

Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario



Assemblée
législative
de l'Ontario

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

M-18

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

M-18

**Standing Committee on
the Legislative Assembly**

Time Amendment Act, 2020

1st Session
42nd Parliament

Tuesday 17 November 2020

**Comité permanent de
l'Assemblée législative**

Loi de 2020 modifiant la Loi
sur l'heure légale

1^{re} session
42^e législature

Mardi 17 novembre 2020

Chair: Kaleed Rasheed
Clerk: Tonia Grannum

Président : Kaleed Rasheed
Greffière : Tonia Grannum

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<https://www.ola.org/>

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7400.

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7400.

House Publications and Language Services
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service linguistique et des publications parlementaires
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

ISSN 1180-436X

CONTENTS

Tuesday 17 November 2020

Time Amendment Act, 2020, Bill 214, Mr. Roberts / Loi de 2020 modifiant la Loi sur l'heure légale, projet de loi 214, M. Roberts.....	M-237
Mr. Jeremy Roberts	M-237
KS on the Keys	M-246
Mr. Robert Swaita	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DE
L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Tuesday 17 November 2020

Mardi 17 novembre 2020

The committee met at 0900 in committee room 1 and by video conference.

**TIME AMENDMENT ACT, 2020
LOI DE 2020 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR L'HEURE LÉGALE**

Consideration of the following bill:

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

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Good morning, everyone. I will call this meeting to order. We are meeting today to conduct public hearings on Bill 214, An Act to amend the Time Act and various other acts.

We have the following members in the room: We have MPP Oosterhoff and MPP Roberts. The following members are present remotely: We have MPP Hassan, MPP Paul Miller, MPP Collard, MPP Kanapathi, MPP Singh and MPP McDonell. Staff from Hansard, broadcast and recording and legislative research join us remotely today.

To make sure that everyone can understand what is going on, it is important that all participants speak slowly and clearly. Please wait until I recognize you before starting to speak. Since it could take a little time for your audio and video to come up after I recognize you, please take a brief pause before beginning.

As always, all comments should go through the Chair. Once again, in order to ensure optimal sound quality, members participating via Zoom are encouraged to use headphones and/or microphones, if possible. Are there any questions before we begin? I see none.

MR. JEREMY ROBERTS

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): I'll now call on Mr. Jeremy Roberts, MPP and sponsor of the bill. You will have 15 minutes for your presentation, followed by 45 minutes of questioning divided into three rounds of six minutes for the government members, three rounds of six minutes for the official opposition members, and two rounds of four and a half minutes for the independent member. Please state your name for Hansard, and you may begin.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Good morning, Mr. Vice-Chair and members of the committee. I'm MPP Jeremy Roberts, MPP for Ottawa West-Nepean, and I'm really thrilled to

have the opportunity to present to you here today on my private member's bill, Bill 214, which is the Time Amendment Act.

I'm sure it was not unnoticed by all of you that earlier this month, on the night following Halloween, we went through what we colloquially call the "fall back" time change. This is the time change where we pull the clocks back an hour, and this goes in concert, as we know, with the biannual practice of the time change: We have the spring forward in the spring and we have the fall back in the autumn.

I can't imagine that I am the only one who went through this practice and who is left feeling groggy and a bit off-put following that time change every year. It throws off your sleep cycles, and of course it also causes something that I have heard from so many Ontarians on over the last couple of months, and that's that people get upset because they get home from work and it's pitch black outside. I'm sure a lot of you have experienced the same thing over the past couple of weeks: You've noticed that suddenly, at 5 o'clock in the afternoon, it's already dark outside. That's something that I think is a great frustration for many Ontarians who look forward to that time when they get home from work, when they pick up their kids from school, to have that sunlight and be able to enjoy a little bit of the day outdoors, particularly as we've been enjoying this bit of fall summer lately.

As I started doing research into the time change, I discovered that, as a matter of fact, there is a ton of research to suggest that this practice has become quite outdated. As a matter of fact, when the time change was originally brought in, one of its original purposes, its main purpose, was to save on energy consumption. There have now been several studies that have suggested that it does not even serve that purpose anymore. There was a study done by the US National Bureau of Economic Research which concluded that daylight savings time might actually be wasting energy as opposed to saving energy, because heaters and air conditioners were being kept on later to account for extended afternoon daylight after the spring change and vice versa, and different changes throughout the year. That particular study found that energy savings were not actually happening and so the original purpose of the time change may not even be there anymore.

What's more is that there were significant studies to suggest that there were a lot of adverse health outcomes as a result of the time change. I'll take you through some of

those studies. Denmark's Psychiatric Central Research Register found that depression levels spiked as much as 8% in early November after the fall-back time change. One of the researchers on that study is quoted as saying, "We are relatively certain that it is the transition from daylight saving time to standard time that causes the increase in the number of depression diagnoses and not, for example, the change in the length of the day or bad weather."

A US study also looked at hospital records across the United States and found a 24% increase in heart attacks amongst higher-risk populations following the spring-forward time change. Similarly, the American Academy of Neurology found an 8% increase in strokes following that time.

Moving along, the Japanese Society of Sleep Research has suggested that the time change may lead to a rise in suicide deaths. Another study, published in the *Journal of Sleep Medicine*, found a 10% increase in fatal car crashes, fatal collisions as a result of the time change—and 10%, of course, is a fairly significant amount. A metastudy by Rutgers backs up this finding, arguing that "Results show that full-year daylight saving time would reduce pedestrian fatalities by 171 per year, or by 13% of all pedestrian fatalities in the 5 a.m.-10 a.m. and in the 4 p.m.-9 p.m. time periods. Motor vehicle occupant fatalities would be reduced by 195 per year, or 3%, during the same time periods."

Beyond these health outcomes, there are also spillover effects in the workplace. An article published in the *Journal of the American Psychological Association* found a sizable amount of workplace injuries associated with daylight-saving-time-induced fatigue. Beyond that amount of workplace injuries, we can also see a decrease in productivity linked to the time change. A joint German-British study found that both Germans and Brits experienced "non-negligible losses of utility" after losing an hour's sleep. A Penn State study found that individuals also increased their time cyberloafing—that was a new word for me. "Cyberloafing" means wasting time on the Internet at work. This study found an increase in cyberloafing after the time change.

All of this significant amount of data leads one to start to ask the question: Why do we continue to follow this outdated practice? It doesn't actually serve its original stated goal of decreasing energy consumption. We see a significant amount of adverse health outcomes, from rises in the depression rate to increased rates of suicide, increased heart attacks, strokes, more fatal car crashes and impacts in the workplace on productivity, on cyberloafing, on workplace injuries. All of this begs the question: Why do we keep doing this?

As a matter of fact, the majority of the world does not follow this practice. In fact, 79% of the world's population does not follow the time change, so we are actually in the minority in that group.

My bill proposes to end daylight saving time, the practice of doing the biannual time change, and it proposes moving us to permanent daylight saving time. What that will mean in practical effect is that we wouldn't go through that time change that we went through recently.

We would stay on permanent daylight saving time, which would mean a little bit of extra sunlight in the afternoon when folks get home from work, when they pick up their kids from school.

0910

Now, a lot of people reached out to me right away and said that they loved this idea. They loved the idea of having that extra daylight in the afternoon. It was wonderful to hear from those people, but I think it's also important to look at what the research suggests. The research actually suggests that there can be some societal benefits to permanent daylight saving time.

