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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 3 December 2020

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 3 décembre 2020

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ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

Mr. Calandra, on behalf of Mr. Sarkaria, moved third reading of the following bill:

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

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

Mrs. Nina Tangri: I'm happy to rise today to speak during third reading of the Better for People, Smarter for Business Act, 2020. I'm going to share my time this afternoon with my fellow PA, Donna Skelly, the member from Flamborough—Glanbrook.

The legislation we are debating today will help make government work better for people and smarter for business, as the name implies, throughout the pandemic and beyond. Under the act, we will be able to deliver clear, current and effective rules that maintain or enhance public health, safety and the environment. Modern regulations that are easier to understand, act on and comply with would free people and businesses to invest time and money in what's important right now: recovering, rebuilding and re-emerging from this crisis stronger than before.

I'll start by talking about the importance of this legislation in the current context. Since our government took office, we've been working to modernize and streamline Ontario's regulations. Before the pandemic, we had already taken over 200 actions to reduce regulatory burdens on people and businesses. This work has become even more important since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Throughout the pandemic, I've had the opportunity to engage with businesses in my riding of Mississauga—Streetsville—gyms, restaurants and coffee shops; dentists, barbers and daycare centres—and they told me their stories; stories about people who have put everything they

have into their businesses in order to provide for their families and the families of their employees, stories about their struggles to stay in business.

I've heard from small business and managers about the devastating impact COVID-19 has had across our province. We need to tackle obstacles in the way of growth and success, modernize regulations and allow for processes to be completed electronically. This is something we are looking at across government. The Attorney General, in particular, has been doing a fantastic job at this in the justice sector. It is our job to do that in the business sector.

We're working to ensure that government is a bridge, not a barrier, on the road to economic recovery. As I said last week, we are not against regulations as a whole. They are necessary. We need strong rules and enforceable penalties to protect our environment and keep us healthy and safe. What we are against, however, are old-fashioned, duplicative and paper-based systems that hold back innovation, growth and opportunity.

The Better for People, Smarter for Business Act, 2020 is an important piece in our made-in-Ontario plan for economic recovery. At a time of unprecedented challenges, we continue to focus on unburdening businesses, creating new opportunities and setting us up for success in the years to come. We're identifying additional opportunities to reduce red tape while maintaining the all-important standards that keep people safe and healthy. We're making regulations easier to understand and comply with, so people and businesses can focus on what really matters: regaining stability, creating good jobs and preparing for the opportunities that will help us come out of the crisis stronger than ever.

We inherited a regulatory knot that was decades in the making. Under previous governments, regulatory burdens had grown into a pervasive problem. Hard-working families and job-creating businesses told us these burdens were weighing them down. And these burdens weren't limited to just a few spheres of people's lives and a few sectors of the economy. The problem was wide-ranging. Red tape was making everyday life more complicated than it needed to be for Ontarians in all walks of life, and it was making it costlier to do business in every sector. That was leading many companies to hesitate to make the investments in Ontario that were essential to creating jobs and building prosperity. That's why we made reducing regulatory burden an important priority from the day we took office, and that's why it remains an important priority.

Ontario families expect and deserve clean air and water. They expect and deserve safe products and working

conditions. Regulations are there to ensure these things. That's why, as we continue our work to make regulations effective, targeted and focused, we are maintaining and strengthening protections for public health and safety and the environment.

The Better for People, Smarter for Business Act, 2020 is the centrepiece of a burden reduction package that also includes dozens of regulatory changes and announcements.

Although we're focusing today on the legislative provisions, I also want to highlight four other actions that are part of this package.

The first is Green Button Connect My Data. This is a smart phone app that will help Ontarians save money by better understanding their energy use. We're proposing a regulation that would require electricity and natural gas distributors to provide real-time data to individuals and businesses on their energy usage. This would give them the information they need to find new ways to lower their energy usage.

Energy costs are a common concern for people and businesses alike, and we've taken action to address this. We've given consumers more choice in their electricity billing, by allowing the choice of time-of-use or tiered billing. More information on usage will allow consumers to make the best choices for them, reduce their overall energy costs and use energy more efficiently.

I'd like to share with you two quotes supporting this action. The first is from Jon Dogterom, senior vice-president of venture services at MaRS Discovery District: "We are delighted to see Ontario continue to lead the testing, development, adoption and now the regulation to roll out the Green Button standard.

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"This announcement gives Ontario companies an international platform to implement energy management solutions that can scale globally.

"It also provides energy users with greater insights and more choice on how to better manage their utility consumption."

The second quote is from Aaron Berndt, head of energy industry partnerships at Google: "Green Button Connect will make it easier for Ontario residential customers to access information about their energy consumption.

"This program will also allow partners to help consumers be mindful of their energy usage—and ultimately to decrease it."

The second action concerns zoning and permitting processes for industrial projects. These processes have become highly complicated over the years. In fact, they're so complex, it's hard for investors to predict whether a proposed project will get the permits, licences and other approvals it needs to go ahead, and that can make them not even bother to try. There is no doubt we have lost out on investments because of this process.

Speaker, problems like this are not limited to only one ministry, and we cannot operate in silos. We've asked a multi-ministry working group to study zoning and permitting processes and to recommend how to streamline

them and make them more predictable. This would reduce costs to businesses and encourage development of industrial land to create good jobs.

Now I'd like to share with you two quotes in support of this action. The first is from Jocelyn Bamford, president and founder of the Coalition of Concerned Manufacturers and Businesses Canada: "We commend the actions taken in the Better for People, Smarter for Business Act, 2020.

"Of particular importance to businesses is the streamlining of regulations for new projects and expansions, which has long been a barrier for growth.

"We're looking forward to continued and much-needed work to make Ontario a more competitive jurisdiction in which to operate a business."

The second quote is from Julie Kwiecinski, director of provincial affairs for Ontario at the Canadian Federation of Independent Business: "The Ontario government's commitment to review the province's permitting and approvals processes is welcome news to small businesses.

"Red tape and delays in getting approvals such as municipal building permits have long been a big barrier to doing and growing business."

The third action concerns operating engineer requirements. In October, the Minister of Government and Consumer Services signed a minister's order that approves simplified and updated rules for operating engineers without compromising public safety. This will reduce administrative burdens on industrial facilities by allowing them to switch from paper-based to electronic logbooks. The changes are expected to save the natural gas refuelling sector \$5 million per year in operational costs, and it will unlock \$20 million worth of investments in new natural gas refuelling stations in Ontario.

The fourth action is pre-start health and safety reviews under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. These reviews are conducted whenever a factory plans to install or modify machinery or equipment that could be highly hazardous. The act requires that a professional engineer conduct a pre-start review to ensure that this would comply with health and safety standards. These reviews would keep workers safe on the job.

Unfortunately, the regulations around these reviews are so convoluted, they're hard to understand. They're the kind of unnecessarily complex regulations that can discourage businesses from investing in Ontario. We're proposing regulatory amendments that would streamline and clarify the rules around pre-start reviews. The changes would maintain strong protections for worker health and safety and at the same time make the rules easier to understand and less expensive to comply with.

Now I'm going to discuss a little bit about the legislative components. Those were some of the non-legislative changes proposed as part of our plan. The legislation itself addresses other problems that affect people and businesses. The parliamentary assistant and member for Flam- borough-Glanbrook will address some of these specific measures shortly.

But it's important to keep in mind that the measures proposed as part of this legislation are not the only actions

we have taken to support people or businesses, and they will not be the last measures either. We will continue to engage with people and businesses right across the province and ensure that they have the regulatory environment to recover and succeed.

Just yesterday, the Supporting Local Restaurants Act, 2020, received royal assent. That act will prohibit food delivery service providers from charging restaurants more than the prescribed amount for food and beverage delivery or related services. We reached out to restaurants to confirm that this is the right approach, and we consulted with delivery service companies to ensure the proposed legislation is measured, focused and intended to be limited in time. The legislation would provide food delivery service company employees or contractors who perform delivery services with the protection that their compensation will not be affected by these changes.

On Monday, the Main Street Recovery Act received royal assent. This legislation will help more businesses rapidly adapt to new demands resulting from the pandemic by modernizing regulations to allow them to pivot and take advantage of new opportunities to increase revenues, while still strengthening strategic supply chains and further promoting innovation.

All of these changes build on Ontario's Action Plan: Protect, Support, Recover. The plan makes landmark investments in front-line health care and provides unparalleled support for people and job creators.

As you can see, the Better for People, Smarter for Business Act, 2020, is just one piece of our government's ongoing plan to support people and businesses during these continued unprecedented times. The act would strengthen economic recovery, help businesses and government better adapt, and create the conditions for investment and prosperity over the long term. Removing costly and unnecessary red tape will help businesses and people increase cash flow, invest in safety measures, and rebuild. Reducing duplicative requirements for private and public sector businesses and organizations will save them time and streamline how government works, and modernizing these regulations while digitizing processes will increase innovation and prepare people and businesses for opportunities of the future.

I will be supporting this bill, and I ask the members on the other side to do so as well, to ensure that our businesses and people benefit from the measures we are proposing, to help them both now and in the future.

Thank you, and onto the member from Flamborough-Glanbrook.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I want to tell you right now we will not be supporting Bill 213; it is reprehensible.

I want to start, Madam Speaker, by telling you what actually happened in committee, because the people of this province are going to be very interested. The theme is: Who is the PC government listening to in Ontario? And I'm going to tell you who they are.

We know, because we've actually had to file an inquiry with the Integrity Commissioner, that Mr. McVety had special access to the Premier. He knew that schedule 2—which is reprehensible—in Bill 213, was coming back in the summer, and yet Canada Christian College is not registered as a lobbyist. So I want to thank our anti-racism critic and my colleague and friend from Kitchener Centre for doing that. But the question does remain: How did Mr. McVety get special treatment and get this special schedule in a so-called COVID-19 economic recovery bill? So that would be ongoing.

The other issue with schedule 2—which the government did not change at all; they still maintain that this is actually in order for the people of this province. Mr. McVety and his son have borrowed almost \$1 million from Canada Christian College. This from the party who are obviously supporting this kind of antics, which champions so-called fiscal responsibility and transparency—these are still outstanding issues with this college. They still got special attention from this government.

