone else." When they would speak to me, they said, "It's really tough when we, as colleges, are required to make labour-market-responsive programs and teach labour-market-responsive programs to our students, and it takes, through this process that currently exists in Ontario, at least two years, sometimes upwards of three years to get a program approved." I said, "That's ridiculous." I don't think anybody could possibly disagree. Can you imagine? As a college, you want to put a program together for your local community. Whatever riding you're representing, your local college wants to put together a program to support your local business needs, your local factory, whatever it might be, and it takes upwards of three years to get that program approved. I said, "There's no way. You must be mistaken." So I looked into it. I got back to the office, sat with my staff, spoke to my department, had all of these meetings and all of these briefings.

This is what was revealed to me—astonishing. An institution wants to become a university—we'll use that as an example. They apply to the minister for minister's consent. They lobby their local MPPs and they lobby other MPPs to try to bring in legislation. These are the only opportunities—you've got legislative means or you've got the minister's-consent process.

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The simplest route, of course, would be to apply through the ministry. So you write a letter to the ministry office and say, "I want this program" or "I want to be a university." The ministry department office sends a note to the ministry office, that then sends a note up to the minister. By that point in time, several months have already gone by. The minister sees it—and within my first 45 days as minister, I had about 40 of these various requests on my desk. They all said, "You should send it to PEQAB." I thought, "Okay, we'll send it to PEQAB. That makes the most sense. That's the independent reviewing body." You send it back down. It goes back to your ministry office, back to your department office, back to the institution. The institution is now told, "You're going to PEQAB." They have to formally ask to go to PEQAB. Now they go back to the department, to the ministry, to the minister, and then it comes back to me to say, "As minister, yes, I approve you to go to PEQAB." Then it goes back down to the ministry, back down to the department, back to the institution. Now the institution applies to PEQAB.

I said to my staff and my deputy minister at the time—this process now is now 18 months to two years—“This is absolutely preposterous. Why would we be doing this? It seems like the minister would almost always send the program or the application for a university to PEQAB. They’re the independent body. They know this stuff. They’re the experts. It seems like the most logical way—you always send it to the PEQAB group, the independent body.” They said, “Well, there might be a time when you, as a minister, might not want it to go through an independent body.” I thought, “Oh, okay. I understand.” So then I said, “We’re not doing that anymore. There will be no politics in this process. Remove it. Apply directly to PEQAB.” There is no more minister involved in the discussion; you apply directly to PEQAB. Right away, the applications got accommodated and completed within three to six months.

We talked about this in last year’s red tape bill. I don’t want to be too off base here, but I think it was about 14 months ago, 12 months ago or more—it was in October we introduced that legislation, if I’m not mistaken. Over a year ago, we passed this legislation. We passed the red tape bill. We talked about it in the red tape bill—that we had simplified the program approval process. We had taken a process that was two-plus years, sometimes three years, and we reduced it to a matter of three to six months. I think everybody would agree that was a really good thing. That was a fair, equitable process—removed politics out of the equation, took it right out.

Then we had a bunch of universities that were applying—well, I shouldn’t say a bunch; there were two universities in particular that were not fully designated universities. One was my alma mater of Algoma, where I got my undergraduate degree, and one was OCAD University—two institutions that I would say are incredibly awesome institutions. I think they do a phenomenal job. Perhaps I’m a little biased, as a graduate of Algoma—and I am obviously very proud of my local institution. It was very important that they could have that degree-granting authority—but it would be inappropriate for me to pick, especially as a graduate, wouldn’t it? It could be very biased. Somebody could say, “Well, the only reason you want to make your institution a university is because you’re a graduate.” It could be problematic, couldn’t it? Somebody could say there’s something wrong with that. Why not, then, amalgamate the legislative process with the independent process and say, “If you complete PEQAB, then your legislation will get proclaimed into force”? We talked about that. I seem to remember a lot of people in this House being supportive of OCAD University and Algoma University getting their full degree-granting authority based on a process whereby they would first apply to PEQAB. When PEQAB was completed, the legislation would be proclaimed into force.

So, a little known fact—maybe it’s not all that known; OCAD University only got proclaimed by virtue of legislation—I believe it was this past June. The legislation passed many, many, many months before. The member from Don Valley West just suggested, “Yes, but they

weren’t run by”—and I’m not going to say the word because it’s not for me to determine any of these. But what I can tell you is, they are an institution that applied through an independent process and they completed the process. OCAD University did what they were required to do, and the legislation got proclaimed into force.

I can tell you, with respect to my alma mater, Algoma—they have not yet been proclaimed into force because they haven’t completed the process.

So when we talk about procedural safeguards and when I talk to you about the charter and the case law—and I could cite numerous bits of constitutional case law. I was a constitutional law teacher at Algoma University, as a matter of fact. It means something to me. It matters that we have processes that are fair.

You can attack me for a lot of reasons. People might say, “Hey, you’re a lawyer.” A lot of people have a lot of things to say about lawyers sometimes. Sometimes people would say, “How did you do the job you did? How could you represent an individual who was maybe, arguably, guilty”—or was not; I’m not going to get into that. Well, because we have a process of laws. We have a process that requires that we respect our charter, that we respect the rights of individuals, that we respect the tenets of equality, fundamental justice and our fundamental freedoms. It’s what makes us a free and democratic society. These are the things that make us, as a country, who we are. If we start to interfere with processes, we can get into trouble pretty quickly.

Again, there is no place in this province, none—and there shouldn’t be anywhere—for racist, discriminatory views or beliefs. There is no place for Islamophobia or homophobia of any kind. And that is not—I repeat, that is not—what the legislation suggests. What the legislation states is that there is an independent procedural set of safeguards that have been created that are the rules, and everybody has to follow the same set of rules.

What I continually hear from the members opposite is that we should somehow change the rules when we don’t like the players. If you want to change the rules, you get into the real potential for problems.

Interjection.

Hon. Ross Romano: I hear the member from Don Valley West again. Was it like when Samsung got a \$7-billion contract that they ought not to have gotten? Is it like when things like certain acts were argued for green energy that really, quite frankly—I think we all know they weren’t very fair. I don’t want to colour the issue that way; I really do not—but it’s tough when we are trying to talk about procedural safeguards.

I can appreciate that the opposition members want to create the wedge issues and they want to play politics. I understand. But when you get to a point of going over and over again on the same question, I ask myself: Do you fully appreciate what the rules are? Are you suggesting that there shouldn’t be a set of rules for everybody? Are you suggesting that we should create different rules for some, not for others? That’s not what we are about. That’s not what equality means. That’s not what our principles of

fundamental justice mean. That is not what was thought of or conceived for a moment when our Constitution was being written. That is not what it was about.

I do not ask anybody to agree with, accept the views of any one individual. To the contrary, this is a very free and democratic society. We all have the right to stand up in this House, as elected members of our constituents, and state what we believe to be right. But what we absolutely cannot do is interfere with the independent processes. You may have a perspective on what any one individual stands for, and you are very entitled to that perspective, because that is everyone's right. But you can't interfere with the process.

The motion, as it's presently written, has a whole lot of statements of belief of an individual. But then it also references that we ought to do everything in our power to stop an institution from getting this accreditation. The fact of the matter is, constitutionally, we just can't do that. You can't stand in the way of a process. It's unlawful, because every individual is equal before, and under, the law, and every individual has the right to equal benefit and equal protection under the law—everyone.

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Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that we as legislators, as elected officials, try—it's not always easy—to separate the politics from the process. I only ask that we have a degree of respect for the process. The process is all we have, at the end of the day, if we want to maintain the status of our rights and the status of our freedoms. We have to continue to follow the process.

I find it really difficult at times to stand in this House—and it's challenging, when you're doing everything you can and you're fighting with everything you've got to try to ensure that you're doing your best. Sometimes situations can be challenging, but you have to do your best. That's what I believe in. I believe in, always put your heart out there, work your hardest, and leave it all out on the field. It's a philosophy I try to live by. It's not always easy, but you try to do your best.

As a government, we have discussed a lot of issues over the last 18 or more months—I guess we're a little over two years or something now—and this last while has really been difficult. Sometimes days meld into weeks and months and years.

The point I'm trying to get at is, we worked very hard to ensure that we had a process for institutions that was simple and easy to follow. I know the colleges across Ontario were very happy that we were able to reduce the process that took years and simplify it down to a matter of months. It allows institutions to be more labour-market-responsive to their local communities, which is very important; I don't think anybody would deny that.

With respect to institutions, as I referenced earlier, my alma mater of Algoma and OCAD University went through that same process—the exact, identical process that three institutions are going through here in this bill; three identical pieces of legislation that are identical to what OCAD University and Algoma University went through a year-plus ago. Nothing is in any way different.

So if nobody had a problem with that process for those institutions, whether you agree or disagree, the fact of the matter is, you can't have a difference of opinion with respect to the process for these institutions, because there is equal benefit and equal protection under the law for everybody.

