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Mercredi
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 2 December 2020

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 2 décembre 2020

Report continued from volume A.

1800

PRIVATE MEMBERS'
PUBLIC BUSINESS

FRONT-LINE AND ESSENTIAL SERVICE
WORKER WEEK ACT, 2020

LOI DE 2020 SUR LA SEMAINE
DE RECONNAISSANCE DU PERSONNEL
DES SERVICES DE PREMIÈRE LIGNE
ET DES SERVICES ESSENTIELS

Mr. Rasheed moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 230, An Act to proclaim Front-line and Essential Service Worker Week / Projet de loi 230, Loi proclamant la Semaine de reconnaissance du personnel des services de première ligne et des services essentiels.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Pursuant to standing order 101, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Whenever I have the privilege and opportunity to rise in this House, I always try to take a moment to thank our front-line and essential service workers for their hard work in maintaining our health care facilities and the flow of goods and services throughout the COVID-19 crisis. This is because I want our front-line and essential service workers in Ontario to know, and I hope everyone will agree with me, that I wholeheartedly believe that they are the real heroes of this crisis.

There have been many changes this year to our day-to-day lives and habits, and I am sure most will agree that they would like to say goodbye to some of these changes sooner rather than later. But I hope the act of appreciation for our front-line and essential workers stays on our minds for many years to come.

Bill 230 seeks to proclaim the third full week of March of every year as Front-line and Essential Service Worker Week to acknowledge the tremendous contributions of the various industries that make up Ontario's essential and front-line workers. The third full week of March coincides with the Ontario government's formal declaration of a state of emergency under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act during the COVID-19 pandemic. The state of emergency applied to the entire province of Ontario and ended on July 24 of this year.

Ontario's front-line and essential service workers played a vital role in maintaining the flow and delivery of goods and services across the province throughout the

state of emergency. Front-line and essential service workers continue to be a crucial part of Ontario's economic recovery. Speaker, the COVID-19 crisis has become a defining moment in the history of the province of Ontario. We know that front-line and essential workers played and continue to play an integral role in ensuring our province runs smoothly in an unprecedented global pandemic. Now more than ever, we need to support our front-line and essential service workers as our province works together to overcome the challenges of the ongoing crisis.

As I mentioned, back in March of this year, the province shuttered its bars and restaurants, public centres, libraries, schools, child care centres, theatres, concert venues etc. All public events were cancelled, including services at places of worship. Only essential services such as grocery stores, convenience stores, pharmacies, public transit, manufacturing facilities and supply chain companies were able to remain operational. Our doctors, nurses, police, firefighters and paramedics were all on high alert, responding when and where they were needed most. Our front-line and essential service workers were called upon to serve their communities so that the rest of us could socially isolate, stay home, flatten the curve and stop the spread of COVID-19.

Every time I go to the grocery store or other places in my community that have remained open during the pandemic, I am reminded of the importance of our front-line and essential workers. Our communities in Ontario have seen the dedication of these workers and have shown their thanks and appreciation in various ways.

Speaker, you may recall that early in the pandemic and throughout the summer, households across Ontario would take part in an evening ritual at 7 p.m. every night. I did this with my kids on numerous occasions. The people of Ontario would stand at their front doors and windows and bang on pots and pans to honour our front-line health care workers. My kids are still very young and they love to make a little noise and always got excited, but my wife and I made sure to speak with them about how important it is to say thank you to our front-line and essential service workers.

Speaker, I want my kids to grow up in a world that honours and acknowledges the contributions and sacrifices of individuals who stepped up and did their duty in service of the greater good so we all may benefit. We must acknowledge those on the front lines of this ongoing battle. If you took a walk through my neighbourhood in the great riding of Mississauga East-Cooksville—and I'm certain you saw examples of the same in your neighbourhood, Speaker—you would see countless signs in

windows and chalk drawings on driveways and sidewalks. All of them said the exact same thing: Thank you. Thank you to our front-line and essential service workers.

Ontario is thankful. We have so much gratitude and appreciation for these remarkable individuals. Today, in my way, I hope to preserve this thanks and appreciation with Bill 230.

Over the summer, Ontario saw a decline in cases, hospitalizations, patients on ventilators and unfortunate deaths. Since then, the province has worked diligently to reopen our businesses and restart our economy. Unfortunately, Speaker, the nature of this virus is that it is persistent, and regrettably we have seen a rise in cases, not just in Ontario but across Canada and around the world.

Last month, Toronto and Peel region entered a 28-day lockdown to combat the surge in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations. Once again, our front-line and essential service workers are being called upon to support our province so that the majority of individuals in affected areas can stay home and isolate. Once again, the people of Ontario have been asked to work harder than ever to support one another through this difficult time.

As we have seen all year, Ontarians have shown that we are strongest when we work together. As I've said, this crisis has become a defining moment in our province's history and there are still many challenges—many challenges, Mr. Speaker—ahead of us in the battle against COVID-19 and much work to be done in our economic recovery efforts.

The idea for a Front-line and Essential Service Worker Week is taking off in other jurisdictions as well. Our neighbours in Quebec have passed two resolutions to recognize and congratulate the work of front-line workers and volunteers in times of crisis.

The member for Brantford–Brant has also approached me to let me know that Councillor Wall of the city of Brantford is seeking to have a front-line and essential service worker day which also coincides with the declaration of the state of emergency in Ontario. Councillor Wall said, “It is imperative that we collectively say thank you loud and clear to all essential workers. We owe a profound debt of gratitude to every person who has ensured and continues to ensure our communities can continue to operate.”

Speaker, Ontarians are thankful. Canadians are thankful. Let's not delay in formalizing a week to acknowledge our front-line and essential service workers. Five or 10 or 20 years from today, we will look back at this time, in the same way we currently look back on the attacks on the World Trade Center on 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, the SARS outbreak or the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami. We always remember how quickly the world changed, and we must absolutely remember and honour the people who, in a time of great crisis, stepped up and did the impossible work of keeping our society moving forward.

1810

I believe that the great people of Ontario are already, in their own ways, showing thanks and appreciation for the front-line and essential service workers of this province.

But, Speaker, I believe strongly that we should honour these workers collectively, by committing a week to acknowledge their hard work and dedication. I respectfully and sincerely hope this House will agree to make the third week of March Front-line and Essential Service Worker Week in honour of all the people who are right now out there, and in this Legislature, doing their jobs and performing with excellence and dedication.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Jamie West: I'm very proud to talk about Bill 230. Basically, this motion will declare the third week of March Front-line and Essential Service Worker Week. I think it makes sense. I think it's a good connection because the third week of March was when we declared the COVID-19 emergency. We can all agree that the front-line essential service workers, the health care workers all played a vital role and no doubt will continue to play a vital role to COVID recovery. No doubt, they're heroes to all of us, Speaker.

However, this is a bill that I would describe as all sizzle, no steak. Obviously we're going to support this bill. We all believe, my colleagues across the aisle as well, that the front-line workers and health care workers are heroes. We're united on that. But, personally, I feel like this bill is just a feel-good exercise, sort of a photo op for the government. It's a way for the government to say that Conservatives care without having to put their money where their mouth is. They are the government, Speaker. They're not people putting up a poster in the window or banging their cups in congratulation.

You can say that you care, but it's different to say, “Conservatives care, but we don't care enough to lift the 1% wage cap that we forced on workers like nurses and other public sector workers.” They care, but not enough to include all the front-line workers as part of last summer's pandemic pay. They care, but not enough to make the temporary PSW top-up permanent. They care enough to make the announcement about the PSW top-up, but don't care enough to get it implemented after two months.

We're going to support the bill, Speaker, because we agree that all the front-line workers are heroes, but we want more than a photo op. Heroes deserve more than thanks. If you truly believe they're heroes, they need PPE, like N95 masks. They need fair pay. They need sick days. They need presumptive WSIB for COVID. Workers want more than a photo op. We want more than a photo op.

This summer, Speaker, I walked on the Bridge of Nations in Sudbury. I was walking with nurses. They were fed up with the Conservative government. They were fed up with being called heroes and posing for photo ops. They were fed up with feeling like zeros when it came to having their rights frozen, when their vacations were cancelled, when their wages were capped below inflation. That's not how you treat a hero.

At the time, I thought to myself: deeds, not words, because the workers don't want slogans unless they come with the actions to back them up. “Deeds, not words” is a slogan dating back more than 100 years. It was said by the

American suffragette leader Emmeline Pankhurst. Emmeline said her emphasis will be on direct action: “Deeds, not words,” will be “our permanent motto.”

It’s telling that the majority of our front-line workers are women, and that more than 100 years ago women had to demand from the government deeds, not words, and that more than 100 years later the Conservative government offers words, not deeds—sizzle, not steak.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. John Fraser: I want to congratulate the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville for bringing forward this bill. It’s an important recognition.

This pandemic has showed us who essential people are. We probably never thought of them as being essential before until this hit, as people who serve other people on the front lines, people who have to go to work because they’re doing something that we need—preparing food, working close together. It really shows just how important we are to each other. So doing this bill is a good thing.

But words and deeds are important, and I think right now of sick days—two paid sick days—of the 10 days’ emergency leave that was in Bill 41 or Bill 141 that we put forward, and that was removed. If we’re going to recognize and value essential workers by designating a week, then we need to value them by recognizing their work, making sure that they have fair wages, that they have sick days. That the things that most of us have, they can have too: a pension, work that’s not precarious. Especially if you take a look at long-term care or retirement, those are really essential workers. We found that out. We have to follow up with those things; otherwise the week will not really actually do what it needs to do, which is not just tell the folks that we recognize that they’re there, but that, every year, it spurs us to action.

I hope that’s what this bill does. There’s an opportunity for the government to bring those two paid sick days back permanently, to raise wages of essential workers that work for the government or agencies funded by government—

Mr. Wayne Gates: They would have done it by now.

Mr. John Fraser: Well, there’s always hope.

I think if we all reflect on how essential these workers have been to us during this pandemic, and have always been, then I hope that will happen.

I want to thank you for your time, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you to the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville, my colleague, for bringing forward this important private member’s bill. I love this bill because I think that gratitude is something that doesn’t really have as much of a place in our society as it ought to have. I think we don’t often take enough time to say thank you. So the intention here is very, very good. That is why the MPP from Mississauga East–Cooksville brought it forward, and I think we need to applaud that. I think gratitude is extremely important. I think we need to make more of a place for it.

There are many great quotes about gratitude. One is that it is a powerful catalyst for happiness, and that’s certainly true. Another is that gratitude turns what we have into enough. These things are very important in this fast-paced age where we are rushing about our business so much that we sometimes forget to say thank you.

Last March, we went into a very difficult period of time. We went into this period of time where COVID turned our world upside down and people’s lives have been turned upside down. Some people have cited the chief medical officer of health out in British Columbia, who has that great expression: Be kind, be safe, be careful—I think is what it is. The part that I like is the “be kind” part.

I have been trying to say to everybody every opportunity that I get during this pandemic, let’s remember to be kind, because we’re all, as it were, knocked off our feet a bit because things are not the way they’re supposed to be. Everything is upside down, and it’s a very difficult time for everybody, and sometimes there’s a lot of judgment. You know, neighbours—and I know all of you have been contacted by them; I’ve been contacted by them—really telling on neighbours. “My neighbour is not doing what they’re supposed to do during the pandemic.” Although their intentions may be good, I always remind them to be try to be kind, because it’s confusing for people and it’s hard to adapt our ways.

So, again, I really just want to applaud the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville for bringing forward a PMB which is really just founded on saying thanks. There were some criticisms; I think the member from Sudbury talked about “all sizzle, no steak.” But I think sometimes the sizzle is important. We need a little sizzle sometimes. Clearly—I know you said you will be supporting the bill—we all want to recognize the really heroic contributions of all of those front-line workers, of all of the essential service workers who have kept our whole society going throughout this incredibly difficult pandemic.

1820

I don’t think we should let the perfect be the enemy of the good. I think that there is a lot of good in just making this week to mark these essential workers and the front-line workers, and the services that they have offered to all of us—and continue to offer to all of us every day—which frankly are keeping the wheels on the bus, as it were. They’re keeping society going. They’re helping us to keep life as normal as possible. Frankly, every day—some more than others—all of them are out there working, and they are exposing themselves to potentially getting the virus, because they’re out in the world when other people are able to stay home. We need to say thank you for those sacrifices that they’re making. I think that that is an important part of what we’re doing here today.

I realize that actions speak louder than words, and I know our government has been taking a lot of actions to try to show these workers how much we care about them and to support them. Some of them were already mentioned. We did the pandemic pay, a temporary PSW top-up. My friend the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville did go out on his porch, as I’m sure many

others did—I did—and bang pots and pans together with his family every night as a way of saying, “We appreciate all you’re doing,” when things were really, really difficult. Those are also actions, and I think it’s important.

I know that there’s more to be done, and we’re certainly working every day to try to do more. But I think we should also remember that another important thing that we can do—because they are out there every day, still working every day, to keep things going—is we need to try our very, very best to follow all of the public health measures in places, even though we’re all frustrated with them, we’re all sick of them, we’re all tired of washing our hands—we’ve worn the skin off—and wearing our masks.

I think that it’s really important that we take the personal responsibility for making sure that we are not part of spreading the virus any further, because if the virus is spread in the community, there is more chance that these essential workers, who have to be out there on the front lines, especially the ones working in health care—but frankly, the ones working in grocery stores as well and the ones driving trucks and working in distribution centres to keep the supplies coming into the stores—all of those people will be more exposed to the virus if it’s more spread around, so we all have a personal responsibility to do everything we can to make sure that the virus does not get spread. I think that that is also a way of saying thank you, a way of saying that we care, because we’re going to change our behaviour in order to make sure that we are keeping them as safe as we possibly can because we appreciate all that they are doing.

That’s really most of what I wanted to say. I think gratitude and thanks are incredibly important—I don’t think we do it enough—and I am honoured to speak in favour of this private member’s bill brought forward by my friend the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville, because this is a bill that is a genuine attempt to say something very important, which is to express the thanks that we owe all of these front-line and essential service workers.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Wayne Gates: It’s my pleasure to rise and speak to this motion for Front-line and Essential Service Worker Week, put forward by the Conservative member from Mississauga East–Cooksville.

I don’t have a lot of time, so I’ll get right to the point. This bill creates a week to celebrate essential workers, but you know what this bill doesn’t do? It doesn’t reinstate pandemic pay. It doesn’t make pandemic pay retroactive. It doesn’t give workers sick pay. It doesn’t provide funding for PPE and N95 masks. It doesn’t give them presumptive WSIB coverage. But equally, as you’re doing this bill, guess what the Ontario nurses are doing? They’re having their virtual day of action and they’re asking this government for RNs for complex care. Quality care is quality jobs. They’re asking to protect long-term care and to not privatize it.

Mr. Speaker, I’m at a loss for words with Premier Ford and his government. We have a limited amount of time to

pass legislation in this House. People don’t need bills that do nothing. They don’t need bills that give legal protection to your donors who run private long-term-care homes. They need help, and you’re the ones holding the purse strings.

A newsflash to this government: These workers won’t start being heroes when you pass a bill saying they are. They’ve been heroes since day one. Yet when they’re sick, these heroes can’t get paid to be quarantined. When they get sick, they have to fight WSIB for coverage; think about that. Over 2,000 have been denied WSIB during this pandemic—disgraceful.

We know the fact that Canada’s richest billionaires are making out like bandits during this pandemic. Their profits are higher now than before, yet they ripped away pandemic pay from their employees the second they thought they’d get away with it. Forget nothing bills like this. Take the time to write a bill to make people like the Weston family, who own Loblaws, and the Walton family, who own Walmart—make a bill that gives these workers permanent increases.

If you don’t have the courage to do that, have the courage to stand with us and we’ll push these companies to give our neighbours a fair wage. Anything is better than patting yourselves on the back and letting your friends like Mike Harris off the hook for their criminal behaviour when it comes to our long-term-care homes.

Mr. Speaker, enough is enough. This provides nothing for the front-line workers and quite frankly—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Excuse me; I recognize the member from Oakville on an point of order.

Mr. Stephen Crawford: I’m not sure if I heard that correctly but perhaps the member can verify. Did he say “criminal behaviour”?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much. Thank you for that. I’ll—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Having spoken with the Clerks’ table, I will ask the member to withdraw that comment.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I withdraw.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you. Further debate?

Mr. Stephen Blais: As others have said, the COVID-19 pandemic we’ve all been living through the last nine or 10 months now has reinforced what we already knew: that essential workers are the backbone and at the heart of our society. The brave men and women of our police force, firefighters, paramedics, nurses, those front-line workers who we often take for granted, Mr. Speaker, have been there to support all of us these last number of months in both times of crisis and also supporting our everyday life: the check-out cashier at the grocery store who is allowing us to buy groceries; the crossing guard who is helping get our kids to school this fall.

One group in particular that I’d like to point out in Orléans are the brave men and women at Station 53. Station 53 is the fire station on Charlemagne Boulevard,

the old Cumberland township fire station that was absorbed into the city of Ottawa during amalgamation. This is a unique station in Ottawa because it is the only station that is made up of both full-time professional firefighters and volunteer firefighters. This is a hybrid station.

It's also very near and dear to my heart because it was firefighters from Station 53 that responded to my 911 call—I cry every time; I've got to stop doing that. The firefighters at Station 53: I owe them a debt of gratitude. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

1830

Mr. Stephen Crawford: It's a real pleasure to be able to speak to Bill 230 today, introduced by my colleague the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville, a great riding not too far from our community of Oakville. Since the onset of this pandemic, all members of the Legislature have worked together to keep Ontarians safe. I think that's the purpose of this bill as well.

Now, this bill is meant to be symbolic. I know that the member opposite from Sudbury mentioned that it's all sizzle and no steak and the member from Niagara Falls had some questions about the content. I'm not sure if they're aware, but there are limitations and rules to what is available to be in a private member's bill. This is meant to be symbolic. That is the whole purpose of it.

Having said that, our government worked very hard to introduce supports for essential workers, such as pandemic pay that established over \$1.5 billion to provide a temporary pay increase of \$4 per hour to 375,000 front-line workers. More recently, our government moved to support 147,000 hard-working personal support workers and direct support workers with a temporary wage increase, and the Ministry of Labour has hired 100 safety inspectors to ensure their workplaces are safe. No government in the history of Ontario has had so many inspectors working for it to ensure the public and the essential workers are safe. So we have done a lot for essential workers. This bill is meant to be symbolic.

Those actions that we have taken are just a few that we've taken to recognize the contributions and sacrifices of these essential workers. I am glad and proud to support the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville. This bill in particular will proclaim the third week in March as Front-line and Essential Service Worker Week. As a few members have already stated, that is one year since the beginning of the pandemic, so I think it is a timely motion as well.

The heroes of the pandemic are not concentrated in one sector, and I think we need to be aware of that. This is a very diverse group of people. Some of them are in the health care sector, some in the grocery stores, some are on construction sites, some are in the classrooms and some actually are right here in this Legislature as we speak. I want to give a shout-out to every member of Legislative Assembly staff who has been here.

Applause.

Mr. Stephen Crawford: I think we can all agree on that because the staff has been phenomenal. The Clerks, the staff, the people working down in the cafeteria, security: We have needed you. Government needs to function in the midst of a pandemic, so we are sincerely appreciative of what you have done.

During the pandemic, we have helped different industries through funding or safety guidelines to assist in adapting to the demands of COVID, which has supported their vital work, and ensuring that their work can be carried out safely. For instance, there were 121 workplace safety resources available online—I'm not sure if many people on the opposite side were aware of that—and tips for 28 distinct sectors, including construction, agriculture, manufacturing; our government has amended the Provincial Offences Act so that municipally run courts can make a greater use of technology to deliver justice services remotely; and we implemented measures for bars and restaurants for contract tracing and social distancing. There are front-line workers, of course, in all of these industries.

We know that the pandemic has brought numerous challenges to everybody's life. The contributions from our front-line workers have been invaluable. We owe all of these workers a great amount of gratitude, and having the third week in March dedicated to acknowledging and appreciating their contributions is vital to raise awareness and outreach.

Speaker, we hope there is never going to be another global pandemic that we are experiencing. Front-line workers have worked tirelessly to give back to their communities and put others ahead of themselves. Since the state of emergency was declared March 17, front-line and essential workers made a significant impact in Ontario's COVID response. I believe that every member of this Parliament can support this bill, and I give full credit to the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville for having the courage to stand up and say thank you to the front-line workers.

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

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It's my pleasure to rise to speak to the motion from the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville, the Front-line and Essential Service Worker Week Act. I couldn't help but laugh, though, when the member from Oakville said how it took courage for that Conservative member to bring forward a bill for a recognition week for front-line essential service workers. What is courage is ensuring that those front-line and essential workers have paid sick days, things that you took away from them; ensuring that they have the wages that they need in order to keep a roof over their head and feed their families, something that you took away from them by putting a cap on their wages.

It's not courage to bring a bill forward to say that during a particular day or particular week of the year, we're going to stand up and say thank you to people who are doing incredible things. It's courage when you bring forward legislation that actually supports them, not just platitudes like this bill is.

Every one of us in this House is incredibly thankful for these front-line workers, but there's only one side of this House that is actually fighting for those workers, and it's not that side of the House. It's not the government side of the House.

I mentioned how this government will not give workers sick days. They, in fact, brought in legislation that takes away their sick days and their vacation time. So explain to me how you are showing appreciation for these workers. You haven't increased the wages for PSWs or those that work in developmental services. You're not ensuring they have full-time hours where they get benefits. That's not happening.

This bill is not courage. Giving them those wage increases and those full-time hours and benefits is courage, Speaker; giving them the PPE that they need, not only to keep themselves safe but our communities safe. Again, presumptive WSIB coverage: As has been pointed out, they're being denied coverage when they become sick with COVID-19.

If you really want to support workers, don't just stand here with this fluff piece of legislation. Actually put those words to action and put through legislation that supports the workers in this province, rather than bending over backwards to pat yourselves on the back or to bring in legislation that protects people like former Premier Mike Harris when the long-term-care homes that he represents, that he takes money from, huge profits from, are letting these workers and these residents die—and this government brings in legislation to protect them. You need to do better.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. Order. Okay, I'll remind the members to make their comments directly through the Chair, not across the floor.