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But do you know what they didn't do, Madam Speaker? They didn't uphold schedule 8, and this actually proves what we've been saying all along: There is an agenda on the PC government side which is favouring the religious right. I'm going to tell you that yesterday the government voted against their own schedule 8. Why would they do that, you might ask? I know you were wondering. The government is recommending against its own schedule, which enables a code of conduct for people who solemnize marriage. This was a consumer protection piece of the bill, and this would have changed—to ensure consumer protection by strengthening program integrity for those who oversee marriages. The change would have also helped to reduce the number of compliance issues and complaints, as well as costs that may directly affect couples who have been married if the marriage officiant has contravened the Marriage Act.

Essentially, what has been happening with some—the minister's own words—"fly-by-night" marriage officiants is that they have occasionally been denying to oversee a same-sex marriage, and so built into this schedule 8 was a new code of conduct which, presumably, would have ensured that marriage officiants would have been upholding the Ontario Human Rights Code. What happened? The government got pressured, Madam Speaker. They got pressured by a couple of people. I'm quoting from LifeSite, a media source which is against same-sex marriage, abortion and all the rest of it:

"After Outcry, Ontario Govt to Amend Bill that Would Force Christian Wedding Officiants to Adhere to Govt 'Code of Practice'

"Critics said Bill 213 would make it easy to 'expunge Christian marriage officiants who conscientiously object to presiding over a homosexual "marriage," or otherwise, to coerce them into doing so.'"

The member for Cambridge and her husband got involved in this and started fundraising off of this, really put the—sorry—fear of God into the people who oversee

marriages and said that this new code of conduct—which is really a standard that should be in place for those who oversee marriages and would adhere to the Ontario Human Rights Code—would violate their religious freedoms.

Specifically, this is what Jack Fonseca said—who, just in case you don't know, is the political operations director for Campaign Life Coalition. He told LifeSiteNews that he believes the goal of Bill 213 and that schedule as originally written was “to make it easy to expunge Christian marriage officiants who conscientiously object to presiding over a homosexual ‘marriage,’ or otherwise, to coerce them into doing so.”

At this stage in the debate, the minister and the MPP from Huron–Bruce had appeased under pressure and agreed to amend it. What happened yesterday, though, is that the government voted against their whole schedule, so the consumer protection piece is not there, the standards are not there, and the government—this is who you caved to. This kind of fear and oppression is what you caved to, but you kept schedule 2 in this piece of legislation.

So let's just review where we are with this: The minister responsible for post-secondary education—this is offensive on so many levels, and it speaks to the true intentions of this bill and confirms that schedule 2 has no business whatsoever in a so-called COVID-19 recovery bill.

We also tried to bring forward a couple of amendments which would have validated the PEQAB process.

There were two other schedules in Bill 213 that also bypassed the PEQAB process to expand degree-granting authority for two other religious institutions. We still don't know how these religious institutions got in this bill, because there's no transparency around who is lobbying who, but this is Redeemer and Tyndale—and this is important, because this blows the whole rationale that this minister has been sticking to the entire time out of the water. Redeemer and Tyndale have not submitted any PEQAB application to seek a ministerial consent for the additional degrees being enabled by Bill 213.

So the two amendments that the government voted against where we tried to validate the PEQAB process really resulted in the government shutting down the PEQAB process. They voted against our amendments. The two amendments tied their expanded degree-granting authority to the successful completion of the PEQAB ministerial consent process. We presented these amendments to validate the PEQAB process, and the government bypassed them.

The windows are open, the doors are open, the lights are on, and we really see where this government is. People in this province can have access to the Premier behind closed doors and get what they want in a piece of legislation. By his own admission, the Premier has said, “Listen, I take calls from the CEO of Walmart.” It's a matter of public record. He said, “Do you know what? He says I've got to keep the whole store open and I have to let main street”—survival of the fittest down there on main street. This is a pattern which is very disturbing for the official opposition to see where the values and the

priorities of this government are—encased in a so-called economic recovery bill.

The other thing that was very interesting yesterday is that we heard from the bus operators across the province. Schedules 16 and 24 essentially deregulate private inter-city bus services by dissolving the Ontario Highway Transport Board. Obviously, there are some people in the province who want deregulation, but unanimously bus operators in the province of Ontario do not favour deregulation right now. They are struggling.

This is from one bus operator, Doug Badder: “I am also on the executive of the Ontario Motor Coach Association”—they've run their company for 70 years. “All of the operators in the association are talking about the decision to have deregulation of the bus industry and why now in the middle of a pandemic.” He goes on to say that schedules 16 and 24, which we tried to address and amend yesterday—the government fell silent in this committee—“will hurt the bus industry on top of all the losses we are having because of the pandemic.... There isn't time to recover before this hits us.”

He goes on to say, “Until the government can make this a level playing field for our jurisdiction with other neighbouring jurisdictions I don't think deregulation is in anyone in Ontario's best interest. Jobs will be lost.”

You embedded a schedule in a so-called “economic recovery” piece of legislation which is going to cost the province jobs and cost access to transportation across the province. Everybody knows that transportation is an economic driver in the province of Ontario.

He says that this is not the right time for these sections. Greyhound, Badder, Airways and Cherrey came—I mean, honestly.

The fact is that the government, under the cover of a pandemic, is giving special treatment to Charles McVety and the Canadian Christian College, with also Redeemer and Tyndale tied in there, bypassing a whole transparent process, about which the government has said all along, “This is open and transparent.” We have confirmation that it is not, because those two other private colleges are not part of the PEQAB process. Regardless of what the minister has said in this House—and in his fairly patronizing way, the member from Northumberland–Peterborough South was directing every delegate to the website. If you go to the website, you can confirm that Redeemer and Tyndale are not part of the PEQAB process.

We know now that somehow Mr. McVety, who is a known homophobe, a known Islamophobe, a known transphobe and a known racist in this province, based on his words—not our words; his words. And language and words are so important. That's what we heard from the delegations. We heard it from the Canadian students' association, who said, “Please don't do this. We're working so hard. Mental health is such a huge issue on our campuses. We don't need the Premier championing this individual and holding him up for special attention.” What does that say? It clearly says where his priorities are as a Premier, and that is not a Premier for the people; that's a Premier for some of the people some of the time.

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I have to say that it was emotionally exhausting to be on this committee and hear the delegations from Friday and Monday. This piece of legislation also is moving so fast, we don't even have the Hansard. We can't even quote back to you the citizens we were supposed to be listening to because this government is accelerating this reprehensible schedule 2 in Bill 213. And that speaks to your priorities. You've got to get Mr. McVety what he wants.

Meanwhile, our ICUs and our hospitals are at capacity. I just said this morning that as of August of this year, Ontario had lost 13,501 businesses in the province of Ontario. The government had an opportunity to address and level the playing field and acknowledge the financial strain and emotional strain that businesses are going through. And what did they do? They fast-tracked Charles McVety in the province of Ontario. To hear from people, especially from the 519 here in Toronto, how harmful this piece of legislation is—it is barely helpful to businesses. In fact, Bill 213 is not likely to change much on the ground. Much of the bill is minor or technical, as if the government is trying to just fill their quota of red tape reduction.

You actually had the bus operators in the province of Ontario asking for higher safety regulations during these delegations.

Not only have you lost your way on this piece of legislation, but the bill is not named appropriately; I almost voted against that at committee.

I'm going to leave it at that, Madam Speaker, because I hope you understand that this is a piece of legislation which gives favours to the Premier's friends and really speaks to his priorities as a Premier. This is not an economic recovery bill. And what a lost opportunity. In the pandemic, in an economic and health crisis, to create a state of further harm for those marginalized communities who are already on the ropes—it's really a shameful time in this province.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. John Fraser: It's interesting, this debate's ending—it has been so heated and so passionate in this Legislature; it feels like it's not ending with a bang but a whimper.

Words matter to us in here. The kind of things that we've been debating around Bill 213, specifically the special deal that Mr. McVety is getting—it's very concerning because of his words. They're not just concerning to me and members on this side of the Legislature, but I know they're concerning to members on the other side of the Legislature. I know by looking on the other side when I'm in debate or asking a question, especially in question period—people are looking down at their desks. They're not very happy about it. And when I talk to colleagues on the other side, I read between the lines. So there's a lot of discomfort—probably greater than discomfort.

It's very clear to me that there is one person making this decision, and it's the Premier. I was hoping after all the

questioning, all the debate and all the media coverage on this very concerning issue that the Premier might have a “come to the light” moment and realize that doing this is the wrong thing to do and sending the wrong message to a whole bunch of people here in Ontario.

There are three things that I think everybody needs to remember from this debate:

(1) It's clear that Charles McVety is getting a special deal. We know that. We've established that.

(2) We know that Charles McVety has said things that instill fear. We heard it from the member from University–Rosedale in this Legislature. We didn't have to go to testimony in committee. We heard her tell us how his words affected her family. We didn't have to go outside this building. The reality is, Mr. McVety has said that the Muslim faith is a threat, that it's a hostile takeover. And the interesting thing about those words—because words matter—is, those words instill fear. Where have we heard words like that before? In places where minorities have been persecuted. It's not something that has happened in the last five, 10 years; it has happened for hundreds of years. It has happened in the last century. It's happening right now. That's how persecution starts, with words like that, that instill fear of “the other.” We've seen the consequences of words like that in recent history. Rwanda—I'm sure members on the other side of the House can list off a few. We can all list them off. Those words are really dangerous.

(3) Through all this turmoil that the special deal has caused in this Legislature, Mr. McVety, who is no stranger to this place—I've sat in front of him at committee, listened to the same kind of testimony and the same kind of words that we're talking about right now with regard to families and differences, and I've seen him sitting on the floor of this Legislature, up at the front, during the throne speech. But why wasn't he here at committee to testify? Why was he not here to defend his words? Why was he not here to defend his institution? Why did he not have the courage to appear here? Because his words are wholly indefensible. That's why he didn't have the courage to come here.

We're probably going to vote on this next week. There are three things that members can do on the other side of this Legislature, because I know you're uncomfortable:

You can vote with your government, because that's the team thing to do—been there.