There are two in particular that I think merit mentioning. The first is that there have been several studies in the United States that have suggested that permanent daylight saving time could actually help our small businesses. A study by the bank JPMorgan Chase found that after the fall-back time change, when we go out of daylight savings time, they saw a drop of 3.5% in retail activity during that time. That was backed up by a Massachusetts commission report that found similar findings on the impact on small businesses.

Both of these studies theorize that the reason for this is because people get home from work, it's dark, and they feel less of a desire to leave home to go out to a local business, a local restaurant when it's dark out. That's the first piece. A benefit of daylight saving time could be a benefit to our businesses.

There was also another interesting study that found that there could actually be an impact on crime rates, that having that extra daylight in the evening has actually shown a decrease in crime rates in some jurisdictions. These societal benefits suggest that not only is there an argument as to why we should end this, there is an argument as to why we should do this permanent change.

When I mentioned before that 79% of the world does not follow this practice, I think it's also important to note that there are many jurisdictions across the Western world that are looking at making this change as well. In Canada, Saskatchewan and the Yukon don't follow the time change; in the United States, there's Arizona and Hawaii.

Meanwhile, there are a ton of jurisdictions investigating the possibility. Here in Canada, we've got both Alberta and British Columbia looking at it. In the United States, a whole swath of states, including Texas, California, Massachusetts—a whole swath of them that are also looking at this, looking at the evidence and considering whether or not this is something that we should move towards. I think there's a real opportunity here for Ontario to lead the charge.

There's something very critically important about my bill that we included: the fact that we want to make sure that we do this reasonably. There are some people who fear that doing the time change not in coordination with some of our jurisdictional neighbours could cause a lot of significant problems. The two neighbours that come up the most often in discussions are Quebec and New York.

With New York, the fear is that we benefit tremendously from being in the same time zone as the markets in New York City, and so there's a feeling that we want to

maintain that competitive advantage we have by maintaining that commonality in the time change with New York.

Meanwhile, when it comes to Quebec, it's a bit of a local, Ottawa-area issue that I can appreciate and I'm sure the member for Ottawa–Vanier on the line can also appreciate, and that is that half of our federal government workforce is located in downtown Ottawa while the other half is located across the river in downtown Gatineau. If we were not to do the time change in coordination with Quebec, we'd have a very strange situation where you would have half the federal government in one time zone and half in another. When people cross the interprovincial border, they'd be changing time zones. It would be tough to schedule meetings—all sorts of logistical challenges.

That's why, when I discussed this bill with the Attorney General and with colleagues in caucus, we felt it was very important that this bill include a measure to make sure that the bill would not come into force until we have some of our neighbouring jurisdictions on board. I think that's the responsible thing to do and I think that's why we're seeing this bill moving forward now through the committee stage, on to hopefully third and final reading, and moving forward with getting this time change done, finally.

When we tabled this, in second reading, we got a significant amount of media interest across Ontario, but I'm also pleased to say a significant amount of interest across the region. In fact, a reporter asked Premier Legault in Quebec about it and Premier Legault indicated that he was open to the idea. Meanwhile, I also did some media across New York state. We did several radio interviews across the state. We published an op ed in the Albany newspaper. So we're trying to kick-start this discussion in New York state and Quebec to really move the ball forward.

This is our chance to get it done. We have bipartisan support for this initiative. This bill includes that contingency to make sure that we do it responsibly, to make sure that this change happens in concert with our neighbours. The data is clear as to why we should stop doing this change. The data is clear as to why we should move to permanent daylight savings time, in terms of the societal benefits. I think all the factors are there for us to have success.

I really look forward to the questions today, to hearing from some of our witnesses, and I look forward to us moving this forward through the process so that we can really go to our neighbours and say, "Ontario has passed this bill. Now we need you to do the same." Let's get Quebec and New York state on board, and let's finally end this outdated practice.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Thank you for your presentation, MPP Roberts.

I see that MPP Skelly joined via Zoom, and I also see MPP Mitas joined via phone. MPP Skelly, can you please confirm that you are present and that in fact you are the honourable member, and confirm that you are in Ontario?

Ms. Donna Skelly: Good morning, Mr. Chair. Yes, it is MPP Skelly, and I am in Hamilton.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Thank you.

MPP Mitas, can you please confirm that you are present and that you are in fact the honourable member, and can you confirm whether you are currently in Ontario?

Miss Christina Maria Mitas: Good morning, Chair. I can confirm that I am MPP Mitas and that I am here in Toronto.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Thank you.

This round of questions will start with the official opposition for six minutes, independent members for four and a half minutes and government members for six minutes. I'll start with the official opposition. I see MPP Miller.

Mr. Paul Miller: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good morning, everyone. I'd like to start off asking MPP Roberts a couple of questions. Actually, I'm glad to be on this committee. It's nice to know that my private member's bill inspired MPP Roberts's bill. It's a compliment to know that not one single word was changed, other than a few language amendments like the Mining Act. Mr. Roberts's presentation sounds very similar to my speech on March 12, when my Ditch the Switch Act passed second reading with Mr. Roberts's and his entire party's support. In fact, support was unanimous.

I'm quite surprised that we're even here today doing this. I feel that this is a total waste of resources and time and a legislative tie-up, especially considering we're in the middle of a pandemic. I find this very interesting. I'm not sure what the purpose of this is. Maybe he can help me with this. Is this to lift his profile in Ottawa? Is it to change the clock, when it comes to what's going on with the pandemic? I'm sure he got a lot of calls in Ottawa; it's one of the red zones, I believe. I'm very concerned that we are wasting resources and time, and I think that there's such a thing as plagiarism and, unfortunately, that occurs occasionally with other issues and things like that.

Frankly, I'm very unhappy and very disgusted that this party, the governing party, is wasting taxpayers' dollars, time and effort on something that was perfectly fine and was presented on March 12 and passed unanimously in the House. I believe even Mr. Roberts came over and shook my hand and said, "Good bill." So what is this all about and why are we going through this again?

0920

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Thank you very much, MPP Miller, for the question. When I first got elected, one of the first letters I sent in my capacity as a member of provincial Parliament was a letter to the Attorney General. For those who aren't aware, the Attorney General is responsible for the Time Act, which governs this time-change process. I sent a letter to the Attorney General and asked if we could start to look at changing this outdated practice. As I mentioned in my remarks, and as MPP Miller noted, there's a significant amount of evidence as to why the time change shouldn't happen.

At the time, the Attorney General wasn't sure if we should move forward with this. At the time it was Minister Mulroney, and she had some concerns around our neighbouring jurisdictions. Of course, we had a change in

Attorney General, and the new Attorney General, Minister Downey, came in. Again, I sent Minister Downey a letter, and he's actually shared with me that the first letter he ever sent in his capacity as Attorney General was a letter to me on this issue, again expressing some concerns about the neighbouring jurisdictions.

As MPP Miller has mentioned, there have been several attempts in the past to bring forward legislation like this. MPP Miller brought forward something similar back in the spring that would end the time change, MPP Marie-France Lalonde, former MPP for Orléans, brought forward something similar, and there have been previous attempts in other Parliaments.