Further debate? The member for Mushkegowuk–James Bay, and I'll give you 40 seconds in addition to the time that's on the clock, just so you know.

M. Guy Bourgouin: Thank you.

C'est avec honneur que je me lève aujourd'hui pour parler du projet de loi sur la Semaine de reconnaissance du personnel des services de première ligne et des services essentiels.

I want to tell the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville that I will support this bill. Why? For one simple reason: As a lifelong and proud labour activist, I am always happy to support praise for our front-line and essential workers.

As the preamble to Rasheed's bill states, "Ontario's frontline and essential service workers played a vital role in maintaining the flow and delivery of goods and services across the province throughout the state of emergency and continue to be crucial for Ontario's economic recovery." I agree. But should the member for Mississauga East–Cooksville and the Conservative government appreciate the role of essential and front-line workers, they would then do so not just by symbolic gestures, but with concrete action.

Also, I want to remind the member for Mississauga East–Cooksville that should he and the Conservative

government be keen on supporting essential and front-line workers, they should provide pandemic pay to all front-line and essential workers retroactively to the beginning of the pandemic, as the official opposition has demanded. They should also reinstate the pandemic pay, which the Conservative government ended in August. They should also ensure that paid sick days are offered to all essential workers. They must ensure that PSWs and essential workers receive the equipment, the work conditions and the salary they truly deserve and that multiple corporations, hedge funds and billionaires are not the ones making a cut off their backs.

1840

Since we're at it, we want to remind the member of Mississauga East–Cooksville that it was this government that rammed through multiple pieces of anti-worker legislation, including Bill 47—which took away legislated paid sick days and scrapped the minimum wage of \$15—Bill 66, Bill 124, and I can keep going.

Speaker, I appreciate the gesture, but workers cannot live on gestures. If this government is going to give a pat on the back to front-line and essential workers, they need to put the money where their mouth is.

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

The member for Mississauga East–Cooksville has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Before I close, I would like to thank my team for their work on this bill. Thank you to my LA Kasia, my OLIP intern Monica and my constituency team members, Maaz, Amna and Nadeem for their work in all the stakeholder relationships they did; also, to the government House leader's team for continuing to support me on this one. I appreciate it. If we can just give the GHLO team a round of applause, please, for their great work.

Speaker, I also want to thank the members for Oakville and Eglinton–Lawrence for their supportive remarks in this regard today. I want to also thank the members from Sudbury, Ottawa South, Niagara Falls, Orléans, Windsor West and—I'm so sorry, my friend, your riding, I completely—

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Mushkegowuk–James Bay.

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Thank you so much for taking the time to consider this bill and share your thoughts here today.

I want to once again thank our front-line and essential service workers who continue to perform their duties with such excellence. Now, more than ever, they deserve our acknowledgement and gratitude. Speaker, from the bottom of my heart, thank you so much to every front-line worker and essential service worker out there. Thank you so much for going above and beyond to fulfill your duties and responsibilities. My utmost respect to you, and I cannot thank you enough.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The time provided for private members' public business has expired. Mr. Rasheed has moved second reading of Bill 230, An Act to proclaim Front-line and Essential Service Worker Week.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?
Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 101(i), the bill is now referred to the Committee of the Whole House, unless—

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: General government.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Is the majority in favour of this bill being referred to the Standing Committee on General Government? Agreed? Agreed. The bill is referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

LONG-TERM CARE

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa South has given notice of dissatisfaction with the response given by the Minister of Long-Term Care. The member for Ottawa South has five minutes to state his case, and the minister or parliamentary assistant will have five minutes to reply. I recognize the member for Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank you for being here this evening, everyone at the table and everyone who's here. I do in particular want to thank the minister for being here. It's not very often that a minister comes to a late show, save and except the government House leader, who I've seen here a few times, not just in this government, but in other governments. It would be something that should happen, I think, with a bit more frequency.

So we've got a bit more time. The issue that I raised with the minister was brought to me by a constituent who noticed, in her walk around the Perley and Rideau Veterans' home, vacant rooms—a large number of them. After I enquired to the Perley and looked on their website, I found there were 120 vacant rooms out of 450. I do understand that some of those rooms have to be used for isolation, both of COVID patients that would be inside and people coming in, but that's about one third of those beds.

So I wrote to the minister, or we wrote to the minister, in advance of the question, and that was a message to the minister, that this is concerning. It doesn't seem right to me. To the people I talked to, it just doesn't seem right; it doesn't feel right. I was surprised that the minister's answer wasn't, "It doesn't feel right. Let me look into that and let me get back to you." That's all I needed to hear.

There are people who are waiting and they're suffering. We have the same kind of situation of a blanket ban with essential caregivers, and we found a solution to that. Because the first thing was, for the first two months nobody could go in, but then we realized we were doing more harm on the other side and we weren't accounting for that. So the minister and the Chief Medical Officer of Health found a way. And now essential caregivers,

although there are still some challenges, even during an outbreak, can go into a home.

So I'm just asking you to look at it through that same lens, and here is why: The Perley is a particularly visible description of the problem. I've been told by numerous sources there may be 900 to 1,000 beds in Ottawa that are not occupied. Now, they're not all useable, but that's a lot of beds, and there are people who need to get out of hospital. We know we need to get them out of the hospital.

I just want to you look at that. I don't expect you to solve it tomorrow. We don't. The families don't. But what they do want us to say is, "I think we should find a way to do this." That's what I'm asking you, and I hope that you can do that. I think that you can do that. I think you have the power to advocate for that, and I'd ask you to do that.

Now, the minister's response to me was, "You only built 641 beds." Well, the minister knows that between 2003 and 2018, 30,000 beds—new beds and rebuilt beds—were built. I've talked to the FAO about this. The minister would also be aware that my work before coming into government on the redevelopment of St. Pat's home and the additional beds given to St. Pat's home, a project that took a long time—the minister would be aware of that.

The minister would be aware of that, or the work I've done with Hillel Lodge or the Glebe Centre or the Perley, who were going to get new beds, but they got turned back. Also, at the beginning of this government, all those projects were slowed down. We can debate that. They were stopped. That's what happens when you come to government. It doesn't have to happen, but it did happen. You became the minister in June 2019.

I'm sure the minister is going to have something to say to me about this, and that's good. I'm happy; I'm happy to hear that. It's not like we didn't do anything. It's not like we didn't invest in home care. It's not like we didn't build and redevelop beds. It's not like we didn't invest more money in health care than governments had previously, just like you claim right now.

I'm acutely aware of all the things—and we all should be—that we're not able to do for people. What I'm asking you right now is to do the thing that you are able to do for those families. You don't have to do it tomorrow; you just have to say, "I'm going to try to do that. I think there's a way." And there is a way; I believe there's a way.

Minister, I do understand your files and appreciate how hard your work is.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply to the member for Ottawa South, I recognize the Minister of Long-Term Care.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: If the member for Ottawa South had taken the time to read the only two English daily newspapers in his region, he would have seen the Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre's explanation of the issue in black and white. That explanation is clear. The admissions process has been complicated by the pandemic. The home, quite rightly, recognizes that it's critical to admit residents carefully. The home has experienced several outbreaks, and during outbreaks homes cannot take new admissions.

1850

Newly admitted residents must self-isolate for 14 days, often necessitating one-on-one staffing, in a home where 120 staff are on leave due to factors surrounding COVID-19. The member indicates he doesn't think that should be the case, to which I would say, he does not understand the complexity of this issue; he just doesn't get it.

Does he think the home should not take a cautious approach to admissions in the midst of a pandemic? Does he think we should ignore public health advice? Does he propose to set himself up as the sole judge of what's appropriate in safeguarding the health and well-being of long-term-care residents? Well, I'll tell you, we will not go back to the conditions of wave 1.

It is stunning that he wants to take this sort of risk with the lives of our most vulnerable Ontarians. There must be cohorting rooms. There must be isolation rooms. And we must deal with the staffing crisis and the capacity issue that you left behind in your wake.

The member for Ottawa South has frequently spoken of his anger on this issue, including this morning. I would suggest, through you, Speaker, that his anger is misdirected. The House will not need reminding that from 2011 to 2018, the Liberal government only created 611 net new beds while the population over the age of 75 grew by over 170,000 people. Put another way, they met an increase in demand of over 20% with an increase in supply of 0.6%, less than a 1% increase in supply. They failed to take action on developing new spaces and on upgrading old facilities, some of which dated back to the 1970s; they failed to take action on the staffing situation in long-term-care homes across this province, as it became critical right before the pandemic; and they lacked the vision to expand community paramedic programs that give people peace of mind and 24/7 care they need to stay in their homes longer.

It existed; you ignored it; you never bothered—a program which our government expanded last week. That neglect and the choices that the previous government failed to make to invest in long-term care, to invest in our most vulnerable population, to invest in capacity that was left to rot—that is your legacy.

The overall wait time in the Champlain LHIN is—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I didn't want to interrupt the minister, but I'm going to ask her to make her comments through the Chair.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: The overall wait time in the Champlain LHIN is 206 days, and at the Perley Rideau alone, there are more than a thousand people on the wait-list and a median wait time of 334 days. This did not happen overnight. What was the member of Ottawa South doing during that time?

After being elected, he cheered it on from the back benches for a year and then was appointed parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, where he praised that government's record even more strongly. He had the chance, he had the opportunity to make a positive contribution to long-term care, to use his seat at the table to make a difference, and to push the needs of long-term care, the staff and the residents forward. But

he didn't. He chose other priorities. His government chose other priorities. He chose to join the rest of the government in saying one thing and doing nothing. With a record like that—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. That concludes our adjournment debate. I'm going to call orders of the day next.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ONTARIO REBUILDING AND RECOVERY ACT, 2020

LOI DE 2020 SUR LA RECONSTRUCTION ET LA RELANCE EN ONTARIO

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 2, 2020, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

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

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm told that when we last debated Bill 222 at third reading, the member for Ottawa Centre had the floor. He still has time on the clock, so I will recognize the member for Ottawa Centre to continue his debate.

Mr. Joel Harden: When I left off, Speaker, I was telling the Ottawa story, which I think is very relevant to this debate around Bill 222. That story primarily, as I was talking about it, concerned our own light rail project, because this bill is meant to empower a certain kind of transit construction; that transit construction is one that is facilitated through public-private partnerships. I was telling the story of what it was like to be at the launch party and this premonition of fear I had sitting next to the member for Ottawa West-Nepean. Both of us, I think, could sense something was wrong.

Do you know what's interesting is that the train opened—the launch party was September 14, but on October 7, we were having parallel buses replacing the light rail transit because of how much interruption there was. There was a debate in our city about whether it was the transit riders' fault. There was considerable debate about whether it was people jamming the doors. I found that ironic, because it's amazing how, in that moment of crisis, some folks in our city weren't looking to the contract and how we built the transit system in the first place; very quickly, they were blaming the users.

What we learned since is that door jams were something—if you go to any major city around the world, and I'm sure the member for University-Rosedale knows this better than me, this is something that's supposed to be built into the system. You're supposed to be able to accommodate doors opening and closing at the last moment, particularly in high-peak-rush areas.

On October 8 and October 9, it was clear that there was something wrong with the computer system in Ottawa's

LRT. Then, on October 13, we reached a critical mass moment in our city about people using our new LRT—we reached three million riders—but on November 1, the mayor of our city was on record as being furious at the amount of delays and the amount of malfunctions that were going on in the system. The mayor, the Honourable Jim Watson, said in a tweet: “To say I am furious with the poor performance of our LRT system is an understatement. Both” Rideau Transit Group and Rideau Transit Maintenance “will be held to account for the problems that have frustrated our very patient transit users.” It was nice to see the narrative bend towards not blaming the users but to saying that there was a systemic problem here.

On November 4, we had an announced investment of \$3.5 million to make sure buses could take over capacity for what wasn't working. On November 13, we had a weld break on the line. On December 31, we had free service that we had announced, given that it was New Year's, blamed on dirt and a lack of cleanliness in the cars. On January 16, we had a wire fall onto one of the trains, leading to one of the longest delays that we had yet. Keep in mind, Speaker, this system was a few months old at this time.

On January 18, something remarkable happened in the city of Ottawa: We had an enormous snowfall. I'm sorry if I'm being too facetious at 7 o'clock at night.

Interjection.

Mr. Joel Harden: Ottawa—the member for Peterborough-Kawartha knows this—is a beautiful Nordic capital. We're used to incredible amounts of snowfall. But a record snowfall meant for some reason that our LRT system didn't work. I know, and there are members in this House—I know MPP Blais was there involved in making a lot of these decisions—who heard the Rideau Transit Group say to our city, “Don't worry. The trains you're getting are snow-ready. They're Nordic-ready. They're built for Ottawa's climate.” Well, evidently not. The director of transit operations, Troy Charter, said safety sensors at the station that were designed to confirm that no one had entered the tracks can be activated—get this—by blowing snow. So the snowfall was actually wreaking havoc in the system itself.

On January 24, we paged for a British expert to come in and help us. On February 27, we had our transit chair, Councillor Allan Huble, openly musing about walking away from this contract altogether. So what opened on September 14, 2019, by February 27 of this year, leadership in our city was saying, “Let's walk away from this deal.”

Speaker, I hope with what I've shared with my colleagues today, we can at least acknowledge there was something deeply wrong about the way this transit system was built that should give us pause when we're talking about repeating this procurement model. Again, I am offering this advice free of charge to my friends of government, because it's all a matter of public record, but I think it deserves being mentioned again.

On February 27—that was the worst day, as I understand it—we had a record low of six trains potentially operating. Perhaps—and this is ironic, I suppose, but the

pandemic, in a way, came to the rescue of our failed LRT system, because obviously, in a pandemic, people were told to stay home and self-isolate, and the people who are involved in the LRT got to actually step back and maybe look at the system and figure out what to do with it.

1900

Nonetheless, by March 9, a notice of default was sent to the builders. The city leaders were demanding that this contract be renegotiated, be looked at again. They were withholding monthly money, as the system allows. On May 2, the entire system was shut down. The executive of the transit group resigned in July. And on August 7—September 14, 2019, it opens, and on August 7, 2020, for the first time our LRT system was running with 15 trains—for the first time.

I hope that gives us pause to think about how we build things right. I understand my colleagues on the opposite side of the aisle are very passionate about private-sector-led projects. They believe in the intrinsic genius of private-sector-led innovation. I think you will find a lot of consensus in this building about people who celebrate entrepreneurship, but we want accountability, we want disclosure, we want to know what we're going to be doing with the public's money; and when things go wrong, we want to make sure we're not on the hook for something that is going to hobble the public purse.

I want to switch in my remaining time to talk about another impacted community that has a story for us as we talk about Bill 222, and that's the community of Manor Village. It's in the area of Nepean, Speaker. My friend the honourable minister for tourism, culture industries and sport—did I get the title right? It's her community. This community is a working-class community, a low-income community, but what we've just learned from our city, with the expansion of our LRT project, is that we are poised to lose 120 units of affordable market rental housing there.

Now, these residents were up in arms. They asked their city councillor, they asked MPP MacLeod; they asked anybody they could find, really. I was probably their sixth or seventh call for help. In our city, we have what's bedeviling, I think, a lot of the world: We have a housing and homelessness emergency. Our city council declared it in January 2019, led by the incredible leadership of Councillor Catherine McKenney from Somerset Ward. We acknowledged that in our city of Ottawa, there are over 100 people sleeping outside even right now. As I speak these words, people are finding their place in the bushes or whatever because our shelters are full. That's happening. We have over 500 families in emergency shelters in our city, Speaker, and we just have the lowest vacancy rate you can imagine. We have a serious problem with housing in Ottawa, and I know that's not unique to Ottawa.

The people of Manor Village are being told in the context of a housing and homelessness emergency that they're going to be displaced by the extension of the LRT into their community. So they picked up the phone—and I know their councillor, Keith Egli, talked to them actively to try to think about ways to strategize with them. But I

think, at the end of the day, Councillor Egli was not of the view that you could stop this. But those residents didn't stop. Those residents were worried about being counted amongst those families in our city who are homeless, Speaker.

I want to speak about Alison Trowbridge, who called me. Alison is a working-class mom. She is disabled. She lives on an income with the Ontario Disability Support Program with her son. She called me, called our office, absolutely exasperated, saying, "Joel, I don't know. No one's listening to us. But I'm organizing with a fantastic group called ACORN Ottawa. It's a bunch of other low-income tenants, working-class tenants, just like me. We want to make representations to the city of Ottawa to say, 'Please don't demolish. Please find another route for the LRT.'"

If the goal of building mass transit—as I heard the associate minister say earlier—is to think about ways in which we put affordable housing along the line, surely we wouldn't want the building of this transit to demolish existing affordable housing stock. That would stand to reason, right, Speaker?

So Alison contacts ACORN Ottawa, contacts us and immediately applies to depute to the city transit committee. She's told very quickly that, while her concerns are heard, they're not plausible: "This is where the route's going. There's nothing we can do. Everything else is too disruptive." It was pretty matter-of-fact, and it was pretty blunt. So Alison was pretty disappointed. But when I talked to her, I said, "Don't give up. There are other avenues of appeal. Our grandmothers and grandfathers didn't build this country after they were foiled the first time or the second time. They kept at it, and you're going to keep at it. Let's keep working."

Do you know what happened, Speaker? They went to a different committee—the member for Orléans will remember the acronym. It's called FEDCO. It's a major finance committee of the city. They were considering a late request from the consortium—another private consortium—that runs Lansdowne Park in our city. They were asking for access to a pool of capital in their contract—\$4.7 million—because of the impact of COVID-19. So FEDCO was meeting and they were considering this proposal. Alison called me and said, "Joel, wait a second. The city is talking about demolishing our housing, yet this highly lucrative group of developers that built the Lansdowne project asked for a meeting with FEDCO, and they got their meeting in four days, and they're probably going to get access to that money?" I said, "Yes, Alison. You should sign up. You should testify, too." So she did.

What's unfortunate is that when Alison waited her turn—I think she was number 32 in line—and it was her turn to speak, very quickly she was interrupted and told, "Talk about Lansdowne Park. Don't talk about Manor Village. Don't talk about the LRT. This isn't the place for that. We're here to talk about saving Lansdowne Park." But Alison persisted, because she's resilient. She and her neighbours asked why the city of Ottawa is so quickly coming to the aid of some of the most successful

developers in our city but they're not there for the people of Manor Village being displaced by a transit project. It was a potent question, and I didn't hear much by way of a response. Unfortunately, very recently, at Ottawa city hall the people of Manor Village were told that this is a done deal, but that working-class community in Nepean is not going to give up.

This is a cautionary tale for my friends in government about where Bill 222 goes. If this is going to go through communities and rip up existing stock of affordable rental housing, I would hope that there would be consensus in this room that that's not what we want to do. I would love to see late-breaking amendments to this legislation that specify very clearly that it would work in a consultative way with impacted communities though a community benefits agreement, as my colleague from University-Rosedale was saying, to make sure we don't lose affordable housing.

At the end of the day, as one of the people who got me into this work, Jack Layton, used to say, people don't drop off the country or the province's balance sheet when they're homeless; they become 12 times more expensive. And worse, people lose their dignity. They lose their housing. Their families fall apart. They develop coping strategies for their trauma, and it could involve addictions and all kinds of other behaviours. I would hope that's not what we want to do in this place.

We want to build the kind of transit that makes our communities thrive. We want to build the kind of transit that is affordable, predictable, accountable and transparent to the public. We want to build the kind of transit that makes sure people like Alison don't lose their housing.

Last but not least, I've talked about this gentleman before, and in my last minute and a half I'll mention him again. I invite all my colleagues to look up the story in the Ottawa Citizen. Frank Schwenzer is an Afghanistan veteran who actually built the Kandahar main facility. When you land in Kandahar and you're there for military service and you go through your formal debriefing, you go to the place Frank built. He shoots concrete. He built a company that started with two employees, and at its height it had 26 employees. He is one of the casualties of the LRT system in Ottawa, because he's one of four subcontractors currently suing Rideau Transit Group for compensation for not being paid.

Frank talked to me about walking onto a job site filled with garbage, about spraying concrete in a situation where there would be water up to his knees, about being compelled—not necessarily through words or through a direct order, but just being encouraged—to put workers into unsafe situations. I'm going to guarantee, given what I heard earlier in the essential workers debate, that no one in this room wants to do that to workers and their families. All of us are going to go home safe tonight. Nobody involved in building a transit project needs to suffer any injury or, God help us, loss of life.

What we in the official opposition want to see in amendments to this bill is what we have said at committee: We need to absolutely know that communities are going

to be consulted, that these projects are going to be built safely, that they're going to be built transparently, that they're going to be built affordably, and that they're going to be there for us.

Consider the LRT as a cautionary tale about what we shouldn't do. Consider the community of Manor Village as a community we want to protect and support in any future projects.

1910

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll now invite members to ask questions to the member for Ottawa Centre.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: I listened intently to the member from Ottawa Centre go on and on for quite a long time about the issues of the Ottawa LRT, when the former chair of the Ottawa LRT and current member for Orléans is sitting right there and has been playing on his phone the entire time. So my question to the member is, why is he criticizing this government when the reason that there is a problem with the Ottawa LRT is sitting right there in front of you? And by the way, I just wanted to make another comment: Free advice is not worth the price.

Mr. Joel Harden: MPP Blais and I have debated about this, but the difference between the debates MPP Blais and I have is that they're collegial and respectful, unlike what I hear from the member from Carleton, who has a bit of a proclivity to throw bile around this place. The member from Orléans and I are neighbours. We behave with each other like neighbours. I don't exhort on social media and personally go after members of provincial Parliament. I think the member should be thinking about her own conduct before she starts criticizing mine.

The point of the matter is—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. Member for Carleton will come to order. Member for Kitchener–Conestoga will come to order.

Your can conclude your response, member for Ottawa Centre.

Mr. Joel Harden: Well, Speaker, all I will say is, I'm not perfect and I've made mistakes, but in the instance that the member from Kitchener–Conestoga mentioned, I apologized to the Premier personally, and I meant that apology.