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

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: This week, the Legislature is voting on Bill 213, an omnibus bill that ostensibly helps small business but that contains a poison pill—and boy, this one is really poison. Schedule 2 of the bill gives Charles McVety's private college the right to call itself a university and to grant university degrees, BAs and BScs. It interferes with and politicizes the normal arm's-length process of the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board. There is nothing fair or normal about interfering with that process.

But worst of all is that McVety is a notorious Islamophobe, and he is viciously homophobic and transphobic. He has uttered the vilest slurs about Islam and about queer people. I won't repeat those slurs here; it's easy to find them, and they don't need more publicity.

This summer, the terms “systemic racism” and “systemic discrimination” came into common parlance. Most Canadians came to understand from the protest that followed the murders of BIPOC people at the hands of police in both the United States and Canada what systemic racism means and that the goal of public policy should be to rid our systems of this scourge, whether in health care, policing, education, the media, workplaces or anywhere else. Schedule 2 of Bill 213 does the exact opposite: It builds into post-secondary education the views of a bigot via the curriculum that McVety's institution will write and the way it will distort the world view of impressionable students. And it gives the government of Ontario's blessing to this curriculum.

We know from their own words that the perpetrators of the massacres of Muslims as they prayed in both Christchurch, New Zealand, and Quebec City were affected by Islamophobic mischaracterizations of Islam. We know that Islamophobic words can turn into physical violence. We know that homophobic, transphobic hate can turn to violence.

Our job as legislators is to lessen the hate in the world, not add to it.

In April 2019, my private member's bill, Bill 83, which commemorates January 29 as a day of remembrance and action on Islamophobia, passed second reading unanimously. Government MPPs, including the now Minister of Education and the government whip, spoke passionately about the need for the bill and especially the need to take action to rid all of Ontario society and all its institutions of Islamophobia. But now, the government is doing the exact opposite: It is legislating more hate and more Islamophobia into our society, not ridding us of the Islamophobia that has continued to turn into violence, as it did just this summer, when a caretaker at a Toronto mosque was murdered by an avowed white supremacist.

The government is legislating more transphobia into our society, despite evidence that transphobic words translate to transphobic hate and violence—and indeed, on Thursday, the Legislature will observe a minute of silence for trans people who have died from that violence. They say there is no place for Islamophobia or transphobia in Ontario, but they act to increase both of these scourges.

Schedule 2 of Bill 213 amounts to an attack on Muslim communities across the province. It amounts to an attack on LGBTQ+ people and those who love them.

I have a gorgeous trans daughter. I couldn't be prouder of her, and it is, frankly, terrifying to me as a mother, as it is for the loved ones of other trans Ontarians, to know that the government of Ontario cares so little for her safety or her human rights that it is legislating further systemic transphobia into the province in the form of these degrees and the curriculum that will accompany them.

No small business that I know would want to be a cover for hate. The Premier needs to withdraw schedule 2 from Bill 213. The government needs to condemn Charles McVety's poisonous views, and it needs to stop promoting them or assisting him in their promotion.

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

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Je prends la parole aujourd'hui pour appuyer cette motion. Moi, je ne connaissais pas Charles McVety auparavant, et je crois que peu de francophones le connaissent. C'est pour ça que je m'adresse à eux : pour qu'ils sachent quel genre de décision ce gouvernement est en train de prendre, pour qu'ils sachent que le gouvernement appuie une personne qui répand une rhétorique raciste, homophobe et transphobe.

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En tant que représentants élus de cette province, nous sommes ici pour être la voix des plus vulnérables et pour travailler à créer une province plus équitable chaque jour. C'est notre responsabilité. Comment ce gouvernement peut-il continuer à ignorer les inquiétudes venant de partout dans la province et refuser de condamner la haine? Comment le soutien à Charles McVety du Collège chrétien du Canada protège-t-il nos plus vulnérables et lutte-t-il pour l'équité?

À tous les jours, nous découvrons de nouveaux liens personnels qui unissent le premier ministre et Charles McVety. Il y a clairement un conflit d'intérêts préoccupant ici. Je suis profondément préoccupée de la manière dont ce gouvernement continue de centraliser le pouvoir, réduire les débats et accélérer ses priorités déplacées.

Plus que jamais, nous devons faire preuve d'intégrité, de collaboration et nous montrer inclusifs pour aider tous les Ontariens et les Ontariennes. Soutenir une personne qui ne respecte pas les principes antidiscriminatoires du Code des droits de la personne de l'Ontario va à l'encontre du travail que nous devons faire. Ce gouvernement doit prendre sa responsabilité, et il doit prendre la bonne décision. Il est temps d'arrêter d'éviter les questions ou d'ignorer le problème. Il est temps de faire le travail pour

lequel vous avez été élus et de protéger les Ontariens et les Ontariennes.

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

Mr. Will Bouma: I am indeed happy to rise in the House today to speak to this opposition day motion. I want to speak to and reflect on what the minister has said, as well.

Before I get too far into the details and the debates of this motion, I think that it is important to address what the opposition has been focusing on today. I can completely empathize with the concerns that the opposition raises. However, as has been pointed out several times, that is not what this issue is about.

Based on what the NDP has been speaking about all day, you would think that they are debating a topic that is entirely different from what the referenced legislation proposes to do. It is clear to me, and I think it's clear to Ontarians, that the NDP wants to focus on an individual and not the transparent process that everyone, including this particular individual, must go through. That's a real shame.

When the opposition chooses to politicize an independent process that is made to be as transparent and efficient as possible, they draw shadows on our entire post-secondary education sector. Frankly, Ontario has the best post-secondary education sector in the world. The reason why we have such an amazing education sector is because of the way in which all institutions, regardless of whether they are public or private, new or firmly established, large or small, have to meet the same standards and reviews by the independent Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board, or what we term as PEQAB. I don't think that can be stressed enough. That is why it has been so disappointing to hear the opposition try to politicize this process.

I understand that they may not like the individual applying to the process, and that is fine. In the province of Ontario, you are allowed to challenge beliefs and viewpoints. That is part of what makes this province the thriving democracy that we all cherish. What you cannot do, and what the NDP and the Liberals apparently want us to do, is to interfere in this independent and robust process because they don't like the person going through the process. That's really what this is all about.

If a drive centre supervisor didn't like a drive test student but they passed all objective standards, the expectation is that the supervisor would still grant that person their licence, regardless of what their feelings were towards them.

In Ontario, there are independent procedures and processes that safeguard our system. That is highly important so that, despite the best efforts of the opposition, there is no political interference in the system. I want to speak to this process as well, because I think that as we highlight what is actually happening here, Ontarians will see beyond the fear-mongering of the opposition and will be able to see and appreciate just how strong and thorough our post-secondary approval systems really are.

I listened carefully to the minister when he gave a thorough breakdown of the processes post-secondary institutions must go through in order to be designated as a university or to obtain the ability to grant degrees. You would think, based off the opposition's comments, that the institution in question does not currently grant degrees, but that is not correct. In fact, since 1999, when this institution received all-party support in the Legislature, they have had the ability to grant degrees. I thought that was important to highlight, as I think that point has been lost in all of the noise created by the opposition.

So what is changing now? As the minister has repeatedly stated, the process for institutions to change their status or expand their degree offerings is becoming more efficient. This was a change our government made last year, in our 2019 red tape reduction bill. Before we made those changes, if any post-secondary institution wanted to expand their degree offering options or change their name to become a university, they had to go through old bureaucratic methods that took years to complete. We heard clearly from the post-secondary sector that they had a problem with this old and inefficient way.

As I said, the Ontario post-secondary sector is the best in the world, and in a changing world and economy, we needed to find ways to support our sector to help compete on a global front. They wanted thorough and robust systems, not red tape and delays. The old system was not serving the needs of post-secondary institutions in Ontario, and that is because, through the old and inefficient process, when an approval came to the minister, the minister would almost always refer the matter to the Post-secondary Education Quality Assessment Board anyway.

The referral to PEQAB made sense, as all governments have relied on their important work to make informed decisions that preserve the integrity of the post-secondary sector. That is exactly why we went from this old red tape-riddled method to a more streamlined approach, where the applications went directly to PEQAB for their review and, upon approval, would have their legislation already available so that they could begin at once. This system is better for universities, it's better for students, and it's better for the taxpayer. That is what is happening here. as well.

There are three institutions listed in this legislation; the opposition is zeroing in on only one. All three institutions listed must complete their PEQAB review prior to obtaining the power to grant new degrees or to use the university designation. Even if the legislation is passed, the changes will not be adopted until the PEQAB review is complete. That is important, and that is something that has not been highlighted.

I want to go over a few points that I think need to be stressed in this debate, because I think these points speak to the reason why Ontario has one of the best post-secondary education systems in the world. I think that one of the main reasons is because of its independence. It is independent from government interference and independent from political positions. That is why, as the minister has stated, all institutions wishing to offer new degrees or

use the university designation must go through the PEQAB process. Once they have completed their review, and only then, the legislation will come into effect. Let me repeat that so that it is very clear: We know that enabling legislation has been used for multiple post-secondary institutions. We are also aware that once the review is completed by the independent PEQAB, the government will review and make the decision. But this will only happen when the process is complete, even if the legislation has been passed. This is how it has been done for multiple institutions, including, recently, as we heard, Algoma University and the Ontario College of Art and Design, or OCAD. OCAD completed its review, and those portions of the legislation came into effect. Algoma has yet to complete its review, as we heard this afternoon, but upon its completion, it will be eligible. That is one of the efficient, transparent reforms our government has made as we continue to reduce red tape across Ontario.