But there's a key difference with my bill. In working with the Attorney General's office, we wanted to figure out how we could address this concern about our neighbouring jurisdictions. That's why my bill includes that section on the commencement of the bill: that the bill would only come into force if the Attorney General, the Lieutenant Governor in Council deems it appropriate to do so. In doing so, we have a commitment from the Attorney General that we won't do this unless it's done in co-operation with our neighbours. Again, to go through, it's so critically important that we have our neighbours on board. We don't want to do this without New York. We don't want to do that without Quebec—

Mr. Paul Miller: Mr. Chair, with all due respect to Mr. Roberts—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): I recognize MPP Paul Miller.

Mr. Paul Miller: With all due respect, that answer is irrelevant, because what he's saying here is that they're going to agree with the neighbours when the neighbours want to do it. But all of this could have been pre-empted by any discussions that he had, he says, with New York and all these other places. They could very well have brought that forward.

I don't remember him coming to me to co-sponsor the bill. I don't remember him even talking to the opposition about this.

What really surprises me, Mr. Chair, is that the government and their leader constantly stand up in the House and say, "We want to work together with the opposition. We want to work with them to get things done. Why won't they work with us?" Well, when we try to do things that are positive—and obviously it was positive, because they took it off me. Why do they keep saying they want to work with us, when really, they don't want to?

This is definitely partisan, this is definitely to raise his profile in Ottawa, and that's what it all boils down to. I don't care who he talked to, or how many letters he sent. It doesn't matter. He was well aware of what was going on when I presented my bill, and he could very well have stepped up and talked to me about all these things that he's—I don't know—not been hiding, but that he hasn't discussed with me. This is absolutely unacceptable, and I really want the public to know that this is a total waste of time and this is simply done to divert attention away from what's going on in Ottawa with COVID-19.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): We have 10 seconds left for the official opposition. If no one has any comments or questions, we'll move on to the independent members. They have four and a half minutes.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: I do have a couple of questions of clarification, really. MPP Roberts mentioned the collaboration, of course, with our neighbours. I just wanted to know, for Quebec, what is the status? What's their interest? Do you have an idea about the timeline on when this could be achieved?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Thank you, MPP Collard. As I mentioned in my presentation, I'm sure with your riding having some of the federal government and a lot of federal government workers living in your riding, that's a key concern, to make sure that we do this in collaboration with Quebec.

We wanted to wait until we formally approached our neighbours until this bill passes through the various stages of the legislative process, but it was my hope that by tabling it with this change in terms of the commencement, it would spark a conversation in Quebec, and I think that's what has happened. I've had the opportunity to go on the radio in Montreal a couple of times, and in Quebec City with Radio-Canada as well. The media there, as I mentioned, in fact asked Premier Legault about this issue, and he indicated that he is open to the idea, so hopefully, if we are successful in passing this through committee and then through final reading, we can then begin some formal engagements with Quebec and find out if Premier Legault, in terms of his openness—we'll gauge that and see if we can get them on board and move forward.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Okay. Well, thank you for that answer. Now, regarding New York, though—I understand fully, of course, the obligation of needing to have Quebec on board for this change. I'm not sure why it would be necessary for New York to be on board. As far as I've heard, businesses are used to making transactions in different time zones, and doing business with New York wouldn't be different than with other time zone locations. What is the rationale for needing New York to be on board for this?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: I think it's the fact that they're such close economic neighbours. There's such a significant amount of trade across the border, and again, it benefits us to be in the same time zone as the markets.

As a matter of fact, I was reading an old article in the paper that talked about one of the previous times this subject has been raised in the Ontario Legislature. At the time, it was Premier McGuinty who expressed concern about doing this without New York City, without having us onside with the markets in New York City, so this concern has been raised as a barrier towards getting this done across the past several decades. That's why I thought it was really important that we include New York in this conversation.

Don't get me wrong: It's going to be difficult. I'm sure New York has many, many priorities that they're considering right now, but again, I think this is our best shot now, with Ontario moving forward, with a bill moving forward,

with conversations happening, with media attention, with media interest. I think we can really kick-start this conversation.

We've actually had a significant amount of correspondence from New Yorkers, as well, who have indicated that they're supportive of this and they want us to get it done, so I'm hopeful that we'll be able to get this done and do it responsibly.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Chair, do I still have some time?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): You have 40 seconds.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: I just want to know, as a follow-up to this, have you had any formal conversations with the state of New York to see if they're on board and if they would be considering that any time soon?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: No formal correspondence yet—again, we want to wait until the bill passes through all the stages before we do a formal reach-out—but I will say that there is a senator in New York, a New York state senator, who has reached out and expressed interest in connecting with us, so I think that's good, that there's a legislator there who is also interested in speaking to us.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Next are the government members for six minutes. I see MPP Oosterhoff.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this legislation, and I want to thank the member for bringing it forward and for being a strong advocate for these types of practical changes that benefit the lives of Ontarians and will make life easier. Whether it's in a pandemic or any other time, we all have a task to ensure that we're doing everything possible to make life easier for Ontarians, to make life more affordable and, of course, to improve health outcomes. I think that's something you talked about extensively.

I do find it a touch ironic that the members of the opposition, on the one hand, claim that this bill is a waste of time, and on the other hand claim that you copied it from them. I'm not sure if they can have their cake and eat it too. On the one hand, they say that this is legislation that should never have come forward, and on the other hand they say, "But you took my legislation," so they're going to have to make up their minds on that one. We'll see; I guess they like to flip-flop depending on which way the wind blows. Unfortunately, that seems to be the way of the NDP.

But I want to ask the member if he could talk a little bit about the importance of this legislation in a stream of legislation on this subject that has come forward, also, in other areas. The reason I mention that is that I know a colleague in Alberta, Thomas Dang, has brought this forward in the past—I believe in 2018, if my memory serves me correctly—and I believe it passed second reading but it did not pass third reading.

0930

Do you know why there has been a challenge in getting some of these pieces of legislation to pass Legislatures? I understand all the positive benefits, and I'm going to ask

you to talk a little about those in some detail, but is it a cultural shift that needs to happen? Because I saw the awareness when you brought this forward. Truly, it was staggering. We've brought forward a lot of different things under this government, and I find it interesting that on the one hand, there are billion-dollar investments in LRTs and in hospitals and schools, and this bill got almost more attention in some of those areas than those investments. Could you talk to me about that precedent that has been set with bills not passing and what we can do to make sure that this one doesn't go down that path?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Absolutely. It's a fantastic question. As I mentioned in my presentation, a significant amount of the world's population doesn't follow this practice: 79% of the world's population don't do the time change, and so many jurisdictions are looking at getting rid of it. So again, that begs the question, why aren't more jurisdictions moving forward with it, given that significant amount of research that we talked about: that spike in depression rates, more heart attacks, more fatal car crashes, all of that evidence that is out there that suggests that this practice shouldn't continue?

I think the two biggest factors as to why some of these pieces of legislation have stalled—the first is, there is some debate over, if we end the time change, should we move to permanent standard time or permanent daylight saving time? Permanent standard time, which is the time that we are in at present, would mean a bit more daylight in the mornings as opposed to more daylight in the afternoons, which permanent daylight saving time would do. There is evidence to make a case on either side, and so some jurisdictions have gone back and forth a little bit on which path do they want to choose.

Here in Ontario, I believe, as I've put forward in my bill, that the strongest case is to be made for permanent daylight saving time; again, referring to some of those societal benefits that I talked about: the potential to boost retail activity for small businesses, the potential to reduce crime rates and different things like that. That's why we're bringing forward that bill, and I'm pleased that in the correspondence I've received, there is vast, vast support for that direction here in Ontario. So I think this bill has chosen the right path in terms of those two options.