You can vote against this bill and join your colleagues and us on this side in not allowing this to go forward.

But you have a third choice, and that third choice is, do nothing. Sit on your hands. It's not that hard to do. It makes a statement. You have the right of abstention.

You have two choices out of three that will allow you to do the right thing, and I encourage you to do that.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Ms. Donna Skelly: The Better for People, Smarter for Business Act will make life easier for people who live in Ontario. I want to highlight some of the provisions that

demonstrate just how it will make life easier. By streamlining rules and moving more processes and services online, we will help people recover from the economic impact of the pandemic and look forward to better days.

Regulatory relief isn't only essential to businesses. Individuals are also impacted by regulations in their day-to-day lives. Our government's actions to make regulations more flexible in response to the pandemic are producing positive results right across Ontario. For instance, when panic-buying this spring left grocery stores and pharmacies struggling to keep their shelves stocked, our government permitted trucks to make deliveries right around the clock. This made a significant difference, because it gave retailers the opportunity to restock the shelves more quickly. The fact that shelves were no longer empty helped restore consumer confidence that they could buy the things that their families needed just when they needed them.

The Better for People, Smarter for Business Act includes proposals that would make a material difference in people's lives every single day. This includes anyone buying a house or a condo, students enrolling at a private career college, transit riders who take an intercommunity bus to get to a class or to an appointment.

1400

Our government is fine-tuning provincial regulatory processes to ensure they do what they were intended to do. We are updating rules written decades ago to ensure they fit the world that we live in today, and we are removing barriers to competition to ensure that people have access to essential transportation.

I'd like to speak more specifically about the proposed actions that will make a real difference in the lives of everyday Ontarians.

The first proposal is one that is designed to ensure regulations provide the protections to people that they were meant to provide. This proposal would strengthen consumer confidence in what, for most of us, is our biggest purchase ever: a brand new home. Our government is proposing amendments to the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act to permit the creation of a new and separate regulator of new home builders. These amendments would overhaul Tarion Warranty Corp., which administers and enforces the act. The amendments would better protect consumers by having Tarion focus exclusively on new home buyers. This change would help reduce the number of defects in new home construction, therefore reducing the resulting warranty and protection claims. More importantly, it would also better protect homebuyers from bad actors in the home construction sector.

As a former journalist, I have heard new home buyer horror stories about major structural flaws, such as cracked foundations, that didn't become apparent until months after the buyers moved in. And for many, trying to get problems repaired and resolved simply became a nightmare.

Our government is also proposing a change that would give communities more say when a water-bottling

company proposes to dig a new well or expand an existing well. Our review of Ontario's water-taking program found that the current framework is effective for managing the takings of bottled water. However, the review underscored a significant change that local communities were requesting. They want to have more direct input in decisions to allow water bottling in their regions. That is why we are proposing a requirement that bottlers have the support of the host municipality before they can apply for a provincial permit for new or increased draws of water.

Now I'd like to speak about our government's plans to update payment options for child and spousal support. When the regulations were written 24 years ago, these options barely existed. Currently, the employers of people who owe support are required to deduct the amount owed from the employee's pay and then forward the money to the Family Responsibility Office, or FRO. This practice reflects the payment options that were available back in 1996, when the Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act came into effect. But today, we have automatic payment options such as pre-authorized debit and online banking options that simply weren't available when the act was passed more than two decades ago. This proposal would give the Family Responsibility Office director the discretion to offer people who owe support payments these new payment options. But FRO would only support payers to use one of these payment methods in cases where it is appropriate, and FRO would monitor these cases closely for compliance. This would relieve employers of the administrative burden of deducting support payments from an employee's pay. I've spoken to employers who would rather not have the responsibility of sending support payments to FRO on behalf of their employees.

Madam Speaker, our government also wants to address gaps in intercommunity bus service. Buses are a lifeline for many people in our province, especially in rural and northern Ontario. They rely on bus service to take them to a doctor's appointment, the hospital or to attend a class at college or university. But there are significant gaps in bus services in these areas, and the COVID-19 pandemic has simply widened those gaps. Because bus carriers have reduced or discontinued service on many routes where the demand for public transportation has decreased, our government is proposing to deregulate the intercommunity bus sector. This would allow new entrants to fill the service gaps. It would create an open and competitive market that would support economic recovery. New carriers would be given the green light to offer more service options for people in northern and rural communities. This would include using smaller buses on routes with lower passenger demand. And, as existing carriers restart service, deregulating the sector would give them more regulatory flexibility as well. It would give existing carriers the latitude to change service options in response to consumer demand and their own financial capabilities.

Next, I'd like to focus on job creators across the province and our government's proposals to bring them much-needed regulatory relief.

Throughout the pandemic, businesses have gone above and beyond in an effort to serve the people of our province, whether it was by closing their doors to stop the spread of the virus, or keeping their doors open to provide essential services, or stepping up to produce medical and personal protective equipment. Well, now these businesses are counting on us to help them rebound and to recover. One of the best ways we can help these businesses is by addressing outdated or burdensome regulatory barriers that cost them money or needlessly slow them down. That is why our government acted quickly to make temporary regulatory changes.

Many of the ideas on the COVID-19: Tackling the Barriers website, which launched back in April, came directly from businesses and individuals we spoke to—people who live here in Ontario. We have taken action that has helped businesses survive the pandemic and to help them prepare for better days ahead.

Madam Speaker, here are a few examples: We are allowing bars and licensed restaurants to include alcohol in takeout or delivery food orders. We are allowing Ontario corporations to conduct virtual meetings and to submit documents electronically to the provincial government. And we are continuing to listen closely to what businesses are telling us about how we can help them keep their doors open and how we can help them create good-paying, sustainable jobs.

The struggles faced by businesses during the pandemic have underscored the urgency of our efforts to modernize regulations and to move more services online. These efforts will help strengthen Ontario's competitive advantage well into the future, and they will help businesses recover from the pandemic and rebuild and re-emerge stronger than before.

Madam Speaker, the proposals in this legislation would help create the conditions for investment and prosperity in three ways. They would reduce red tape to boost recovery, and that would allow companies to increase their cash flow, to invest in safety measures, and to rebuild their businesses. The proposals would reduce unnecessary and redundant requirements for businesses, which would streamline how the government works and support change for businesses and governments. The proposals would accelerate the shift to digital solutions, and that would increase innovations and prepare companies for future opportunities.

Our government's legislation would make a measurable difference for businesses in many sectors of Ontario's economy, including aquaculture, real estate, mining exploration, brownfield site redevelopment and corporate decision-making.

These proposed measures would bring regulatory relief to businesses across multiple sectors.

For example, our government is proposing to lay the groundwork for a digital delivery system that would provide environmental information on properties. This information is critical for land developers when they are making decisions on things like real estate transactions and redeveloping brownfield sites. But the current manual

system is simply outdated. It requires public service employees to gather paper documents stored in various physical locations. A search like this could typically take anywhere from two weeks to a few months. Our proposal to move property information requests online would reduce the turnaround time by up to 20 days. This would allow property developers and the real estate sector to make faster and better-informed decisions about property transactions, and it would support a government-wide move away from paper-based processes through our Digital First strategy. We are working to improve the user experience by delivering services more efficiently and by providing more timely responses.

1410

I would now like to speak about a measure that would increase the regulatory flexibility for construction projects to build infrastructure or redevelop brownfield sites. This proposal would amend what's known as the RSC regulation. RSC is short for "record of site condition." And the RSC regulation is a summary of a property's environmental condition.

Our government is proposing amendments that would create standard rules on processing excess soil from a construction site and then reselling it to gardeners. These changes would help put vacant land back into good use. There are also several other benefits. Costs for managing and transporting excess soil would be reduced. Excess soil would be managed according to its quality and potential for reuse. Soil sent to landfills would be reduced. Greenhouse gas emissions would be lowered. And strong health and environmental protections would be maintained.

We are also proposing a regulation to extend grandfathering provisions for infrastructure projects. This would provide relief to businesses that have run into delays because of COVID-19. The amendments would save these companies from having to repeat already completed technical assessments.

Now I would like to highlight proposed housekeeping amendments to provisions in the Planning Act on subdivision control. These provisions ensure proper oversight when land is subdivided. The government evaluates proposals to create parcels of land to ensure they adhere to land use planning principles and address any long-term impacts from creating a parcel. These are highly technical amendments that would help clarify the subdivision control provisions in the Planning Act and reduce unnecessary administrative burdens.

Our government is also proposing changes to get forfeited land back into production sooner by removing duplication and clarifying requirements to make it easier for businesses to seek relief from forfeiture or to buy a forfeited property. The changes would also allow the ministry to manage and dispose of these properties more quickly and more efficiently. This would support revived businesses and protect businesses legitimately operating on forfeited property.

I'd like to speak now about an amendment to the Business Corporations Act that would make it easier to do business in Ontario. We are proposing to eliminate the

requirement that at least 25% of a business corporation's directors must be resident Canadians. This would align Ontario's practice with that in almost every other province and territory. The Business Law Modernization and Burden Reduction Council advised that the residency requirement creates an incentive for businesses to incorporate in jurisdictions that do not have this requirement. Our proposal would make Ontario more competitive in attracting business incorporations, and it would help drive economic growth and job creation.

A second proposed amendment to the Business Corporations Act would allow privately held business corporations to make a certain type of decision faster and more cost-effectively; specifically, decisions that require shareholder approval through an ordinary resolution. Currently, the act requires companies to spend time and money obtaining a signature from every voting shareholder. Sometimes, even a resolution that shareholders don't oppose fails because a company simply can't get all the signatures within the timeline set out within this act. This would allow companies to capitalize on opportunities to provide better shareholder value by eliminating unnecessary burdens.

Overall, the proposals outlined this afternoon will help to strengthen Ontario's pro-investment business environment and help the economy rebound from the pandemic by removing regulatory roadblocks so companies can create good jobs and thrive once again. These proposals will support businesses by helping them overcome challenges unlike anything they have ever faced before. And they'll deliver clear and effective rules that will protect our environment and keep people safe and healthy, without sacrificing innovation, growth and opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It's very much a privilege for me to rise today and add the voices of London North Centre constituents, whether it's OUSA, the Canadian Federation of Students or so many more people who have had the courage to stand up against schedule 2 of Bill 213—courage that I wish the government members would also have.