I also think it should be noted that we will not presuppose the results of an independent board's assessment. That would be inappropriate. I believe that we should wait to see what the independent board finds before the final review is made. That is proper and fair and how it ought to be done. The NDP has clearly already presupposed this review, and I think that is improper.

The opposition may wish not to talk about the PEQAB process. We know it is an integral part of all approvals for post-secondary institutions. I think that it is again important to note that enabling legislation has been used in practice for post-secondary institutions under multiple governments.

Speaker, I want to wrap up by stating that the concerns raised by the opposition are important—we have never denied that—and it is important that all members of the Legislature speak out against discrimination. However, this issue has nothing to do with the legislation they reference.

The irony is that this process is meant to protect everyone from personal and political interference and feelings about certain candidates. The NDP and the Liberals don't seem to care about this, or maybe they think the principles of justice only apply to the people they agree with.

1420

However, they are mistaken. Independent reviews apply to everyone equally, regardless of views or beliefs. That is fundamental. On this side of the House, we would never interfere with this independent process because we disagreed or agreed with someone's personal beliefs. The opposition can choose to focus on whatever they like, but as we meet today, in the midst of a global pandemic and health crisis, I would have hoped that they would have used their time to bring forth constructive contributions to our government's ongoing fight to keep Ontarians healthy and safe. I can certainly say that post-secondary institutions have done this, rising up to the challenge of COVID-19 and making tremendous progress in the fight, both in terms of research and health supports. We should not diminish the great work that they are doing today by

attacking the approval process that is one of the best in the world. I think, by looking at the post-secondary sector today, it is clear that they contribute to the reputation of our fantastic institutions, and offer students from Ontario and around the world a world-class education so that they can compete in the modern economy.

Our government will continue to support the independence of our post-secondary review boards, and we will continue to recognize them as an integral part of the degree-granting process for all universities in Ontario.

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

Mr. Faisal Hassan: It is my pleasure to stand in the House today and add my voice of support to the official opposition motion calling on the government to condemn the extreme and hateful invective of Charles McVety and to oppose any efforts to make his college an accredited university.

As a member of the official opposition Black caucus and as the first Somali Canadian elected provincially, I cannot stress enough that the rights of all citizens to be able to live and work free from discrimination, racism and hate should be a cornerstone of a healthy community. Mr. Speaker, those enshrined rights are daily at risk of being diminished, challenged and weakened. Hatred, discrimination and bigotry need to be called out for what they are by every one of us in society.

Here in Ontario, we have had, since 1962, the Ontario Human Rights Code, which is provincial law that gives everyone equal rights and opportunity without discrimination in a variety of areas. The code's goal is to prevent discrimination and harassment because of race, sex, disability and age, to name a few of the 17 grounds.

When education providers, be they private or public, fail to meet anti-discriminatory and anti-hate speech principles set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code, and fail to provide mutual respect and dignity, I suggest those providers not be enabled by being given university accreditation.

This government is using legislation buried in an omnibus bill to help grant university accreditation to an individual who has a well-documented history of spreading hate towards Muslims and LGBTQ people. This same person and his organization have offered some wild theories and have demonstrated a consistent anti-science bias.

The Ministry of Colleges and Universities acts as a gatekeeper to higher education in the province and has an important role in eliminating inequitable barriers that may discourage or limit applicants to all forms of post-secondary education in Ontario. As such, the government of Ontario is required by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to consider the educational record of this college prior to accrediting it as a university in Ontario. In light of this record, and as has been noted at length, the government of Ontario should not accredit Mr. McVety's college as a university in the province, as its educational record demonstrates a course of conduct and words that violates the equality provisions of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

In particular, the public accreditation of this college could harm higher education in Ontario by creating barriers for 2SLGBTQIA+ people and for many other groups who have historically faced discrimination in our province, given that the college has repeated issues of deeply discriminatory attacks upon those groups in its educational activities.

It is my view that Canada Christian College, through its conduct and words, imposes inequitable barriers to higher education for students, and that public accreditation will undermine the public's confidence in Ontario's ability to regulate post-secondary education in the public interest of all its residents.

Mr. Speaker, I believe both sides of this House know that the path this government is choosing to go down to help give accreditation to Charles McVety and his college is the wrong path. The record of this college is quite clear: Bigotry, racism, and discrimination is their curriculum.

Please, members of this House, do not let silence be complicity. Stand and be counted, reject bigotry and hate, and stand for the rights of all Ontarians to be honoured and respected.

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I rise to speak to the opposition day motion.

I want to begin by saying that the company you keep matters. The government's refusal to give up their special treatment for Charles McVety totally contradicts official statements they've made condemning Islamophobia and expressing support for the LGBTQ+ community. Speaker, actions speak louder than words.

Today, the National Council of Canadian Muslims called on the government to rescind their special favour for Mr. McVety. I'd like to quote their CEO, Mustafa Farooq: "If you say that Islam has a 'mandate for a hostile takeover,' or if you argue that Haitians are devil-worshippers who deserve 'horrific government,' amongst a litany of other terrible things, then you shouldn't get special treatment." I couldn't agree more, Speaker.

This is about choosing what side you're on. Are you on the side of human rights? Are you on the side of respect for diversity of race and religion, for diversity of sexual orientation? Or are you on the side of one of Ontario's most prolific purveyors of hate?

When the Christian television service removed Mr. McVety's television show for his remarks, it reviewed 14 incidents between July 2009 and February 2010 that disparagingly treated topics around Muslims and other minority groups. Speaker, these are not one-off incidents; it's a pattern of hate. Such views are disgusting and have no place in Ontario.

The government can hide behind the PEQAB process, but if they truly respected the independent process and wanted to make a statement against hate, they would remove schedule 2 from Bill 213, allow the PEQAB process to take place and then, if need be, introduce legislation at that time. That would send a clear signal to everyone in this province that nobody in this House will

stand on the side of hate, bigotry, Islamophobia, transphobia, homophobia and all the other forms of hate that Mr. McVety stands behind.

Speaker, I ask the members opposite to do the right thing. Let the independent process take place, and then we can debate whether they want to move forward with this or not.

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

Mr. Billy Pang: As the member of provincial Parliament for Markham–Unionville and a previous school board trustee, I know about the value of a post-secondary education. I also know that Ontario has the best post-secondary education system in the world.

One of the reasons why we have the best post-secondary institutions in the world is because of the rigorous process they must go through to become accredited degree-granting institutions. There is a similar process for institutions that want to use the term “university” in their name. In Ontario, we would expect no less.

It is this process that ensures our students get the best education, and it’s the reason our institutions have the reputation that attracts students from all across the country and around the world to study here in Ontario. The rigorous process includes the review by the independent Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board.

1430

One of the issues here is that the opposition does not want to listen to the fact that we are following that exact same independent process. The legislation the opposition referenced will not be proclaimed until the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board has completed its review. That is so important to stress. We are doing this in a proper way, because independent processes are respected by this government.

It is also important to note that this is a transparent process. The minister talked about how, before our government cut red tape, the process to grant new degrees or allow an institution the ability to use the university designation was not efficient or transparent. The minister could put a ministerial order, and the designation would go through without being debated. This process is better as it allows both the independent process to take place, on one hand, and it is transparent so that we can debate here in the House. And that is one of the main issues we are debating here today.

The other one is with respect to the independent institution that the opposition referenced in their motion. We need to be very clear: Anyone can apply to the process that determines licences, and politicians shouldn’t dictate who can and who can’t apply to run a private business. This is the other part of what this issue is about. That is the main point that needs to be addressed today.

We, of course, condemn racism and bigotry. There’s no place for them in Ontario. In Ontario, everyone has the right to be equal. That is what is so great about this province. Whether we agree with someone’s personal

opinions or not, they have the same rights and freedoms as every other individual in Ontario.

Therefore, I strongly reject the suggestion that opposition members have been making about our government. This government has a strong track record on fighting racism and helping to make Ontario a place where we are all equal. That is a fundamental right that the minister has noted several times.

I think it is important to note that the outcome of the review for all of the institutions in the legislation is not determined by politicians, but by the independent Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board. That is the way it should be.

Unlike the Liberal government before us, we believe we ought to follow the process of letting independent experts decide on important matters, such as expanding a university’s degree-granting authority.

The legislation, as the minister has repeated in this House, was created as a way to reduce the old bureaucratic ways that institutions had to go through to update their degree-granting abilities. Even if the legislation does pass, the changes would not be made until the review is complete. I want to say that again: Even if the legislation does pass, the changes would not be made until the independent process is complete.