The second piece that I think has hampered some jurisdictions and some legislators around the world from getting this done is the difficulty of doing it without your neighbours. Where we have a significant amount of whether it's interprovincial trade or international trade or logistical issues like I mentioned previously in the Ottawa area, where you have a workforce that's spread across two borders, all of these things are such critically important issues, and I think governments have sometimes been reticent about moving forward and shaking things up a bit in a way that perhaps could adversely impact some of those relationships across those borders.

Again, that's why my bill is different than any one that I have seen that's come forward before, because we're taking that into account and because we're making that an integral part of the bill. We're going to do this responsibly,

and that has really spurred this conversation as well, because people are finally looking at this and saying, “Okay, we have a bill that’s going to get rid of it. They’re going to do it responsibly. We have bipartisan support. Let’s get this bill done, and let’s spur that conversation across our neighbouring jurisdictions.”

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Showing leadership. I like it.

One of the things I want to ask you—I’m from an agricultural background myself. My family, most of them, are still currently farmers. My parents are farmers. My grandparents are farmers. I know the changes came into effect during the war, I believe—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Thank you, MPP Oosterhoff.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: We’ll get to it next time.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Yes.

The second round of questioning will start with the government members for six minutes.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Can I continue this one, and then I’ll turn it over to my colleagues? Okay.

To return to that point, I know it came forward during, I believe, the First World War. I’m just wondering if you’ve heard any pushback, because I haven’t heard any from my family members, most of whom work in agriculture. But I’m wondering if there have been particular sectors or areas that have said this isn’t beneficial. If that is the case, could you lay that out a little bit, just so we have all the information before the committee?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Absolutely. You’re correct: This gained widespread usage after World War I. It was Germany that first adopted the practice on a broad scale in an effort to conserve coal during the war, and Britain and Canada followed suit, although there are some instances of it being started on a trial basis in different jurisdictions. I’ve had some letters from folks in Thunder Bay who have indicated that Thunder Bay tried it even before World War I, but my understanding is widespread usage after World War I.

In terms of the agricultural community, one of the things that I’ve read is that a lot of farmers actually support getting rid of the time change, because for them, their livestock don’t understand the time change. A lot of things on farms are very methodical, based on keeping a steady routine, and so if they’re used to feeding their livestock at 7 a.m. and suddenly 7 a.m. is 6 a.m., they have to get up earlier to get it done, because that’s what the routine is based on. So I’ve actually heard a lot of support from the agricultural community on this change, which has been great.

Now, your question about where there has been some criticism, I think, is a good question to consider. The most significant criticism that we’ve received so far is around why we’ve chosen permanent daylight savings time over permanent standard time. We’ve had some folks in what I will refer to as the chronobiologist world. It was a field of academia I was not as familiar with before I started studying this bill.

Some chronobiologists have come forward and said that there are arguments to be made that permanent

standard time matches up better with our circadian rhythm. I acknowledge that. I presented my case as to why permanent daylight savings time has more societal benefits, and I would posit to the folks who prefer permanent standard time that, following that argument that standard time is better for our circadian rhythm, it would also be better if all of us basically woke up and went to bed with the rise and fall of the sun, and I don’t think that’s the case. I think the vast majority of people have their own schedule, that they set an alarm for a certain time so they can get their kids to school, so that they can get to work, so that they can take their dog for a walk, so they can do a workout before waking up. They don’t tend to base their alarm clock schedule on when the sun is going to rise in the morning.

And so I acknowledge those concerns—I think they’re very valid, and I appreciate that they brought them forward—but weighing the evidence and looking at the societal benefits, I think permanent daylight savings time, more sunlight in the evening, is the way to go.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you so much. I understand that my colleague the member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry has a question.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Thank you. I see MPP McDonell.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Thank you, Jeremy, for bringing this forward. I’m just wondering about some of the benefits of the permanent daylight savings time. I’m thinking of the sports fields in the summertime. We already have a shortage of lit fields in the community. Certainly if you went to standard time, that would eliminate much of the after-work sports. Does that come up with your discussions with any of the other jurisdictions?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Absolutely. In fact, it’s interesting you bring that up. There was a candidate in the recent presidential primaries, Andrew Yang. He was running for the Democratic primary. One of his platform items was bringing forward permanent daylight savings time. One of the arguments that he used in this platform document was that permanent daylight savings time would actually increase the amount of sport and physical activity by encouraging young people and old people alike to go out after work and get exercise, go out to the soccer field. I think that’s definitely an important part of the conversation in making sure that folks have that daylight so that they can take part in sports, get that critical physical activity, particularly outside right now as, of course, across the province, we’re dealing with a lot of differing schedules and closures for our gyms. So that’s a really important part of the conversation, for sure.

0940

Mr. Jim McDonell: You know, it’s amazing. I’m involved in minor soccer. Double daylight time would be, certainly, a benefit in the summer.

I know it came up about New York state and the need for that, but when you think of people who like to watch TV, a lot of our programming is based on the eastern seaboard time changes. You’d be watching shows—it would be 11 o’clock, but all of a sudden, it would be midnight. It would really affect some things. I think that another good

point would be moving with the rest of our eastern neighbours.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Absolutely. There are so many arguments as to why—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Thank you. Sorry, the time is up.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Thank you, Chair.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Next, independent members: four and a half minutes.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I do understand the argument from both sides, either to go with the standard time or the daylight saving time. I'm not sure whether I like one over the other, but I understand that there's not a majority one way or the other—you said that you've heard both positions—unless you can tell me that the majority is what you're proposing.

In terms of the bill itself—and I don't have a problem with the bill. I think around the table here, the different parties have presented similar bills. But I have to say that we're in the middle of a pandemic. I'm not sure that this is a wise usage of our resources.

On that topic, I'd like to know if you've evaluated what would be the cost associated with changing the time, if we get to that.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: I appreciate the question. Of course, private members' bills, as everyone on this committee knows, are an opportunity for us to advance something that we believe in strongly, that perhaps our constituents have spoken to us about. There are private members' bills on a range of different topics. A lot of the private members' bills that are coming forward right now don't all have to do directly with the pandemic, so I think it's fair to say that the work of governing goes on. It's important that we continue to do our job as legislators to move forward with bills that we believe are important and that our constituents believe are important.

Looking at the evidence on this really suggests to me that this is something that needs to happen. We look at all of this evidence on the health impacts, on depression rates, on heart attacks, on strokes, on fatal car crashes, and we ask ourselves, "Why do we keep going through this time change? Why do we keep having the 'fall back, spring forward?'" Before we know it, it's going to be "spring forward" again. I certainly hope it's not a long winter, but I guess we'll see what Mother Nature has in store for us.

I think this is a critical conversation for us to have, and to have now, to bring forward this reasonable bill with this commencement clause included in it that has really sparked a conversation. Again, if folks weren't interested, I doubt that we would have had as much interest as we have had from media across New York state and Quebec and Ontario. I think it's because people see this as a daily struggle that they went through, that so many people experience that fall-back time change and think to themselves, "Gosh, why are we doing this? Can someone please end this once and for all?" That's why I thought this was important to bring forward.