But the fact of the matter is, in the debates we have over transit, they impact peoples' lives. They could be passionate debates, and I think we should be fine with that, but let's keep it respectful.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Questions?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I listened intently as well to the member from Ottawa Centre. He always brings such great passion to this House and anything he speaks about. What touched me tonight most was when he talked about the homeless situation in his community and the fear that some of us would have if the Ottawa example is in any way replicated here in Toronto. Knowing the homeless problem or population we have already, if any of the extensions and new projects in transit or transportation are going to impact on affordable housing, they should do something about it now.

I'm going to ask the member if he has any suggestion on what this government can do to make sure that no one that needs affordable housing will lose it during this project.

Mr. Joel Harden: Well, I think that's where we get to the example of community benefit agreements. They have been proven to work in, even projects we're not thrilled with, like the Eglinton Crosstown that the member from University–Rosedale talked about.

A community benefits agreement is like a collective agreement: You sign a contract with the community and you promise to deliver things. One of the things we could promise is to not lose any affordable housing in a community impacted by transit, which would be a great addition to this bill.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Questions?

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: I listened with interest to the member's comments about collegiality. So my question to the member from Ottawa Centre is, what exactly is he referring to when he's speaking about the Minister of Long-Term Care's behaviour, especially when compared to what he did with the sign that he took a picture with? If we want to talk about collegiality, maybe we shouldn't be throwing stones here.

Mr. Joel Harden: As I was mentioning before to the member from Kitchener–Conestoga, I'm a man of passion. I'm guilty of that. In a moment of weakness, I took a picture with a sign that I shouldn't have. I walked up to the Premier personally and I apologized. He accepted the apology, and I've moved on. If the member hasn't moved on, that's fine. I actually respect the fact that I'm a fallible human—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Mr. Joel Harden: What I find troubling, though, is when we engage in vitriol on the Internet in all kinds of nasty forms. I'm just going to caution the honourable member. There have been a number of attacks on members of this caucus that you have authored, so let's just—you talked about stones in glass houses?

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Member for Carleton, come to order.

Mr. Joel Harden: Let's just be careful in the example we set for children and in the example we set for our colleagues.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I listened to the remarks by my colleague the member for Ottawa Centre and I think he does have some very instructive lessons based on his experience in Ottawa. He talked about the P3 model, and we know that the Auditor General has identified numerous problems with P3s. We have also seen some of those problems, with lawsuits launched against contractors, when the whole point of a P3 is to pass some of the risk on to a contractor. I wonder if he would like to elaborate on the pitfalls of P3s in the context of his community.

Mr. Joel Harden: I think most of us in Ottawa would agree that this deal didn't end up being what we thought it

was going to be. This deal was supposed to deliver us a Nordic-proof transit system that was going to be delivered at an affordable cost of \$5 million a month. That's not what we got. We can get great pitches in this life. I'm sure all of us every day in our jobs are pitched on all kinds of wonderful things, but if we don't have the transparency and the accountability required to make an informed judgment, that's where we get into trouble. I have seen case after case, Speaker, of public-private partnerships costing Ontario a lot of money, and I believe that's what the Auditor General herself has counselled us to think about too.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Questions.

Mr. John Fraser: Speaker, I'll try to get to a question on this. I'm watching this debate and I know the member from Ottawa Centre—there's a bunch of stuff we don't agree on, but I do know that he's passionate. In actual fact, I can't remember the exact situation, but it happened in here and he had to withdraw. It came right after something I had done. He sent me a text that said, "I'm really sorry. I didn't mean to, that moment," and that meant a lot to me.

I just want to defend the member. I don't agree with some of the things he said, so I'd like him to respond to that. But let's treat each other with a certain level of respect. I mean, even inside parties—and the member from Carleton would know—sometimes you get attacked online. So we just have to be careful. We're getting close to Christmas. Can we treat each other with respect? That's my question to the member.

Mr. Joel Harden: I would only say that I wholeheartedly agree with what the member just said.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Carleton.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Mr. Speaker, I want to go back to my initial question, because I didn't really get an answer on it. The member for Ottawa Centre said that he had very collegial conversations with the member from Orléans regarding the member from Orléans's blunder with the Ottawa LRT prior to getting elected. So my question to the member is, how can he have collegial conversations with the person who is responsible for the blunder of the Ottawa LRT?

His constituents are suffering because of this fact. His constituents, the ones who rely on the Ottawa LRT, are the ones who have to live day in and day out with the mistakes of the member from Orléans. So how can you be so passionate when you're attacking the government, and yet when it comes to representing your constituents against the member from Orléans's mistake, you can have a collegial conversation?

Mr. Joel Harden: I guess I would only invite the member to consider, Speaker, that—and I was trying, in what I was saying this afternoon, to not come across in a finger-wagging and nasty manner to the government. I'm offering advice; if you don't want to accept it, that's fine.

The member from Orléans and I are neighbours. We will disagree on policy matters, but it doesn't mean that it has to get nasty. I think, to be honest—seriously, Speaker—of the federal member in my riding, again of a different political party than mine, MP Catherine

McKenna and the amount of vitriol and abuse that she has received online, and sometimes in person when she's with her kids. This is a page we have to turn in our politics. I've seen politics in the United States and other parts of the world go to places that it doesn't have to go here. We can be better than that.

I have fallen, I have tried for forgiveness and I will endeavour myself to be better than that. And when I do fall, I know people here will hold me again.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Windsor–Tecumseh, quickly.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Without pointing fingers, I wonder if the member from Ottawa Centre could talk about the blunder the previous Conservative government made when selling Highway 427—or 407, whatever the heck it's called.

Mr. Joel Harden: There goes the member from Windsor–Tecumseh asking me to comment on something I wasn't briefed on to talk about tonight. He's testing me, in a good way that a colleague does.

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I would only just say, Speaker, that it is very tempting—and I can understand from the perspective of government how you'd want to enter into a financial project that doesn't seem like it costs a lot on a going concern monthly basis, but it ends up being massively more expensive later, and I—

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

Mr. Stephen Blais: It has been a few hours since the ministers made their statements, so I want to remind everyone that they focused most of their attention not on actually the bill that we're talking about and debating tonight but on their grandiose plans for infrastructure and transit in Ontario. Much of my response is going to focus on that.

I'm very glad that the ministers have finally realized that there are economic issues in Ontario as a result of COVID-19. The Ford government's support for small business owners has, of course, been anemic at best, so it's nice to hear that his cabinet is finally starting to awaken to the problem.

While the Ford government dithered in the spring and took a mission accomplished victory lap over the summer, small business owners across the province were suffering, and unfortunately, too many of them had to close their doors for good. Even now, as the government touts its support for small businesses, it's giving enormous advantages to some of Canada's largest companies. Big box stores are allowed to stay open while small, independent operators are forced to close or sell their goods on the sidewalk. In fact, today one of the big box stores that the Ford government is favouring was caught offering loyalty reward points to customers to go have face-to-face meetings with family and friends. In the middle of a pandemic offering loyalty rewards to offer face-to-face meetings with family and friends is one of the big box store companies that the Ford government is offering this great opportunity to. It's very clear where the government's priorities lie, and it's obviously not with main street.

We all saw today that the Premier himself said that everyone should be held accountable. All elected officials, all employees of the government should be held accountable, especially him. I find it interesting that he says this and earlier his ministers touted the government's success in public transit investments, but like many of their assertions and many assertions of the government, they're not backed up by the independent officers of the Legislature that are hired to hold the Premier and his cabinet accountable.

The Financial Accountability Office has revealed that despite the big declarations of success and promises for more in the future, the Ford government's enormous 10-year infrastructure plan will actually leave the province with an infrastructure gap of \$22.7 billion. That's \$22.7 billion in the wrong direction, Mr. Speaker. The minister spoke about her bold steps, her bold plan to take Ontario's infrastructure \$22.7 billion backwards—the government's bold, record-setting infrastructure plan over the next 10 years with its \$22.7-billion hole right in the middle of it, right in the middle of the backbone of Ontario's infrastructure. What's even more frustrating is that the government's top priority in their infrastructure plan—the transit sector—the crown jewel of what they purport to have accomplished, represents the largest portion of the gap. The bold transit plan that's going to transform Ontario that is the centrepiece of their infrastructure plan will have a \$7-billion infrastructure gap over the next 10 years.

Of all of the things that the government is promising to do poorly, of all the infrastructure the Ford government plans to shortchange, transit is at the very top of the list. And so, we have to consider if transit is actually one of the government's priorities, or is it just polish to shine the leather on their old, weathered ideology?

If the government truly had transit as a priority, municipalities in Ontario would already have certainty about their revenue gap in 2021. They don't. Instead, cities like Toronto and Ottawa have been asked to explore privatizing portions of their bus services in order to receive COVID-19 emergency funding. So, in the middle of a pandemic, when transit agencies are already short of cash, the government wants them to use critical staff time or hire consultants to study privatizing part of their transit system. That isn't making transit a priority.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that the efforts of these transit agencies—their time would be better spent trying to get buses to their stops on time, not studying how parts of their service can be handed over to private operators. But nothing makes the Conservative base pitter-patter more than the thought of privatizing public transit. Get the talk radio lines going with the thought of privatizing public transit.

Earlier, during the first set of questions, I asked the associate minister what criteria the government would use to choose these new transit projects that will be so deserving of acceleration. Which projects are out there that are now going to become provincial priorities and get put on the fast track? The minister didn't answer. The minister dodged the question. I hope, Mr. Speaker, that the government is not going to make privatizing part of their transit

service a requirement for the special designation like they have with the COVID-19 relief funding.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to use all my time, but I'd like to summarize just very quickly: a 10-year infrastructure plan that leaves transit infrastructure \$7 billion in the hole; transit funding that requires the exploration of privatization of service; transit fares that are going up and becoming unaffordable for the front-line workers the government wants to declare a special week and month for, the hardest hit by COVID-19; and a 10-year infrastructure plan that blows a \$23-billion sinkhole right into the middle of Ontario's critical infrastructure. These are the Ford government's infrastructure and transit priorities.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Questions to the member for Orléans?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I guess if I were to channel the questions from the member for Carleton, I would say to the member from Orléans, in your presentation, you did not acknowledge the fact that you were the chair of the Ottawa transit commission, or whatever it's called, during the time of the contract with this controversial light rapid transit system. I'm just wondering if you could tell the House what difficulties you had as a member of the commission during all of this controversy, then and now.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Despite what some would like people to believe, I was not the chair of the transit commission when either of the two LRT contracts in Ottawa were signed, just to correct the record. I was the chair of the transit commission when we brought in the low-income affordable monthly bus pass, Mr. Speaker. I was the chair of the transit commission when we brought in the low-income affordable single fare pass. And I was the chair of the transit commission when we enhanced bus capacity and options for our growing suburban neighbourhoods in Ottawa.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Carleton.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: My question to the member from Orléans: I was listening very intently to what he was saying. My question to him is, how does he even think he can give this government any advice on transit when he is responsible for one of the biggest worldwide transit blunders in existence? The Ottawa LRT has been trending and was trending internationally. Even international news media was commenting on the blunders that were made by that member who used to be chair of the Ottawa transit commission. What makes him think he can give this government advice on transit?

Mr. Stephen Blais: Certainly, the member from Carleton has been complaining about light rail in Ottawa for some time. In fact, her first complaint about light rail was on March 22, 2019. That's the day that Premier Ford came to Ottawa to re-announce the Liberal investment in phase 2 of light rail. The member from Carleton's complaint was that she wasn't positioned close enough to the photo op. So, I'm not going to hear complaints from member from Carleton about—

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Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. The next question.

Mr. Joel Harden: I'm wondering if the member for Orléans could tell us a little bit about the privatization feature that's part of this government's work on transit, of which I was somewhat unaware.

I know you're aware that in Ottawa we're having this debate about user fees having more of a role in the riders' experience, and it's something a lot of advocates are concerned about. Do you feel that this bill contributes to a direction in which we're going to see ridership fares increase, and what are the consequences of that?

Mr. Stephen Blais: As I said, I was very proud to bring in low-income discounts of 50% for both monthly-pass users and single-fare users, and reduce the cost for suburban commuters by over 30% while I was chair of the transit commission.

My fear in the government's goal to privatize public transit is that the most marginal citizens are going to be the ones to face the biggest consequences. The routes that make the least amount of money for groups like OC Transpo and TTC are the routes that service our low-income communities. If those routes are privatized, forget about it; they'll be out of options.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Carleton.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Since we're talking about memory here, I just want to refresh the member from Orléans's memory about an article that was written on September 10, 2018. This is by the CBC, by the way, Mr. Speaker. The article reads: "For the second time this year, the consortium building Ottawa's \$2.1-billion LRT system will miss its deadline to hand over the Confederation Line, putting lie to the city's ubiquitous marketing slogan."

I quote from the member from Orléans: "'I think this is very disappointing news,' said Coun. Stephen Blais, the transit commission chair who's rarely at a loss for words. 'I think a lot of people I know ... anyway, I'm pretty angry right now, actually.'"

So, my question again to the member from Orléans is if he was at a loss for words in 2018 because of his own blunder, once again, why does he think that he has any sort of standing to give this government advice on transit?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member to respond—but I think I'm going to say something about this. This debate is degenerating into back and forth personal attacks. That's not what we changed the standing orders to allow for. We wanted to have continued, fulsome debate allowing members to ask and have a reasonable interchange of ideas, and not personal attacks back and forth over and over again. We're debating Bill 222. I would ask the members to keep that in mind for the remainder of the evening sitting.

The member for Orléans to reply.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I believe I was referencing the fact that the proponents of Ottawa's phase 1 light rail were behind schedule on delivery. Of course, the entire project was behind

schedule because Conservatives like Larry O'Brien, John Baird and the member for Nepean–Carleton delayed the project, ripped up a contract—it cost the city \$100 million and delayed light rail in Ottawa by a decade. That's why light rail in Ottawa is behind schedule.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I would like to ask the member from Orléans about one of the legacies of the previous Liberal government, which was political interference in transit decisions and the delays that that caused for major transit projects in Toronto. I would like to know the member's view on whether Bill 222 will do anything to prevent that kind of political interference in transit decisions.

Mr. Stephen Blais: Earlier, I asked the minister specifically which criteria the government would use when choosing a new provincially significant transit project under the changes in Bill 222, and the minister refused to answer. That leads me to great concern that the choice of provincially significant projects to accelerate as a result of the bill will be handed out like political party favours just before an election.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Carleton.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Mr. Speaker, since the member from Orléans wishes to talk about delays and timelines, my question to the member is—our government wants to not only build transit, but we're looking to build it quickly and efficiently, and make sure that we're respecting taxpayer dollars. Given that the member from Orléans has provided a lot of criticism about delays, my question to the member is, what taxpayer-friendly plan does the member from Orléans have that would accomplish either of those goals?

Mr. Stephen Blais: Before I was elected to Ottawa city council, there was no plan to bring light rail to Orléans. As a result of my advocacy and work, there is now a plan to bring light rail to Orléans. In fact, that plan is under construction. And after previous Conservatives cancelled light rail to Riverside South, I was the champion to bring light rail to Riverside South in the heart of Nepean–Carleton.

The member opposite should ask herself this question: Do the residents of her own constituency want the LRT, that is apparently so bad, that I helped bring, or do they not want it? Under Conservative leadership, LRT to their community has already been cancelled once, and it sounds like the government is threatening to cancel it again.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Carleton will come to order. The member for Orléans will come to order. Neither one of you have the floor at the moment.

I'd like to recognize the member for London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: The member from Orléans will know that Bill 222 is really an expansion of Bill 171. That bill gave the government rather extraordinary powers, which, at the time, the government said would only be

exercised as a backstop if good-faith negotiations had broken down with stakeholders such as utility companies, developers, property owners and local communities.

Does the member have confidence that those extraordinary powers will only be used as a backstop?

Mr. Stephen Blais: As I mentioned, I asked the minister specifically for the criteria that the government would use in choosing new transit projects to accelerate through this provincially significant process. The minister could not answer that question or chose not to answer that question. I have great concerns that, instead of using objective criteria on projects that are going to deliver more ridership and faster commute times, projects are going to be chosen based on their political expediency as party favours ahead of the next election to help elect members on the government side.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I don't think we have enough time for another exchange.

Further debate?

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: I'm pleased to rise and say a few words about the Ontario Rebuilding and Recovery Act, An Act to amend various Acts in respect of transportation-related matters.

The COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented global health crisis, social crisis and economic crisis. From its start, our government has responded swiftly to protect the people of Ontario's health and well-being. This will always be our top priority. We recognize the toll that this pandemic is taking on people's daily lives. As we adjust to this new normal, we must continue to make smart, targeted investments to get the most from our infrastructure and provide services for future generations.

The Ontario Rebuilding and Recovery Act, if passed, will support the construction of better-connected highways and public transit networks, transit-oriented communities, affordable housing and more, right across Ontario. This bill is a package of legislative and policy measures that would, if passed, accelerate the planning, design and construction of critical infrastructure projects to create jobs and lay the foundation for a robust economic recovery.

Sharpening Ontario's competitive edge will spur growth in the skilled trades and professional workforces, getting shovels in the ground and getting people back to work faster.

Our government continues to move forward boldly to achieve our ambitious goals as we build healthier, safer and more prosperous communities.

By working together, I have no doubt that we can build infrastructure that meets future demands and ensures Ontario's prosperous future. If this crisis has taught us anything, it's that we need to be ready for whatever the future may hold, and I am proud to be part of a government that has created the most ambitious infrastructure plans in this province's history.

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As part of this vision, we are committed to removing barriers in the planning, design and construction of major public infrastructure projects. This is how we will

strengthen communities and create jobs while increasing much-needed critical services. Today, I want to go into more detail on the three legislative proposals that are contained within the Ontario Rebuilding and Recovery Act.

First, we are proposing amendments to the Building Transit Faster Act. This act, which came into force last July, introduced new measures that streamline project delivery and support the accelerated completion of our four priority transit projects for the GTA. The Ontario Rebuilding and Recovery Act builds on the measures we introduced and that came into force earlier this year in the Building Transit Faster Act and the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act.

As a reminder, the Building Transit Faster Act and the supporting regulatory changes will help speed up the delivery of four priority subway projects by:

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

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

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

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

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

It is important to remember that these measures are not designed to change these processes' outcomes, but only the timelines. It doesn't change any outcome, any results. It just changes the timelines. I want to reaffirm our commitment to working with municipalities, Indigenous communities, organizations, the private sector and others towards our shared goal, which is to make an Ontario connected with transportation networks.

Thanks to the Associate Minister of Transportation's efforts, the Transit-Oriented Communities Act, which was part of the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act package, allows us to pursue transit-oriented communities, to have other communities and subways built together to better serve the people. This approach, Mr. Speaker, will increase transit ridership; reduce congestion and emissions; and provide a mix of housing, including affordable housing, retail, recreation and community amenities like daycare spaces around transit stations. Both pieces of legislation will help accelerate the delivery of significant infrastructure projects and will put more people back into the workforce.

But these measures only applied to our four priority GTA transit projects. Now more than ever, the rest of Ontario needs infrastructure built faster, and that's what this proposed legislation will achieve. The amendments contained within this bill would enable the extension of authorities, as appropriate, to other provincial transit projects, by providing regulation-making authority to name

such projects. This would help reduce the risk of these projects running over schedule and over budget.

Second, we are proposing amendments to the Public Service Works on Highways Act for provisions related to the relocation of utilities to support the accelerated and streamlined delivery of provincial highway projects. If a utility company fails to comply with a request to relocate their equipment or lines, these changes add a provision for a court order, like the measures that exist within the Building Transit Faster Act.

Third, we propose extending measures included in the Transit-Oriented Communities Act to other provincial transit projects, including GO rail expansion and light rail transit projects, such as the Hurontario LRT project. These measures would enable our minister to enter into new commercial agreements and to delegate this authority to Metrolinx and other public agencies, facilitating efficient communication with potential partners to speed up development of transit-oriented communities.

It is important to remember that all of the proposed measures, like the proposed amendments to the Building Transit Faster Act, are designed to be backstop measures to prevent delays to the delivery of significant projects. They will help us get these projects built as quickly as possible, while still collaborating and respecting the rights of the land- and homeowners.

Our government is very proud of our collaboration-first approach to develop the province's infrastructure. Since our election, we have demonstrated how necessary this approach remains as we work to improve people's lives across Ontario, and our collaborative approach is getting results.

The successful negotiations with our municipal partners have led to preliminary agreements with the city of Toronto and York region, which will enable us to quickly and efficiently build transit infrastructure. These two key agreements will ensure that the province, the city of Toronto and York region continue to successfully collaborate to deliver the Premier's historic plan for the GTA's subway expansion. Together, we will build some of the most ambitious, historic and nationally significant projects in the country.

That's why we continue to invite the federal government to join us at the table and commit to funding at least 40% of the four priority transit projects that are now well under way. In the past, we have accomplished so much working with our federal partners, and I know we can do it again, by working together to build new transit infrastructure, including new subways, that get people moving across the province.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about some of this proposal's non-legislative aspects. This pandemic has shown us that access to the Internet is not a "nice to have" any more; it is a necessity. That's why our government is working to provide better broadband access for many rural, remote, and northern communities across Ontario.

Last year, we committed \$315 million over five years to expand and improve Internet and cell service in more unserved and underserved communities. We know how

critical these services are for millions of people and businesses. Businesses need support to get online to sell their products and services. Students also need to get online to access the resources they require to get a solid education. Health care providers can offer more convenient care to their patients through a virtual approach.

The list of the benefits of improved broadband access goes on and on. That's why, as part of our Broadband and Cellular Action Plan, led by the Minister of Infrastructure, our government is supporting efforts to identify and remove policy and regulatory barriers to broadband infrastructure deployment.

We are funding the expansion of broadband in communities across the province and will be identifying policy levers that support more private sector investment to accelerate broadband expansion. This is how we will get more people, businesses and communities the Internet connection and cellular service they need to thrive during this pandemic and beyond.

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We are also working hard to build a robust community housing system that supports our most vulnerable citizens. That's why the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is taking steps to accelerate municipal infrastructure projects to support our efforts. The minister will consult with municipal partners on the best way forward, which could potentially include granting and delegating additional powers to municipalities to accelerate the delivery of local infrastructure projects. We see these partnerships as a significant part of the equation, improving the way we do business and getting better results for Ontario's people. We need to cut red tape and get these projects to market faster. This will help to lower housing costs and help people get more for their hard-earned dollars.