This is the same process that other institutes have gone through. Recently, when Algoma and the Ontario College of Art and Design applied to PEQAB, the changes were made in legislation. They still had to wait until the PEQAB review went through before these changes took effect. So it is a fair and equal process for all institutions in Ontario. That allows for a proper, independent process to take place.

What the opposition is suggesting we do is to politically interfere with the independent process simply because they don’t like the person going through the process. We will not do that. That is improper, and that allows politicians to determine winners and losers, and it’s not independent.

Our government recognizes the rights of private citizens and private institutions to seek accreditation and licences from the government in an unbiased and non-partisan way. In fact, the opposition are not calling for the closure of the institution in question. They recognize that it has the right to operate in Ontario. The member from Don Valley West and the previous Premier of Ontario has said as much on talk radio. In fact, when this institute started granting university degrees in Ontario in 1999, all parties supported it. All that has changed is that there is less red tape in the process now.

Institutions apply directly to PEQAB to seek their changes, and enabling legislation, which has been used by governments of all political stripes, will allow the changes to go through once the PEQAB process is complete. The post-secondary sector has responded positively to these changes. That is because the minister and this government listens to them.

Speaker, we are in the middle of the second wave of COVID-19. I hope the opposition will stop politicizing the

independent, non-partisan process and look for ways to positively contribute in the fight against the virus and actually find ways to help support our post-secondary sector. I know our government and this minister is doing that.

This is why I was happy to hear the minister's announcement on Friday, when he announced the government is making an investment in critical maintenance, repairs, upgrades and renewals of \$466 million in capital grants over three years. This is great news, as in 2020-21, the government is providing \$144 million, an increase of \$73 million over last year. It's investments like this that support our post-secondary sector. I'm so proud to be a part of a government that supports our post-secondary institutes in constructive, positive ways. It is through measures like this that we help keep post-secondary institutions the best in the world.

Speaker, attacking the independent process that all institutions must go through hurts our post-secondary sector. As I've said, we have the best post-secondary sector in the entire world. We should not diminish the great work they are doing today by attacking the approval process. The approval process that these institutions go through is strong, thorough and independent. I think by looking at the post-secondary sector today it is clear that this process being debated today here contributes to the reputation of our fantastic institutions that offer students from Ontario and around the world a world-class education. It is this system that helps to keep our institutions going strong so that they can attract the best and brightest students from all over, so that these students can compete in the modern economy and in my home riding of Markham-Unionville.

Speaker, our government will continue to support the independence of our post-secondary review boards, and we will continue to recognize them as an integral part of the degree-granting process of all universities in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The next person to join the debate is the member for Spadina-Fort York.

1440

Mr. Chris Glover: A couple of weeks ago, I was visiting a mosque in my area, and I was speaking with the imam, and the imam said that the mosque had received graffiti attacks and threats.

There is a shameful, recent history of Islamophobic attacks in Canada. On October 12, a Toronto mosque was closed because of violent threats.

On September 12, Mohamed-Aslim Zafis, a volunteer caretaker, was stabbed to death outside of the International Muslim Organization mosque in Etobicoke.

On January 29, 2017, six people were murdered and 19 were injured, who were praying at the Islamic Cultural Centre of Quebec City.

Discrimination exists on a spectrum from words to action to violence.

At the mosque I visited, the members were angry and afraid. They expect all of us in leadership positions to

speak up for them and take a zero-tolerance attitude towards any form of Islamophobia.

In contrast, Charles McVety has used his college as a staging ground for Islamophobic invective, urging people to come to the campus to hear warnings about Islam's plan for a hostile takeover.

Why has the Conservative government put schedule 2 in Bill 213 to give McVety the power to grant more university degrees in Ontario? Instead, every Conservative MPP in this Legislature should be standing up and denouncing the Islamophobic statements made by Charles McVety.

The biggest social change in my lifetime is the acceptance and celebration of the LGBTQ2+ community. Until 1968, it was illegal to be a member of the LGBTQ2+ community. You could be arrested just for being who you were.

I lived through the late 1970s and into the 1980s when Harvey Milk launched his campaign for understanding and acceptance of the LGBTQ2+ communities. During that period, there were violent attacks in the Village right here in Toronto, and the Village responded with courage and with love, and they taught us all that love is love, and now Pride is Toronto's biggest annual party.

In contrast, the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council has found that Charles McVety distorted facts and presented abusive comments about the LGBTQ2+ community, and has led hateful campaigns against the community.

Mr. Speaker, the LGBTQ2+ community is not going backwards. They will not tolerate homophobia or transphobia.

So I'm asking the Conservative government to remove schedule 2 from Bill 213, which would give Charles McVety the power to grant more university degrees in Ontario.

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

Ms. Lindsey Park: I rise today to add to the debate on the opposition day motion brought by the member for Kitchener Centre.

I want to start off by saying that, as MPP for Durham, with several post-secondary institutions located in my riding, I have great admiration and appreciation for the quality of our post-secondary institutions and, particularly this year, how they have so swiftly adapted to online learning amidst the global pandemic.

I regularly get to hear stories of the good work our local colleges and universities are doing. They're not only educating bright minds in the province and training them for their future careers and the jobs of tomorrow, but they're always pushing the envelope when it comes to research and collaboration with industry on the pressing issues of our time.

Our world-class post secondary education system here in Ontario is something to be lauded, something to be proud of. I know everyone in this House can agree on that. The Ministry of Colleges and Universities has, from the very beginning of our government's mandate, been working with all partners across all sectors to continue to

build on that world-renowned education system. That includes establishing a fair and equal procedural playing field for our post-secondary institutions to compete and attract world-class talent from around Ontario and abroad, as the minister has outlined in his remarks.

I must admit that the priorities of the official opposition continue to astound me. The official opposition in the province of Ontario is so obsessed with Canada Christian College and going to whatever lengths they can to throw up roadblocks for this post-secondary institution that they are totally missing the priorities of Ontarians right now. Ontarians are just trying to keep their heads above water while we battle the second wave of COVID-19, yet let the record show that this motion is the opposition party's priority on November 23, 2020.

Not only does this motion seem blind to the priorities of everyday Ontarians, but it's also either ill-informed or just confused. They appear to be conflating a number of separate issues. I think what the NDP are trying to say is that there need to be mechanisms to hold academic institutions accountable when it comes to racism or discrimination—or I heard from the member from London North Centre, processes in place to hold people accountable for hate speech. I agree. Where there are concerns that the speech or conduct of a particular academic or post-secondary institution has crossed that line, allegedly violating human rights law, this is serious, and there are appropriate forums for these complaints where allegations are appropriately heard by a neutral arbiter.

But alas, I'm not here today to act as a neutral arbiter on a case before a tribunal or court—although I must say, Speaker, the motion does read like the member for Kitchener Centre wishes to commence a case alleging human rights violations. If that member or any Ontarian wishes to do so, they should follow the appropriate process for making those allegations.

What brings us here today is the specific issue of a private college seeking accreditation to be able to grant university degrees in the province of Ontario. There has been a process for such accreditation in place for decades. Every institution in Ontario has the right to apply for licensing applications and to go through the appropriate procedures and processes as established by and prescribed by statute. All post-secondary institutions have the ability to apply to what is known as the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board, or PEQAB for short. It is an independent, non-partisan board. PEQAB is made up of independent experts with significant experience in post-secondary education administration. The opposition is suggesting with this motion that the elected government should politically intervene in this process and prohibit an applicant from its right to even apply to this board.

In terms of PEQAB's process, for everyone's awareness—I'll quote from the PEQAB website: PEQAB "makes recommendations to the Minister of Colleges and Universities of Ontario on applications for ministerial consent under the terms of the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000....

"In fulfillment of its mandate, the board determines the criteria and procedures for its reviews, strikes expert and

advisory panels, and undertakes any related research. The board's criteria and procedures are contained in its manuals for three categories of applicants: (a) private, (b) public, and (c) Ontario colleges."

They strive to be—again, this is from their website—accountable, impartial, collegial, transparent, dedicated to quality and continuous improvement, and grounded in research evidence and best practice.

Post-secondary institutions apply independently to that board. Government is not involved. That is the process precisely because it removes political interference, which would be perceived as meddling and inappropriate. Likewise, the board will independently determine the outcome of their review. I think it's important to emphasize that point again: The outcome of PEQAB's review of each institution that is listed in Bill 213, the legislation before this House, will be determined not by the government, not by the members of the Legislature, but by the independent Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board—the point being that even if Bill 213 does pass, the changes, as outlined in schedule 2, would not be adopted until the review is complete. Let me repeat that: This schedule will not be adopted until the PEQAB process is complete.

1450

This specific process, as enabled by legislation, has been in place for 20 years. I told you, Speaker, the name of the bill that passed that long ago in this place. There are numerous institutions that have had legislation proposed based on the review by PEQAB. Might I add that all three political parties—I should add there's a fourth in the Legislature now, but at the time there were three—have proposed such legislation and have proposed schedules like schedule 2 of Bill 213. All three parties have voted in support of this process.

To be even more specific, enabling legislation for private, faith-based degree-granting institutions has been introduced in this Legislature under governments of all political stripes.