Here we are again. We're seeing record numbers of COVID-19 across the province, especially in my riding of London, and we are discussing a favour that the Premier wishes to do for Charles McVety—favours for a fringe radical.

In this discussion of Bill 213, I think of power and privilege and process, but also the misuse of such. The government has gone on record—one of the few times it has actually addressed this issue, or the McVety affair—and they said that there's no room for hate within its party. But there was room for McVety during the Conservative leadership debate. He sat in a privileged position. There was room for McVety right here in this House during the initial throne speech back in 2018. That's power. That's privilege. That pulls the strings.

Not one government member has had the courage to stand up against McVety's poisonous words—not one.

But sometimes when people are too afraid to speak out publicly, they may choose to do so behind closed doors. To my mind, that's a misuse of our privilege to be here as elected representatives for our communities. We saw the vote during the second reading of Bill 213, when only 27 government members showed up—but minutes later, during the budget vote, suddenly, 30 additional government members magically appeared. It must have been a miracle. MPPs are meant to represent their communities, bringing their views, their wishes and their voices into this great House. I don't think anyone asked their member to stand down. On Bill 213, that's exactly what happened when government members abstained from the vote.

We have a responsibility in this province to stand up against hate, to name it, to call it out, to eradicate it with knowledge and understanding. Love will win, but it seems like a long shot when you have governments such as this and this protracted and deliberate silence.

When we take a look at this, we see the inaction and actions of our Premier, and it reminds us of the soon-to-be ex-president of the United States, Donald Trump—pardon me; Trump. He refuses to denounce hate groups. He refuses to denounce hate speech. His silence is seen by many as promoting intolerance, by dumping gasoline onto the fires of hatred. We've even heard our dear Premier loudly proclaim his support for Donald Trump.

We have a responsibility here, as elected members, to not legislate hate, to not legislate intolerance. It's a misuse of our power and privilege to allow schedule 2 to go forward. We need to think of the folks who have been hurt and the effect on their lives. If we as legislators create an environment where hate can thrive, there will be consequences. We need only look to our neighbours, to the United States.

We have also seen that this government has brought in the process—they keep trying to hide behind the PEQAB process, and they keep using the examples of OCAD and Algoma etc. Today, the example of Redeemer was mentioned by the member for Northumberland-Peterborough South. Again, we have apples and oranges here, because Canada Christian College is seeking university status, the ability to confer bachelor of arts and bachelor of science degrees, and Redeemer already does that; they've done so since 1998. I would think that folks at Redeemer probably aren't too thrilled with being brought into a comparison with the views of Charles McVety.

1420

Also, we look at the government's actions within committee. We saw that they stood down on the vote. They had the opportunity, then, to speak up at committee to remove schedule 2, but instead they removed schedule 8.

We have to look at this as being all part of a pattern. When this government first took power, they repealed the health and phys-ed curriculum, going back to the 1998 version, before cellphones, before social media. That's something Charles McVety wanted. We have Canada Christian College—schedule 2 of Bill 213. That's yet again another thing that Charles McVety wanted. So we have to consider the impact of those things.

We see the Premier, also, with what he has done with the OPP commissioner and Ron Taverner. Again, it's imposing that will, a misuse of power and privilege. The human rights commissioners—again, appointing hand-picked people. We see not a respect for the process, not a respect for things like PEQAB; instead, we see someone bulldozing over.

The words that have been used by McVety—there has been ample opportunity for that individual to stand up and say, “I made a mistake. I misspoke. I regret those choices. I impacted somebody, and I was taking away their liberty, their right to be the person they are.” But he has been radio silent.

He was quite happy to be in a broadcasting forum making comments that the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council would deem as “distorted facts” and “abusive comments.” We have a responsibility here as legislators to make sure that those are not taught in Ontario classrooms, regardless of the level.

Not only has McVety not recanted his former comments, not stood up, not done the right thing, but we also see that no one from this government has either, Speaker. It's like they're in lockstep.

I also wanted to indicate that a lot of people will make this discussion—it has been tried to be deemed to be about religion. It's not about religion whatsoever. This is about hate speech. This is about hateful comments. This is about something that is said that is taking away the liberty of somebody else.

Pardon me, Speaker, for using you as an example, but your freedom of speech ends where my rights begin. You're entitled to think what you want, but you're not allowed to say terrible things about me publicly. That would be against the Human Rights Code.

Yet, we see this government that is hiding behind the process.

UWOFA has gone on record and said that we should not be granting accreditation and degree-granting privileges to an institution that is shown to have discriminatory views by its president.

The government has a responsibility to make sure that individuals within Ontario are provided the equity that they deserve. We know that's not the case. We know that during COVID-19, many people have suffered quite tremendously. We cannot allow hateful and discriminatory speech to persist.

Speaker, this is buried within an omnibus piece of legislation that this government clearly does not want to discuss. They want to hide. They won't stand up publicly. They won't say anything about schedule 2, and they're allowing it to continue. Thousands of Ontarians have spoken out. Thousands of Ontarians have indicated their views. But they're closing their ears and they're refusing to listen. They claim that this is about business, but it's not.

We are responsible here in this House for making sure that hate is not legislated. We have a responsibility to make sure that people's rights aren't infringed. Canada

Christian College should never have made it into schedule 2 of this bill, simply put.

I hope with all of my heart that when it comes time for voting on final reading of this legislation, the government members find it within themselves to do the right thing: to listen to their conscience. And if they can't do that, then I hope that they will listen to their constituents and not vote in support of this legislation, but stand up for an Ontario where we are inclusive and we are free to be the people we are.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I rise to speak on Bill 213. I want to be absolutely clear: I will be voting against this bill. I don't see how anybody in this House in good conscience could vote for this bill with schedule 2 in the bill. The hateful rhetoric of the president of Canada Christian College is well-documented.

I have to say, Speaker, to be on the committee and hear the painful voices of people who have been directly affected by the words of this individual was so dispiriting. I don't have time to read all of them, but I do want to quote Sara Sayyed, from the Muslim Society of Guelph in my riding, who came to committee and said, “Individuals, such as myself, and the organizations which we represent, work day and night to refute the harmful and racist vitriol propagated by people like Charles McVety and the platforms and institutions that enable them.

“It is this very same vitriol that encourages and gives permission to those who carry out hate crimes and atrocities like the Quebec City mosque massacre, the recent murder of a mosque caretaker in Toronto, the acts of arson at a Peterborough mosque, vandalism, bomb threats and, in my own city, the assault of two Muslim men who were merely standing on their front porch!

“Passage of this bill would be sanctioning a platform for hate; a situation made all the more disturbing by having disguised this endorsement within a bill claiming to be ‘better for people.’”

There were a lot of people who came to committee who said this bill would not be better for them, Speaker. I want to note that 14 post-secondary faculty associations, including the faculty association representing all university faculty in Ontario, and all of the university student associations came to committee and raised serious questions about Canada Christian College. They asked questions like, “Does this college violate anti-hate speech laws?” “Does this college violate the Ontario Human Rights Code in its admissions and hiring processes?” There are questions about financial irregularities.

I want to remind people that these are serious questions. They're allegations at this point, but they're serious questions. I want to remind members that if this application is denied at PEQAB during the PEQAB process, it is true that schedule 2 will not go into effect. But I want to remind members, it will still be on the books. Is that the legacy we want to have in this House, in this Parliament—to have that on the books? Regardless of what the PEQAB decision is, I don't want that, Speaker. That's not the

message I want to send to the people of Ontario. That's not the kind of Ontario that I believe in. I believe in an inclusive, caring Ontario where everyone feels welcome, loved and accepted.

I'll tell you, the controversy around this particular schedule in the bill not only is negatively affecting people from the LGBTQ+ community, the Muslim community, the Haitian community and so many others; it's actually affecting the students at Canada Christian College who came and talked about the negative experiences they're facing because of this schedule in the bill. So I, in good conscience, can't vote for it.

I also briefly want to raise a couple of other schedules: schedules 16 and 24. We had so many coach companies come to committee and say that this is the wrong schedule at the wrong time. This schedule may put them out of business. It will likely export jobs out of Ontario to Quebec and the United States. And the bus services for 83 communities are under threat because of these two schedules. So I don't understand why they're in the bill.

1430

Finally, Speaker, I want to just quickly mention schedule 18. In many respects, I support the changes being made to water-taking regulations, in terms of host municipalities having a say in the process. But I put forward two minor yet vital amendments that would have expanded that to adjacent municipalities that are affected by these permits—their water intake well is affected by them—and First Nations.

I just want to read a quick quote from Six Nations. “For the government of Ontario to go forward with Bill 213, schedule 18: Amendments to Ontario Water Resources Act, as written, will exclude rights-bearing First Nations from decisions about water within respective tertiary watersheds; will breach the honour of the crown, fiduciary obligations, and the duty to consult and accommodate; as well as violate international human rights conventions and resolutions. Further, to delegate this duty to a third level of settler municipal government, excluding Indigenous peoples will run completely roughshod over the federal government's nation-to-nation commitments, and Canada's full support of UNDRIP.”

Speaker, I put forward a couple of amendments that would have addressed this and other municipal concerns. It was unfortunate that they were voted down. But I'd like it to be on the record that I hope the government, as they move forward with additional water regulations, takes the rights and our obligations under reconciliation into consideration with First Nations.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I rise today to urge every member in this Legislature to vote against Bill 213.

I'd like MPPs to think about what it was like on Tuesday night, when we received a package of amendments after participating in two very full, gruelling, emotional days of committee input, when people came to committee to tell us what it felt like to see schedule 2 in this bill. Representatives of Muslim communities, representatives of LGBTQ communities came and told us what

it would mean to them if this government proceeded to legitimize Canada Christian College, whose founder and president has a well-known history of bigotry, hatred, transphobia, Islamophobia, racism; what it would mean to have that institution that Charles McVety founded granted the status of a university and empowered to award arts and sciences degrees. Let me tell you, it was a very emotional experience to listen to what people had to say when they came to the committee.