After 15 years of mismanagement and underinvestment, our long-term-care facilities were challenged by massive wait-lists of seniors looking for the quality care they deserve. The previous government's approach wasn't working. That's why we have put forward bold new solutions to set up the creation of long-term-care beds across the province.

The Minister of Long-Term Care will explore ways to increase the affordability and availability of land and quicken municipal approvals for long-term-care infrastructure development. To achieve this goal, we propose leveraging existing legislative tools such as enhanced minister's zoning orders to help address zoning, land availability and site plan approvals for priority long-term-care-home development.

It's time to break down any barriers that come in the way of our ability to build the urgently needed long-term-care projects. Our seniors need new, redeveloped long-term-care infrastructure that provides the kind of modern, quality care that ensures they can enjoy the highest quality of living. This is the generation that raised us, taught us, and did their very best for our province. In return, we will do our very best to ensure that Ontario continues to be the best place for everyone at every age to live.

As you can see, these measures are focused on the types of infrastructure projects that will improve people's

quality of life in our province. We are committed to removing the road blocks that delay them. That's something our government was focused on before the COVID pandemic, but now addressing these types of delays has become more urgent. To help us on our way to recovery, we need to get shovels in the ground so that we can realize the economic benefits of these projects sooner.

This pandemic requires an immediate response that stimulates our economy. During public hearings we heard from LIUNA, who said, "The steps outlined in Bill 222 help us to start projects sooner, finish them faster, and deliver enhanced capacity to the GTHA's overburdened transportation system. Efficient and accessible public transit makes life convenient for its riders." Mr. Speaker, I couldn't agree more. I'm so pleased to see that others agree with what the Minister of Transportation is saying, which is that it's time to get Ontario building.

Right now, Ontario needs swift action that improves everyone's quality of life. All over Ontario people are frustrated at how long it has taken for government to deliver much-needed improvements. As the member for Scarborough–Rouge Park, for example, I can say with confidence that the people of Scarborough—my constituents—have been waiting far too long for their subway extension. That project, like many others in our 10-year, \$144-billion infrastructure plan, will change people's lives. We owe it to them to get it built as quickly as possible.

I want to thank Premier Ford, I want to thank the Minister of Transportation and the Associate Minister of Transportation for all their efforts in moving this project forward. Under their leadership, Scarborough is no longer the forgotten city.

Mr. Speaker, the COVID-19 pandemic has made these investments in infrastructure more urgent than ever. Our plan includes more than \$66 billion for public transit to bring more improved service to communities, address congestion and provide more sustainable, convenient and affordable travel options. It also includes more than \$20 billion to expand and improve highway networks to connect communities better, helping people and goods travel more efficiently and safely across our province.

We are investing billions for more new hospitals, health projects, schools, post-secondary institutions, social and justice infrastructure, and much, much more. These projects will create jobs, get people working, improve our lives and deliver the economic stimulus that Ontario desperately needs.

Our subway plan alone is expected to support 20,000 jobs during the construction period, not to mention the economic benefits for the GTA, the province, the country, once completed. Speeding up the delivery of these and other major projects across Ontario will get people back to work faster and boost our economy. The Ontario Rebuilding and Recovery Act, if passed, will allow us to expand the benefits of accelerated infrastructure development to every corner of the province.

Every day, I take pride in being part of a government working with our communities to prepare for the future by

making smart infrastructure investments that put people first. We are building better connected and healthier communities that are well prepared to meet future challenges. Together, we'll get Ontario building and put Ontario back on track and ensure that every community bounces back stronger than before.

I'm grateful to have the chance to serve my community and province as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation, and I want to thank the Minister of Transportation and the Premier for giving me the chance to support Ontario's recovery from this pandemic. I know that by working together, we can help thousands of people get back to work and ensure our businesses and communities have the tools they need to build a better future.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I've been listening to my good friend from Scarborough–Rouge Park, a man I have enormous respect for, and I know how hard he works on this file.

He mentioned the Building Transit Faster Act. My question is: Should we be building transit faster, or should we be building it more carefully, with a well-considered plan that passes all environmental checks and balances and that meets the concerns of the neighbours who will have to live with it long after the contractors and the politicians have gone? Are you absolutely certain, sir, that faster is the better way than the more careful way?

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member opposite: I also have very, very high respect for the member opposite. Thank you for that question. This bill's intent is not to relax any environmental checks and balances, not to compromise on any environmental aspects. The bill's intent is to make sure that we streamline the process and to impact the timeline of the projects, not the process or the intent, Mr. Speaker.

Moreover, this bill's intent, particularly, is to expand the measures in the Building Transit Faster Act across the province's transit projects to make sure that we can get transit built on time and create jobs and economic benefits that we desperately need for our province.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank the member from Scarborough–Rouge Park for being part of this bill and being part of writing it up. It's very important.

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Could the member speak about the government's commitment to collaborating with the municipalities on a shared objective to get transit built faster, especially our LRT down Hurontario?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member.

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: I want to thank the member from Mississauga for his question.

I would like to highlight the historic partnership and collaboration when the province of Ontario got into a preliminary agreement with the city of Toronto and York region. This is the historic moment when the levels of government are coming together to build transportation

that Ontario has been waiting for for such a long time. Not only that, we are bringing forward a bill to make sure that we ensure this legislative proposal is expanded to other parts of Ontario outside the GTA, as well, to have successful transit projects built on time, so that these projects will stimulate the economy and, through that, during the construction or after the construction, it will create more jobs in the adjacent cities and communities.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Ms. Jill Andrew: Thank you to the member across the aisle representing Scarborough–Rouge Park. I appreciated your presentation. I have many family and friends in your riding, so I am excited to see it flourish as the riding that I know it is.

Being a new MPP, I've learned quite a bit about the P3 model versus the public delivery model, which the NDP official opposition is asking the government to consider here.

In your opinion, how beneficial has the P3 model been for your government, considering the delays it has caused, considering the fact that the independent contractor, Crosslinx, is now suing Metrolinx? I'm just wondering how effective the P3 model has been when it's costing taxpayers so much money.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Now over to the member for a response.

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you to the member opposite: Ontario has a very long history of building transportation-based infrastructure.

What the P3 model, or public-private model, does is not just build the transit infrastructure on time and properly, but it also doesn't cost taxpayers a lot of money.

The one thing I really want to highlight is that the Building Transit Faster Act was passed to address the roadblocks and challenges common to delivery of major transit projects.

When it comes to this particular build that we are discussing today, we're going to take this legislative process and expand—and by having a private-public model, we're also going to have a situation where we don't spend more taxpayers' money, and at the same time we'll deliver the transit projects on time.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Mr. Roman Baber: It wouldn't be [*inaudible*] on a transit bill if I didn't take the opportunity to get up and say that I'm excited that we're taking another step towards building subways, subways, subways.

I also want to say to the member from Scarborough–Rouge Park that I represent a North York riding, but I also love the people of Scarborough. The people of Scarborough have been waiting for the Scarborough subway for about a decade now. It was the Premier's brother who first proposed and passed the proposal to build the Scarborough subway. But the opposition's friends down at city hall have voted against the Scarborough subway or to change the plan on the Scarborough subway 11 times now—and a

decade later, not a shovel in the ground. So I'm excited that we're going to get going on building the Scarborough subway for the people of Scarborough.

I'm wondering if the member could tell us how this specific piece of legislation is going to accelerate the construction of the Scarborough subway.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member for a response.

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Thank you to the member from York Centre for that question.

I went to school and worked in Scarborough. I use the TTC. People in Scarborough have been looking for a subway for such a long time, for decades, Mr. Speaker. When Premier Ford announced the Scarborough subway, the response that we are getting in Scarborough is astronomical.

Most importantly, I want to mention that I recently attended this announcement for the RFP for the Scarborough subway extension near Scarborough Town Centre. That's actually good news coming to Scarborough, because people used to call Scarborough a forgotten city. But under the leadership of Premier Ford, Scarborough is no longer a forgotten city, and we are finally getting a subway.

I really want to thank Premier Ford, the Minister of Transportation and the associate minister's leadership for bringing a subway for Scarborough, so that many people living in Scarborough, many businesses in Scarborough, are going to benefit from this.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I must say that in Nickel Belt we do not have public transit, but when I am in Toronto I very much use it and I enjoy that it is there.

I wanted to ask the member if he has any worries at all about the powers that the government will now have, including to expropriate property without a hearing of necessity. Is he worried about the powers in the bill for the government to enter or destroy private property without the owner's consent, to enter or destroy municipal or BIA property without consent or even compensation, things like to cut off access to municipal roads or water, again without municipal consent? The government will have broad powers that they can download to Metrolinx. Is he worried at all about all of those powers of the government to do things that are not very nice?

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Thanks to the member opposite for the question. As I mentioned before, these measures are to make sure—these are a backstop, as a last resort. Again, as I said, when it comes to any measures, the Ministry of Transportation will work with Metrolinx to make sure we work with landowners, homeowners and the community to make sure we have a “people first” approach. That has been the approach for our government from the beginning, and we're going to make sure we follow that.

Having said that, the proposal is enabling the extension of these sorts of measures for other provincial transit projects, as applicable. The reason I am repeating that is

that the intention of this bill will ensure we can stimulate the economy, not just in the GTA, but across the province, which is something we need.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Ms. Jill Andrew: It's an honour to stand and represent my community in Toronto—St. Paul's and to say a few words on the government's Bill 222, Ontario Rebuilding and Recovery Act.

The first thing I'd like to do is talk about the essential workers, because at the end of the day, when I'm looking outside the window, whether it's the Eglinton 34 or it's the Eglinton 32, the buses are packed—the buses are packed. Social distancing cannot always happen. We see community members doing the best they can trying to get around the construction, trying to get around the boards, trying not to fall into the potholes or whatnot, but it's difficult.

Why I want to start with the essential workers is because what we know and what we've seen from COVID-19—many of these essential workers have been women, many of them have been BIPOC community members, many of them are workers who are misclassified, who are working as independent contractors—but, goodness knows, they are pretty much employees—and, as we know, when you're misclassified, that impacts your ability to get proper benefits and, quite frankly, even proper wages.

The bottom line is that many of our essential workers are in precarious employment as well, or they're in difficult employment because of a pandemic, where they're taking care of our communities; they're travelling to take care of our communities. Some of our PSWs in St. Paul's are travelling to their second or third job without that pandemic pay in the bank account.

2010

Nonetheless, I guess the point I want to say is transportation, building transportation responsibly, is so important. Because without transportation, the folks who don't have the luxury or the privilege to work from home or to start at, I don't know, 10 or 11 or whatever time in the morning or early afternoon where the buses, the subways and the streetcars may not be as packed—many people just don't have that choice, and they're getting on and they're travelling.

In our Yonge and Eglinton area, we have probably 19,000 or so residents, just in that little quarter, in that little intersection. When you look at development that's coming, development that's already been approved, we're looking at going up another 25,000 or so residents just in that little intersection. Transportation is key to the way a community moves. It's key to a community's economy. It's key to a community's ability to feel like a community, to get around, to shop local, to visit a friend—I mean, maybe not right now during the pandemic. On that note, about not right now during the pandemic, let me go back a little bit and just say that the issue of construction, the issue of transportation, building fast—but frankly, not necessarily better—has impacted my community for many, many, many years, long before I was sitting as an MPP

and, frankly, even long before I felt the physical impacts of those delays myself.

These are delays that have caused families to lose their businesses. I say “families to lose their businesses” rather than just “shuttering of small businesses” because I think sometimes when we talk about the shuttering of small businesses, we forget that there are actually people behind those businesses: families; immigrants who came to Canada, planted themselves in Ontario and have given up everything to have that little convenience store franchise or to have that little radio show or hair shop or barber or restaurant. They're struggling. We have to recognize that their struggles should be our struggle here in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

For me, it's difficult to read Bill 222 and see it as progress, because what I'm hearing from community, what I'm hearing from our small business families, what I'm hearing from residents who can't sleep at night because of ongoing construction is that consultation has been missing from this bill—and many bills put forth by this government, quite frankly.

I'm going to read some of the things that are particularly concerning. Bill 222 amends the Building Transit Faster Act enacted this year with Bill 171. What's really concerning is that the powers that this bill provides to the minister—it allows the minister or, in some cases, a delegate, i.e., Metrolinx or the contractor Crosslinx, to expropriate property, and “expropriate property” essentially means take property away from the owner without a hearing of necessity. It requires developers to obtain Metrolinx-issued permits for construction work within the corridor, enter or destroy private property without the owner's consent, enter or destroy municipal or BIA property without consent or even compensation, and it cuts off access to municipal roads or water supplies, again without municipal consent.

I worry about any transit legislation that's going to impact our cities, impact our communities, impact my friends, whether it's on Yonge and Eglinton, Mount Pleasant and Eglinton, Dufferin and Eglinton, Little Jamaica, wherever, without them necessarily feeling like they have a seat at the table and a voice being heard.

I want to mention the noise complaints that we've received from construction. I want to situate these noise complaints. These aren't just little bothers. These are people complaining about hearing noise in the middle of the night, people complaining about noise at 5 a.m.—and listen, we're not talking about affordable housing noise here. We're talking about big, shiny, expensive condo development noise and commercial and corporate development noise.

Metrolinx had said to me last year—because again, we've been complaining and we've been asking for supports for small business long before COVID-19. They said that “a comprehensive noise analysis was completed by a third party which compares anticipated noise levels associated with construction activities against early morning ambient noise. A list of resident-based mitigations and the operational measures that can be provided

and implemented onsite has been prepared in order to reduce the impact of extended work hours to local residents.”

On the note of business support, they said, “While Metrolinx does not compensate business owners or tenants in the form of tax breaks or operating subsidies for businesses that remain open during construction, Metrolinx makes every effort to ensure that businesses receive up-to-date information on construction activities and timing, and where they are directly impacted, they are supported.... This involves significant outreach and public communication.”

I get the emails, and I get to find out when there’s going to be a concrete pour on my little area on Eglinton or whatnot, and while I’m thankful for that information, I’m not a small business owner, right? I think I would prefer as a small business owner—and small business owners have certainly told me this—some compensation from Metrolinx possibly: compensation to help keep those doors open; compensation to ensure that the cultural heritage, the look, the aesthetic of a community, the access to the stores that you love and the friends that you’ve made along the way in those stores aren’t shuttered. That’s a concern that I definitely have.

We have to ensure that noise is listened to and that it is responded to by this government. We have to ensure that residents’ mental health is taken care of during this time. Noise, as I said, is not just an interference; it prevents people from sleeping. If you are neurodiverse, if you are the parent of a young one—and these are people who have contacted me. The constant construction, with no real deadline—I mean, it’s 2020; it’s 2021; it’s 2022. This project would have been done years ago—at least the Eglinton Crosstown I can speak of—if former Premier Mike Harris hadn’t thrown dirt or cement—even worse—into the hole over at Eglinton West. But anyhow, I digress.

As we are building responsible transportation and rebuilding and recovering Ontario, which Bill 222 does not accomplish, I also want to mention that now’s not the time for us to be cutting bus lines. Now’s not the time for us to be cutting services to the TTC, for instance. I use it. Many of us in here use it. Now’s the time to invest in maintenance and repairs in our public transit, so that folks can get around.

I’ve said it in the House before, but there were threats to cut four buses that directly impact my community: the 5 Avenue bus, the 33 Forest Hill bus, the 14 Glencairn bus and the 142 Avenue Express. Again, I want to say that these buses carry seniors. They carry students. They carry child caregivers. They carry essential workers. They carry disabled residents trying to get from point A to B. We have heard that the TTC, the largest transit agency, is projecting a \$700-million budget shortfall by the end of 2020.

In my opinion, nowhere in this bill does it say what it’s giving to community members to deal with the hassle of this delay—the delay that the P3 model has also perpetuated. Some members on the other side have hailed the P3 model—I guess it’s the second coming of Christ. It’s the best thing since sliced bread. But we’re hearing that it’s

certainly not not causing delays. It’s certainly not not causing the shuttering of small businesses, those families who own businesses. And it’s certainly not stopping the impact of gentrification in certain neighbourhoods, like Little Jamaica, where, throughout this whole construction mess, many tenants have been pushed out, essentially. Even small businesses have been pushed out because they don’t necessarily have a heritage designation, and then they’re demolished for a condo or for the Oakwood LRT stop or whatever it might be.

2020

Instead of actually putting funds in to help community businesses and for rent relief and rent control and overhauling property taxes, or suspending property taxes for small business owners, what we see is a government that has increased the salary of the Metrolinx CEO, Phil Verster, by 35%. I don’t know the guy, to be honest; I don’t know him. I’m not suggesting by any means that he doesn’t work hard. But I can tell you this: Those PSWs, those nurses, those custodians in our schools who have been calling for more of them, those education workers—and a shout-out to all the child and youth workers—I’m a child and youth worker—and all the ECEs in Ontario, and certainly the ones in St. Paul’s. They’re working hard, too. They haven’t seen a 35% raise. They’re seeing—is it 1%?

Mr. Jamie West: Only if they’re lucky.

Ms. Jill Andrew: It’s 1% if they’re lucky. So we have to get our priorities in order when we’re rebuilding and recovering Ontario.

It’s funny. I did a summit—I don’t remember if it was health care or housing; there have just been so many of them—and I said something about, “We’re in this together.” It was my friend from Ottawa Centre, who was a participant in that Zoom, who said, “You know, Jill, we all say we’re in this together, but if one person is left behind, then we’re not.” That’s something that stuck with me, because I always used to say, “We’re in this together,” and we are, theoretically. But realistically, the essential workers, our front-line health care workers, the people who are on those buses and walking those sidewalks that are boarded up, the people in my little area, in Little Jamaica—actually, it’s a big area. It’s all the way from Marlee and Eglinton to Keele and Eglinton. My area sort of stops at Oakwood in terms of my riding.

The joy of being able to get a culturally relevant meal, the joy to be able to buy your hair products at Monica’s or Sharon’s or the joy to be able to get Mr. Small to tailor your pants—it’s difficult to get there. It’s difficult to get there if you’re using an assistive device; it really is. I’ve got a bad knee. I’ve had many breaks. Last year on Canada Day, I literally fell and demolished my ankle. I feel some pain. But I can tell you, my mother feels a whole lot more, and so do many of the elders and seniors who still frequent the area.

On the note of Little Jamaica as well, I want to mention that there’s a report circulating. It’s a report called A Black Business Conversation on Planning for the Future of Black Businesses and Residents on Eglinton Avenue West. Again, I want to say that this is because Little Jamaica had

been advocating long before I was ever an MPP, or even dreamt of it, to save the community. It's the community that my mom strutted up and down in as a new person, as a newcomer to Toronto. It's a community that brought us the cultural explosion that is reggae. It is a community that has been known worldwide; this is Little Jamaica we're talking about. To look at it now, it's a skeleton of what it was in the 1960s, the 1970s, the 1980s.

I'm here today to say that this report, A Black Business Conversation on Planning for the Future of Black Businesses and Residents on Eglinton Avenue West, created by the Black Urbanism Toronto collective, is a report that I really hope the government reads. In particular, there are calls to action in this report, to the city, to the Minister of Transportation and—I was going to say the name of the Premier, but that will be called out of order—to the Conservative government; a call to Metrolinx to compensate businesses that have been impacted by COVID-19 up to \$30,000. Maybe the government can consider starting an emergency stabilization small business grant or fund.

I see members of the government laughing, and maybe it's funny, maybe it's not. But, to me, it's not funny because, at the end of the day, this community is dying and it requires direct funding to keep it alive.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I was laughing at a joke my daughter sent me.

Ms. Jill Andrew: I didn't name the member, because I'm trying not to be petty. I didn't name anyone. I just saw a laugh and I spoke about it.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Excuse me. Stop the clock.

I take it you are standing on a point of order.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I am. I just wanted to acknowledge that it actually was me, the member for Markham–Stouffville, who was laughing at a wonderful joke that my 12-year-old daughter sent for me. She had a tough day at school today and I thought it was quite funny. I apologize to the member for laughing—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you. That's not a point of order.

I will return back to the member from Toronto–St. Paul's.

Ms. Jill Andrew: I appreciate the apology, Speaker, from the Conservative member. I will also take the moment to give my own regrets for making the assumption that I was being laughed at. The reality is I've been laughed at and spoken down to many times in this House, so sometimes you just come in with your back up because you're not sure if you're going to be heard. As I've said a million times, I don't care if anyone in this building likes me, but it's important that the government listen to me because I'm here representing St. Paul's, right? And St. Paul's needs compensation for our businesses. This is a call coming specifically from Black Urbanism TO.

St. Paul's needs real affordable housing. I mention housing because the NDP submitted amendments to transportation bills that this government has put forth, and they have been turned down. Those amendments included

community benefits agreements for our communities, more schools, affordable housing, community centres, daycares, green space, parks. They were turned down. That's concerning.

Our businesses in St. Paul's need rent relief. They need rent relief on commercial and residential properties, and a moratorium on evictions, to be honest, because, again, small businesses are dying across Eglinton. They're dying—not because the community isn't trying to support, not because the community is afraid to support, but, in some cases, they fundamentally cannot access the space to support. And I get it. Now we're talking curbside and online, but I also want to say that for many small business owners in Little Jamaica, being online poses another financial burden they cannot afford.

I'm hoping that maybe the government will consider BIPOC communities and consider women entrepreneurs who are disproportionately impacted by all of their legislation and make the necessary changes.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): It's time for questions.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to ask the member across a question. Our government has 10 years of projects going, and it's going to cost us a \$144-billion infrastructure plan that will ensure our province is ready for the future. That includes more than \$66 billion, almost half of the entire infrastructure plan, for public transit.

Would the member agree that Ontario would be beneficiary with these significant investments?

Ms. Jill Andrew: Thank you to the member across the floor for the question. I want to make it very clear: I am not against transportation development. I am not against housing development. I'm not against development, but as I have argued, as the various tenants' associations that have chatted with me have argued, we simply need that development, whether it's transportation or housing, to be responsible. We need to think about density in our areas. We need to think about those community benefits agreements that the government has said no to. So we're not against development. We just need development to be responsible. We need it to be equitable. Certain communities are flying high with development, but there are certain communities, like Little Jamaica, that are not, and you have to ask yourself why that's happening.