There are three institutions listed in this current legislation. The official opposition is singling out one institution, the one that they find political opportunity to single out, ostensibly with disregard for the established process. I repeat again: All three institutions listed must complete their PEQAB review prior to obtaining the power to grant new degrees or to use the university designation.

If passed, the changes in Bill 213 will not be adapted until the PEQAB review is complete. That's important to emphasize and understand. Following the established process without special treatment or preference for particular applicants is known as procedural fairness. That is what this government is staying committed to, and nothing less. We're upholding an independent process the opposition wants us to meddle in—a process happening alongside the legislative process that they curiously did not have any complaints about until right now.

Throughout government, we have procedures and agencies and boards that operate at arm's length from the government in order to protect these important processes from political interference. Processes are established in

this way with the purpose of making them independent, fair and accountable. The opposition needs to understand that the procedural fairness measures are in place for a reason, and they are being followed here. It would be inappropriate for this government or any government—even an NDP government, God forbid—to interfere with this process.

I'd love to know what other processes the NDP would like us to politically interfere with, since political interference appears to be the NDP policy now. Would the NDP also interfere with tribunal and court processes because they don't like an applicant? This motion leaves me wondering.

We will not interfere with the independent review. This is the way the process works for all schools, and it is the way it will work for applications in the future to ensure a thorough and fair process.

The NDP is asking our Premier and our Minister of Colleges and Universities to interfere in an independent process, Speaker. I cannot and I will not support that.

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

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I can't help but note that the member for Durham was talking about how she doesn't think we have our priorities straight—that they're not the priorities of everyday Ontarians. To the member from Durham: Muslim and LGBTQ people, their families, their friends and their allies are everyday Ontarians—your community—which is exactly why we are having this debate today.

Speaker, it's shameful that we have to have this debate and that it has come to this point, but it's completely obvious why, based on the last speaker and the Conservative speakers before her.

I'm happy to stand here and support my NDP colleague the member for Kitchener Centre and this motion.

For weeks, the official opposition has questioned this Conservative government's decision to give Charles McVety more power and influence by granting him the ability to confer bachelor of arts and bachelor of science degrees through Canada Christian College. We on this side of the House have done our duty, as representatives of our communities, as elected officials who represent Muslim, gay, lesbian, trans and queer communities, to oppose this move, based on McVety's long track record of hatred and bigotry towards marginalized communities.

We've shown the evidence of his hatred and bigotry time and time again: the horrendous Islamophobic, homophobic and transphobic comments that Mr. McVety has made about our community members while serving as president of Canada Christian College—comments that were clearly so repugnant that McVety's television show was shut down after the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council condemned his “malevolent, insidious and conspiratorial” remarks about the LGBTQ+ community, which included “discriminatory comments on the basis of sexual orientation, religion and mental disability.”

These bigoted beliefs have so deeply concerned the National Council of Canadian Muslims that they started an

online letter-writing campaign to the Premier, urging him to “publicly state that you reject McVety's views, and to not approve McVety's college as a university.”

Yet despite all the evidence, despite the pleas from constituents and the official opposition—none of this has dissuaded Premier Ford and the Conservatives, and they've refused to revoke support of McVety in their legislation. Why is that?

Speaker, it's no secret that Charles McVety is a very close personal friend of the Premier. Not only did McVety fully support Premier Ford in his numerous election campaigns, but he even opened up space on the Canada Christian College campus for Premier Ford during the Conservative leadership race. Ontarians see this, and rightfully so, as the Premier favouring his friend McVety and his bigoted hateful views. This doesn't seem to bother the rest of the Conservative caucus at all. They are rewarding this friend of the Premier with legitimacy and even more influence.

That is why I fully support my colleague the member for Kitchener Centre and her motion to condemn this move.

I have a responsibility to support and defend my constituents in Windsor West, and a moral obligation to oppose such hatred. As I have mentioned before in this House, the city of Windsor is the fourth most diverse city in all of Canada. Windsor's thriving Muslim community and LGBTQ+ community both contribute so much to our city—and, I would say, across the province.

The comments that McVety has made are a despicable and harmful affront to Muslim and LGBTQ+ Ontarians in my riding and right across this province. We have an obligation to ensure that this province is safe for them. We have an obligation to not legislate hatred, as my colleague for Kitchener Centre has said.

The Conservative members in this House may think that this is a trivial thing that they are doing; I assure you it is not. It sends a clear signal to the Muslim and LGBTQ+ people across the province that they agree with McVety's bigoted views and harmful words. Writing legislation that specifically grants powers to McVety's college sends a very clear message about the priorities of this government. That message is not a good one.

Will the Conservative members choose to take a stand here today against bigotry and hatred and be true leaders? Or will they use their votes to side with the Premier and his dangerous, prejudiced friend, Charles McVety?

I am urging the Conservative members to do the right thing: Condemn the extreme and hateful views of Charles McVety, and stand instead with their communities and communities across the province, the ones that we were all elected to represent.

To remind the Conservative members: Your vote on this motion before us today speaks volumes about you personally, now and for years to come.

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

Mr. John Fraser: We all know that Charles McVety is getting a special deal. We all know that he has said hateful

things about people in the LGBTQ community and of the Muslim faith. What he said is that the Muslim faith is a threat. If he said that about Catholics or people of the Jewish faith or Anglicans or people of the United Church, would we be having this debate? No, we wouldn't.

I know that members on the other side of the House know that this stinks, because when we're in debate and when we're in question period, everyone's heads are in their desks. The only member who has had the courage on the other side to stand up is the Deputy Premier. Here is what she said when asked about Charles McVety: "I don't want anyone to think of my party in that way." Not one other person has said that here.

1500

You're sending the wrong message to people, and in the LGBTQ community—when I talked about families, we have a family right here. The member from Beaches–East York stood up and told you how concerned she was, what that meant to her family. And did it register? It doesn't look like it.

Either you're going to vote to support this motion or you're going to continue this charade. You're sending the wrong message to thousands of Ontarians, and you need to change your course.

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

Ms. Suze Morrison: It's an honour to rise today and speak in support of this motion. I stand here today enraged at this Conservative government for attempting to use the cover of COVID-19 relief legislation to give the Premier's close friend Charles McVety the power to award university degrees in the province of Ontario.

Charles McVety is known for his deeply homophobic, transphobic, racist, Islamophobic sentiments. I've heard from constituents in my community who are horrified that this government would give this kind of academic legitimacy to someone who has led such hateful campaigns against 2SLGBTQ+ people and communities. Some of McVety's attacks have been aimed directly at the Church and Wellesley Village in my riding of Toronto Centre. This is personal for my community.

Just last year, Charles McVety led a march up Church Street in an attempt to sow hatred and spark violence against 2SLGBTQ+ people and communities. This march was an attack on a neighbourhood that is so much more than a collection of shops and bars on a main street. It is a safe haven for 2SLGBTQ+ communities and a living, breathing part of queer and trans history. When people learned about McVety's march, they were disgusted. The community leaders, the 519 community centre and our city councillor, Kristyn Wong-Tam, organized a unity rally in Barbara Hall Park. They did that to defend our community and make sure that everyone felt safe and welcome while this hate rally went on. I had an opportunity to speak at that rally, and I was specifically asked by the organizers to speak with love in my heart.

As I stand here to debate this motion today, I'm asking the government members on the opposite benches, who've stood up today with righteousness and anger at us for

daring to have this conversation, to stand against hate and division and to vote against giving Charles McVety the power and platform to hurt more people. Instead, I'm asking you to stand with love in your heart—to stand up and be counted by voting for an Ontario where everyone is free to thrive, regardless of their gender identity, sexual orientation or race. Legislating hate and giving a bigot a platform is not the Ontario I know that we all want.

When I spoke at that unity rally, standing face to face with McVety's brand of hate, I shared a list of things that I love about my community—a community that I am so humbled every day to come into this House and represent. As I stand here again with love in my heart, I want to share that list with you all today, which was my love letter to this community.

With my whole heart, I love every single person who makes this community the kind, joyous, vibrant, glitter-filled, passionate, resilient home that it is.

I love that this community is an oasis, that it is a safe place for 2SLGBTQ people, not just in this riding but all across the city and province. You nurture a place of safety and love and compassion that we need to replicate in every single part of this province.

I love this community at Pride and every single day in between.

I love this community on Sundays, when I'm laughing so hard my gut hurts at drag brunch.

I love this community when I see the drive and passion in the queer and trans youth who are fighting to make a better community for all of us and showing us that the future that they're building is so, so bright.

To every person in my community: Know that you are loved. Know that you have value. Know that you are sacred, that your spirit is strong and enduring. Know that you deserve better than the hate that unfairly and relentlessly targets you. You deserve better than a government willing to legislate hate against you.

Today, I ask all members of the House to act with love in your hearts. Vote for an Ontario that values love over one that legislates hate.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I rise today to bring the voices of London Muslim schoolchildren to this debate as a way of highlighting why legislation that legitimizes Islamophobic views, that gives a platform to someone who has described Islam as a threat to the western world, as not just as a religion but a hostile takeover, as a war machine—why that is so damaging, not just to our collective commitment to the Ontario Human Rights Code and the religious intolerance that it prohibits, but also to the families that we all represent. It has absolutely no place in public policy debates, and it must be condemned, as is set out in this motion.