And then we opened up a package of amendments on Tuesday evening, right before clause-by-clause consideration of this bill on Wednesday. Did we see an amendment asking for the withdrawal of schedule 2 from the government, based on everything that they had heard? No, we did not. What we saw instead was a recommendation brought forward by this government that the committee vote against schedule 8. This was very shocking, Speaker, because not a single deputant came to the committee to talk about schedule 8, not a single written submission was received by the committee that referred to schedule 8. Yet, out of the blue, the government brought forward a recommendation that that schedule be voted against—a schedule that deals with a code of conduct for marriage officiants. We didn't hear a thing about that. We heard overwhelming opposition to schedule 2, but this government decided not to listen.

The people who came to the committee—I want to tell you, we had two days of hearings, and we had 37 deputations. More than one third of those deputations, 13, came specifically to talk about schedule 2, to urge the government to rethink the inclusion of this schedule in this bill and to withdraw it completely from the bill. Of those 13 deputants, none of them were there as individuals. All of them were there on behalf of provincial, national or community organizations that they represented. They were there on behalf of thousands and thousands of Ontarians, speaking as the voice of those Ontarians to raise concerns about schedule 2.

We heard from university staff and faculty members. We heard from post-secondary students. CFS Ontario was there to speak to the committee, and written submissions were provided by the College Student Alliance and by OUSA. So every post-secondary student in this province who is represented by an organization was there to express their opposition to schedule 2.

We heard from representatives of the LGBTQ community. The 519 was there to talk to the committee, Pride at Work Canada was there to talk to the committee, and a written submission was received from Queer Ontario.

We heard from the Muslim community: from the Muslim Society of Guelph, from the National Council of Canadian Muslims.

We received letters from almost 2,500 Ontarians who took the time, in a very compressed time frame, to go online and send a written submission to the committee expressing their complete opposition to schedule 2.

Let's recall, Speaker, that these public hearings took place the same week—just a couple of days after, actually—a motion had been passed by a majority of MPPs in this Legislature to condemn the hateful invective of

Charles McVety and to oppose any efforts to make Canada Christian College a university. So the deputants were aware of that motion and they understood that that motion expressed the will of the Legislature. It was passed legitimately by a majority of MPPs in this place. They came to support that motion and to express their own objections to the hateful invective of Charles McVety and to describe how it would feel, how it would endanger their communities if they were Muslim or trans or gay, how it would delegitimize the integrity of the post-secondary sector in this province—because the process has no transparency whatsoever, despite what this government wants to say.

Speaker, I have to share with MPPs some of the behaviour that we saw on the committee that was very disturbing to me, as someone who is here on behalf of the people I represent to listen respectfully to the input that people want to provide to this Legislature. We heard deputants harangued, badgered by members on the government side, about the intricacies of the PEQAB process. What did they know about the PEQAB process? Had they gone to the PEQAB website? Did they understand how the PEQAB process worked? Well, Bill 213 is silent on the PEQAB process. There is absolutely no mention of the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board—nothing.

What Bill 213 says is that this Ontario government, this Legislature, is going to grant Canada Christian College the status of a university and enable it to award arts and sciences degrees. It doesn't matter if that schedule is not proclaimed. The fact is that if members on the opposite side persist in what they have been doing so far and pass this bill at third reading next week, Charles McVety, in his marketing efforts, will forever be able to hyperlink to the page on the Ontario legislative website that has Bill 213 and show everyone, "Look, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario believed that Canada Christian College was entitled to call itself a university and to grant post-secondary degrees."

1440

It was interesting, Speaker: During the committee, the minister for red tape reduction came to talk about this bill, and we asked a lot of questions about how schedule 2 ended up in this bill. Here in this Legislature, during question period, the Minister of Colleges and Universities talked repeatedly about procedural fairness and transparency as being the reasons why schedule 2 was part of Bill 213. But the minister who spoke to the committee could not give a single clear answer as to how schedule 2 ended up in this bill.

I asked, "Does an applicant notify the government that they're going to need enabling legislation when they're going through the PEQAB process? Does PEQAB notify the government that there's going to be enabling legislation needed? Maybe the government keeps tabs on PEQAB, and the ministry identifies when there's an application going through that will require enabling legislation." But we didn't get any answers. There were no answers—none—as to how this all works.

And these are important questions, Speaker, because if it's the applicant who has to go to the government and say, "I'm going through this process. I'm not sure how it's going to work out. I would love for you to pass some legislation just in case PEQAB approves our application"—when did that happen? We should know when that happened. Did it happen by a phone call? Did it happen by an email? How did it happen? Did the applicant, in this case, Charles McVety, go to the ministry? Did he go to the Premier?

Perhaps he went to the Premier, because he apparently has a long-standing and close relationship with the Premier. We knew that Charles McVety was a supporter of the Premier when the Premier was in the leadership race. We know that Canada Christian College was used for campaign activities when the Premier was in the leadership race. We know that Charles McVety encouraged his supporters to support the Premier in the leadership race.

These are all important questions that we never got the answer to.

The other thing we never got an answer to is—we heard a lot of times about Algoma and OCAD; same thing, they had enabling legislation passed while they were going through the PEQAB process. But we never heard, is there a timeline? How far in advance does the enabling legislation have to be passed before the completion of the PEQAB process? I would suggest, Speaker, that there was absolutely no reason to include schedule 2, to include this enabling legislation in a bill that claimed to be addressing COVID-19 recovery.

We heard the minister and we heard the PA several times use the example of Algoma. Enabling legislation was passed last year, and Algoma's PEQAB process is still under way. It hasn't been completed. So, Speaker, one has to wonder, if the PEQAB process could be months, a year, why the rush? Why the need to pass enabling legislation now, when all of the efforts of this Legislature, all of our collective focus, should be on ensuring that this province is able to recover from the impact of COVID-19?

The bill, which is entitled Better for People, Smarter for Business—I would suggest that, in fact, this is a bill that is better for one business. It is better for Canada Christian College. And it is highly irregular and highly questionable that the government would pass legislation that favours a single business, Canada Christian College—because we know that now Canada Christian College will be able to promote this legislation as legitimizing their request to be granted the status of a university.

I want to refer to a couple of the written comments that we received—we don't have the Hansard transcript because this thing moved forward at breakneck speed. There were some comments that I think are worth sharing; in particular, from the National Council of Canadian Muslims. Let's recall, this is the voice of thousands of Muslim Ontarians. We know that racialized communities have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19. We've seen a rise in Islamophobic, hate-motivated incidents during the pandemic.

The National Council of Canadian Muslims very respectfully came to the committee and said, "It is further

important to note that it is not our position that the government should preclude faith-based institutions from achieving university accreditation because of an offhand remark or a social media comment from years ago by someone at the leadership level of the institution.

“However, we would suggest that processes, like university accreditation decisions, exist for a reason.... Our suggestion is not that Mr. McVety’s Canada Christian College never be allowed to receive accreditation.

“Rather, our suggestion is that given Mr. McVety’s track record and stated positions which he has never, to the best of our knowledge, apologized for, the institution that he leads should not be given expedited treatment through the inclusion of the Canada Christian College in schedule 2 of the bill.”

That really is the nub of the issue, Speaker. We see expedited process. We see preferential treatment being given through this legislation to someone who is a well-known ally of the Premier and someone who has taken very controversial positions on issues of human rights.

That is the other concern that was raised by many of the presenters who came to speak to the committee. OCUFA, which represents all university faculty associations, said clearly, “The Ontario government should not grant accreditation and degree-granting privileges to institutions that do not meet the anti-discriminatory and anti-hate speech principles outlined in the Ontario Human Rights Code.”

Speaker, it’s unfathomable to me that this government would be prepared to pass this bill that does such a disservice to the integrity of our post-secondary sector and puts Muslim communities, queer communities, puts all of us, collectively, at risk, because it legitimizes hate and it makes us a less inclusive, less welcoming province, which is not what we should seek to be.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: I am glad to be able to address Bill 213 today. I want to specifically speak to schedule 2, which the other members have been speaking to on this side of the House, which would expand the mandate of Canada Christian College.

Madam Speaker, I want to put schedule 2 and this action by the government in the context of other things that the government is doing. So I ask you to bear with me because I’m going to talk about some other things, but it is in aid of putting schedule 2 into context.

We know that the government has rightly been preoccupied with its COVID-19 response; that’s absolutely as it should be. There have been gaps and delays and mistakes in that response, and we have heard questions on those repeatedly in the House; nonetheless, it’s understandable that that has been the primary focus of the government, as it should be. But as the people of Ontario focus on the government’s actions regarding these responses, there are other things that are happening. It’s in that context that I want to talk about schedule 2.

Conservation authorities are being undermined, putting flood protection at risk and giving comfort to developers

who would rather not deal with environmentalists and environmental issues.

Pollution is increasing. We know from a report by Environmental Defence today that Ontario has taken a step back in terms of reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the fight against climate change.

And thousands of post-secondary students are struggling or have left college or university because of cuts to student assistance.

Those are three examples of things that are happening in the province, and they are ideological changes that the government has made.

While I disagree with them, I get that they are consistent with the Premier’s and with this government’s belief system. Those ideologies are that developers’ interests trump environmentalists’ interests, that there’s a weak commitment to tackling climate change, and that there’s no strong belief in publicly funded education. Those are the ideologies that those actions exemplify.

1450

We have to assume that support for Charles McVety is part of that pattern, that there’s an ideology at work here. I’ve been listening to the members who were sitting in committee yesterday, and I thank you for raising the comments that were made in committee. It’s clear that when a certain group came to the committee or came to the government and asked that schedule 8 be removed—a schedule that would have required marriage officiants to be more regulated—that was removed from the legislation. So is that part of the ideology, then, that would support Charles McVety?

Schedule 2 in Bill 213 is explicit government support for an institution run by a well-known bigot, Charles McVety. This schedule would support this man and his college to have an expanded mandate to be able to issue degrees beyond the theological degrees that they can issue now—degrees in arts and science, in a broad range of subject disciplines—that would increase the credibility of this organization.

It’s not coincidental that representatives of student groups and faculty associations from across the province have come and have spoken against this legislation, against schedule 2. They do not want to see the quality of education in this province diluted even by the symbolic support of this government for this man.