Again, we've still got a lot of work to do to get our neighbours on board, but this is a huge step forward for all of us on this very, very practical issue.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: I understand the reason for bringing the bill forward. My question is more, if the bill passes, what is it going to cost the government to make this happen? We understand that there are changes to computer programs that are going to be necessary, but there are going to be some other side impacts, financially. Have you identified those?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: I think, at the end the day, one of the things that we could look at doing is timing this with the time change in the spring that happens. All of those clocks and all of those government systems that you mentioned that would have to have the time change would have had to have done that anyway when we do the spring forward. If we do this with the spring forward, then we won't ever have to do it again. So it could actually save us money in the future from having to do that pivot back and forth constantly each year.

I don't have a quantifiable number for you right now. I'm sure that's something that the Attorney General might be able to provide. Again, I imagine, just looking at this, that if we were to time this with the spring forward, it could actually save us money in the future by preventing that pivot.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Six minutes for the official opposition. I see MPP Miller.

Mr. Paul Miller: I was a little surprised with MPP Oosterhoff's comments about flip-flopping and the NDP making up their minds. I believe we made up our minds last March when I presented this. This could have all been done, amendments included, by November, so I don't know where he's coming from on that one. This is simply a duplication to raise the profile of the Conservatives. That's all it boils down to.

Mr. Roberts mentioned his media coverage. Yes, he's been all over the place on media, all over western Canada and the States and all that. But when I presented mine, I brought my bill forward for the people, not for media coverage, and not for kudos on Twitter. Is that part of this bill, or is that to raise profile? I'm not sure.

In my presentation in March, I touched on all the health impacts, car accidents, crime, sports, mental health in my March speech. This almost sounds like a TSN instant replay to me. I'm quite surprised that they're diverting away from what really happened. They don't want to talk about that. Mr. Roberts stood up in the House a couple of weeks ago and mentioned about his bill coming forward. Not once did he mention the other people who had brought bills forward before—not once. He took full credit for something he didn't do, and that is not—I would say it's not fair play. That's for sure, it's not fair play, and I think that obviously the duplication is going to have negative impacts on the outcome of the Conservatives' popularity next election. This is not good, and I don't know why they're doing it. I don't know why they wouldn't have gone with perfectly good legislation that was already there, save the taxpayers money, save them time and save their effort.

Now I would like to pass my remaining couple of minutes over to my associate MPP Hassan.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): MPP Hassan.

Mr. Faisal Hassan: Thank you to my colleague from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek. I was just listening to MPP Jeremy Roberts. You mentioned that this bill requires the co-operation of all federal civil servants, as well as the federal government’s co-operation, the other neighbouring province of Quebec and also the United States—states such as New York state.

Also, I know that my colleague had also put a bill which was called the Ditch the Switch Act, Bill 174, which he eloquently stated is just a duplicate. You just mentioned the only difference is that you have the guarantee of working with the Attorney General. You haven’t mentioned any other differences, other than simply saying that the Attorney General is willing to work with you.

Also, since my colleagues have mentioned, and since the government has mentioned on many occasions that the government wants to work with the official opposition and all members of the Legislature, are you prepared to incorporate the same bill that my colleague from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek—which is the same, as you said. It only requires the co-operation of the Attorney General. In the spirit of working together, is there a way these two bills could be incorporated and make it happen? Since you’re also saying that it requires the co-operation of these states of the United States, such as New York, and of Quebec, you said that this is doing a responsible thing. Are you ready to do the right thing and work with the official opposition member and incorporate the two bills together?

0950

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Thank you very much for the question. MPP Miller mentioned that during my presentation in the House during second reading, I did not mention that this bill had been brought forward before, and in fact I did. I did mention that a bill to end the time change has been brought forward twice during this Parliament. In fact, one of those times—MPP Marie-France Lalonde; she was actually the first one—predated MPP Miller’s bill.

But the key difference that I mentioned in my remarks during my speech is the commencement of this bill, and making sure that the bill comes into force responsibly, which I think is a difference between this bill and any bill that has come forward before. I was really pleased to be able to note in my remarks that MPP Lalonde, now MP Lalonde from the federal Parliament, endorsed this bill, endorsed my bill, was pleased to see this continue forward and was pleased to see us try it in a different way, in a way that could actually get us to spur this conversation forward and really get this over the finish line.

It has been discussed a couple of times now in questions today, about the media coverage. Frankly, I think anybody who is supportive of getting this done would be pleased to see increased media coverage, because it’s spurring that conversation with our neighbouring jurisdictions on getting this done once and for all, which I think is our objective here. The fact that we have had interest in Quebec, in New York state and right across the province is actually a tremendously positive thing.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Thank you. The last round of questions will start with the official opposition for six minutes, then the government for six minutes.

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I will continue my questions before I yield to my colleague from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, if he has any follow-up questions to ask.

You just didn’t answer my questions. The differences, you said, between the two bills, the Ditch the Switch Act, Bill 174, which my colleague from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek eloquently articulated, on his bill—you again stated that you still require the co-operation of these states, from the state of New York and the province of Quebec and the federal civil servants.

You mentioned that your bill was supported by a former independent member; also, my colleague from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek has mentioned, and it’s also on the record, that the entire membership of the Legislature have supported, and you have congratulated, the work he has done.

Then you have moved this bill. It looks to me, if we are working together and getting things done for the people of Ontario, that it would make sense, since the two bills are identical. Are you, again, and members of the government—since you mentioned that the difference is that the Attorney General is willing to work with you, can you and the Attorney General and the members of the government on this committee prepare to incorporate, as well, the Ditch the Switch Act, which is also still waiting to proceed into the committee in which your bill has actually been moved forward, to make it in a co-operative spirit and make it happen? Are you willing, and will the official opposition—I’m yielding to my colleague from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): MPP Miller?

Mr. Paul Miller: I’m a little confused with Mr. Roberts’s response. He may have mentioned that the legislation had been proposed before, but what he failed to mention is that it was currently sitting and waiting in committee for months, and never brought forward by the sitting government.

Why did they not bring it forward if they thought—he supported my bill openly, came over and shook my hand. It passed unanimously and went to committee and has sat there since March. All of a sudden, it appears when things aren’t looking good out there in the community for the Conservatives right now. He brings this back now.

Timing is really important, and I’m really surprised with the timing. If it sat there for all those months and it’s almost a similar bill, why didn’t they bring it forward? And why did they eliminate, in the last few months—there was no subcommittee, which is supposed to recommend what goes to the main committee. They bypassed that. They’ve kept closed sessions. They’ve kept it away from the public. What they do release is only what benefits them and what they want the public to hear from them.

They don’t comment on the opposition’s position on anything. They don’t comment on—and this is working together? I think not. I think when your House leader

stands up in the House and says he wants to work with us, I don't believe he does. I believe this is partisan on their part, and I do not believe they want to work with the official opposition or anyone else.

This is all about votes, and it doesn't really do a service to the public. They are definitely hiding behind closed doors, and they're not bringing forward things that are important issues to the public. They've cut out—even on the sports presentation that I put forward, they didn't even acknowledge all the hard work that my staff put into that. They didn't even acknowledge it. The minister didn't even respond.

So don't tell me you want to work with the opposition and the other people, because that's a fallacy. There's no way that you want to work with anyone but yourselves. I'm really, really disgusted with this whole process.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): We have one minute and 39 seconds left for the official opposition. I see MPP Hassan.

Mr. Faisal Hassan: Yes, thank you, Chair, and I thank my colleague from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek. He spoke of the spirit of working together. My question is directly to Jeremy Roberts, MPP, to address this: Are you willing—and the official opposition is willing to work with the government. We see now we have a bill, Bill 174, the Ditch the Switch Act, which is identical to yours. What do you say to that, Jeremy?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Well, I would say, again, that the bill is not identical, of course, the key difference being the commencement.