The fact that this legislation was slipped into a COVID-19 recovery bill is especially disturbing. We are in the midst of a pandemic that has seen a significant rise in Islamophobic attacks, in large part because of fake news stories and comments that have been made by political

leaders. Since the pandemic was declared, there have been six major incidents of violence at the Muslim Association of Canada Masjid Toronto, and there was, of course, the hate-motivated murder of Mohamed-Aslim Zafis in Etobicoke—fatally stabbed while ensuring compliance with COVID-19 health regulations.

I do want to share what children in London have said about the impact of Islamophobia on them. This is from a research project that was done by some organizations in my community: Vanier Children's Services, King's University College, the Muslim Resource Centre for Social Support and Integration, and the London Islamic School. This is research to look at the experience of Muslim children and their lived experience with Islamophobia because of the gap that exists in the literature about what the impact is. These are children in grades 6, 7 and 8. They said that everyone around them "only thought of Muslims as terrorists." They said they're portrayed, "in most media, as terrorists and people you have to stay away from." They said, "We are portrayed as the villains of this world." They said that "people are scared of ... or, like, they're afraid of us being different. So they would automatically assume that, you know, we're different, we're bad, we're not good people." They said, "I was at Victoria Park and then some guy came by and he started swearing at us ... and saying you guys are horrible, get out of here, you suck." They said, "In a basketball game when we beat them and we wear hijabs and one of the parents said well at least they didn't bomb us." Another one said, "Once we were driving ... there was this one guy ... and he started screaming at us ... Muslims don't know how to drive, go back to your own country." This demonstrates the devastating impact that Islamophobic attitudes have on children in London and on children across this province.

The participants in this research study also talked about what their faith means to them and how it feels when, despite everything that they know that is good about their faith, people outside the community not only fear them but hate them, even though they are only children. The researchers say how challenging this must be as one navigates work and social and community relationships—when you are never sure how you will be received and perceived.

The study concludes that there must be a willingness and a concerted effort to speak out against the discrimination at all levels of society, from the school environment to the larger political arena. Today, this is the political arena that gives us an opportunity to do that, and I hope all members will vote in support of this opposition day motion.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: I'm pleased to take part in this urgent and very important debate.

Speaker, the opposition has for weeks now been serving up plenty of evidence that Charles McVety doesn't deserve the right to issue degrees, even beyond his hateful views on Muslim, gay, lesbian, queer and trans people. We have challenged the government to remove this special

favour from this bill—ostensibly a bill that was there to provide support during a pandemic. I think many of us hoped, on this side of the House, that members opposite would be moved by these facts and would, in turn, pressure the Premier to back down. I'm sure many government MPPs have members of their own family who fall into one of the identities targeted by McVety's vitriol—certainly, they represent constituents who do, and constituents who do not want to see their provincial Legislature used to validate those views. But, sadly, we haven't seen those MPPs speak out. Despite the evidence, despite McVety's record, despite the revelations in the House and in the press of the shady financials, not a single PC MPP has had the courage to really stand up or speak out about this.

1510

So it is up to New Democrats once again to try to use the increasingly limited tools we have in opposition to try to stop this move, to force a vote, to reaffirm that there is no place for this kind of hate in Ontario, that this province is made stronger by our diversity of sexuality, of gender and of faith.

Charles McVety isn't just someone who keeps his hateful views to himself. He has consistently used his platform to target LGBTQ Ontarians and Muslims whenever he has the chance. We know he was booted off the air for hateful commentary that violated broadcast standards, and we remember just one year ago when he led an anti-LGBTQ march directly through the Church-Wellesley Village, the heart and home of Toronto's queer community, joined by far-right and white-nationalist groups. And, as they have for decades, as my colleague mentioned earlier, the LGBTQ community organized and fought back. They held a massive counter-protest and were joined by over 20 faith leaders who made it clear that this man's agenda has nothing to do with faith.

Speaker, the mosque in Davenport has been targeted by anti-Muslim demonstrators this year in the wake of recent mass shootings by extremists targeting mosques. Despite these very real threats, the mosque continues on with virtual services and charity work for those affected by COVID-19. I really don't want to have to explain to that congregation why their government is rewarding someone who spreads Islamophobia, and I should not have to. That's why it's so important for us today to take a stand as MPPs to say no to this kind of hate. We need to stamp out bigotry in Ontario, not give it the power to grant degrees.

Before my time is up, I want to give a shout-out and a thanks to the volunteers and the staff at the George Chuvalo centre in my riding of Davenport. In collaboration with LOFT Community Services, the centre has a mandate to help support queer youth. It's an outpost and a sanctuary in Toronto's west end, where queer community spaces like the Gladstone and the Beaver and others started disappearing even before the pandemic. When I think about the team at the Chuvalo centre working on a shoestring budget to literally save lives by providing an affirming space for queer youth, I cannot bear the thought that this government would wilfully act to tilt the scales in

the other direction by rewarding and legitimizing someone who promotes hate against those kids. It is unconscionable.

I'm proud to be here on behalf of those young people, including trans and queer people in my own family, and all Ontarians who care about building a province where we all belong. I urge all the MPPs today to pass this motion to affirm those values.

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

Mr. Jamie West: Today the conversation is about the Conservative government's attempt to grant Canada Christian College accreditation as a university. The Conservatives want us to believe that this is a normal procedure like any other application, but unfortunately it's not. The president of Canada Christian College is Charles McVety. Charles McVety is an Islamophobe, a homophobe and a transphobe, and every single person in this Legislature knows that.

Unfortunately, Charles McVety has used Canada Christian College as a way to amplify his bigoted opinions. The Canadian Broadcast Standards Council, among many criticisms that you could find about Mr. McVety, said that he "distorted facts and contained abusive comments" about 2SLGBTQIA+ people and has led hateful campaigns against that community.

The minister has been questioned about this every single day, and every day he ignores the moose head on the table. Every day he talks about procedural fairness. Nobody has questioned procedural fairness. What we're questioning is why the Premier would prioritize this in COVID-19 legislation. It's not a conversation about procedural fairness. If the Premier cared about procedural fairness, he would remove schedule 2 from Bill 213—from a COVID-19 bill. This is a conversation about government support for someone who is homophobic and transphobic—and Charles McVety is notoriously homophobic and transphobic.

Last January, members of Sudbury's LGBTQ+ community were targets of bullying or threats. It started online, doxing, and it led to in-person—when people would go to their workplace to threaten them, to talk to their employer or their co-workers. It led to a point where people were afraid to get on Sudbury transit to take the bus because they didn't feel safe in their own community. It led to fear, and at the time Sudbury Pride had this to say: "For months now, folks in our community have felt unsafe due to a campaign of targeted harassment.... This harassment has taken a large toll on the mental health of not only our team ... but of those who've been targets for a while now."

I was asked by that community if I could attend a press conference to denounce what was happening. I agreed, and the next day they phoned me back and I was told that the people being targeted were too afraid to hold a press conference, too afraid to be visible, so I held one on their behalf. I was joined by the MPP for Nickel Belt, the MPP for London North Centre and the MPP for Spadina-Fort York. It was a straightforward conversation—that hate has no place in our community—with us standing firmly with

the community of LGBTQ, standing in solidarity, condemning those espousing the hate that was online and the hate that was in person.

Speaker, the bare-minimum expectation for any leadership is that you clearly and unequivocally oppose bigoted and hateful views. This Conservative government has an obligation to clearly and unequivocally oppose bigoted or hateful views. The member for Toronto–St. Paul's said, "Birds of a feather flock together." As my mom would say, "You lay down with dogs, you get up with fleas."

Katlyn Kotila from Sudbury Pride, following our event, said, "I'm thankful that we do have politicians speaking out and showing solidarity with the community" and that it "speaks volumes."

Similarly, the silence of the Conservative government around this speaks volumes, too. The world is thirsty for leadership. It's time for the Conservative government to condemn the extreme and hateful views of Charles McVety and to oppose any efforts to make the Canada Christian College into an accredited university.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: It is with sadness today that I stand to speak on this issue in the Legislature, on whether the government should proceed or should pull schedule 2 regarding Charles McVety and Canada Christian College.

I heard the minister and several other members talk about process and how process needs to be protected. I agree. The question is, at what point in the process is the box ticked, "Does the applicant wilfully promote hatred?" Where is that in the process? That is what we are discussing here today, because that part should be in the process before the bill is introduced in the Legislature—"Does the applicant promote hatred against other groups? Does he continue to promote hatred to other groups?" The answer is yes.

The government's response is, "We're going to let the wheels turn and at the end, after the bill is passed, but before it's proclaimed, we will make a decision." Why the groups that feel so frightened by this have a right to be so frightened is because this same government refuses to even say the words in this debate—"Islamophobia," "homophobia," "transphobia." They refuse to even say those words, and the leader of this government has no problem identifying himself with that person who promoted hatred.