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The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank the member for her comments.

I was wondering if she could share with us how she sees the P3, the private-public partnership development of infrastructure projects—more specifically, transit projects—versus the public delivery model of infrastructure, and if she sees a difference between the two.

Ms. Jill Andrew: Thank you very much for the question from the member from Nickel Belt. I couldn't quite hear it all, but I think you were asking me about the P3 model versus the public delivery model.

I'm going to quote the words of the School of Public Policy at the University of Calgary. They explain that a lot of people think that the P3 models are useful because they're fast and they "get the job done." But what these scholars have said is that the clearest advantage that P3s offer is actually to politicians, especially governing politicians who are able to transfer to private partners the risks of miscalculated construction costs and revenue projections. To me—and I get that I'm not an expert on P3s—that is another opportunity for government to relieve themselves of accountability and responsibility, placing it on the backs of the private sector, as opposed to accessing publicly delivered models, which are cheaper and which get the job done better.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Mrs. Robin Martin: I listened intently to the member from Toronto–St. Paul's. We both share Eglinton Avenue as a street that our ridings abut each other on, and it's obviously very important that development happens there.

I want to ask the member opposite if she doesn't think it would have been better if those stores that are severely inconvenienced on an ongoing basis because of the Eglinton LRT project—if they had had a shorter project so that the LRT would be in place and done, would that not have been an advantage to the entire community?

Ms. Jill Andrew: Thank you to the member from Eglinton–Lawrence for her question. The member and I have actually been to Little Jamaica on the very same day for an event. I remember she was at a store with me.

From what I understand, the process would have been much shorter, especially in the Eglinton West corridor area, if the former Premier hadn't dumped dirt or cement into the hole that was built back in 2006.

Let's not blame the small businesses, and let's not blame the previous governments. I mentioned the previous Conservative government of Mike Harris, but the bottom line is, this is the government now. So what is the government going to do for the small businesses? They're asking for Metrolinx to compensate them for revenue lost and for damage, for pain and suffering during this conundrum. Will the government help them? Yes or no?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Mr. Joel Harden: Thank you very much, member from Toronto–St. Paul's, for your eloquence and your remarks. You took me right to that street, right to that community. I almost felt like I was there as you were speaking.

As you were answering a question recently, the member from York Centre mentioned that this was better for people, the P3 arrangements. I'm wondering if you could take us again to those stores and ask the question that I think the earlier question was asking the answer to: Has that P3 development, the Eglinton Crosstown, been good—good value—for those businesses that you know better than the member? Go ahead.

Ms. Jill Andrew: When I have called on the phone or walked in before COVID and asked about the struggles that our small businesses are facing along Eglinton—and

I've been focusing particularly on Little Jamaica, but there are also communities that are just off of, say, Mount Pleasant and Eglinton that are impacted as well. They're not necessarily talking to me about P3 models—not all of them; some of them are—but what they are talking to me about is, "Jill, what's going on? Why has this taken a decade?" You know? "I'm not going to be able to survive. My business has shuttered. My friend's down the street has shuttered." You know? "They're now putting up a condo."

So the concern, I would say, from what I'm hearing and from what I understand, is the P3 model is not foolproof and it has cost the taxpayer, it has cost our small business owners and our single moms a whole lot of money that could have been saved if the job was done over a decade ago.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Mr. Stephen Crawford: I have the honour of being the parliamentary assistant to the Ministry of Infrastructure, and I can tell you in that role, there are people from all over the world—from Germany, from France, from other countries in Europe and Asia—that come to Infrastructure Ontario right here in Toronto. The reason they come here is to see what we're doing, because they believe Ontario is a world leader in P3. The facts are—and these are facts—95% of the P3 programs that have been put through in the province of Ontario since its inception have been on-budget, and 70% have been on time. And not a dime—I repeat, a dime—of taxpayer money is at risk through the P3 programs.

Do you question these facts?

Ms. Jill Andrew: I absolutely would question those facts because I have understood, from the Auditor General reports, that there have been billions of dollars—billions of dollars—lost due to P3 developments.

So rather than sitting around, talking about acronyms and things that the average person that's listening and watching, if they're watching, may not understand, I'd like to talk to you about SXS Fitness and Wellness, a gym in my riding that was literally flooded. We call Metrolinx, and Metrolinx says, "Oh, we're off the hook; it's not our fault." What are we doing for SXS? What are we doing for Steve? What are we doing for him? What are we doing for his small business? How are we going to ensure that he survives the rebuilding and recovery of Ontario and, in particular, the Eglinton Crosstown? Because he's not surviving it right now, nor are the people on Peveril Hill road—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much. There isn't enough time to continue with questions and responses, but it is further debate.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I'm honoured to rise in the House today to speak in support of Bill 222, the Ontario Rebuilding and Recovery Act, introduced by my friend the Minister of Transportation. If passed, this important bill would build on the historic progress we've made already this year, first with Bill 171, the Building Transit Faster Act, and then with the Transit-Oriented Communities Act, included in schedule 20 of Bill 197.

These two bills introduced many important new measures to help accelerate the construction of four priority transit projects: the Ontario Line, the Scarborough subway extension, the Yonge North subway extension and the Eglinton Crosstown West extension. Speaker, together this will be the largest subway expansion in Canadian history, increasing the length of the current system by more than 50%. It will provide critical relief at the current Union, Eglinton, and Bloor-Yonge interchanges and help bring transit to many new communities, including important links to the GO Transit network. But as the minister said, the measures in Bills 171 and 197 apply only to these four priority transit projects. The rest of Ontario needs infrastructure, built fast and well. And we need it now more than ever. As the associate minister put it, there's more to the GTA than Toronto, and there's more to our plan than subways. Speaker, I couldn't agree more.

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That's why schedule 1 and schedule 3 of Bill 222 would allow us to extend the measures in the Building Transit Faster Act and the Transit-Oriented Communities Act to other provincial transit projects as well, including the GO Transit rail expansion, bus rapid transit projects, the light rail transit project and including my own Hurontario LRT in the region of Peel. Schedule 2 would amend the Public Service Works on Highways Act to allow us to get court orders when utility companies fail to comply with orders to relocate utilities. Again, this is just extending measures that are already existing in the Building Transit Faster Act to the rest of the province. Together, these measures will allow us to relocate utilities more efficiently while treating our businesses fairly.

This work is already under way in Mississauga-Lakeshore. Alectra and telecommunication infrastructure is all being relocated, and new water main, storm and sanitary systems are being installed all along the Hurontario LRT corridor. The measures extended in Bill 222 would ensure we have access to the land we need in order to build new transit lines and new transit stations. At the same time, current owners and tenants will be treated and compensated fairly.

These measures would also reduce delays in obtaining municipal permits and ensure Metrolinx is able to proceed with soil testing and other important works on these projects. They would ensure there is proper coordination with nearby construction projects in order to prevent unnecessary delays. As the Ontario Home Builders' Association said, these measures target steps in the planned, designed and constructed process which has delayed major projects in the past.

Speaker, none of this should be controversial. This is a common-sense approach that will help us deliver the right transit projects at the right time and at the right cost. It will help us ensure that Metrolinx can apply clear and consistent policies across the province as we work and accelerate and deliver all these important projects.

I would like to thank the Minister of Transportation and the associate minister for their entire team for their work on these bills. I would also like to thank the parliamentary

assistant, the member from Scarborough-Rouge Park, and all the colleagues for their careful consideration of Bill 222 at the Standing Committee on Social Policy. I know that they and MTO staff worked closely with Metrolinx, Infrastructure Ontario, the city of Toronto and the regional municipalities, including York and Peel, to identify challenges and to help develop solutions. I'm confident the minister's collaboration-first approach will continue as we move forward.

According to the C.D. Howe Institute, traffic gridlock across the GTA costs us between \$7.5 billion and \$11 billion every year. This includes the loss of productivity when people are stuck in traffic, but it also takes opportunity costs into account. In other words, opportunities are lost because people decide not to commute.

According to the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, communities in the GTA spend over 50 million hours stuck in traffic every year. They released this in a report titled *Stuck in Traffic for 10,000 Years*. It is clear that the previous approach to build transit just wasn't working.

At the same time, the next decade will be critical for the GTA. Our population is expected to grow by over 50% over the next decade, and by almost 7.5 million people by 2031. By 2046, our population could reach 10 million, almost doubling over the next 25 years. In Mississauga-Lakeshore alone, we now are adding 20,000 people in the Lakeview Village on the site of the former OPG coal plant, and 8,000 residents in Brightwater on the site of the former Texaco refinery where my father once worked.

While this is exciting for us, as the minister said, from a transportation perspective it is also a major challenge for the province to provide transportation infrastructure and other services that we're going to need to support this growth.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the promise is moving forward with over 20 expansion projects to modernize our GO Transit rail network and deliver two-way, all-day service every 15 minutes over core segments of the network, including the Lakeshore West corridor. Moving forward, GO Transit will offer expanded service with faster trains and more stations and seamless connections within the regional rapid transit network.

Procurement is under way now to select teams to design and build on corridor work projects, including new fleet electrification, track work, grade separation, new signals, new junctions and much more, and if passed, Bill 222 would help us deliver this on schedule and on budget.

As the associate minister noted, each year more than 110,000 new residents settle in the region of Peel, so it is absolutely vital that our transit system expands to meet the needs of Mississauga and Brampton. That's why, last year, our government signed a \$4.6-billion agreement with Mobilinx to design, build, finance, operate and maintain the new 18-kilometre Hurontario LRT over a 30-year term, and now work is well under way on this project, which will connect my community of Port Credit in the south to Brampton's Gateway Terminal in the north.

The Hurontario LRT will include 19 stops in two urban growth centres with connections to four mobile hubs. It

will also connect to other major transit systems, including MiWay and Brampton Transit, GO Transit Lakeshore West and the Milton line. This project will help make public transit an affordable and low-stress alternative for communities and families throughout Mississauga and Brampton. Again, Speaker, if passed, Bill 222 would help us deliver it.

As I mentioned, schedule 3 of Bill 222 would extend the measures of the Transit-Oriented Communities Act and help us build more vibrant, higher density and mixed-use communities right across Ontario. These measures would also allow the province to delegate authority to Metrolinx or to other public bodies to allow them to enter into new types of commercial agreements for more transit-oriented communities. It will help us create mixed housing, including affordable housing and long-term care centred around public transit operations.

Earlier this year in Mississauga–Lakeshore, I was proud to announce the construction of two long-term-care homes in Sheridan Park with 640 new long-term-care beds. A week later, I announced an investment of \$24 million to build 219 new affordable homes in Lakeview, just east of the Port Credit GO station, and just to the west of the station, the Brightwater waterfront development will include 150 new affordable housing units. This will include apartments for people with disabilities and programs to support them, including addictions services and life skills training. The ground floor of one of these buildings will become the new home of the Compass food bank, which has been a critical part of local response to COVID-19.

Schedule 3 in Bill 222 will give us the tools we need to speed up the delivery of these transit-oriented communities, based on good planning principles which will increase transit ridership and reduce traffic congestion. If passed, Bill 222 can also help to improve the movement of people and goods, support economic growth and job creation across the GTA.

About one million tonnes or \$3 billion in goods are trucked through central Ontario every day and about \$2 billion in goods pass through Peel region every day, but delays in shipping costs us hundreds of millions of dollars every year. In August, we took a major step to address this by announcing a preferred route for the new 400-series highway and transit corridor across Peel, York and Halton regions.

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The new GTA west corridor will help to reduce traffic congestion and improve the movement of people and goods across the integrated highway network which connects to Highways 400, 401, 407, 410 and 427. This project will include four to six lanes of highway, passenger stations and other transit infrastructure, as well as integrated transportation features and parking for trucks. The advantage of this corridor is critical to the growth plan of the region of Peel, and I want to thank the regional chair, Nando Iannicca; Mayor Bonnie Crombie; and the city council for their strong and consistent support of these important projects.

I also want to thank the minister and the associate minister for restarting the environmental assessment for this project after it was cancelled by the previous Liberal government and the previous Minister of Transportation, Steven Del Duca, without providing an alternative plan to address traffic congestion in Peel after the province invested \$14 million in an environmental assessment. The environmental assessment will continue over the next two years, but its integral design, including property requirements, should be ready by next fall. If passed, Bill 222 could help us proceed with timely property acquisitions and procurements for the new corridor.

Speaker, I just want to take a moment here to thank Erb Transport. Earlier in the COVID-19 crisis, I got a call from my friend David Forgan at Sure Good Foods. David offered to donate about 35 tonnes of chicken breasts to Feed Ontario and Sai Dham Food Bank, but we had no way of transporting the chicken, until Erb lent us one of their trucks. Every year, Erb transports tens of thousands of pounds of donated food. Sadly, Vern Erb passed away earlier this year from leukemia. He was an incredible man and a legend in the Ontario trucking community, and I just want to offer my condolences to his family, his friends and Erb Transport.

Applause.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: Thank you.

Speaker, I want to take a moment to thank everyone who has come forward to support Bills 171 and 197 and asked us to extend these measures more broadly to priority transit projects across the province, as Bill 222 will do.

Just to take one for an example: Anthony Primerano of LiUNA told us that “The steps outlined in Bill 222 will help us to start projects sooner, finish them faster and deliver enhanced capacity to our overburdened transportation system. These projects will create the jobs we need today,” he said, “while providing the modern infrastructure we will need for tomorrow. As labourers who proudly build these generational projects,” he wrote, “we are eager for the work to begin.” And Speaker, so am I.

Again, I want to thank the Premier, the minister and the associate minister for bringing us another step closer to a modern transit network for the GTA with Bill 222. At the same time, I’d like to take this moment to thank the minister and the associate minister for the great work they’re doing in their communities. Recently, the minister joined us at the Mississauga Hospital as we helped the Canada India Foundation deliver 1,400 meals to our front-line heroes at Trillium Health Partners.

In October, the associate minister and I delivered disinfectant kits from Lysol Canada to the Ukrainian Canadian Care Centre in Etobicoke. We also worked together to deliver food baskets from Meaty Meats in Mississauga–Lakeshore to Haven on the Queensway, and I know that the associate minister works very hard with her team to deliver food baskets to the most vulnerable, including seniors, in Etobicoke Centre.

Speaker, if passed, Bill 222 would cut red tape and other barriers in the plan, design and construction of key public infrastructure. It would accelerate the delivery of

this historic \$29-billion transit expansion plan and help us deliver a reasonable, sustainable and modern transit system for the 21st century right across the GTA. It would help us build more transit-oriented communities, including new affordable housing and more modern long-term-care homes, and it will help drive our economy's recovery and create tens of thousands of jobs as we recover from the COVID-19 crisis.

I urge all the members to join me today in voting for this important bill. I just want to go back to a few of my points I had here. Right now, because of the gridlock in our GTA, we are losing a lot of our production. We need these trucks to move much quicker through the area. It's costing us \$7.5 billion to \$11 billion every year. This includes loss of productivity when people are stuck in traffic. Having these projects move much quicker will help us to get the province moving better, and especially after COVID-19.

I thank all of you, and I hope that you will support this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): It's time for questions.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I have a question to my good friend from Mississauga–Lakeshore. To your knowledge, how wide was the public consultation process before the government announced that the relief line was dropped and that Toronto would now have a proposed new Ontario Line? We have daily users of public transit. A lot of our essential workers use public transit each and every day, and I want to know, were they consulted? Who talked to them? Were they listened to? What did they tell you before the relief line was dropped and the Ontario Line was introduced?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank the member from Windsor–Tecumseh for that question.

You have to realize that for the last 15 years, we haven't built transit in this province, or very little transit, so we have to move quickly. With the population increasing in our areas, it's very important that we build transit because we have to get rid of gridlock in our cities.

If you noticed, right now during COVID-19, our traffic is very limited coming into Toronto. Right now, I can get to Toronto in 20 minutes. On a normal day, it takes me over an hour. So the quicker that we can build transit, it's very important for our population and for everybody to get to work and get productive.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you to the MPP for Mississauga–Lakeshore for that wonderful presentation. My colleague was passionately talking about transit and transit infrastructure in the GTA. I know that we have been talking about the Yonge North subway extension for decades, Mr. Speaker, and this is a critical time. We have been talking about the GTA transit infrastructure for decades and decades. People are suffering.

My colleague has mentioned about the right time and right budget. I want the member to elaborate on—this is a

very important point—why you want to do it in the right time and right budget.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: Thank you to the member. We have to build these projects on time and on budget because that's very important. I look at my own community of Mississauga–Lakeshore. I have two large developments coming: The Lakeview partners are putting in 20,000 people at the old OPG land, and at the old Texaco refinery, where my father worked, we're putting in another 8,000 people. So we need transit quickly and done right. That's why this is what we have to do, because for the last 15 years, we haven't built transit. And we need transit as quick as possible, because we have to remove gridlock.

If we believe in the environment—like the members across and like us, we believe in the environment. Less cars on the road is better to reduce the carbon footprint. So the quicker we can build this transit, the better it is for our community and for our health as well.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Mr. Guy Bourgoin: Thank you to the member from Mississauga–Lakeshore. I look at it from a northern lens. I hear about transit being built, highways being built. And yet, winter has not even started in northern Ontario and our highways have been closed many times already.

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Your government made a promise also for a train that would be coming back, the Northlander, yet this budget is silent on it. I want to hear from you: What do you have to say to northern Ontario, les enfants oubliés, comme on dit in French? What do you have to say to them, that you made a promise that you have not kept? And yet we're talking about tons of transit.

All we're asking is to bring back the northern train, the Northlander.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank the member for that question. I can't comment on that particular project, but I can comment on many projects in my own riding of Mississauga–Lakeshore—the LRT that will be going up Hurontario that will relieve a lot of pressure in our city, as well as a future project going down Lakeshore which will be a BRT, which will bring people from the Port Credit GO station right to the Toronto border, to get people into Toronto much quicker.

We have to do it quick because with the population that we're having, the GTA will be overpopulated and cars will be difficult to move. Like I said, we have to protect the environment at the same time, so we have to reduce this carbon footprint by doing this. We have to do it quick and affordable as well.

That's why P3s are a great idea for this, because P3s are on time; 89% of the time, they are on time.

Interjections.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: You know what? You should read more of what the Auditor General said. You should read past the first three lines of the Auditor General's report on that. If he didn't read that, I understand. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Mr. Dave Smith: The opposition have talked about, in these types of projects, how we should be looking at community benefit, which basically is saying that we should be hiring people from the community that the transit is being built in. My riding currently has an unemployment rate of 11.9%. It is the second-highest in Canada. Could you please explain why our government believes that Ontario tax dollars being spent to create good jobs should be available to all people in Ontario?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank the member for that question. I believe that everybody should be able to work in these jobs, and I agree. Coming out of the Ford Motor Co. in Oakville, I worked in a unionized plant, so I believe in quality work for the job. I believe as well in putting P3s in place, because P3s are the most efficient way to build transit infrastructure in the province and across the country.

If you look at British Columbia under an NDP government, they use more P3 projects than anybody else across Canada. I'm really proud to use P3s and employ as many people as we can to build these projects.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I want to talk to you about P3s, because there's a lot of conversation around them. My good friend from Peterborough is here, and he should know this: Their hospital was built—publicly funded, publicly delivered. It cost \$365 million. The same hospital in St. Catharines, around the exact same size—I think there are 25 more beds in St. Catharines—was \$1.1 billion. Imagine what you could have done with that \$700 million. It was done under the Liberals; this is the first time I've said this. That \$700 million could have gone into hiring more staff, more money for PSWs.

What I'm saying to you is when you stand up and say it's on time and on budget, it may be on time, it may be on budget, but it has cost you \$600 million and \$700 million more to build the same hospital. What do you think of that?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank the member across for that question.

I'll tell you what. Government-led projects would be cheaper, given the government's low cost of borrowing, if they were risk-free, but that is simply not the case. In fact, government-led projects have a long history of being over-budget and delayed, with taxpayers ultimately bearing the extra costs. Union Station is a perfect example of that.

P3s, on the other hand, have a strong record of delivering public infrastructure on time and on budget. In a recent analysis of 42 Canadian P3 projects from 2009 to 2013, an impressive 83% finished on time or earlier. In a separate report, 19 Canadian P3 projects from 2004 to 2009 were even more impressive: 39% finished on time or even early—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much. Further questions?

Mr. Roman Baber: I appreciate the opportunity to weigh in late in the debate. I figured I'd engage in a

friendly question-and-answer and also respond to my friend from Windsor–Tecumseh.

There is no question that the Ontario Line, as devised by our government, is significantly more beneficial to the people of Toronto and the GTA than the relief line was. Specifically, the Ontario Line will go up to Eglinton, instead of just going to Bloor, and then it will connect with the Crosstown LRT, which was the subject of much discussion earlier today, so that's wonderful.

Also, God willing, when this is over, I'll invite my friend from Windsor to some dinner on King West, that we'll be able to get to using the new Ontario Line and the finally newly built Ontario Place that our government is also considering—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much. Back to the member from Mississauga–Lakeshore for a response.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I just want to thank the member over there for that answer for me. I really appreciate that you answered the member across for me.

Interjection.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: Maybe he will—in Port Credit, I hope, when Posta reopens, with the new transit down Lakeshore. So I hope that he'll come down to Port Credit for that.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): There isn't enough time for more questions and responses, but there is time for further debate.

So now I turn to the member from Windsor–Tecumseh for further debate.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Hello, Speaker, my old friend, It's time to rhyme with you again.

Now, initially I may need a wee bit of latitude
And for that you'll have my deep-felt gratitude.

If the budget took more money from the Treasury Board and gave it to the House leader—we don't have enough poetry here in this hallowed hall—

Would that be robbing Peter to pay Paul?

Conversely, Speaker, if it took it from the House leader
And gave it to Treasury Board, we'd be robbing Paul to pay Peter.

I think of those things at this time of the season
Even though there's rhyme with very little reason.

Speaker, I have poetry by the carton

Just ask the chief government whip, who's always wearing those fancy, very expensive Doc Martens.

Now, I know we take some things for granted

Like working late and debating plans for future transit.