In terms of who is the most important to work with on this, when I was developing this bill I felt that the most important person to work with was the Attorney General, who is responsible for the Time Act. That's why I worked closely with him and his office to determine how we could do this in a reasonable way. I think—credit to my team—that that's why this bill is now moving forward, because we've done this in a responsible way.

With regards to the timing, my ballot date came up this fall, and that dictated the timing of when this was brought forward, as it does for all members who bring forward a private member's bill.

Again, I believe that the past work that has been done to talk about this issue and other bills has been important. Our difference here is the commencement.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Thank you. Next, six minutes for government members: I see MPP Skelly.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Good morning, Mr. Chair, and good morning, MPP Roberts. It's a pleasure to be able to speak to your bill this morning and to talk to you about, first of all, the work that you've done bringing this forward. I have to congratulate you. I know much has been raised about the media, and as a former member of the media I know we're not always anxious to talk to politicians, but you obviously were able to bring this forward to the general public, articulate your message very well, explain coherently what you were proposing and, in doing so, obviously received a tremendous amount of media attention. I want to applaud you for that, because I think

it's imperative, when we do have an opportunity to bring forward legislation that is as critical as this and as widespread as this, that people understand, have an opportunity to ask about it, to read about it and to hear about it.

It's important to take advantage of media: local media, provincial media, national media and international media. So again, I want to applaud you. I want to also state that as the only sitting government member from the city of Hamilton, I have heard from so many Hamiltonians who applaud this initiative and think you have done a remarkable job—again, hearing about it in the media.

1000

I'd like you to perhaps talk a little bit more about the mental health impact of bringing this forward and having this legislation implemented, if we are able to get all parties on board.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: I appreciate the question, MPP Skelly. I have got to thank my team. They have been instrumental in making sure that the rollout of this private member's bill was such a success. I'm sure all of us have had times where we have gone to some of our staff and we have said, "We want something done. Please get this done," and our staff have looked at us and thought, "Oh, gosh, how am I going to do that?"

I had some moments like that, where I went to my staff and I said, "Listen, we're getting this bill through second reading. Let's get media coverage in New York state. Let's try and spur this conversation in New York." Then I went home and thought, "Gosh. I just asked my staff to get us media in New York. How in the world is that ever going to happen? New York state has so many exciting things happening; I'm sure they won't care about a small private member's bill in Ontario." But to my team's credit, they did it. We were on radio in New York state. We were in newspapers in Albany. We were getting that coverage.

Of course, that media coverage in New York was not for votes; I don't have any voters in New York state.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Of course not.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: The coverage there was because if we actually want to get this done, if we are committed as a Legislature to getting this done, we need to do it responsibly with those neighbours.

Media coverage is a great way to spur that conversation. In every single one of my media interviews outside of Ontario, I would ask the listeners to contact their local state legislators, or their MNAs in Quebec, and tell them about what's happening in Ontario and encourage them to do the same thing. So that's why that media coverage has been so critical, because I know all of us across party lines want to get this done, and I think all of us can get this done if we spur that conversation in our neighbouring jurisdictions.

That was a long, roundabout way to get to your answer, but to answer your question, the mental health impacts, I think, are clear: the increased depression rates; the study out of Japan that suggested that there was an increase in suicides. Those are worrying statistics that I think we should look to.

Anecdotally, I speak to so many people who say that after the fall back change, they feel a little bit groggy. They

feel a little uneasy. They feel a little unwell because they have had a change in their sleep schedule and they're having that increased darkness at the end of the day. That gloomy darkness, I think, can sometimes get people feeling down. So we have both the anecdotal and the actual academic research backing up the case for this on mental health.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Again, I want to congratulate you.

Again, to the members of the opposition who don't understand the value of using media to connect with residents and help push forward something as important as this, I think it's unfortunate. But I understand that we also have somebody else from our government side that wanted to speak to this as well.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): I see MPP Oosterhoff.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you so much, MPP Skelly.

MPP Roberts, I was wondering if you'd be willing to speak a bit more with regard to some of the health benefits, because I think that is a key piece here and one of the reasons I think it's important that it's moved forward sooner rather than later. Could you talk about some of those studies and some of the work that's gone into these changes? Because I understand that there is a health component as well as an economic component.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Absolutely. You know, I think it's so important for us legislators to look at what public policy evidence suggests and what some of the research suggests when we look at changes like this. That's why, when we looked at the research, we found those health impacts—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Thank you, MPP Roberts. I see the time. This committee now stands in recess until 1 p.m.

The committee recessed from 1005 to 1300.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Good afternoon, everyone. I will call this meeting to order. I would like to do an attendance check before we begin. I'll just go with the names I see.

I see MPP McDonell. Can you please confirm that you are in fact the honourable member and confirm that you are in Ontario?

Mr. Jim McDonell: Yes, it's Jim McDonell, and I'm sitting in the Legislature in Toronto.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Thank you. I see MPP Collard. Can you please confirm that you are in fact the honourable member and you are calling from Ontario?

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Good afternoon, Mr. Chair. I'm MPP Lucille Collard, and I'm in Toronto, here at Queen's Park in my office.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Thank you. I see MPP Nicholls. Can you please confirm you are in fact the honourable member and confirm you are calling from Ontario?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Good afternoon, Chair. Yes, it's Rick Nicholls. I'm live and in person in room 440, right here at Queen's Park.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Thank you. I see MPP Miller. Please confirm you are in fact the

honourable member and whether you are currently in Ontario.

Mr. Paul Miller: Yup, I'm in the same place I was this morning; Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Ontario.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Thank you so much. I see MPP Oosterhoff. Can you please confirm you are in fact the honourable member and whether you are currently in Ontario?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I am indeed Sam Oosterhoff and I am here in Ontario.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Thank you. We have MPP Roberts here in the room.

Interjection.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): I see MPP Hassan has joined the call. MPP Hassan, can you please confirm you are in fact the honourable member and whether you are currently in Ontario?

Mr. Faisal Hassan: Yes, I'm Faisal Hassan, MPP for York South—Weston. I'm here in York South—Weston and I am in Ontario.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Thank you.

For your information, this afternoon there are two presenters who cancelled today. The Boston Pizza franchisee cancelled and Eli Tannis also cancelled. We'll have one presenter, Robert Swaita, from KS on the Keys restaurant/bar/café. We'll have one round of questions and then we'll be done for the day.

Good afternoon, everyone. We are continuing the public hearing on Bill 214, An Act to amend the Time Act and various other Acts.

Before I introduce the presenter, I want to go through the timelines for everyone. The presenter will have seven minutes for his presentation. We'll have one round of questions of seven and a half minutes for the government, seven and a half minutes for the official opposition, and four and a half minutes for the independent members.

Interjection.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): I see MPP Kanapathi has joined. MPP Kanapathi—

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Logan Kanapathi, joining from Markham, Ontario.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Thank you.

KS ON THE KEYS

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Now I kindly would like to ask Robert Swaita from KS on the Keys restaurant/bar/café to start his presentation.

Mr. Robert Swaita: Yes, can everybody hear me?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Yes, we can hear you, Robert.