Madam Speaker, this legislation has come forward even before the formal academic application process has been completed. That means that the government did not need to bring this legislation. Let’s imagine that Canada Christian College, without the support of the government—I don’t know what the process was; we don’t really know how this happened—decided spontaneously that it was going to come and request to go through the PEQAB process. There was no need for the government to bring forward legislation in advance of that process being completed.

The support for Charles McVety is a signal to all of the people of this province that homophobia, transphobia, Islamophobia are condoned by this government, and never

in my wildest dreams could I have imagined having to say those words in this Legislature. I honestly believed that we were past the point where any government in Ontario, a self-declared inclusive, multicultural, multi-ethnic and supportive province—that we would actually be sitting in the Legislature debating with a government that was bringing forward such a vile piece of legislation. I just didn't imagine that that could ever happen.

There have been questions raised today about why the government might be expediting this process. Well, I can tell you, Madam Speaker. They want this legislation gone. They don't want to talk about it anymore. They don't want to have to acknowledge that they are supporting this man and his hateful behaviour, and so they want to get it gone as quickly as possible—

Mrs. Robin Martin: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Stop the clock.

I recognize the member from Eglinton–Lawrence on a point of order.

Mrs. Robin Martin: On a point of order, Madam Speaker: The member is imputing motive, which is against the rules of procedure in the Legislature.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize that members are not allowed to impute motive.

I will return to the member and encourage her to keep her comments speculative about her own motivations and not the government.

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My motivation is to be very clear that I will not support this legislation. I will not support schedule 2. I think it is a serious mistake. We have to ask why this is happening. We can only conclude on the face of it that this is what the cabinet and caucus believe.

I want to talk from my personal experience. When a piece of legislation comes forward, as the Premier, you have the opportunity to be briefed in depth on that legislation. You know—you should know—what is in the legislation. Certainly, on an issue as contentious as this, I cannot imagine that the people around all of the members would not have flagged this as an issue.

We are debating this legislation because the government is standing behind it. The government is supporting this man and is supporting this institution. Condoning the behaviour of a man like Charles McVety is dangerous. It's dangerous for Muslim families. It's dangerous for young people who are struggling with their sexuality. It's dangerous for anyone in the LGBTQ+ community, because we have fought for decades, for generations, for rights and acceptance. What this government's legislation does is it says, "That actually doesn't count, because we're going to support someone who doesn't believe any of that. We're going to actually improve his opportunity. We're going to help him to have a broader mandate."

It's shameful, and I certainly will not be supporting the legislation nor, I would suggest, should anyone in this Legislature.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Chris Glover: It's an honour to rise here in the House to talk about Bill 213, which is called the Better for People, Smarter for Business Act, and the idea that in the middle of the pandemic that's what we should be talking about, that's what we should be debating. We should be talking about how we support businesses and people through this pandemic.

At noon, I just had a meeting with 18 business owners in my riding. All of them are struggling to get through this pandemic. All of them need more government support in order to survive and in order to keep their businesses intact through the pandemic so that they can be part of the economic recovery at the end of this thing.

In Bill 213, one of the economic actions in schedules 16 and 24 is actually to deregulate the bus services and to strip away the bus public service act, which provides safety standards. We had eight different bus companies come and speak in committee over the last week and say this is the wrong legislation at the wrong time. They said, "We are in the middle of a pandemic. We are struggling." Those schedules of this legislation will open Ontario bus operators up to competition from Quebec and the United States, and the Quebec operators have a competitive advantage because they have access to the Montreal market. They're saying they're struggling right now. They're not going to have a chance to recover from this.

So if this passes—and I want to get this on the record—they said three things would happen. There would be a lowering of safety standards in intercity bus travel in Ontario, which could lead to a crash like the one that we saw in Humboldt, Saskatchewan, a couple of years ago. They said that many of them—and these were operators with decades in their intercity bus travel companies—will not survive this reopening. And they said the other thing is that there's no reciprocal opening of the market—Quebec is not opening its market, and the United States is not opening its market.

In other words, this is the wrong legislation that will drive many Ontario bus companies out of business, and I don't know why you're doing that in the middle of a pandemic.

The other schedule that I want to talk about in this legislation is schedule 2, which is the one that will grant Canada Christian College the name of "university" and the ability to grant other degrees. To have this snuck into the middle of a bill that's supposed to be about helping people and businesses through the pandemic is just wrong. You could see it in the committee over the last week. These businesses owners are coming to speak, and they're in the middle of this very contentious debate and discussion about Charles McVety and the things that he has said and the college that he runs.

The government has defended their actions. I heard some of the members from the government side say, "I don't personally support some of the things that Charles McVety says, but I would defend his right to say them under freedom of speech." The question is, what's the line between freedom of speech and hate speech? One of the professors who came to the committee hearings said the difference is, you have freedom of speech up to the point

where your words are impeding the safety of others. So the question is, do the words of Charles McVety impede the safety of others?

1500

We heard very clearly in committee from representatives like Dr. Cheri DiNovo that when you say hateful things about the 2SLGBTQ2IA+ community, those lead to deaths. The suicide rate in that community, particularly among trans youth, is much higher than in the general population. So when you create a context of condoning those kinds of statements by bringing this legislation forward, you're actually causing the deaths of young people.

Madam Speaker, it's not just us that are saying this. The Canadian Broadcast Standards Council took Charles McVety's show off the air because he made "malevolent, insidious and conspiratorial" remarks about the 2SLGBTQ2IA+ community.

The other group that Mr. McVety has attacked is the Muslim community. At his college, he hosted a meeting by Geert Wilders. Geert Wilders is a well-known Islamophobe from the Netherlands. One of the things that Charles McVety said, and it's quoted in the media, is that "Islam is not just a religion, it's a political and cultural system as well and we know that Christians, Jews and Hindus don't have the same mandate for a hostile takeover. Here in Canada there is a real, clear and present danger." The question is: Is that freedom of speech, or is that hate speech?

When you look at the horrible acts of Islamophobia that are happening in this country, almost on a weekly basis—we've had the shooting of innocent people in the mosque in Quebec. We've had the knifing of a volunteer caretaker in front of a mosque in the Premier's own riding. He was just sitting there in front and somebody came up and attacked him. We've had attacks on mosques across the province.

So is this hate speech? Is McVety part of creating an atmosphere of Islamophobia that leads to those actions, acts of hatred and violence? You have to say yes. You have to say that, yes, those hateful words that he says, those words of threat, are part of creating that atmosphere.

Madam Speaker, we had an opposition day motion on Monday. The government has a majority. Our motion stated—I'll just read it: We ask the Legislative Assembly to call on "the Ford government to condemn the extreme and hateful invective of Charles McVety and oppose any efforts to make Canada Christian College into an accredited university." It's the first time in two and a half years that the opposition won a motion. We won 29 to 27. I think it's a clear statement that many of the members of the governing party do not feel comfortable voting in favour of Charles McVety having a university, and condoning the hateful messages that he has put out about the Muslim community and about the 2SLGBTQ2IA+ community.

I would encourage the Conservative members to please listen to your consciences when you're voting on this bill and either abstain or vote against this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I just want to get on record—it's a short time, so I just want to express the disappointment that I feel around having schedule 2 in Bill 213. The government did have an option of removing that schedule; I wish they took that opportunity during committee. It is a very damaging thing, when you have someone spewing discrimination and racist remarks. It isn't a province that I want to live in. We have made so many gains, and these are the things that we should be building on—not reverting back. As the member from London West said, granting degrees to a Christian university that has somebody at the head of it who won't even acknowledge that maybe they've made a mistake and they need to move on and get with the times—because we all need to understand that we all belong in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate? Further debate?

Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 25, 2020, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Calandra has moved third reading of Bill 213, An Act to reduce burdens on people and businesses by enacting, amending and repealing various Acts and revoking a regulation.

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

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

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

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

"Pursuant to standing order 30(h)," the government requests "that the vote on third reading of Bill 213, An Act to reduce burdens on people and businesses by enacting, amending and repealing various Acts and revoking a regulation be deferred until deferred votes on Monday, December 7, 2020."

Third reading vote deferred.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the government House leader on a point of order.

Hon. Paul Calandra: In accordance with standing order 7(e), I wish to inform the House that there will be no night sitting tonight. And I believe if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to see the clock at 6.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to see the clock at 6. Is it agreed? Agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Mrs. Robin Martin: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government should mandate a collaborative

approach for school boards, community police services and other partners to develop and adopt an anti-human trafficking protocol to prevent, identify and recognize human trafficking and develop responses to facilitate early and appropriate intervention.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mrs. Martin has moved private members' notice of motion number 122. Pursuant to standing order 101, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Mrs. Robin Martin: I'm very pleased to lead off the debate on this motion, which calls on the government to mandate that local school boards, community police services and other community partners work together in a collaborative way to develop and adopt an anti-human trafficking strategy. This would ensure that educators and others who work around the school system have the skills necessary to perhaps prevent or at least recognize and identify possible cases of human trafficking, and ensure that early and appropriate interventions can be made when individuals are most vulnerable to falling victim to human trafficking.

Speaker, human traffickers prey on some of the most vulnerable members of our society: our children. Just to underscore this, the average age of recruitment into sex trafficking is 13 years old. Over 70% of human trafficking victims identified by police are under the age of 25. Young women and girls are particularly at risk, though boys, men and people who are 2SLGBTQ are also targeted. Risks are even greater for those from Indigenous communities and children and youth in care.

Apparently, according to experts working in this area, there is not a single youth who does not know someone who is being trafficked or was being trafficked or who knows someone else who is being trafficked, or who knows someone else who is being trafficked. It's rampant.

1510

Frankly, Speaker, human trafficking ruins lives. It's critical that we do all we can to identify potential cases of human trafficking so that early intervention can happen and, hopefully, be successful.

Our government has already taken some significant steps to address the issue head-on. Ontario's updated health and physical education curriculum for grades 1 to 8, implemented in September 2019, equips children with important skills to help protect themselves against human trafficking.