From Windsor, I could fly here and use an island runway

But I prefer Via 1—the train—and then the subway.

I'm a frequent visitor at Union, Bloor-Yonge and Queen's Park stations

And that's about all I know about Toronto's subway system of transportation.

Urban planners owe a debt to Jane Jacobs and former councillor Mayor John Sewell;

They led the way on the walkable neighbourhoods planning rule.

And don't forget the SSSOCCC—

The Stop Spadina Save Our City Coordinating Committee.

Yes, a trip down memory lane to the late 1960s and 1971

When Bill Davis put an end to it and victory was won.

Toronto's transit plans then needed to be refined

At the expense of the expressway formerly known as Spadina.

No one wants an expressway or subway next to their backyard fence

So they learned to tolerate traffic that was heavy and more dense.

And then we wait and wait for newer transit plans—

It has been that way since transit planning first began.

Speaker, there is truth to the fiction

There have been too many planning cooks out there in the planning kitchen.

Oh, it's not like it's a planning competition:

Changes and transit delays have become a Toronto tradition.

The planners, you would think that they would

Know how to make transit work in Toronto the Good.

Why not ask the riders? They would surely know

They use the buses, streetcars, subways every day— even the GO.

The member for University–Rosedale—Speaker, you know her well;

A former president of the transit riders' association, she's our critic Jessica Bell.

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So the bill we're debating in the chamber tonight

Won't be approved without a good fight.

Now throw COVID into the mix,

With people working from home means some transit plans may have to be switched.

Previous plans and predictions based on development extensions

Now see empty office towers and landlords facing business extinction.

Speaker, I'm not trying to be a scaremonger,

Just giving the planners something to think about and ponder.

Existing plans, I'm not going to skewer,

But will downtown in the future have more people or fewer?

Corporations are vacating downtown and going alone.

It's so much cheaper to be working from home.

So the way I see it consequently

Now is the time to plan transit differently.

Speaker, I'm not looking to create any acrimony

With Ministers Surma and Mulroney.

Speaker, here's the rub, the essence:

Will this transit plan face obsolescence?

We heard it just a moment ago from the member for Toronto–St. Paul's. She said, "We're all in this together."

If so, can we slow down and take another look at the proposed transit endeavours?

Speaker, I'm used to it, as every election I hear the transit whispers,

"High-speed rail from Toronto to Windsor."

Applause.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Oh, yes. Applause is good.

With Bill 222, Speaker, you know, there are times in this House when the debate for some reason just leads me to think of my six grandchildren. That usually puts me in a better frame of mind. But sometimes I think about what their future may hold because of the decisions we make in terms of legislation. Bill 222 has me humming a tune that the younger ones sing along to, *The Wheels on the Bus*. You know it; I'm sure you know it:

The wheels on the bus go round and round,
Round and round, round and round,
The wheels on the bus go round and round,
All through the town.

But what happens when the wheels on the bus, the public transit bus or the subway car or rapid transit vehicles of whatever shape and size—what happens when the wheels fall off the bus, fall off the bus, fall off the bus, all through the town?

When it comes to this government and its transit policies, it appears the wheels have been known to fall off the bus, Speaker. Bureaucratic delays; government power plays; lawsuits with the contractors; promises to the developers; renegeing on promises to the people who rely on transit, who were told they would be getting parkland or affordable housing: Yes, Speaker, the wheels on the Conservative transit planning bus are not going round and round, round and round, round and round, as promised. We have seen, for example, some of the plans that critics say were written on the back of a napkin during a power lunch, and it has been touted as the greatest thing since sliced bread—that's right, Speaker, the Ontario Line. You know the Ontario Line, Speaker: the bait-and-switch proposal. When everyone was looking at the relief line south plan, inching its way along, going up and down, up and down, up and down, all through the town, out of the blue comes the Conservative blueprint for a new line that wasn't on the table before, the Ford plan for the Ontario Line. To borrow from the Ford Motor Company—stock footage: A better idea, job 1, the Ontario Line.

Now this was kept close to the vest of a three-piece blue suit from February until a week or so after April Fools' Day, when it dropped like a wet balloon on the people who rely on public transit in Toronto and were hoping for some transit relief.

While the Conservatives were expecting applause and jubilation, they were met with fears and consternation. A lot of riders saw it as another delaying tactic that would likely end up costing more money in the long run. At first, people jumped to the conclusion that the Premier had a plan for a casino complex at Ontario Place, but that turned out not to be the case—so far, at least. So the plan was updated and the Ontario Place station was replaced with

one at Exhibition Place; although the name stayed as the Ontario Line and hasn't been changed to the Exhibition Line.

Now, some of us who have been here for a few years know what the Auditor General has reported when it comes to the cost of the P3 method of contracting and paying for major infrastructure projects. The extra costs, according to the Auditor General, run into the billions. I think it was \$3.2 billion more for P3 projects that she looked at—major infrastructure projects in Ontario.

The previous Liberal government didn't care and the Conservative government doesn't worry about that either, as the Ontario Line will have not one, not two but three separate and distinct P3 parcels; one for the rolling stock systems, operations and maintenance contract for the entire line, which will be just a little more than 9.5 miles, or 15.5 kilometres.

The Exhibition or southern portion will have a separate P3 contract. Metrolinx and Infrastructure Ontario issued a request for proposals for that back in June, as well as for the rolling stock systems operation and maintenance contract. They said the RFQ for the line from Gerrard station to the Ontario Science Centre should go out, if everything goes according to schedule, somewhere early in 2022. Early predictions said the line would be finished on time, on budget by 2027. The jury, as they say, is still out on that optimistic prediction.

Getting back to the Wheels on the Bus tune: "The horn on the bus goes beep, beep, beep / Beep, beep, beep / Beep, beep, beep / All through the town." Those beeps are the alarms being sounded because of some of the environmental concerns that have been raised for portions of the Ontario Line. For example, there are challenges fitting a line along the GO's Lakeshore East corridor. It would have to be added to three existing overpasses, and, if the Lakeshore East embankment needs to be widened to accommodate the Ontario Line, nearby homes, businesses and community facilities may have to be expropriated. Previous government bills introduced in this House recently have laid the groundwork for such acquisitions.

There's also a threat of possible completion delays because of flood-mitigation projects in the reconstruction of the Gardiner Expressway in the lower Don River area. We've seen what has happened in Ottawa with a rapid-transit plan that failed to account for winter conditions when it comes to slight grades in the track layout, and there is concern that sections of the elevated track along the line may prove troublesome.

Concern has been raised about the environmental impact when it comes to the noise vibration and visible pollution that nearby homeowners will have to put up with along the elevated portions on the Ontario Line. Metrolinx has added to the costs already by finally agreeing to build noise walls along the rail corridor between the Gerrard and East Harbour stations. When it comes to the elevated Lakeshore East embankment, speeds of the trains most likely will have to be slowed so that cars will be able to safely navigate its curves and grades.

The environment has to play a role in any economic recovery. We build roads, we build rail lines along our

waterways and wetlands. For some reason, the government wants to gamble that the development can happen alongside floodplains and wetlands, but this will threaten the viability of our watersheds.

Speaker, I know you, as I, have received a letter from the Essex Region Conservation Foundation. Foundation president Susan Stockwell Andrew has reminded us we can't have a healthy economy without a healthy environment. Speaker, your friend and former Premier, Bill Davis, established the Essex Region Conservation Authority along with the Duke of Kent, Darcy McKeough, who used to represent your riding. ERCA supports and encourages environmental protection programs on Pelee Island, which obviously is in your riding.

Ms. Stockwell Andrew reminds us in her letter that the foundation has raised the money to create 80 kilometres of safe off-road trails connecting our region. They plant up to 100,000 trees every year, and that is critical, as you know, Speaker, as our region only has a tree cover of 8.5%.

Conservation authorities provide a much-valued bridge across municipal boundaries, just as rail and subway lines keep us connected transportation-wise. They see the big picture. They have a vision for the future, and across an entire watershed they're ideally suited to encourage science-based, collaborative strategies and decision-making.

Just like Bill 222, which deals with the future of transit, there has to be a workable plan designed in the best interests of everyone it will serve. When it comes to economic recovery, the roles and responsibilities of conservation authorities are critical in protecting the lands, waters and wildlife which benefit businesses and communities across Ontario, and upon which our health and well-being ultimately depend.

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Susan Stockwell Andrew puts all of this in her letter to us on behalf of the Essex Region Conservation Foundation. Even though we're discussing Bill 222, she fears that schedule 6 of Bill 229 will damage our rebuilding recovery efforts outlined in Bill 222. Specifically, that's because ERCA brings to our region a broad, unparalleled, integrated, watershed management approach to protecting our natural resources.

Imagine just for a moment what Toronto the Good would be like without a subway system. You think we have transportation problems now, think of the gridlock on a daily basis that we would have. Speaking of gridlock—and I know my friend from Mississauga–Lakeshore has talked about gridlock earlier this evening—I met the man who was noted as popularizing that term: "Gridlock Sam" Schwartz, a former chief traffic commissioner in New York City. He used to be a cabbie in New York, then he got a job at the city and worked his way up to the top of the traffic planning department. He had a plan for bike lanes and public plazas, but it was vetoed by a former mayor, John Lindsay.

In any event, when I was on Windsor city council, we hired Gridlock Sam as a consultant to prove to the former Liberal government that their plan for an at-grade freeway

from where the 401 ends, through west Windsor, all the way to a new international border crossing, the Gordie Howe International Bridge, was a terrible idea—because it was.

After months of fighting and public meetings, Windsor council, under former mayor Eddie Francis and Gridlock Sam's sage advice, convinced the Liberals we wouldn't settle for anything less than what we have today, known affectionately as the Herb Gray Parkway. It's 11 kilometres long, runs through Tecumseh, Windsor and LaSalle; it has 15 bridges, 11 tunnels, covered by 17 kilometres of hiking trail and 300 acres of parkland—not bad, thanks to the mayor and his decision to hire Gridlock Sam to prove to the province that his transportation plan for a major at-grade freeway would never cut it down our way.

We in Windsor are the gateway to Ontario, the first thing motoring visitors see when they enter Canada from Detroit, or the last thing they'll remember when they leave and drive across the border to Michigan. Windsor is the busiest border crossing point in North America.

My point, Speaker, is we, the people, don't have to accept what is suggested to us by government. We can fight for a better deal, a better transportation plan, a workable plan for our future needs that includes respect for our shared environment, a healthier environment. Governments—federal, provincial, regional, municipal—or Metrolinx and railways don't have all the answers, all the best answers. They can be pressured to develop better plans.

Governments come and go. Planners come and go. But the homeowners stay and have to live with what's in their backyards, their front yards and what runs below and above their properties. That's why public input is so important to the future plans for transit and transportation.

Well, Speaker, I'm almost out of time,
So with your okay, just a bit more of rhyme:
As I end with how I begun,
Having just a bit of fun,
I hope no one took offence
If I used a little pretense
Just to make a point or two,
But transit planning is a very hard thing to do.

Without the use of a crystal ball,
Traffic snarls and trains slow to a crawl.
But that's why we have opposition politicians,
With our suppositions and conditions.
Our nature is to have suspicions,
Hoping the government will withdraw
A bad plan that should be improved before it becomes
law.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Well, I see that the member from Windsor–Tecumseh has now sat, but I think it's safe to say he is the Legislature's poet baccalaureate.

It's now time for questions.

Mr. Roman Baber: I've been listening to my friend from Windsor comparing the downtown relief line and the Ontario Line, and I thought I'd add the following to the debate:

The relief line goes up and down, up and down, up and down,

But the Ontario Line goes up and down, up and down,
And all across downtown.

Yes? No? Okay.

Interjection.

Mr. Roman Baber: Well, I mean—all right, all right. I've got another one. With respect to the Ontario Line, I thought I'd add the following to the debate:

On the first day of Christmas my friend said to me:

“Let's go walk in Leslieville and the Ontario Line will get us there”—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Question?

Mr. Roman Baber: Okay. I'm going to come back my next time around.

But isn't it true that the Ontario Line is a much better design than the relief line?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: What a good effort, the member for York.

Earlier today, the associate minister said it was time for new ideas, saying, “Out with the old. It's time to be bold.”

So my suggestion would serve her well:

Consult with and consider the advice of University–Rosedale's Jessica Bell.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Mr. Joel Harden: There once was a member from Windsor–Tecumseh

What an eloquent fellow is he.

He poses his questions with good rhyme and reason;

Even government members must agree.

But good elocutions

Must point to solutions,

So kindly expand on this:

Why build in a rush,

Lining pockets already stuffed

By P3 shysters taking us for a ride?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Look, we spent much of a day

Listening to the way

We build transit. Yet,

The Conservative budget shows it's a sure bet

No ifs, ands or buts

That when it comes to transit spending, there's been a \$700-million cut.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Mrs. Robin Martin: I want to thank the member from Windsor–Tecumseh for his very entertaining speech.

Our government wants to not only build transit, but we're looking to build quickly.

What taxpayer-friendly plan does the opposition have that would accomplish either of those things?

And don't be prickly.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: What could be worse

Than Metrolinx taking control of Eglinton at Bathurst?

Developers want to make money,
But transit project delays are never funny.
Sure, while you wait, you can have a coffee or a cappuccino,

But Woodbine is still getting a subway station at its casino.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Mr. Jamie West: Thanks to the member for Windsor–Tecumseh for 20 minutes of rhyming today.

The history of transit from my point of view

Is old projects are cancelled and in come the new.

To paraphrase him, the plans from Mike Harris go:

“Rip, rip, rip,

“Rip, rip, rip,

“Rip, rip, rip.”

Then the plans from the Libs go:

“Rip, rip, rip” all through the town.

Filled in with cement,

Or ripped up new plans,

Let’s cancel another;

Isn’t that grand?

My question, dear Speaker,

What I want to know

Is how can it be faster

When there’s more stops than GO?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Well, obviously, Speaker, the member from the Big Nickel

Has just put me in a big pickle.

Our critic was really vehement

About the lack of solid community benefit agreements.

For example, she gave a lesson on the impact on Little Jamaica.

It’s a small business unity;

That construction has harmed their community.

They’ve been very vocal

About the need to buy local.

And I say to you

That is missing in Bill 222.

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The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you. Further questions?

Mr. Mike Harris: I feel like tonight has become a little bit of a train wreck and has gotten a little off the rails perhaps.

I would like to ask the member from Windsor–Tecumseh, who I admire quite a bit and, after today, a great display of his prose, which we all know he is very fond of, but I want to ask a serious question.

If the way that this has been going for the last, dare we say, 50 or 60 years, and we’ve been using the same model in trying to build transit, and it just hasn’t worked, why is he so against and why is the NDP so against trying something new and putting some private sector investment into this and getting transit built faster for not only the people of Toronto but also the people of southwestern Ontario, the people of eastern Ontario and northern Ontario? Because, as we know, if we can get congestion off the roads, it helps goods travel to the other parts of the

province a lot faster and will mean that people will be able to have their goods and services come to them in a more timely manner and a cheaper cost.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: We talked earlier this evening to the member from Scarborough–Rouge Park about building faster, and I asked whether it was right to be building faster when we should be building more carefully and taking things into account, such as the environment, instead of trampling all over environmental concerns. But I heard the member for University–Rosedale say there’s nothing in Bill 222 today, and,

That’s deplorable that there’s nothing in there

To make bus fares more affordable.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much. Further questions?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I do agree with one thing: We need to get cars, trucks and buses off our roads to protect our environment. I think we all can agree to that. What we don’t agree to is—I’m going to try and find out why with my question. The Ontario NDP is calling on the Ford government to build transit using the public delivery model and to commit to made-in-Ontario targets to help the province recover from COVID and obviously create jobs. Why would you feel that way as a party?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: What a great question by the member from Niagara Falls, who started off talking about buses and climate change.

There’s a huge climate change challenge facing us

We’d do better to park our cars and take the bus.

But there is a caution:

People in the poorest neighbourhoods have few options.

So we need more buses and more trips a day

So these folks can get to work or home on time

Home especially—in time to play.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Mr. Roman Baber: I’m going to try again regarding the Ontario Line.

On the first day of Christmas, my friend said to me

Let’s go to Leslieville, and we’ll take the Ontario Line there.

On the second day of Christmas, my friend said to me

Let’s have dinner in Greektown

Let’s walk in Leslieville, and we’ll take the Ontario Line there.

On the third day of Christmas, my friend said to me

Let’s walk through the Beaches

Have dinner in Greektown,

Let’s walk through Leslieville, and we’ll take the Ontario Line there.

On the fourth day of Christmas, my friend said to me

Let’s see a show on King Street

Walk through the Beaches

Have dinner in Greektown

Hang out in Leslieville, and we'll take the Ontario Line there.

On the fifth day of Christmas, my friend said to me
 Let's hang out at Ontario Place
 Let's see a show on King Street
 Let's walk through the Beaches
 Let's have dinner in Greektown
 Let's hang out in Leslieville, and we'll take the Ontario Line there.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Question, please?

Mr. Roman Baber: Would you come with me, member from Tecumseh, please?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): To the member from Windsor–Tecumseh for that response.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you to my good friend, who is really having a good time this evening. Having almost as much time as I had—and, of course, because we're friends, I would go with you in your riding anytime once the restaurants and bars open up. I'll even buy the first round.

But I did have fun tonight, and I'd like to thank everybody for their patience. I don't think we do have enough time in this House. Earlier this evening, you saw some of the back and forth, the acrimony. The tone of the House was getting a little sharp. I think we lowered that a little bit for a little while, and I think the more we can do that sort of thing, it gives us a better time to get to know each other, a better time to say that we are all in this room together. We have to find a way out of the epidemic that we're in, and if we can have a little fun along the way, then all the better.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mrs. Robin Martin: Unfortunately, the member from Windsor–Tecumseh is a very difficult act to follow, especially tonight. So you'll forgive me; I don't have those talents to offer. I'll just do my speech. But I did very much enjoy his presentation.

Speaker, I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to speak in favour of Bill 222, the Ontario Rebuilding and Recovery Act. This bill includes a number of measures to accelerate the planning, design and construction of key infrastructure projects in our province, such as highways, public transit, transit-oriented communities and affordable housing.

I'm just going to try to stop for a second. I can't stop thinking of rhymes every time I read a word, so I have to focus—okay.

We all want these projects to be built and built quickly. Our constituents clearly demand more transit—I know mine do—and more highways and more affordable housing. But when it comes to getting significant infrastructure built, government can, at times, be its own worst enemy. We've seen it too many times before: All levels of government of all political stripes make commitments to build more, build faster, build bigger, but then those very same governments put up dozens of roadblocks, obstacles,

chicanes and a labyrinth of permits and approvals, all wrapped in insurmountable amounts of red tape that are enough to make anyone run for the hills. Projects that should take days take months, and projects that should take months take years, and projects that should take years take decades.

Speaker, what we have been saying since we formed government and what we are again saying today with this bill is that enough is enough. Dithering and delaying is no longer acceptable for the people of this province, not when we have underbuilt transit systems in our cities in desperate need of expansion, not when we have a lack of affordable housing and a plan to build more, not when we have major highway projects just waiting for the green light, and not when we have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to truly build transit-oriented communities.

So we're doing something unprecedented. We're going to clear away those barriers, we're going to accelerate the approval stages of key infrastructure projects, and we're going to actually get these projects built. Earlier this year, this House passed two key pieces of legislation to move us toward those goals. The Building Transit Faster Act, to refresh everyone's memory, expedites the planning, design and construction process for the four priority transit projects in the GTA, and the Transit-Oriented Communities Act, which was part of the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act, allows us to pursue transit-oriented community opportunities along those new subway corridors. Together, these measures will help us deliver a public transit network for the GTA that gives people a realistic, convenient and affordable alternative to driving.

Our \$28.5-billion new subway transit plan for the GTA will transform the region's outdated subway system into a more modern integrated rapid transit network that offers more options and reduces travel times to make life easier for the people. It constitutes the largest subway expansion in Canadian history, with four projects: the Ontario Line, a brand new 15.5-kilometre subway, double the length of Toronto's previously proposed downtown relief line; the Yonge North subway expansion from Finch station to Richmond Hill Centre, providing a rapid transit connection to York region; the predominantly underground Eglinton Crosstown West extension to increase transit access to Etobicoke and towards Toronto Pearson international airport; and the long-awaited three-stop Scarborough subway extension, connecting that part of the city with the rest of the rapid transit network, something that has been waited for, for a long time, by the people in that community.

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Speaker, we also recognize that the rest of Ontario has similar needs. By 2041, Ontario's population is expected to grow by about 30%, and our infrastructure needs will grow with it, and the COVID-19 pandemic has created an additional economic imperative to get these projects moving and get them moving now. This bill proposes three key changes to help us do just that:

(1) It allows the government to extend the measures included in the Building Transit Faster Act to other provincial transit projects, if designated by regulation.

(2) It proposes amendments to the Public Service Works on Highways Act for provisions related to the relocation of utilities on highway projects, similar to the measures that exist within our Building Transit Faster Act.

(3) It expands the measures contained in the Transit-Oriented Communities Act to other provincial transit projects.

It must be late; I keep stumbling over the words.

Some of the other provincial transit projects currently under way that could potentially benefit from these changes include GO rail expansion and light rail transit projects, such as the Finch West and the Hurontario LRT, which we heard about earlier.

Let me say this, Speaker: If someone wants to argue that these initiatives aren't necessary, if someone wants to argue that the status quo is just fine, I invite them to come to my riding, to come to speak with the residents and business owners on Eglinton Avenue West, who were promised a city-building transit project that would be operating by now. Speaker, it is sad but true: My constituents know all too well what happens when governments try to build a major transit project without even attempting to clear away the many roadblocks and hurdles that get in the way as they build these projects. They've been living through it on Eglinton for the last decade with the construction of the Eglinton Crosstown LRT.

This much-needed transit line is a prime example of an important transit project that has faced unnecessary and avoidable delays due to excessive amounts of time spent obtaining permits, licences and approvals. In fact, many of the provisions of the Building Transit Faster Act could have accelerated important aspects of that project. For example, approval requirements for road work on the road near Eglinton Station resulted in a delay of 85 days—85 days of delay on construction due to a single delay in approval. In addition, simply removing a shed where the LRT interfaced with GO expansion, as well as additional negotiations to relocate, took months to coordinate with the owner, resulting in extensive additional costs and, of course, the delay. These are just two examples at two locations along a 19-kilometre, 25-station rapid transit project. We could spend all day going through many more of these examples of avoidable and unnecessary delays, but I'm sure many other colleagues will want to comment on some of these things, so I'll just stop with those two examples that are ones that occurred in my riding.