Mr. Robert Swaita: Thank you. My name is Robert Swaita, owner of KS on the Keys restaurant in Ottawa. Thank you, Chair; thank you, committee; and thank you, MPP Jeremy Roberts, for allowing me to speak today. I wish I could say that the bump on my forehead was caused by my drowsiness because of the clock change. It would

make a good argument for this bill today. But unfortunately, it was just me horsing around with my kids.

Just to give you a little bit of background, my restaurant was started back in 1971 by my late father. I took over from my father about 15 years ago and I decided to expand the restaurant. With the help of the community, KS on the Keys restaurant has grown from being a small diner in the 1970s to a 350-seat restaurant today.

In our 50 years of existence, we have faced many challenges, but nothing, including this pandemic, that cannot be overcome by hard work, ingenuity and the support of the community. As a business person who was well trained by my father, we always find a way to survive.

As you are all aware, especially during this pandemic, anything—no matter how small or big—that can really help small businesses, especially those that are dependent on consumers going out, is more than welcome. Today, again, as we all know, because of this pandemic, it's more welcome than ever before.

From a business perspective, in the hospitality industry, having more daylight when the majority of the population finishes work or school puts people in a happier mood and encourages people to go out more often. Again, from the restaurant hospitality perspective, this is more than welcomed. We all know that when it gets dark and when the weather is gloomy, we all just want to cuddle up at home and watch a movie and not go out. I want to repeat: Having people going out is a good thing for business, especially retail businesses.

From an operational point of view, we also notice changes in our employees' behaviour when the clock changes, and that's a big concern to me, especially in the kitchen. We always want people to be at their sharpest, no pun intended, when they're working with knives and other equipment in the kitchen. From a customer's perspective, it is a running joke that when a complaint happens from a customer when the clock changes, staff always chalk it up to the changing of the clock. So we all recognize that there is a mental factor that's considered because of the change in the clock. But from a business perspective, it is so important for people to be in the good mood that the sunlight always brings to people.

With that, I want to thank the Chair and the committee for allowing me to present.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Thank you for your presentation. Now we'll move to questioning. The first round of questions will start with the government members, seven and a half minutes; independent members, four and a half minutes; and the official opposition, seven and a half minutes.

I see MPP Roberts. Please go ahead.

1310

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Excellent. Well, thank you so much, Chair, and thank you very much, Mr. Swaita, for presenting to the committee today. We really appreciate hearing your views. I know I can speak for many folks in Ottawa in saying that your restaurant is a real staple of the community, beyond just serving great food. For those who

haven't had it, their chicken Parmesan is a particular favourite, but beyond that, they're also a real bedrock in the community.

Last year, when we experienced another hurdle from Mother Nature, the flooding that happened in Ottawa, Mr. Swaita's restaurant jumped into gear and actually provided pizzas to a lot of the volunteers who were busy sand-bagging a lot of the homes. That's the kind of community spirit we love to see from our small businesses, so anything we can do on the government side to support folks like you is the least we can do to thank you for all you do for our community.

I was very interested in your comments about how you've seen the time change impact your business. You mentioned, for example, that sometimes customers seem a little bit grumpier during this time and that you also worry about staff in your kitchen perhaps being a bit more tired or groggy. Do you want to expand on that a little bit for us? I think that's a really valuable perspective for us to hear as committee members.

Mr. Robert Swaita: For sure. Thank you, MPP Jeremy Roberts. It's always a concern when people are coming in—and it's not just the clock change, but in any case—when an employee is not well rested. We all know that very well. There are obviously labour laws that protect employees from that. This is why I always have a heightened level of concern around the clock change, because we're always being more vigilant. In fact, there were a couple of years where I opened up later just to accommodate for this drowsiness. I wish I could say it was a yearly practice, but I did try to experiment with it to see if it made any impact, and it did make an impact. Unfortunately, I couldn't keep that going because of reservations that we had and customers' expectations for us to be open at the same time.

So that's always a concern for me during these periods, and then from a customer perspective, we always see customers—every time there's a complaint of some sort, we always say it's a full moon or we always chalk it up to the change in the clock. Now, it could just be that we actually did something wrong, but there always seems to be an increase in these types of complaints during the clock change.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Interesting. That's fascinating.

Just touching on another piece: Obviously you own a business in Ottawa and you're involved in a number of business interests around Ottawa. One of the pieces of this bill is that we want to make sure that we do this in concert with some of our neighbours, namely Quebec. Of course, with the federal government, half of it is located in downtown Ottawa and the other half in downtown Gatineau, so we'd have a confusing piece of having half of our workers on one time and the other half on another. Do you think that's a wise course to take, particularly given our experience in Ottawa of having a lot of interprovincial activity and employment in that region?

Mr. Robert Swaita: So if I understand what you're asking, you're asking that our neighbours follow suit?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Yes. I'm just wondering if you agree that that's a good approach to take, to make sure that

we go along doing this with Quebec, so that we lower some of the disturbances in Ottawa with a lot of workers crossing the border at different times.

Mr. Robert Swaita: Yes, it definitely could be advantageous for our neighbours to follow suit. As you can see, again, because of this pandemic, Ottawa is so integrated with the Gatineau region neighbouring us across the river that at one point—I think it was in the summertime—Gatineau decided to close off access to the city of Gatineau because of the pandemic. That caused a lot of disruption. The same, I believe, would affect, when the time changes, that we do stay on the same page with each other.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: For sure. Chair, how much time do we have remaining?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): You have two minutes and 49 seconds.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Two minutes and 49 seconds; great. If any of my colleagues want to jump in, just let the Chair know, but I'll ask another question here.

You talked a little bit about how you've sometimes seen some decrease in business because people feel like they don't want to go out when the time change happens. This actually matches up with some research out of the United States. The JPMorgan Chase Bank actually found that after the fall-back change happens, there's typically a decrease in retail activity of about 3.5%, again because people are less likely to go out when it's dark.

Are you able to expand a little bit on how that's been your experience and how permanent daylight saving time, that extra sunlight in the afternoon, could help your business?

Mr. Robert Swaita: Definitely. We definitely do experience a drop in business during the fall back. It's very noticeable, and it does take several days for an adjustment to happen—I believe people adjusting their internal clocks to that. There's definitely a drop in the business. I haven't quantified it. I could easily quantify that number, but I haven't quantified it for today's purposes. With the fact that people are going out when there's daylight, especially if they actually initiate the event of going out—once they're out, they're out. Even if it becomes darker while they're out, it's okay, as long as they've left their house. That's the key point of this. We notice that a lot when we're able to use—our patios go on longer. People stay out longer, end up having more appetizers or drinks, and they make their evening longer, just because they feel that it's early because they still see daylight out.

While they're in my establishment, they do go past when the sun goes down, and that's a good thing. Definitely, there is a decrease in business during the clock change, and definitely, there is an increase in business when people tend to leave their house when the daylight is out.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: I appreciate that. I can say that you're certainly not alone. Our office has heard from a lot of different BIAs and chambers of commerce who made the same argument. The bill has been endorsed by the Ontario BIA Association, and we also have support from over 15 different chambers of commerce right around the province. We've got the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, Brockville, all sorts—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Thank you. Next, we are moving on to the independent members for four and a half minutes.

Before we do that, I see MPP Mitas has joined. MPP Mitas, can you confirm that you are in fact the honourable member, and can you confirm whether you are currently in Ontario?

Miss Christina Maria Mitas: Hello, this is Christina Mitas.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): And can you confirm whether you are currently in Ontario?