In March, members may recall that the Premier, the Solicitor General and the Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues unveiled Ontario's comprehensive five-year strategy to combat human trafficking and end child sexual exploitation across the province. The new strategy is the largest total investment in dedicated anti-human trafficking supports and services in the country and is a major step forward in Ontario's fight against human trafficking, backed by \$307 million over the next five years. It calls for measures to support survivors by investing new funding in wraparound community-based supports and Indigenous-led initiatives to make more services available for survivors and by enhancing victim

services to assist survivors throughout the court process. It also calls for investments in specialized intervention teams involving police and child protection services, incorporating human trafficking awareness into the education curriculum, and establishing dedicated licensed residences to support victims, including those under the age of 16.

In August, the government built on the plan by introducing two new educational resources to help prevent human trafficking by teaching kids how to recognize if they are being targeted by a trafficker and making sure that they know where to get help. One was Speak Out: Stop Sex Trafficking. It's an Indigenous-focused human trafficking educational campaign, designed by and for Indigenous people, that provides information about sexual exploitation and human trafficking, how to recognize it, why Indigenous people may be particularly vulnerable to being targeted, and where to go for help. Resources include a website, downloadable materials for distribution in communities, and culturally relevant activities to help leaders and caregivers facilitate conversations with youth to raise awareness and provide support. Second is The Trap, a human trafficking digital education tool designed to raise awareness about sex trafficking among middle school and high school youth. The interactive tool allows youth to experience what it feels like to be targeted and recruited by a sex trafficker through an immersive chat experience. It features scenarios based on real-life experiences and, with the support of an adult facilitator, youth learn the skills they need to stay safe.

Incorporating human trafficking awareness into the curriculum and the development of additional resources is an excellent initiative, and I completely support it. But I think our schools can play an even stronger and more prominent role in the fight against human trafficking, and that's what today's motion is about.

While human trafficking itself doesn't generally happen in our schools, our schools are uniquely placed to help identify it and prevent it. The reality is that schools are the primary place outside of the home in which a child is socialized. Our children also spend a significant amount of their time in school, around the same set of teachers, educators and classmates. It's likely only the second place they spend their time, really—the home and the school.

Traffickers use schools as a decoy. Parents or a caregiver might think a child has gone to school, but that child may be packing a second outfit in their knapsack, which they will use later. Their traffickers want them to be back to school in time so they can be picked up on time and so they can go and do the same thing the next day.

We know that most teachers and other school staff genuinely care about the well-being of their students. They want to do their part. They want their students to succeed on the right path. We also know that bringing our schools into the fight against human trafficking can be successful because it's already being done in some parts of Ontario.

An excellent example is in York region. There, York Region District School Board has come together with York Regional Police and a number of community agencies, including BridgeNorth, a women's mentorship

and advocacy service, to develop an effective partnership that includes education and awareness training for educators, parents and students.

I recently had the opportunity to speak with Casandra Diamond from BridgeNorth about how the partnership came together and how York region schools are now playing a very active role in combatting cases of human trafficking in their community. Casandra herself is a survivor of human trafficking. She was in that industry from the time she was 17 to 27. She founded BridgeNorth in 2014 with the goal of seeing an end to sexual exploitation in Canada. She has focused her efforts in the York region, working with a number of amazing educators and administrators who formed the human trafficking awareness committee for the York Region District School Board.

Casandra advised that modern-day sex trafficking affects girls and women from all backgrounds. They are lured in schoolyards, shopping malls and on social media. Predators pose as friends and boyfriends, promising a glamorous life of wealth and love. Casandra opened my eyes to the world of human trafficking that is preying on some of our most vulnerable. She told me that human trafficking is a relational crime, that traffickers become very skilled at identifying vulnerabilities even in social media profiles and posts. This is particularly true for youth in care. They test the victim, saying, "Will your parents comment or call you or will you get in trouble if you're home late?" If a parent doesn't call, then the trafficker knows that there isn't going to be an issue that way. Then the trafficker will skillfully use the vulnerabilities against the victim. They exploit the victim and their vulnerabilities by preying on their need for attention, for love, for care.

It's very upsetting to know that this is going on and that the trafficker will weave a script or a story which they share or feed to the victim and the victim sees that story as their life story now. It rewires them. They start thinking that the trafficker is really on their side. They give the victim cigarettes or marijuana or expensive things as ways of showing love, but they're not really showing love. We know the reality is much different. Unfortunately, the victims can be deceived by these scripts. They don't have anyone else to talk to or anyone to question it, and they get stuck. It's very upsetting. We know the reality is very different.

The partnership in York region started as an informal arrangement, which was driven by these educators who sought additional training in identifying human trafficking from both the police and local organizations, and over time it has become formalized. Most importantly, that protocol has made a difference. It has empowered educators to identify potential cases of human trafficking and ensure early intervention. It has empowered the community agencies that have expertise in supporting victims of human trafficking to do what they do best. And, yes, it has empowered the police to go after those who prey on students so others do not fall prey to the same. It is, by all accounts, a very successful model; I'm sure there are others across the province. We're not suggesting that school boards should implement a one-size-fits-all

approach. We know that anti-human trafficking will have to be different in Toronto, Windsor or Kenora.

What the motion does is it encourages each board in the province to work with their local partners, their local police agency and community agencies that are active in their part of the province, to determine the best way that schools can help fight human trafficking in their local area and to develop an anti-human trafficking protocol that outlines everyone's roles and responsibilities and helps educators and staff know what to look out for and what to do. I think it is a very, very important goal. I think this is a very important motion for that reason, and that's why I've put it forward today.

I look forward to the rest of the debate and hearing the perspectives of my colleagues on this motion.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: It's an honour to stand in the House to add to debate on implementing a human trafficking protocol in Ontario. Often, people think that it's something that happens somewhere else, to someone else.

1520

I would like to put on the record the words of a young lady who grew up with our kids in a small town in northern Ontario, Ms. Karly Church:

"I would like to tell you a story about a young girl who was forced into the sex trade. She was an average girl who grew up in a small community, in a seemingly normal family, with both her parents. This girl struggled with the vulnerability of many young girls growing up and was unsure of where to turn to for help. She found herself in a life she had never imagined....

"She met two men who seemed to want to take care of her. They talked to her, they asked her about her life, her family, her friends, even her hopes and dreams for the future. She told them everything, as she had felt as if she had been waiting all her life for someone to notice she was struggling and ask her about it, to stop and take time out of their lives to ask her about hers. She did not realize, though, that this information would later be used against her.

"Next, they began to treat her better than anyone had ever treated her before. They gave her a safe place to live and began meeting all of her basic needs. They showered her with compliments, boosted her self-esteem, boosted her self-worth. They introduced her to their friends, gave her that sense of belonging, being a part of something. This is something she had always craved! They also provided her with her drug of choice.

"She felt as if her luck had finally turned around, as if someone was finally going to take care of her. She felt as if this was the best her life had ever been. There did not seem to be any red flags for her. The only one she identifies was it was too good to be true, but why would she want to believe that when no one had ever treated her in this way before?

"The red flags started a bit later. They gave her all that love and attention, and then they pulled it all away, gave her all that love and affection and then pulled it all away.

She describes it as walking on eggshells, unsure if she was going to have a good day or a bad day. Things no longer came free in this stage. Physical violence began. She was asked to do things she didn't want to, but did them because she was rewarded with love and attention after.

"If she didn't do as she was told, oftentimes there was a punishment. Very quickly, she became willing to do whatever it took to get a glimpse of the good times. This is when her trafficker realized he had her exactly where he wanted her and brought up the idea of working in the sex trade. He had her choose between escorting or dancing. She chose escorting, thinking she would have some sort of control. But he had other plans. He took her photos, he posted her ad, he put his cell phone number down, he arranged the dates, he described what services she would provide and he decided how many people she would have sex with a day. She expressed how much she hated every minute of it. Half the time she had no idea who was coming to her door or what services she was expected to provide. It was the most traumatic experience of her life.

"She has mentioned that she would have never left on her own if it was not for the love and support of service providers who understood the complexities and trauma associated with the trafficking situation. Today, she is thriving because of the appropriate protocols and supports given.

"This is just one story. I have heard thousands of other stories just like this. This is what human trafficking looks like in an Ontario context, and we need to continue to bring awareness to this issue that affects so many of our young people today. And that girl's story I just told you? That girl was me. By implementing a provincial anti-human trafficking protocol, we could stop this from happening to other young, vulnerable individuals and appropriately support those who have been affected."

Those words were from Ms. Karly Church, who is now a crisis intervention counsellor with Victim Services of Durham Region, affiliated with the Durham Regional Police Service. It has been an honour to be able to put her words on the record.

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

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm pleased to have an opportunity to speak to this important motion, which calls for a collaborative approach for school boards, community police services and other partners to develop and adopt an anti-human trafficking protocol.

You will know, Speaker, that human trafficking is one of the fastest-growing crimes, particularly in the region of Durham. Prior to being elected as the member of provincial Parliament in the by-election in 2016, I was a regional councillor on the regional council. At that time, I chaired the health and social services committee for seven years. I also chaired another committee, partnership on diversity. Populating that particular committee were representatives who were doing work together to combat human trafficking. I still believe, as I did then, that effective prevention starts by educating and working with youth. It does take a partnership, and I know you realize that because you also have municipal experience.

Coming back to the region of Durham: In partnership with the Durham Regional Police Service, in particular the human trafficking unit, which over the years I've done a lot of work with, but also Victim Services of Durham Region, they've created a grade 9 education and awareness program for students throughout the region of Durham. It's an important program, and it ties, obviously, so well to the motion before us. Again, it speaks to partnerships. These workshops are inclusive of youth culture, and they debunk widespread myths and misconceptions about human trafficking in Ontario in order to increase—this is an important point—the protective factors. It's the protective factors that we are talking about. This highly interactive training uses current media through a survivor's perspective to bring to light the concerning epidemic—and it is an epidemic—of human trafficking.

One of the survivors in the region of Durham who does bring this perspective not only in the setting I just described, but in other ways, is Karly Church. Karly, yes, is a survivor, but she has been participating in the setting I'm describing, and in other ways, in an effective way, working with the Durham Regional Police Service human trafficking unit—reaching out to young women across the region of Durham, giving them hope, listening carefully to what brought them to that point, discussing with them that there are opportunities beyond where they are now.

Speaker, Victim Services of Durham Region and Durham Regional Police Service recently hosted Antidote to Human Trafficking: A Youth Symposium to raise awareness of trafficking of youth. School educators and students in grades 8 and up were equipped to understand the nuances of consent, gain a strong knowledge of trafficking in the region of Durham and what to do if you suspect this is happening to you or your friend. It is the "what to do" part which is one of the key outcomes from what I'm describing.

Karly will tell you this: At a number of these types of symposiums that she has participated in—she's always approached after these symposiums by young people telling her about situations that don't seem right to them, which they've encountered. They seek her perspective and advice on a way forward.

Speaker, the work of Karly Church and Victim Services of Durham Region, in my view, is absolutely vital to effecting the intent and purpose of the motion before us, and I can't thank the member from Eglinton-Lawrence enough for bringing forward this motion to allow us to talk about this epidemic. It's not only the region of Durham; it's other parts of Ontario, as well.

1530

Human traffickers prey on the most vulnerable members of our society: our children and our grandchildren. We must do everything possible to keep our children safe.

On this motion, I talked about the purpose and intent. It talks about the partnerships that are necessary, the underpinnings to effect the intent and purpose. The collaborative approach complements well the government's comprehensive five-year strategy announced earlier this year to combat human trafficking and end child sexual exploitation across the province. Yes, it's the largest investment in

dedicated anti-human-trafficking support and services in this country, and I'm proud about that. I'm proud about that because I have a long, long history and experience in this area.

At the end of the day, what Karly, I, and I'm sure every member in this Legislative Assembly aspire to is to instill hope.

In her role, Karly has this to say: "I want them to see that there is a way out, and there is the ability that they can reach any goal that they have for themselves.

"That you don't have to be stuck, that there are people who care."

There are people who care in this chamber today and every day—not just what we're discussing today. They care deeply. Again, it does take a partnership.

I want to highlight, in closing, some of the features of the strategy to end human trafficking, because it ties so well to the intent and purpose of the motion before us. I'm not going to go on too long; I just want to highlight a few of them, and I want to get them on the record.

I talked about the work that Karly Church has done for years as a survivor, and I talked about Victim Services of Durham Region and the work they've done. But one of the features of the province's strategy to end human trafficking and the new investment is to expand the Youth-in-Transition Worker Program to support youth leaving care who are at risk for human trafficking and expand protocols—again, what this motion is calling for—for children's aid societies and police services to include human trafficking. That's happening not just in the Durham Regional Police Service, through the human trafficking unit; it's happening in other settings as well—York region is an example—going forward.

Another feature is creating human trafficking intelligence positions in the Criminal Intelligence Service Ontario unit to increase capacity to proactively identify human trafficking activities and coordinate—another key feature of the intent of this particular motion before us—intelligence efforts across the province.

Where I live, Speaker, and where you live, we're in the central corridor. Whitby, Oshawa, Clarington and some of the municipalities that form the region of Durham are on the 401 corridor. It's a main transportation corridor, unfortunately, for human trafficking.

With these types of initiatives that I highlighted, I think, taken together, as well as the provincial coordination and leadership, this motion today factors very well into the five-year strategy and the funding that has been provided going forward. More importantly, this motion takes into account the work of people like Karly Church, Victim Services of Durham Region and the effect it's having on lives across the province of Ontario.

This is the type of motion that will have a lasting effect on many young lives across this province.

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

Mr. Chris Glover: It's an honour to rise and speak on this issue. I want to thank the member for Eglinton–Lawrence for bringing the motion forward.

We have a Sunday program where we're handing out food to people experiencing homelessness. A woman I came across there and her daughter had lost their housing in a small town, and they had been moved to a shelter in Toronto. In the shelter, her daughter was kidnapped by a trafficker. She was tied up and injected with fentanyl until she became addicted to fentanyl. Eventually, she escaped. She testified against the trafficker. The trafficker is in jail, which is good, because otherwise he would be continuing to recruit young women from Mexico, which was one of the other things he was doing. These traffickers are evil people, and they need to be stopped. The reason I know about that story is because I met her in the encampments.

There's a gentleman in the building where I live who started a project called Project Comfort to support people experiencing homelessness, and then he started a second group, a charity called Project Recover, to support women who have been trafficked. He said it's because when he was supporting people who have experienced homelessness—a lot of the trafficking takes place in that vulnerable population.

So this motion is a good step, but there needs to be a lot more. The government needs to understand the tie between people experiencing homelessness and human trafficking.

When I look at this government's record on homelessness—right now, the Landlord and Tenant Board is rifling through cases and expelling people from their homes, sometimes in hearings that last only 60 seconds. There's also a 30% cut to legal aid. So the people who want to maintain their housing are not able to even maintain their housing. When we're looking at this, the experience of that mother and daughter, and we're looking at the homelessness crisis—and the other thing I'd say the government did: You've frozen Ontario Works at \$635 a month.

When you do not provide access to mainstream society for people, when you do not provide people with enough money to participate in the mainstream economy even at a subsistence level, then you create a side economy. That side economy is where people become vulnerable to exploitation like human trafficking.

So if you really are committed to ending human trafficking, you must also end the exploitation that happens among people who are experiencing homelessness, and you must bring an end to homelessness.

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

Ms. Jill Andrew: Thank you to the member from Eglinton–Lawrence for putting forth motion 122 on anti-human trafficking protocol.

The NDP supports the motion. However, like my friend and colleague from Spadina–Fort York—this is a small step. I say that with kindness, through the Speaker, to the member for Eglinton–Lawrence.

I have said this many times in the House: You have to address the roots of violence. You have to address the social conditions that bring people or can assist people in getting to a position, a state, a place, a time when they become susceptible to human trafficking, whether that's labour trafficking, whether that's organ removal—because it's not all sex trafficking; any kind of trafficking.

Very early on in her speech, the member said that youth in care are particularly vulnerable to trafficking, yet one of the first things this government did when they “got power” was the decision to cut the office of the provincial advocate for children and youth—guess what?—in care. That’s an example of a way in which you don’t dismantle the system and then create legislation that suggests that you care about the system that’s breaking down some of our most vulnerable folks in community.

1540

The member was right; I think I heard the member say something around 2SLGBTQIA+ community members, maybe the member mentioned Black community members, certainly Indigenous community members—any community member who, systemically, tends to have problems accessing the resources that they need in life to thrive tends to be more vulnerable to the world’s ills. So whether that’s a person who has no place to live, whether that’s a person who has no food security—and my friend from Beaches–East York, the critic for poverty and homelessness, has tirelessly tried to get this government to declare homelessness a crisis, to get more funding for shelters. She has advocated for more supports for food banks that are often empty.

These are the kinds of ways that you actually address trafficking and violence against women and violence against marginalized communities—by looking at the root causes and looking at the social determinants. So I wish that some of those were embedded deeply in this legislation.

And last but certainly not least, I would ask the member from Eglinton–Lawrence to take a read of the article called *Trafficking at the Intersections: Racism, Colonialism, Sexism, and Exploitation in Canada*. One of the people who reviewed this article is Nicole Pietsch, who is with the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres and is certainly no stranger to this government, as she has pleaded and pleaded and pleaded for additional funding to shelters, to rape crisis centres, sexual assault centres—the gateways that place women in certain situations. I won’t have time to read the piece of this article that I wanted to, but I really do hope that the member from Eglinton–Lawrence will read it, and if she’s interested, I will more than happily send her a copy electronically.

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

Mr. David Piccini: It’s an honour to rise today to speak to this motion in the chamber.

With just a minute left, I’m speaking on behalf of the Minister of Education, who had wanted to be here but asked me to just read a few remarks. He wanted to say and I want to say as an MPP on the 401 corridor, where, sadly, far too much human trafficking occurs in this province, that we’re deeply grateful to the member for Eglinton–Lawrence for her leadership on this issue and for advancing this province-wide, in all schools of the province, to combat trafficking and victimization. This zero-tolerance approach really forces the system to up our game. He, I and all members on this side of the House—

and, I know, across the aisle—are inspired to see this sort of leadership in this House, to bring forward a motion to combat this.

I think to conversations I recently had in my office just the other day with the mother of someone who had been trafficked and conversations I’ve had in my PA role with the critic opposite. These are issues where we really must come together, where we can’t be shy to challenge one another, but where we can put our partisanship aside to discuss this important issue to really make gains—because at the end of the day, to address these issues in a meaningful manner, we all benefit.

Thank you to the member for Eglinton–Lawrence.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): We return to the member from Eglinton–Lawrence, and she has two minutes to respond.

Mrs. Robin Martin: I want to thank all of the members who spoke: the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane, the member from Toronto–St. Paul’s, the member from Spadina–Fort York, the member from Northumberland–Peterborough South and, of course, the member from Whitby. I want to thank you all for your comments.

I know the Minister of Education and Associate Minister of Children and Women’s Issues were both hoping to be here but had other things, unfortunately, because the timing changed, so they could not make it. But we heard a little bit about what the Minister of Education wanted to say.

This is a very important initiative. It is a step in the right direction.

There are lots of great people working in the field. I want to take a moment to thank the woman I mentioned, Casandra Diamond. Karly Church was also mentioned a couple of times, so we want to say thank you to her, too—and all the people Casandra Diamond is working with at the York Region District School Board and people working in the Durham region to address these problems.

We know that the protocol will be a step in the right direction. I also think we know that it will be a protocol which will evolve as we learn more about what is the best way to help. I think we’ll all benefit from some of those learnings. I certainly hope that we can help some of these young people, whose lives are being ruined through no fault of their own, to get out of this terrible industry, this terrible situation.

Remember that buying sex is a choice. You don’t have to do it. Remember that you’re hurting real people, including children, our most vulnerable.

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

Ms. Martin has moved notice of motion number 122. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): There being no further business to discuss, this House stands adjourned until 9 a.m., Monday, December 7.

The House adjourned at 1547.

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Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
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Gill, Parm (PC)	Milton	
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Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hassan, Faisal (NDP)	York South—Weston / York-Sud—Weston	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor—Tecumseh	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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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
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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	
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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	
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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
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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
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Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
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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
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