Unfortunately, it's too late for the Building Transit Faster Act, the Ontario Rebuilding and Recovery Act or any other act of this Legislature to reverse the impact that construction has had on Eglinton Avenue through my community, lasting over a decade. Instead, we're left to make the best of a bad situation.

In March, the Minister of Transportation heard my concerns and the concerns of local businesses and pledged \$3 million in support for Eglinton businesses in the form of marketing, promotion and clean-up assistance. We're all very grateful for that support. It is certainly much needed. But it should never have been necessary in the first place. The measures passed in the Building Transit Faster

Act for the four priority transit projects—which are proposed in this bill for other projects—could have saved three years on the delivery of the Eglinton Crosstown. That's three years of unnecessary congestion for residents and lost foot traffic—and street traffic, frankly—for businesses along Eglinton. And that's without COVID-19.

Unfortunately, no meaningful effort was ever taken by the previous government to ensure that this project could be completed faster by removing the many obstacles that stood in its way. No consideration was ever given to using this massive investment as an opportunity to develop complete transit-oriented communities or to help address our city's growing affordable housing crisis.

This was all avoidable. Had the previous Liberal government, supported by the NDP, simply had the foresight to think ahead to remove barriers, to streamline approvals, had they introduced these exact same measures, we would be riding those trains right now, and Eglinton would be thriving once again. Unfortunately, all we are left with is the opportunity to learn from our past mistakes.

Speaker, our partners are ready to roll up their sleeves and help. When this bill came forward to the Standing Committee on Social Policy last week, we heard from stakeholders who are eager to move forward. Enbridge said, "We know the city of Toronto and government of Ontario are in need of priority transit projects and that Enbridge will be a helpful partner in ensuring that happens. Enbridge Gas, Infrastructure Ontario, Metrolinx and the province have been working collaboratively towards achieving many positive outcomes on the current four priority transit projects."

Speaker, as I said earlier, this isn't about changing the outcomes. In the case of Enbridge, any gas line that needs to be relocated for a major transit project will still need to be relocated. But this bill is really about making sure that the permits are issued in days or weeks, and not months and years, because the sooner the work can be completed, the sooner construction crews can clear out, the sooner residents can benefit from the new project and the sooner businesses on the surface can get back to normal.

On transit-oriented communities, we heard from the Ontario Home Builders' Association at committee. In their submission, they noted strong support for provincial efforts to expedite the delivery of transit projects of provincial significance by removing barriers and streamlining processes that may result in delays to the timely completion of these transit projects, while enhancing coordination and engagement with private sector stakeholders.

They noted how they have, for years, been raising the issue of the approvals process, and timelines for both new housing and major infrastructure projects taking far too long, being cumbersome, uncertain and expensive. They highlight how lengthy approvals processes have directly contributed to both our housing supply shortage and transit infrastructure deficiencies. We are committed to finally doing the hard work necessary to fix this, Speaker.

LiUNA also weighed in at committee. They made a point of emphasizing how Ontario is the heart of Canada's economy. In order to compete with world-class cities, we must have a seamlessly connected transportation network,

from highways to public transit to ports. This is the infrastructure that gets people into work on time, food to our grocery stores, essential supplies to all of our hospitals and long-term-care homes, and, in better times that are certainly ahead—I hope—brings families together. That's what we're looking for. They say that the province must make prudent investments which both address the challenges we face today, while planning for the future.

They highlighted how the government's recent legislation, such as the Building Transit Faster Act and the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act, laid the foundation for an ambitious delivery of new transit projects. The acts removed many layers of red tape, which have historically delayed construction and increased costs to the taxpayer.

The Ontario Rebuilding and Recovery Act connects and expands on previous legislation in a way which supports the cohesive development of community infrastructure around our public transit and highway networks. They also emphasize how the facilitation of transit-oriented communities proposed in Bill 222 accounts for the growing need for housing infrastructure as our cities grow.

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Perhaps unsurprisingly, these are all points that we feel strongly about on this side of the House. We must ensure other communities in this city and in this province don't have to go through the same protracted agony mine is going through right until this day. We will get transit built. We will get it built as quickly as possible, and we will get it right the first time. We will build sustainable and attractive communities around these transit projects.

Of course, this bill is not exclusive to public transit projects and transit-oriented development, though most of my remarks have focused on that. It also allows us to accelerate key highway transportation projects so we can build a complete provincial transportation network for all modes of travel. It also allows us to accelerate the construction of new and modern long-term-care facilities, which I'm sure all members will agree are badly needed for the sector. It allows us to rapidly accelerate the expansion of broadband Internet, which I know is of great importance to my colleagues from northern and rural areas of the province. It allows us, through the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, to help workers and employers alike by increasing apprentice registration and training opportunities through major infrastructure projects.

That's what this bill offers to the people of Ontario. I think it offers a great deal. It's a good package of things that are important to the people of Ontario, so I encourage everyone with me to support this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions?

Mr. Guy Bourgoïn: Thank you to the member from Eglinton–Lawrence. I'm going to try my question again that I tried with one of your colleagues but did not get an answer on. So I'm going to try it with you. If I don't get it this time, I'll try in French next time.

In northern Ontario, we're happy that you're getting transit. We're happy that you're getting these extra highway lanes. On this side of the House, we question how it's

getting done, but that's part of our job. What I'm asking, though, is that in your budget, there's zero mention—zero mention—of the Northlander, the train that would leave Cochrane and come to Toronto.

A lot of my constituents don't have cars. So I'm asking the member, can you explain to northern Ontario, les enfants pauvres du gouvernement, why we're not getting our Northlander? That was a promise that you made in the election.

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you to the member from Mushkegowuk–James Bay. I'm afraid I can't give you a direct answer to that question either. I've been so focused on the transit opportunities here in Toronto that I'm not going to be able to satisfy your desire for an answer, but hopefully you'll find somebody else, or the minister herself or the associate minister, who can answer.

I did mention a few things in my speech about the good things that are in there for the north, like our expansion of broadband. We know that that's very important to northern and rural communities as well. It's so important in this day and age to have access to Internet and Internet that is working and fast enough so that you can download the things you need to download, especially in the COVID-19 era—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much. Further questions?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: My question to the member for Eglinton–Lawrence: For a lot of the things we do, it's important to start now so that we can look to the future and how it's going to help the next generation.

I want to ask the member from Eglinton–Lawrence how this transit initiative is going to help the environment, but also how it's actually going to help the next generation get to where they need to get to conveniently.

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you to the member for Barrie–Innisfil for the question.

I think transit is such a big part of making sure we get people out of automobiles. Obviously, it is going to be good for the environment if more people are using transit.

I live in an area which is very well served by transit already. Both the Yonge line and the University line go through my riding. I think we have seven subway stops. We're about to have nine Eglinton LRT stops, when that opens. It's a growing community. There are more and more people all the time. It's right in the centre of the city of Toronto, so it's still crowded on the subways. Some of the projects that we're planning are going to relieve some of the pressure on those lines.

Frankly, for young people getting around, this is the way of the future. We don't need to have as many cars, especially not in crowded cities. So I think this is going to be great for the future of Toronto.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm not so sure how the workplace is going to be after COVID-19, with more and more people working from home. So I really believe you should take another look at transit.

When we talked today mostly about P3s, I just happened to look up—on July 11, 2018, Metrolinx ended up in court with a company, Crosslinx Transit Solutions. What they were suing Metrolinx for—more time and more money on delay to the light rail line. The problem with P3s is, you end up in court, at a big cost to taxpayers.

My question to you is, if we know that publicly funded, publicly delivered is cheaper, why do you continue to support P3s, knowing these types of projects ended up in court costing taxpayers billions of dollars?

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you to the member from Niagara Falls for his question. I don't accept the premise of your question, that public-led projects are cheaper. I don't accept that at all.

I don't know if you know, but I practised as a lawyer downtown for many years. Whether they're involving government or public parties or private parties, all big projects have contentious issues that have to be worked out, and often they end up in court. It doesn't matter who the parties are; this is what happens in complex projects. I've talked to many people involved in P3 projects, and they're not perfect, but what they do is, they allow the transfer of risk away from taxpayers and onto corporations. If taxpayers have less risk, it's going to cost them less. They'll be less on the hook in the future, which is exactly what we want to achieve.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Mr. Mike Harris: Just on the topic of P3s: I think it's somewhere in the neighbourhood of 89% to 90% of P3 projects come in on time and on budget, and often under budget and before or ahead of schedule.

When we look at the status quo—and I think that's what we're talking about here tonight—the status quo isn't working. We've been dithering over trying to build these subway projects and other large-scale infrastructure projects in the province for decades.

There's lots of talk about Mike Harris tonight, so maybe let's go back to that. That's what really kicked off a lot of this, in trying to move these things forward—and then they've just gotten bogged down under the previous government, over the last two decades.

We're here and we're trying to make a difference. We're trying to build transit faster.

I'm going to ask a question to the member for Eglinton–Lawrence that I also asked the member from Windsor–Tecumseh: If we can build transit faster, build transit better, get more cars and trucks and whatnot off the street, how is that going to impact people in outlying areas, not just in Toronto?

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you to the member from Kitchener–Conestoga for the question.

I think it's critical that we do these things as quickly as we can. Any good project would be getting these things done as quickly as possible. It's good planning to try to remove the barriers and obstacles and have these things achieved faster.

If we get the congestion out of the city, it's going to make the whole region move better. People won't have to

necessarily drive into the city. There will be transit opportunities. This legislation goes outside of the city as well for projects for public highways, and also for the Hurontario LRT, for example. I think in many ways it's going to help the whole region function more as a transportation—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you. Further questions?

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Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I was shocked to hear that the member from Niagara Falls believes that we shouldn't invest in transit. I wonder what he would tell the students in Niagara about how they're supposed to get to school. But maybe that's the secret plan of the NDP, actually liking online learning.

Can the member from Eglinton–Lawrence talk about how this is going to improve the quality of life by investing in transit and long-term care?

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you to the member from Barrie–Innisfil for the question. I do think it is important that students at universities have access to transit and can get around. Even students going to high schools often are on the subway. I know my daughter walked, took a subway and then a bus. It took a long time for her to get to her school every day. It is important to improve those conveniences. It's also safer, frankly, for them.

I really do think there are great opportunities here. There is, as you mentioned, the opportunity to build more long-term care, which we all know is desperately needed. Anything to help these projects be done quicker is going to relieve some of the pressure on the hospitals.

Also, right now I think we have over 30,000 people on a wait-list to get into long-term-care homes, and that is so hard on those people. They haven't got any place where they can go where they can be properly looked after. Nobody wants to be in a hospital all that time.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): There isn't enough time for further questions and responses, but there is time for further debate. I recognize the member from the Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'm happy to be able to put a few words on the record regarding Bill 222, Ontario Rebuilding and Recovery Act. Earlier—it seems like a long time ago, but it was tonight—the Minister of Transportation started her talk about the Ontario Rebuilding and Recovery Act talking about previous governments, that whenever they faced a turn in the economy they looked at building transit and building infrastructure.

She started with Franklin D. Roosevelt following the Great Depression. What did this government do? They invested in infrastructure and they invested partly in transportation infrastructure. Then she went on to the Second World War and talked about, how do you get the economy going again after? The government put out a stimulus package to invest in infrastructure, including transportation infrastructure. Then she pointed to the federal government. In 2008, after the downturn in the economy, how did we pull out of this? Through investing in infrastructure and transportation.

This is 2020, Speaker. We don't have to keep the same recipe as to how to rebuild the economy after a downturn. In 2020, we have to realize that we are living through an environmental crisis that needs to be taken into account when you look at how your recovery will be.

When you look at the pandemic, of the thousands of workers who have lost their jobs, they are mainly women. And I'm sorry, as much as I would love for women to be into the trades—I'm really proud that my youngest, Jessica, is an industrial electrician. She went into the trade. She works with, I don't know, 128 guys and her. I'm really proud. But it's still 128 guys and her. This is what investing in rebuilding infrastructure, including transportation infrastructure, does: It creates good jobs for men. Right now with the pandemic, the downturn in the economy we are looking at, who are the people who are weathering and carrying that load? They are mainly women.

Why can't we go out of the box for once—the box that was started after the Great Recession and World War One—and look at this recession through the eyes of 2020, through the eyes of: What does our environment need and what do the people affected need?

I have nothing against public transit, Speaker. I don't have any public transit where I live; I would love to have some. We used to have a little bit of public transit in northern Ontario. I remember when we used to have the Northlander train that allowed us to go from northern Ontario right to downtown Toronto. It brought you to Union Station.

In northern Ontario—there are a lot of health services that are not available in northern Ontario. We get sent down to Toronto or Ottawa to have those. The Northlander was perfect, because even if you're sick, even if you have a disability, even if you're in a wheelchair or blind or whatever else, a train is easy to manoeuvre. You can walk. You can go to the bathroom. You can talk. You can work. You can do a whole lot of things that you cannot do on a bus. For somebody who is sick, for somebody that has cancer and needs to come down here for a PET scan, because we did not have a PET scan in northern Ontario—they just did not have the energy to do this, once the Liberal government decided to divest from the Northlander. That was a very fancy word that means, "We're not having a train anymore."

The hardship it has caused and continues to cause to a lot of our vulnerable, our sick people of northern Ontario is atrocious. I remember it was Minister Rick Bartolucci who made that decision back then. I remember the member for North Bay standing with me and all of the MPPs from the north standing together, saying, "That cannot be. This is our public transit. This is what public transit looks like for a northerner. To take this away is taking away our public transit."

What Liberals told us at the time is that it cost them millions of dollars to keep the Northlander going. What we were saying is that the government invests in every other public transit. You look at the subway in Toronto; you look at GO; you look at the buses. They are all

supported by the taxpayers, but the one public transit we had in northern Ontario, our train, apparently the government could not invest a penny in there. This is wrong.

So we lost the Northlander. Then most of the rest of the bus service was handled by Greyhound. The deals with the buses used to be that they would sign a contract to gain access to some of the very popular routes where there's a lot of money to be made. But in exchange for getting those contracts for the high-density routes, they would have to service some of the other routes. That's a code name for: they would have to service the people that I represent in northeastern Ontario.

Well, those contracts got changed and changed and changed. Apparently, if you let competition between the travel industry, you will see that the prices will go down and we will have better service. Maybe the price between Ottawa and Toronto went down, but what also went down is that they were not interested in serving the north anymore. There's not enough density of population for us. The distances are huge. They were not making any money. In 2018, Greyhound cancelled all of their buses west of Sudbury. That was it. That was all. No more. We had no more.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Shame.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It was a real shame, and it was something that could have all been prevented. It did not have to end this way. Other provinces made other decisions regarding their contracts with bus services, and basically it stayed the same that Ontario had been for a long time. If you want the lucrative contract between Toronto and Ottawa, if you want the lucrative contract between Kingston and Toronto or Hamilton and Toronto and all of those, you will have to pick up some of the other ones. But Ontario did not do this.

We pretended that the competition between many transporters was going to meet our needs. That was a complete fail, and the results speak for themselves. We got Ontario Northland that has a few buses now that covered west of Sudbury, but it's really iffy. You better plan for a long time if you need to get anywhere.

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My son, his wife and their three kids decided to come and visit me in Toronto. As a treat for the kids, because they had never taken the train before, they decided to take the train from Sudbury to Toronto just to make it a special treat for the kids. That was a disaster. The train was eight hours late leaving Sudbury. Rather than leaving at, I think it was supposed to be at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, they ended up leaving at 11. They got sidetracked because, apparently, merchandise trains got priority over a people train.

Anyway, Sudbury-Toronto usually takes about four and a half hours, depending on who's driving; it took about three times that amount of time before they made it to Toronto, and it was the same thing going back. Their train was supposed to leave Union Station at 1; they stayed at Union Station until midnight with three little kids to get the train back. No more of that. That was with CN. That was not with the Ontario Northland, because it had been

ended by then. Ontario Northland was on time. It provided a good service based on our needs. You were able to leave in the morning, go to your appointment in Toronto and come back at night. None of this is available to the people of the north anymore.

Another thing I want to talk about is what is called the Budd Car. The Budd Car is also a train that leaves Sudbury and goes to White River. All along this route are a whole bunch of people who live there, and this is their only point of access. There is no road. There is no—nothing. You either fly to where you go—if you live close to a lake you will land on a lake and then go to where you're going, but, for most people, you get on a train and you tell the conductor when you want to get off, he stops the train, you get your stuff off; and, when you're ready to get back on, you watch for the train to come by, you wave him down, he stops the train, you get your canoes, you get your backpacks, you get your everything and you go back on.

This summer during the pandemic, while everybody was looking for a safe place to distance and stay apart and everything—come to northern Ontario. Two metres apart? No problem. You can be two kilometres apart from the next person. It was really easy to do and a good place. Except that they decided to have one train a week. The train would leave on Saturday, go to White River, and come back on Sunday. That means that if guests left Sudbury on Saturday, got dropped off—we have beautiful, beautiful outfitter lodges that are all along the train route—they would be there for the whole week because the train didn't come back until Sunday, but that means that when the next train came, the people were still there because the train only came once.

We used to have three trains, one on Tuesday, one on Thursday and one on Saturday, all through the summer. Again, just by decreasing the train schedule, that means that all of those outfitters had to do one week with guests and one week with no guests, because, otherwise, on a Saturday night, they ended up with a double cohort where there was nowhere for those people to stay. It was tough. It was hard for the outfitters.

I mean, borders were closed. Usually there are a ton of people from the States who come to my riding through the summer because Nickel Belt is just beautiful, and you should come and see it if you've never seen it. The outfitters were able to pivot and get new guests, and then the transit did not work. I'm afraid that for a few of them they're not going to be there next summer because they were not able to make any money. Most of them make money from June, sometimes after the bugs are gone, more like toward the end of June, until September. And for this summer, it was a complete disaster.

When we look at what is in the bill, where they want to build transit—again, I'm all for building transit. I'm all for rebuilding Ontario and recovery. They speak a lot about Internet and cell service. About 40,000 people in my riding have no or really, really poor Internet service. I'm one of those 40,000 people. When the government announced that there were millions of dollars to bring Internet to northern rural Ontario, I said, “Hey, this is me, northern

rural Ontario. There's millions of dollars. We're going to get WiFi.”

So I phoned them all and said, “Are you guys—I'm ready to write you letters of support to say come, and any project that you have I will support.” Only one of them, Sunwire, is putting one tower not quite in my riding. It's actually outside of my riding, southeast of my riding, but it will cover about 40 houses that are in Nickel Belt. Why? They all said the same thing: It doesn't matter if the government pays for the entire infrastructure, there is no money to be made in setting up WiFi in Biscotasing, Westree, Shining Tree, Mattagami, Ivanhoe Lake, Cartier, or—I could name you 33 communities in Nickel Belt where there will never be any money to be made and all of this set-up, this P3, this public-private partnership that the government wants to put in place, none of them will ever do this.

We used to have Ontera. Ontera was government-run Internet access. It covered most of my riding, because even back then nobody saw any money to be made, so Ontera was the one that was providing us with Internet. At the time, it was as good as anybody else in town was having, and it was of a regular price. The Liberals gave Ontera to Bell with a promise that Bell was to maintain the service. Let me tell you what that promise means, Speaker. It means that from that day on, if you were not a customer of Ontera, nobody is allowed to join in. If you're going to be out of the country for a few months and want to disconnect, you will never be allowed to reconnect. And since they got the equipment, they never updated it. So what looked like pretty good Internet service in 2014, fast-forward to 2020, it's not up to snuff anymore. It needs to change. For the Government to think that we should be ecstatic about the millions of dollars they've put on the table for Internet in northern and rural Ontario, I can guarantee you, for the 33 little communities of Nickel Belt, one of them Wahnapiatae in the southeast of my riding, about 40 houses are going to be helped. For the other 40,000 residents of Nickel Belt who don't have access, it's not going to change anything—same thing with cell service.

The last thing the government talked about lots was their new beds for long-term care. I want everybody to realize that the pandemic has shown us what anybody who works in health care and long-term care already knew: Our long-term-care system fails a lot of our frail, elderly seniors. Why? Because they cannot recruit and retain a stable workforce. Why? Because PSW jobs don't pay. It's part-time, has no benefits, has no sick plan, has no pension plan. They're not good jobs.

How do you fix this, Speaker? It's easy: You make PSW jobs careers. You give them full-time work, good pay. You give them benefits, sick days, a pension plan and a workload that a human being can handle. And there are a lot, mainly women, who are very good at being a PSW, but right now they cannot make ends meet when they choose to work in those jobs. It's all fine and good to say, “We will have thousands of new beds in long-term care,” but what good are they if you haven't got any staff?

2220

The member from Ottawa South, I think—

Interjection: Centre.

M^{me} France Gélinas: —Ottawa Centre—I always do that wrong—was talking about a long-term-care home in Ottawa that had over a hundred beds empty. Why? Because they haven't got any staff to fill them.

To build new homes under the old model of 128 beds per home or multiples of 128 beds per home is the old way of thinking. Look at the NDP plan. We have put forward a plan that shows that there are other models of care that meet the needs of people who need long-term care, models of care that can be integrated into different communities, be it a First Nation community or a francophone community or a northern and rural community, which I serve. There will never be 128 beds in Gogama. There's 290 people in Gogama, so all of them would have to be in long-term care. But we could have different models that would serve the needs of Nickel Belt and many other communities. I'm not as excited as they are about building new beds if we don't change the systemic problems that we have with recruitment and retention of staff.

I know there were many other things that I wanted to mention, but I see that I only have a few seconds. You've been very patient with me, Speaker. I'm all for transit. I sure wish that the government would realize what transit looks like in northern Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions?

Mr. Vincent Ke: In Ontario, particularly in Toronto, our subways are 30 years behind. The impact of this is preventing us to create jobs, grow our economy, and is holding Ontario from moving forward. Red tape crimps our economy and creates delays for projects like the ones we are speaking about a lot today.