There is very little confidence that the government will do the right thing at the end of the process when the government refuses to even acknowledge the issue at the start of the process. That's why we urge members of the government to change their minds—because people are going to be hurt by this.

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

Then, the member for Kitchener Centre has extra time to wrap up what she heard this afternoon.

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to all of the people on this side of the House

who used this opportunity to speak loud and clear against hate.

1520

I'm going to use the three minutes that I have before me to talk specifically to BIPOC community members. To queer community members, to trans community members, to Muslim community members, to Black and brown and racialized community members, to Indigenous community members, this one is for you. If everybody else in the House doesn't understand what I'm talking about, don't worry, because y'all are in charge of the system. Y'all are in charge of this process.

To all of my BIPOC friends and family, this was, most importantly, the appropriate time to talk about hate. I keep hearing on the other side that we were doing something inappropriate. Guess what? Every single time you stand up in this chamber, speak out against hate. That's your job. Do it.

The second thing that I want to say to all of my BIPOC friends and families: What you are hearing on this side of the House is not about feelings. That part drives me, I think, the most crazy. This isn't about feelings. I didn't feel badly because slavery was legislated. I didn't feel badly because of residential schools being legislated. I didn't feel badly because of segregation in Ontario schools. It was legislation. So stick a pin, as my people say.

I'm going to speak to the lawyers on the other side of the House who made it very clear that they are lawyering and talking about "legally" things. In all of your lawyerliness, I'm going to ask you to reference the lawyers who stood up against legislative systems and practices and pieces of law that made certain people lesser than. Stand up today. Do your work. Use your power. Use your privilege. Do not allow somebody who openly, unapologetically is bigoted to have more power—don't. Stand up.

I think that it is fascinating that whenever we stand in this House and we say, "That was racist. That was homophobic. That was transphobic," or "That piece of enabling legislation will open the doors to transphobia, homophobia, racism, Islamophobia etc. etc. etc.," we are told by the government that we're just talking with our feels. Well, guess what? This is the kind of politician that you're working with. She talks with her feels. It's all about her feeling.

So with that, I would like to end on this note: Thank you to my parents, to my mommy who lives out in Scarborough and to my daddy who's out in Niagara Falls, who raised me in the Anglican Church to centre love and care for absolutely everybody. Thank you, because what you have done is you have given me the courage to use my position of power and privilege to speak out when I see an opportunity for people to be harmed by the inaction and silence of this government. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Ms. Lindo has moved opposition day motion number 2. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

A recorded vote being required, the bells will ring for 30 minutes, during which time members may cast their votes.

Prepare the lobbies.

The division bells rang from 1525 to 1555.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 29; the nays are 27.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PROTECT, SUPPORT AND RECOVER FROM COVID-19 ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2020 LOI DE 2020 SUR LA PROTECTION, LE SOUTIEN ET LA RELANCE FACE À LA COVID-19 (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 18, 2020, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 229, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact, amend and repeal various statutes / *Projet de loi 229, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter, à modifier ou à abroger diverses lois.*

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Pursuant to the order of the House from earlier today, I am now required to put the question. Mr. Phillips has moved second reading of Bill 229, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact, amend and repeal various statutes. 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, the bells will ring for 30 minutes, during which time members may cast their votes. Prepare the lobbies.

The division bells rang from 1559 to 1629.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 57; the nays are 24.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): The vote was held on a motion for second reading of Bill 229, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact, amend and repeal various statutes.

The ayes are 57; the nays are 24. I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Pursuant to the order of the House from earlier today, the bill is referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

Orders of the day.

BETTER FOR PEOPLE,
SMARTER FOR BUSINESS ACT, 2020
LOI DE 2020
POUR MIEUX SERVIR LA POPULATION
ET FACILITER LES AFFAIRES

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

Bill 213, An Act to reduce burdens on people and businesses by enacting, amending and repealing various Acts and revoking a regulation / *Projet de loi 213, Loi visant à alléger le fardeau administratif qui pèse sur la population et les entreprises en édictant, modifiant ou abrogeant diverses lois et en abrogeant un règlement.*

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I am happy to rise to speak during second reading of the Better for People, Smarter for Business Act, 2020. This bill is on the front line of reducing unnecessary burdens, modernizing regulations and digitizing processes in order to help the people and businesses of Ontario who are struggling from the economic effects of COVID-19. Together, using this bill, we will be strengthening our economic recovery, cutting costly red tape, modernizing regulations, increasing cash flow and increasing future business opportunities.

Ontario needs to work together, now more than ever before, and focus on rebuilding and re-emerging from this pandemic stronger than ever. This is a large bill, with multiple different schedules. In my allocated time, I'd like to talk about a few of these key topics, specifically how this bill is going to reduce red tape and save businesses money.

But before I get into the meat of my opportunity to debate, I want the small businesses in Toronto and Peel currently in lockdown to know that I'm very sensitive to the challenges that they are facing. We as a government are doing our best to help them while containing this virus.

First of all, I'd like to highlight some of the general points on how this bill will benefit Ontarians and small businesses who are really struggling in these tough times:

—how electricity rates are billed so that customers can have a predictable rate when Ontario families are at home and when businesses have closed their doors for the day. This will go hand in hand with helping Ontarians access their information online, which I will be talking about a little bit further in my speech;

—how trucks deliver to pharmacies and grocery stores overnight, ensuring that critical businesses have the resources they need to stay open and supply Ontarians with demand;

—also, how the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario is able to help Ontario's response to COVID-19 outbreaks by allowing temporary certifications.

In addition to that, I'll talk about how expiry dates on licences and permits have been extended.

It's important to note that our government is also improving the way restaurants and food delivery companies function. By allowing alcohol to be delivered, we can

ensure more money is going toward supporting local businesses, as well as allowing restaurants and bars to extend their licensed areas so that social distancing requirements are met.

All these changes and more are great examples of how this bill and our government are helping Ontarians, in addition to small businesses.

We've already saved businesses \$358 million and reduced regulations by 4.2% since we've taken government; that's a modest 2% a year. Our government also has a made-in-Ontario plan for economic recovery, renewal and long-term growth. By updating regulations and making them easier to follow and comply with, businesses can concentrate on getting back to normal, creating more jobs and preparing for the future.

It's important to note that in December 2019—almost a year ago—the Legislature passed the Better for People, Smarter for Business Act, 2019, which contained 80 measures to reduce regulatory burdens and the cost of complying with regulatory requirements.

I might also add that there are, in fact, five guiding principles that are behind all the work in this area. One is to protect public health and safety and the environment. It's our goal to enhance and ensure public health, safety and environment—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Stop the clock, please. I recognize the government House leader on a point of order.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Just to inform the House on standing order 7(e), I believe it is, that there will be no night sitting this evening.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you. Back to the member for Chatham-Kent–Leamington.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Also, we want to prioritize important issues. By understanding which issues cost the most time and money, we are able to see which ones Ontarians will benefit from.

We also want to harmonize rules with the federal government and other provinces where we can; that is, by targeting duplicative red tape to save people time and money. We also want the people of Ontario to know that we are listening to you, the people and businesses of Ontario. Your inputs are important to us, and we want to do as much as possible to help reduce red tape and create the ideal environment for job growth and development.

Lastly, we also want to take a whole-of-government approach whereby we are working together to ensure that everyone is on the same page and understands the red tape processes.

These new changes also go hand in hand with other recent changes this government has made to help those in need. Some other examples include streamlining and modernizing outdated rules, creating a one-stop shop for annual transport truck safety and emissions inspections, allowing Ontario drivers to carry proof of insurance on their smart phones and safeguarding our environment and protecting our public.

Let's talk about helping Ontarians understand their energy use to reduce costs. Gas and electric distribution

companies provide people and businesses with the energy consumption data. You can get that; you can check it out. You can look at your bill and determine whether you want to go with time-of-use or a flat rate. That's your decision. We want to help you. Whatever is best for you, that's what we want.

People are able to access their information any time through this app to bring awareness and lower their energy bills. Of course, it also allows people to take steps in reducing their energy consumption, such as lowering their house temp when they aren't home. They can do that remotely—pretty cool; for goodness' sake for technology.

We also want to help consumers find long-term energy solutions like upgrading windows and heating equipment. Real time data shows the saving can be up to 12% when people are aware of this usage.

Let's talk about the farming of fishing industry as well. Ontario's population continues to grow, and with that, so does a higher and more diverse demand for different supplies. As industries grow to match the demand of Ontario over the years, so should legislation be put in place to monitor these industries. The current legislation from 1977 no longer provides Ontarians with the flexibility required to run aquaculture operations across the province. These changes are imperative because they ensure ecological sustainability as a top priority while allowing specific industries to be profitable, supporting local business needs.

Now, let's also talk about hazardous waste. My riding of Chatham-Kent–Leamington borders one of the Great Lakes, Lake Erie. What we want to do is we are changing and updating how Ontarians report and manage hazardous waste. Our government has proposed changes in the Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan to ensure these hazardous materials are being stored, transported and processed properly.

By making the process easier for businesses to submit their reports, the Ontario government is in fact reducing red tape. As of right now, over 450,000 paper manifests are submitted to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. Our government is changing this outdated system to allow for a better, digitalized reporting service which will be more efficient and not as time-consuming for better hazardous waste monitoring. We want to ensure that Ontario polluters are being held accountable and our waste isn't harming our beautiful ecosystems.

1640

One other thing here is that we want to talk about water bottling companies and municipality support. That is really important, because we want water bottling companies to be supported by local municipalities before tapping into their limited ground drinking water supply. We're asking that the water bottling companies obtain support from the community before applying for permits with the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. By allowing municipalities to weigh in on such an important matter, this will ensure the protection of significant water resources here in Ontario.

Speaker, I hope that I have elaborated on a few key topics to show just how this bill will significantly reduce regulatory burdens and save businesses money. It's also time that we update these types of policies—long overdue. These actions will greatly support businesses in a time when they need this government more than ever.

I would also want to suggest, especially with the areas that are currently in lockdown, in Toronto as well as in Peel, that we have your backs and we're doing our absolute best to help you, especially in this time. We need to get this virus under control. In addition to that, I want you to also know that we will deliver a concise and important structure that will ultimately protect public health, public safety and our environment, without limiting opportunities. With this pandemic, times are in fact changing, and it's about time that our government changes with the times. It's about time that we change with them as well. I thank you for the time, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions?

Miss Monique Taylor: I listened intently to the member from Chatham-Kent–Leamington. I was listening for the member to talk about schedule 2, or for the member to talk about schedule 3 or schedule 8, and I heard none of the above.

He talked a lot about how the government has small businesses' back, particularly those who are in complete shutdown right now. Where in this bill does it talk about real measures that would actually help small businesses? Where is the rent relief? Where is the insurance help? Where is the utility help? Where is the help that these small businesses have actually asked for?

I would like to know the member's opinion on schedule 2.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Again, I would like to thank the member from Hamilton Mountain for her question. It's a little confusing, perhaps, with all the things that our government has, in fact, been doing to help small businesses. I mentioned about the energy relief and giving businesses and even just households an opportunity to determine what type of rate plan they want to fall under, and that's based on their own personal consumption.

It seems that it doesn't matter what we bring forward. The opposition have a tendency to try to cherry-pick and pick out different things which they feel we're not doing, and yet you look at our bills and you'll find that it's covered. Even if you take a look at the budget bill and the things that are in that, as well—two words for them: COVID-19.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions?

Mr. John Fraser: It's interesting. This is called the fairness for people act, and unquestionably there are some things in that bill that are going to help people. But there's something that hurts people, and that's schedule 2. Charles McVety is getting a special deal. Charles McVety has told people of the Muslim faith that their faith is a threat—a threat.

I know the member opposite holds his faith very close to him, and that's really important. I think that if one of

our faiths is under threat, all of them can be, so I would like to ask him his thoughts on schedule 2.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I somewhat anticipated those types of questions coming from the official opposition, and the independents as well.

It's too bad, though, that the third party no longer supports faith-based education in this province. In the past, bills dealing with these schools were put forward by all parties, including the Liberals as well.

I stand strongly with our Minister of Colleges and Universities and how he has described the process involved. If they choose to identify individuals, again, to me, that is—my words—political assassination. And when I talk about character assassination—sorry; I'll rephrase that—I don't think it's very fair that they should be doing that.

Again, it's too bad that they're not supporting faith-based education in this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions?

Mrs. Nina Tangri: I want to thank the member for his comments on this bill.

What I've heard in my community—to the layman out there, they don't always have a clear understanding of what red tape is or why we need to address Ontario's overregulation to help our small businesses.

Member, if you could address red tape, the regulatory burdens: Why is it important for Ontario's recovery that we address this and we hammer it head on?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I'd like to thank the member for Mississauga—Streetsville for the question. Look, we know we're in unprecedented times right now. Businesses need help to recover from the economic effects of COVID-19 while preparing for the future, and we need to be futuristic in our viewpoints.

Red tape hurts job creators' ability to do what they do best: create jobs. We help them create these jobs as we continue down the path of recovery. That's why we've introduced new legislation that would help drive our province's economic recovery by removing regulatory roadblocks that are getting in the way of businesses.

Again, if this bill is passed, we will strengthen Ontario's economic recovery, support businesses on the ground, and help government deliver clear and effective rules that promote public health and safeguard the environment without sacrificing innovation, growth and opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions?

Ms. Suze Morrison: I'd like to ask the member opposite specifically where the tangible supports for businesses in this bill are. I'm thinking specifically of the queer- and trans-owned businesses in my community in the Church and Wellesley Village, who not only feel absolutely abandoned by this government in terms of signalling the hate they will tolerate in schedule 2 of this bill by handing out favours to their friend Charles McVety—awarding him the ability to grant university degrees and legislating hate into this province—but to the queer- and trans-owned businesses on Church Street, who are now in lockdown for the second time. Where is the

commercial rent relief for them? Where's the commercial rent relief? Where is the commercial eviction ban for them? Where is the income supplement for the queer and trans folks who work in those businesses and now aren't going to be able to pay their rent next month? Where are those tangible supports? There are none.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: To the member from Toronto Centre: You talk about supports. We don't differentiate, regardless of who owns businesses and who doesn't. We're trying our best to provide that relief to all these businesses, and if they have any questions with regard to the supports that our government is offering them, then all they need to do is go to the website, which they can look up—to go to ontario.ca and look it up, and we can assist them even further as well.

Ms. Suze Morrison: You're giving everybody nothing.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Again, I don't know why you bring up some of this other stuff; I'll call it "stuff."

I want to encourage businesses in your riding to seek, to find out—have them call your office. You know what the supports are, and they can find what those supports are to help them.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Question?

Mr. John Fraser: To the member opposite: I have a great deal of respect for him. I'm not participating in "character assassination." Those are the words that were used. The point I was trying to make is that if he used those words about Catholics or Lutherans or Anglicans or people of the Jewish faith, we would not have debated what we debated this afternoon and I wouldn't have to get up here and say this.

I'm just trying to square those two things, because I don't think it belongs in the bill. If you want to bring it out and debate it on the floor—but you're burying it in a bunch of stuff, and it's hurting people. It's not the right place and it's not fairness for people—with a great deal of respect. I'm just asking you that question because I think it's one that all of us have to answer, and I'm using his words.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: With all due respect to the member from Ottawa South, prior to us resuming debate on Bill 213, there was an opposition day motion that had enough debate on this particular issue. I will not engage in character assassinations. I will not engage in hateful, hurtful—as a government, we do not tolerate racism, homophobia and those types of things.

Look, that's been covered. That's been debated. I look at this now and I'm saying that Bill 213 before us—they want to cherry-pick and pick out schedule 2. Why don't you talk about some of the other schedules that are providing great relief for Ontarians? Because we want to get things back, on economic recovery, as best and as quickly as possible. That's what we want to do.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): We don't have time for another question.

Further debate? Further debate? Further debate?

Mr. Sarkaria has moved second reading of Bill 213, An Act to reduce burdens on people and businesses by enacting, amending and repealing various Acts and

revoking a regulation. 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, it will be deferred until after question period—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Oh, sorry. My apologies. I’ve got everyone running.

A recorded vote being required, unless I receive a deferral slip, the bells will ring for 30 minutes, during which time members may cast their votes.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): And I have received a deferral slip from the government whip:

“Pursuant to standing order 30(h), I request that the vote on second reading of Bill 213, An Act to reduce burdens on people and businesses by enacting, amending and repealing various Acts and revoking a regulation, be deferred until deferred votes on Tuesday, November 24.”

Second reading vote deferred.

Orders of the day? The government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: No further business.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): There being no further business, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1653.

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Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
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Cho, Stan (PC)	Willowdale	
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
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Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	

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Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Parm (PC)	Milton	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gravelle, Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
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Hardeman, Hon. / L'hon. Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hassan, Faisal (NDP)	York South—Weston / York-Sud—Weston	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor—Tecumseh	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
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Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
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Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	
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Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
MacLeod, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa (PC)	Nepean	Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries / ministre des Industries du patrimoine, du sport, du tourisme et de la culture
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Miller, Norman (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	
Mitas, Christina Maria (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
Monteith-Farrell, Judith (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Morrison, Suze (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports

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Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Park, Lindsey (PC)	Durham	
Parsa, Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	
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Piccini, David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines / Ministre de l'Énergie, du Développement du Nord et des Mines Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Roberts, Jeremy (PC)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa- Ouest—Nepean	
Romano, Hon. / L'hon. Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction / Ministre associé délégué au dossier des Petites Entreprises et de la Réduction des formalités administratives Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Simard, Amanda (LIB)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Singh, Gurratan (NDP)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Singh, Sara (NDP)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Associate Minister of Transportation (GTA) / Ministre associée des Transports (RGT) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
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Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
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Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	

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West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Wilson, Jim (IND)	Simcoe—Grey	
Wynne, Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Yakubski, Hon. / L'hon. John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
Yurek, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs

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