Miss Christina Maria Mitas: I am in Toronto, Ontario, at Queen's Park.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Thank you, MPP.

Now we'll move on to the opposition members for four and a half minutes.

Interjection.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): My apologies. We are moving on to the independent members for four and a half minutes.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Thank you, Robert, for your testimony here. I understand your argument and your position about your business. I'm from Ottawa, by the way. My riding is Ottawa–Vanier. I haven't been to your restaurant yet, but I'll have to remedy this very soon.

That being said, I also understand from what you've said that you've also got kids. I have four kids, and I gather from your explanation about running around with your kids, bumping your head, that they must be pretty young.

I'm totally comfortable with the fact that the changing of time brings a lot of disruptions. However, I'm not certain whether the best is the daylight saving time or the standard time. Of course, you're speaking here in favour of more light later in the day. What is your experience with your kids early in the morning to get them up when it's still really dark out there and they think it's still night? I just wanted to hear you on that.

1320

Mr. Robert Swaita: Thank you, MPP. You're more than welcome to come to our restaurant any time. I would love to have you.

Yes, my kids are young. My oldest is 12, then 11 and nine. It's always a challenge waking them up, whether it's daylight or dark out; however, thankfully, my wife has my kids on a strict regime, and they go to bed at a certain time. So usually they're up before I am, because I tend to work late. We always have our struggles, like any other family, I'm sure, with young children and getting them up, but it's nothing overly crazy to get them up. In fact, my oldest is very responsible, and she actually tends to wake up the other ones to get ready to go to school, so we haven't seen too much of a challenge with that.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: All right. So you're still convinced that it's better to have daylight later in the day than earlier in the day, that for you, getting up when it's still dark and going about your business, getting outside, getting either your kids to school or getting yourself to work,

that doesn't have a big impact on you. You would prefer to have the light later.

Mr. Robert Swaita: Yes. Again, from a business perspective as well, it's very important for people to enjoy the end of their day. After a hard day at work, they can come to my establishment or any other restaurant and just unwind. People like to do that while the daylight is out.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Yes. For me, I'd like to say that my experience has been a little bit different with the kids. When we change time in the spring and we're still trying to get them to bed around 7 or 8 o'clock but it's still really bright out there, they don't want to go to bed because they figure, "Hey, it's still during the day." That's why I'm saying I agree that the changing of time is now a dated practice. I don't think we really need it. I'm not sure the economy is a good reason to do that. But certainly—do you know what? I want to be able to appreciate the effect on people's lifestyles, really. So thank you for your comments. I appreciate it.

Thank you. I'm done, Chair.

Mr. Robert Swaita: And just to add, as a father, I always encourage my kids to be active before going to bed, to tire them out. In that way, it's a lot easier to put them to sleep. Thank you, MPP.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Thank you. Next, we'll move on to the official opposition members. They have seven and a half minutes. I see MPP Miller.

Mr. Paul Miller: Good afternoon, Robert. I'd like to start off by saying, do you think if this legislation had already been in place, would it have helped you during the COVID situation?

Mr. Robert Swaita: That's a very good question, MPP. Thank you for the question. This year has been—every day, it's something different. It's hard to tell what type of impact it would have had, because COVID has brought so many surprises, and as I said, every day it's something different. It's definitely challenging as a small business owner to operate in this environment. We make decisions, and the next day we regret it. So it's difficult and it's hard for me to answer that question. Although it is a good question, it's hard for me to answer it. I just don't know.

Mr. Paul Miller: Okay. So if it had been in place by, say, November 1—because I brought forth the bill originally in March 2020. If it had been expedited by the government and brought to the committee to deal with it—it sat there for months on end with no attention—I think it probably would have been beneficial to your business and other small businesses throughout the province, restaurants, especially, and bars. I think it would have had an impact—at least left you another door to go through if you were stuck in one corner.

I guess my next question would be—I had the same changes involved in the bill I presented originally. The extra hour's worth of time, of sunlight—in terms of revenue, would it have been beneficial for you, for example, if you have a patio or if you could put people—social

distancing on a patio. If you have that ability to do that, would it have been beneficial?

Mr. Robert Swaita: Again, thank you for that question. I'm not aware of the bills that you may have brought forward. I know that I'm in support of the bill that's presented here today. Any extension of daylight during dinnertime is going to be beneficial for a restaurant.

You mentioned patios. Definitely, patios—people tend to enjoy being outside. I don't like to show off or anything, but we do have a nice patio at our restaurant, and during the pandemic, when we were only allowed to open the patio, we made very good use of that, so yes, we would see an increase in business by using our patio because of the extended daylight.

Mr. Paul Miller: I'm quite surprised you didn't hear about the bill in March, because this is almost identical to the one I put in.

Could you estimate, on an industry-wide scale, basically, from your professional opinion: Has removal of the time switch bill—would it have any effect? Because you mentioned you were concerned about some of your employees, their safety and that, and whether they were sharp, as you put it. Would it affect your WSIB claims and personal injury claims? Would that go up in your business, or do you think it would help lower it?

Mr. Robert Swaita: Again, I'm not a doctor or somebody in the insurance industry, but from what I understand, there are some studies that have shown that people tend to be more—what's that word?

Mr. Paul Miller: Alert?

Mr. Robert Swaita: —alert, without having these time changes. One can kind of assume that that would result in fewer incidents. Fortunately, we haven't had any incidents during these time changes. However, we are at an elevated concern level, just to make sure that nothing does happen.

Mr. Paul Miller: In a sense, it's unfortunate that you weren't familiar with my submission of the bill; this is practically a copycat. But in all reference to that, you might want to get your hands on that, because it certainly had some good suggestions for small business in that, so you might want to read that. I don't know if Jeremy would share that with you, but it might be a wise move on your part.

Thanks for your submission. I appreciate it.

Mr. Robert Swaita: Thank you, MPP.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam): Thank you. Are there any other questions from official opposition members? I see none.

Thank you to the presenter. Thank you to committee members and staff. That concludes our business for today.

As a reminder, the deadline for written submissions on Bill 214 is 7 p.m. this Thursday, November 19, 2020, and the deadline for filing amendments to Bill 214 is 5 p.m. this Friday, November 20, 2020.

Thank you, everyone. This committee is now adjourned until 9 a.m. on Monday, November 23, 2020, for clause-by-clause consideration of the bill.

The committee adjourned at 1328.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Chair / Président

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed (Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville PC)

Vice-Chair / Vice-Président

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam (Scarborough–Rouge Park PC)

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown (Beaches–East York ND)

Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est L)

Mr. Faisal Hassan (York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston ND)

Mr. Logan Kanapathi (Markham–Thornhill PC)

Mr. Jim McDonell (Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry PC)

Miss Christina Maria Mitas (Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre PC)

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff (Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest PC)

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed (Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville PC)

Ms. Sara Singh (Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre ND)

Ms. Donna Skelly (Flamborough–Glanbrook PC)

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam (Scarborough–Rouge Park PC)

Substitutions / Membres remplaçants

M^{me} Lucille Collard (Ottawa–Vanier L)

Mr. Paul Miller (Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek ND)

Mr. Rick Nicholls (Chatham-Kent–Leamington PC)

Mr. Jeremy Roberts (Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean PC)

Clerk / Greffière

Ms. Tonia Grannum

Staff / Personnel

Ms. Sude Beltan, research officer,
Research Services

Mr. Andrew McNaught, research officer,
Research Services