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have created an agency to get shovels in the ground faster. My question to the member for Nickel Belt is, does the opposition believe that the pandemic's impacts have brought enough incentives to build faster infrastructure quickly?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I wish I could be as excited as the people on the other side of the room when they talk about shovel-ready projects. Experience has shown us that it's not always the shovel-ready project that is the best project. It's not always the one that is the most needed.

It's not because it's ready now that it is a priority. It's a priority for the government to be able to make an announcement, to be able to have a photo op and to be able to say, "Look, we're moving forward." But for individual communities, take the time to listen to them. They are the ones who know what they need. They are the ones who understand how things work. Sometimes, it takes a little bit longer to take time to have meaningful conversations with the people affected, but at the end, you will have a priority project rather than a shovel-ready project. They're not always the same.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Mr. Jamie West: Thank you to the member from Nickel Belt for her perspective of the north.

Looking at the clock, it's almost 10:30. I remember when I was 16, my girlfriend lived in Nickel Belt, in Hanmer. The last bus was at 10 o'clock. Decades later, I still don't know if E.T. ever got home.

She talked about the Northlander and the importance of Northlander train service. One of the comments I think is really important to emphasize, especially if you're not from the north, is the importance of the Northlander train service for medical service in the south, especially during snowstorms and bad weather. Could you please expand on that?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Oh, absolutely. Ontario Northland was a train we had that left Cochrane and went all the way to Toronto. That train was cancelled by the Liberals. The Conservatives promised to bring it back. It has now been two and a half years, and it's still not back. The difference is that a train offers you a level of comfort that a bus doesn't. If you are sick, needing tertiary care in southern Ontario that you're not able to get in northern Ontario, it makes the trip possible. But for a lot of people, once the train was not there any more, they just gave up on their treatment. They just could not make themselves get on the bus, to have to sleep over in Toronto and come back. They just did not have the energy to do this and just said no to treatment. It's just a huge difference. A train is way more comfortable for a sick person than a bus will ever be.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Mr. Kaled Rasheed: Our government has a 10-year, \$144-billion infrastructure plan that will ensure our province is ready for the future. That includes more than \$66 billion. Almost half of our entire infrastructure plan is for public transit. Would the member from Nickel Belt agree that Ontarians would benefit from these significant investments that our government is currently making as well as proposing for the future?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would say there's a great chance that Ontarians will be able to benefit from investments of this magnitude. I don't wish any harm upon any of you, but there's a good chance you won't be there in 10 years, and neither will I. So it is a whole lot more meaningful to say what you're going to do during this mandate. To invest \$144 billion over 10 years—if \$140 billion of this comes in the ninth year and only \$4 billion in the first eight years, it's not that helpful. It's good to have a long-term plan. It is a lot of money. Investing in transit are all things that are positive. But all I can tell you is that it has a chance of helping, not necessarily, until we actually see this money starting to flow.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It's always a pleasure to listen to my colleague the member from Nickel Belt. She started out her remarks by commenting on the fact that the pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on women and, in particular, women workers. If she was here for the speech of our member for University–Rosedale, she would've heard the member for University–Rosedale talk about the fact that community benefit agreements—which

have not been included in Bill 222—but those are the kinds of tools that can be used to increase assets that are particularly valuable for women; for example, community centres, child care centres, seniors' homes, long-term-care homes, where women work. I wondered if the member wanted to comment on the value of community benefit agreements.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Absolutely. The NDP pushed hard to try to put amendments to the bill so that community benefit agreements would be included in. Whenever you work with the private sector—the private sector is there to make money. There is nothing wrong in making money. We all do. I come here to work because you pay me to work; otherwise, I wouldn't be here. There's nothing wrong with this. But you have to realize that when you're building infrastructure for transportation, you are building a public good. This view of making sure that you have benefits from your public good means community benefit agreements. It means that you're not going to have a whole bunch of new houses around your subway station. It means that you will have rent geared to incomes. You will have subsidized housing, you will have daycares; you will have a school; you will have a park; you will have what a community needs, and usually that means what women need.

2230

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I just wanted to ask the respected member opposite—she speaks to every bill, and I admire her for that, because she always has countless things to say.

But as someone who is close to northern Ontario, I heard input about this bill and the fact of how much employment it's going to create in all regions of Ontario, not just downtown. Decast, which is located next door to my riding, provide a lot of the moulding. So my question to the member opposite is, what is she doing to work with her local trades companies and some of the young people there to bring them up to speed as to the big projects that are creating employment in all parts of Ontario, not just downtown?

M^{me} France Gélinas: My riding is called Nickel Belt because all of the nickel mines are in my riding. People think that the nickel mines are in Sudbury; no, they're all in my riding. I have a brand new gold mine that is being grown. Although we call them nickel mines, they have a number of other metals that are all useful in any kind of infrastructure construction. So for the mining industry—that is the bread and butter of most of the people of Nickel Belt—whenever the government invests in infrastructure, it means good news for the people that I represent. It means the demand for the minerals that come out of the ground will continue to be high and to be local.

For us, for Nickel Belt, that is always good news, and people will continue. The jobs in mining have been unionized for a long time. They're good jobs. They're well protected and they support families.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Hon. Paul Calandra: I appreciate the opportunity to rise and say a few words tonight on this debate. I want to, obviously, thank all the members who have participated, and of course, my colleagues the ministers and the parliamentary assistant and, in particular, the Premier, who is has had a vision for transit and transportation growth throughout the province of Ontario—not just in the GTA, but across the whole province.

The Speaker will know there have been significant investments in roads and transportation in his neck of the woods. My own riding, along the 404, we're seeing expansions there. I know a lot of colleagues that are seeing those expansions and also some investments in their local transit systems. There is a lot to look forward to. There are a lot of good things that are happening across the province of Ontario, ostensibly because the government has put a priority on transit and transportation.

One of the reasons we put such a priority on transit and transportation, Speaker, you will know, is because we understand how important it is to building a strong economy for the province of Ontario. Really, we saw this—if we learned anything out of the 2008 recession in Canada, it was that, as difficult a time as that was, it was also a very good time to make the types of investments that an economy needs in order to ensure that as it comes out of a recession, it can succeed, that it has all the tools and resources that it needs to succeed.

In 2008, that was investments in roads and bridges. It was investments in transit corridors so that we could improve our trade and access to our partners in the United States. We saw that through a rapid build. Today, we certainly knew when we were elected—and all of us ran on a platform of ensuring that we increased transit and transportation because we knew how important it was to our community.

Gridlock—you've heard me talk about it a lot. It would take upwards of two hours for me to get here, 50 kilometres away. I know that's unacceptable to everybody in the House, not just for me and my constituents. But we've done other great things. When you look at the improvements in the GO train system in and across southern Ontario—hugely, hugely important. I know we have better access to Niagara Falls. We have two-way, all-day GO train from my community—something that we wanted and fought for, for a very long time—and a new GO train station in my riding, the new Stouffville Old Elm station, which is finally under construction. So there are a lot of good things going, Mr. Speaker.

But I look back fondly on everything that the Conservatives have done with respect to building transit and transportation in the province of Ontario. If you'll indulge me, Mr. Speaker, I know before the first subway was built—we talk about it a lot, how there have been delays, delays, delays, and it frustrates us. I think it frustrates most members when there are delays. But the first subway built in Toronto opened up in 1954. Planning for that started in 1911, Speaker, and it wasn't until 1954 that they were able to get that going.

As I said, Speaker, if you'll indulge me, the first subway opened on March 30, 1954, in Toronto. You'll recall that of course that was a Conservative government that made the investments and got that done. There was an expansion on the University subway line that opened on February 28, 1963, and that was a Conservative government that got that done;

—February 25, 1966, expansion of the Bloor-Danforth: a Conservative government, again, got that done;

—May 10, 1968, further expansions to Islington and to Warden: a Conservative government got that done;

—May 30, 1973, expansion on the Yonge line: a Conservative government got that done;

—1974: a Conservative government got that done;

—1978: a Conservative government got that done;

—1980: a Conservative government got that done;

—March 22, 1985: Mr. Speaker, Conservative government funding got that done as well.

Now, the Liberals, to their credit, did do a couple. Well, I digress; they did one. In 1987, they got one done.

But then, Speaker, the next great subway builder in the province of Ontario was none other than Premier Mike Harris. In 1996, we saw an expansion open up on Sheppard—thank you, Mike Harris. In 2002, another expansion—thank you, Mike Harris. And, Mr. Speaker, in 2017, it was a federal Conservative government that made sure that the funding was in place to expand subway service for York University and on the western part of the GTA.

Those important investments were made by Conservative governments, always in the face of opposition from other parties, Mr. Speaker, so when it comes to building transit and transportation, there is only one party in the province of Ontario that has ever got the job done for the people of the province of Ontario, and it has been the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario—always, always. And one of the reasons we're able to do that is because we understand that in order to pay for things like transit and transportation, you have to have an economy that provides you the wealth to do that. That's why this government has focused on making sure that we have a good, vibrant economy. We have always done that as Progressive Conservatives.

Colleagues will know that when this Progressive Conservative government brought in socialized medicine, it was against the howls of other people. But it was a Progressive Conservative government that brought in socialized medicine in the province of Ontario. We did that and were able to afford that because we had a vibrant and strong economy.

The only time, Speaker, when we have fallen down in our responsibility to grow is when other parties thought of other things. We had the disastrous time, that one time between 1990 and 1995, the one time when the NDP were given the honour of serving the people of the province of Ontario. Now, they didn't build any subways in their time, because they had no money. The economy was tanking. There were more than a million people who were out of

jobs. It was a horrible time for the people of the province of Ontario.

Now, they were left—if I can defend them in a way—with a horrible situation by a Liberal government who also left the province, as they do so often, without funds. Now, the Liberals, of course—and we certainly heard it tonight, actually—always make these big, giant, massive promises. The problem with Liberals is they never actually come through with their promises, Speaker.

It was interesting tonight to hear the member for Ottawa-Vanier when the member for Carleton talked about the light rail system in Ottawa, a system that was under the guidance of the member of Ottawa-Vanier, that was over budget, late and doesn't work.

2240

Now some colleagues of mine are old enough—I'm a lot older than other colleagues in here, I suppose. I remember a song—and I was just listening to it earlier today—from Shaggy. Speaker, you'll remember that song from Shaggy, *It Wasn't Me*. It doesn't work on time for the Liberals—it wasn't him. It was over budget—it wasn't him. It doesn't work—it wasn't him. Everything single thing and every single criticism—it wasn't him.

That's fine, because on this side of the House we just get it done. That's what we do all of the time, Mr. Speaker. This is another opportunity for us to get things done for the people of the province of Ontario. Even in times of a pandemic, Speaker, when the rest of the world and the rest of the country have seen their economies slow, we have made a commitment to the people of the province of Ontario that not only are we going to battle the pandemic, not only are we going to do everything we can to flatten the curve, it's because of the things we have done that we are better positioned than any other province in Canada. We have done better than any other province in Canada, and I think we should all be proud of that.

I know some of the members talked about long-term care. Some of the modifications and changes that this government has made with respect to the building of long-term care will help us build on that capacity, and that's within the legislation that this House has passed.

I know some of the members opposite have lamented the use of an MZO, and I've heard it in a community not far from mine. We have an MZO that has brought us a new long-term-care home for 200 people. That's good news for the people of the province of Ontario.

We see the transition to Ontario health teams. That's very important because as we exit out of the pandemic, Ontario will be better placed than any other jurisdiction to make sure that the lessons learned from COVID-19 are actioned, that we have a better health care system, that our economy is better, and the way we'll have a better economy is by seizing on the things that we have learned during the pandemic, seizing on the things that we have learned during other recessions and making sure that we come out of it stronger than ever before. That's what transit and transportation do.

Now we can sit in this House and debate, delay and obfuscate for years on this, but at some time we just have

to get the job done, and that's what this legislation allows us to do. We will look back at the debates that saw anger and rancour over the Yonge subway extension from 1911 all the way to 1950, where everybody disagreed with it and no one wanted to get it done, and, "It would ruin the character of the city of Toronto." You know what? It got done, and now we're all here saying what an important improvement that was for the province of Ontario and the city of Toronto.

I know the member for Nickel Belt talks about Internet access in northern Ontario. Let's not forget that Ontario and Toronto provide not only a massive amount of investments for the rest of the province of Ontario—it provides wealth and opportunity for all of Canada. It really does. It is the engine that drives Ontario, but it is also the engine that drives Canada. So it is in our best interest to ensure transit and transportation so that people can get around the GTHA, not only from my area of Markham but all the way from Kitchener through Waterloo through Windsor, which is so important.

I remember the debates, and I don't know if the member opposite is in favour of it or not, but the Gordie Howe bridge—the importance of getting that done.

I remember being at the federal table and arguing with respect to whether we needed a new bridge or not. We knew how important it was to get a new bridge across from Windsor to the United States. We knew how important it was because Ontario—Canada is a trading nation, and that's how we build wealth and prosperity that help pay for the things that the members opposite fight for and have fought for in this House for generations.

They fight for many of the same things we fight for. We all want better long-term care. We all want better health care. We all want housing for people who can't afford to pay for houses. We all want to provide resources for people who can't afford them. We want a strong social safety net in the province of Ontario. It was a Conservative government that brought in the social safety net in the province of Ontario. We want it to be sustainable, and the only way we're going to make it sustainable and more responsive to the people of the province of Ontario is if we have a strong, vibrant economy to do that. We may disagree on how it gets done, but we all agree on one thing: that we have to have an economy where people are working and that provides opportunity for people to succeed, and in part, transit and transportation do that.

It's not just about building subways. It's not just about improving GO train access. It is about bridges. It is about airports. It is about making southwestern Ontario more accessible. And, 100%, it's about high-speed rail. It is unacceptable that it should take two hours to get from Kitchener to Toronto; we should be able to do that in 45 minutes. But we have to make investments in order to get that done. We have to unleash the economic opportunity and prosperity in the province of Ontario, and we have to get obstacles out of the way. If we don't get obstacles out of the way, we will look back at our time in office and say that, like so many governments before, we weren't able to get the job done.

I don't think the people of the province of Ontario—whether we agree with it or not—look back on the last 15 years of Liberal government and say, "That was a successful time." In fact, it's just the opposite. They look back and say, "Look at the opportunity we lost in comparison to every other jurisdiction." We left the people of the province of Ontario one of the best hydroelectricity systems in the world, and we inherited from the Liberals one of the worst, one of the most expensive—a system that was driving people out of the province.

Manufacturing: We lost hundreds of thousands of jobs, not because we weren't making investments, not because our people weren't the best, but because we had red tape and we had high hydro. We drove jobs away from here—overregulation.

There's not one person on this side of the House who doesn't think that good regulation is important. We do think that good regulation is important. It's important for our workers. It's important for our economy. But overregulation does the opposite thing. So we look at that and we say that we can do better—and we have done better; we have always done better in the province of Ontario.

If we look back at the failings of the previous Liberal government with respect to transit and transportation, they didn't get enough done. We can do better.

If we look back at their failings on long-term care—whether you agree with it or not—you cannot deny the fact that 611 beds were built in the province of Ontario over the last 10 years. That is not a record of success that any of us should be proud of. We can do better, and we will do better.

There's nobody in this House who can look back over the last 15 years of Liberal government and say that our health care system is better now than it was before. It is getting better because we're learning from the things that we put in place—health teams. Markham–Stouffville has had a health team for over 10 years, and it is a beacon of success. It is why we are transitioning the system.

We took power in 2018 to start to right the ship. We are the most indebted sub-sovereign government. Great. It is what it is. We have to deal with that, absolutely. But while we deal with that—and we did right away. We started to cut the deficit immediately. We brought it down from \$15 billion to \$7 billion, and we knew we had more work to do.

We also knew that in order to create a vibrant economy we had to cut taxes. We had to invest in transit and transportation. We had to get red tape out of the system. We had to help improve the opportunities for our manufacturers. We had to take care of our energy sector so that it could prosper. We had to make sure we had resources in place for the least fortunate people of the province of Ontario, so that they could one day enjoy what all of us want to enjoy: the dignity of a good job. But if there were problems in between, they had to know that their government would be there for them and support them. And the changes we were making did that.

When COVID-19 struck the province of Ontario, we were ready. We were positioned better than we would

have been had the Liberals still been in office. There can be no doubt that the failings of the previous Liberal government are what made it even more difficult for us to tackle COVID-19. All members of this House will know—all members of this House will know—because all of us worked very hard from March right through to June. Many sat around the table as we were crafting a budget, as we were crafting initiatives. They will know how difficult it was, given the financial restraints that the province of Ontario was left, Speaker. We can do better, and we are.

Despite those financial restraints, we are still doing better than any other province and almost any other jurisdiction in North America, because we aren't afraid to make those investments. The reason we aren't afraid to make those investments, despite the catastrophic mess that the Liberals left us in, is because we know that the investments and the changes that we are making will leave us in a better position in the province of Ontario, and that our economy will come through it better than ever before.

I remember, as a staff member in 1995, the mess that was left to us. Imagine this, Mr. Speaker: In 1995, when Premier Harris took office, he was left with an \$11-billion deficit—in 1995. Think of the scale, of the magnitude, of the decisions that had to be made in the province of Ontario. Finance Minister Ernie Eves was laughed at when he went to New York to try and get money to keep the province of Ontario going. They had to make immediate decisions—and they did. They made immediate decisions in the province of Ontario, and those decisions helped us grow an economy. We created jobs faster than any other province in Canada, Speaker. We grew with jobs and business, and investment came back to the province of Ontario. But that was 1995, and in 2003—we lost a lot of time in between.

But we can do better, and we have always done better. So while there are a lot of things that we have left to do, we should all be proud of what this province has

accomplished. When you look at what this Legislature has accomplished during the time of COVID, I'll take what we have done in this place and put it next to any other Legislature, any other state assembly in North America. I think the people of Ontario have every reason to be proud of what we've accomplished here. We have kept the Legislature going from March.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I ask that the question now be put.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Mr. Calandra has moved that the question be now put, and I am satisfied that in fact there has been sufficient debate to allow this question to be put to the House.

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

All those in favour of the motion that the question now be put, please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion that the question now be put, please say "nay."

In my opinion the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, unless I receive a deferral slip—

"To the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario: Pursuant to standing order 30(h), I request that the vote on the motion for closure for third reading of Bill 222, An Act to amend various Acts in respect of transportation-related matters, be deferred until deferred votes on Thursday, December 3, 2020."

Vote deferred.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Orders of the day.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, no further business.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): There being no further business, this House will now stand adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock.

The House adjourned at 2254.

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Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
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
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues / Ministre associée déléguée au dossier de l'Enfance et à la Condition féminine Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Elliott, Hon. / L'hon. Christine (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fee, Amy (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Fullerton, Hon. / L'hon. Merrilee (PC)	Kanata—Carleton	Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Parm (PC)	Milton	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gravelle, Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Hardeman, Hon. / L'hon. Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hassan, Faisal (NDP)	York South—Weston / York-Sud— Weston	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor—Tecumseh	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hillier, Randy (IND)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Solicitor General / Solliciteure générale
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karahalios, Belinda C. (IND)	Cambridge	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Kramp, Daryl (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Kusendova, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga- Centre	
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
MacLeod, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa (PC)	Nepean	Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries / ministre des Industries du patrimoine, du sport, du tourisme et de la culture
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Miller, Norman (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	
Mitas, Christina Maria (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough- Centre	
Monteith-Farrell, Judith (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Morrison, Suze (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Park, Lindsey (PC)	Durham	
Parsa, Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Rod (PC)	Ajax	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Piccini, David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines / Ministre de l'Énergie, du Développement du Nord et des Mines Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Roberts, Jeremy (PC)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa- Ouest—Nepean	
Romano, Hon. / L'hon. Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction / Ministre associé délégué au dossier des Petites Entreprises et de la Réduction des formalités administratives Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Simard, Amanda (LIB)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Singh, Gurratan (NDP)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Singh, Sara (NDP)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Associate Minister of Transportation (GTA) / Ministre associée des Transports (RGT) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Walker, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Associate Minister of Energy / Ministre associé de l'Énergie Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Wilson, Jim (IND)	Simcoe—Grey	
Wynne, Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
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

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Wayne Gates
Lorne Coe, Rudy Cuzzetto
Wayne Gates, Randy Hillier
Andrea Khanjin, Jane McKenna
Judith Monteith-Farrell, Michael Parsa
Randy Pettapiece, Donna Skelly
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Thushitha Kobikrishna

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Amarjot Sandhu
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeremy Roberts
Ian Arthur, Stan Cho
Mitzie Hunter, Logan Kanapathi
Sol Mamakwa, David Piccini
Jeremy Roberts, Amarjot Sandhu
Sandy Shaw, Dave Smith
Vijay Thanigasalam
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Julia Douglas

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Présidente: Goldie Ghamari
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Mike Schreiner
Robert Bailey, Jessica Bell
Goldie Ghamari, Chris Glover
Mike Harris, Daryl Kramp
Sheref Sabawy, Amarjot Sandhu
Mike Schreiner, Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens
Daisy Wai
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Isaiah Thorning

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: John Vanthof
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
Will Bouma, Lorne Coe
Robin Martin, Norman Miller
Taras Natyshak, Rick Nicholls
Billy Pang, Amanda Simard
Marit Stiles, Nina Tangri
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Julia Douglas

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Roman Baber
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Roman Baber, Will Bouma
Lucille Collard, Parm Gill
Natalia Kusendova, Suze Morrison
Lindsey Park, Gurratan Singh
Nina Tangri, Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Kevin Yarde
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Thushitha Kobikrishna

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Kaleed Rasheed
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vijay Thanigasalam
Rima Berns-McGown, Michael Coteau
Faisal Hassan, Logan Kanapathi
Jim McDonell, Christina Maria Mitas
Sam Oosterhoff, Kaleed Rasheed
Sara Singh, Donna Skelly
Vijay Thanigasalam
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Select Committee on Emergency Management Oversight /
Comité spécial de la surveillance de la gestion des situations
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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Tom Rakocevic
Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson
John Fraser, Christine Hogarth
Daryl Kramp, Robin Martin
Sam Oosterhoff, Lindsey Park
Tom Rakocevic, Sara Singh
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell