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**Official Report
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(Hansard)**

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**Standing Committee on
General Government**

Better for People,
Smarter for Business Act, 2020

1st Session
42nd Parliament

Wednesday 2 December 2020

**Comité permanent des
affaires gouvernementales**

Loi de 2020
pour mieux servir la population
et faciliter les affaires

1^{re} session
42^e législature

Mercredi 2 décembre 2020

Chair: Goldie Ghamari
Clerk: Isaiah Thorning

Présidente : Goldie Ghamari
Greffier : Isaiah Thorning

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DES
AFFAIRES GOUVERNEMENTALES**

Wednesday 2 December 2020

Mercredi 2 décembre 2020

The committee met at 0900 in committee room 2 and by video conference.

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

Consideration 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 Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Good morning, everyone. I call this meeting to order. We are here today to conduct clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 213, An Act to reduce burdens on people and businesses by enacting, amending and repealing various Acts and revoking a regulation.

We have the following members present in the room: MPP Sattler, MPP Fife, MPP Piccini, MPP Skelly and MPP Fraser. The following members are participating remotely: MPP Bailey, MPP Glover, MPP Wai, MPP Bouma and MPP Sabawy. Staff from Hansard, broadcast and recording, legislative counsel and ministry staff are joining 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. The Clerk has distributed the amendment packages to all members and staff electronically.

I will go over the voting process for clarity. If we have to hold a vote during today's meeting, it will be through a show of hands. I will start by asking, "Are the members ready to vote?" I will ask, "All those in favour, please raise your hands." I would ask that all members in the room and participating on Zoom please raise their hands and keep them raised. For those members on Zoom, please make sure that your hand is raised clearly and visibly, that you're not raising and lowering it, and that you keep it raised until

we can say that you can lower it. I will then ask, "All those opposed, please raise their hands." I will then declare the vote. Unless someone specifically asks for a recorded vote after I have asked whether members are ready to vote, the breakdown of the vote will not show up in Hansard. Are there any questions before we begin?

We will now begin the clause-by-clause consideration. Bill 213 is comprised of three sections, which enact 29 schedules. In order to deal with the bill in an orderly fashion, I suggest we postpone these three sections in order to dispose of the schedules first. Is there agreement on this? Thank you.

Are there any comments or questions to any section or schedule of the bill, and if so, to which section? MPP Fife.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I think, based on what we heard as an overall picture of Bill 213 through delegations, both on Friday and Monday just of this week, schedule 2 does not belong in this piece of legislation. To see the faces of small business owners, especially the bus operators, bear witness to the division that schedule 2 has brought—I am surprised that the government is not more willing just to withdraw schedule 2 in its entirety, let the PEQAB process play itself out, and let's stay focused on the measures that are contained within Bill 213 that can be of assistance to small businesses, especially during this pandemic.

I also have to say, Madam Chair, that in all my time on committees such as this, I had never seen a display from parliamentarians towards delegations that we witnessed last Friday. People come to this committee. They have the right as citizens to speak their mind, to speak their truth. They are not parliamentarians. They do not fall under the same purview and oversight that we do.

I would also like to say that when MPP Bailey was making those gestures on this screen—and perhaps it's a shift in the way that we're doing these delegations. We would never, as colleagues, condone that behaviour in this room. You would hold us to account, and we would hold you to account. I think in that particular moment when delegations had the courage and had taken the time to exercise their rights as citizens, to see Mr. Bailey make those gestures was really quite embarrassing for me as a parliamentarian, which is why I had asked you to forward a letter of apology on behalf of the whole committee to the two delegations that appeared before us.

With that said, we have obviously brought forward some amendments to Bill 213, but schedule 2—I'll speak at length to schedule 2, but this bill cannot be supported

by the official opposition if the government keeps schedule 2 within it. I was hopeful that after government members heard the concerns from academia, from an ethics perspective around the lobbying, from a financial transparency perspective, that the government would willingly remove schedule 2.

With that, we're prepared to try to make some amendments to Bill 213, but we will not be supporting this legislation.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you. As I mentioned to the member on Monday, I did remind all MPPs about Zoom etiquette. There have been gestures from both sides, actually, when witnesses were speaking. Opposition members, as well, were making gestures, making facial expressions and shaking their heads. So again, I just reminded all committee members about Zoom etiquette and once I made that reminder—on Friday, actually—all MPPs and all members committed to that and there has been nothing since then. So the matter, I believe, had already been dealt with at that point.

Further comments? MPP Fraser.

Mr. John Fraser: Thank you, Chair. This is not my regular committee, but I felt it was important to come today.

I support the MPP from Waterloo's comments fully: Schedule 2 doesn't belong in this bill. It doesn't connect to this bill and there are three things that, when the committee considers this and votes on these proposed amendments, they will think about—I can't vote on it; I'm not a member of the committee. The three things are:

(1) We know that Charles McVety is getting a special deal. He is getting something in legislation before it has been reviewed. We don't do that.

(2) Charles McVety has said some very hateful things towards our Muslim brothers and sisters in Ontario, and towards members of the LGBTQ community. He has essentially told Muslims in Ontario explicitly that their faith is a threat. Those words are words we hear in regimes around the world against minorities. Those are the first words that are spoken; that's the start of the slide downhill. Those are the same words that were spoken in Germany in the 1930s. Those same words are very, very dangerous words. We can't support them, not one bit.

(3) Charles McVety did not have the courage to appear before this committee to defend his institution, the process or, more importantly, his words. And why did he not come? Because his words are indefensible. He knows it. He is no stranger to this place. He has appeared before committees, I know; I've sat in the committee room when he has been there. He was on the floor of this Legislature at the swearing-in, so he is no stranger to this place.

Everyone will have a choice in the first two proposals here to reject schedule 2. You can vote against these proposals and Charles McVety will get a special deal. You can vote for the proposals and schedule 2 will be removed, and you'll do the right thing. Or you can just simply not vote. So there are two out of three options for you this morning to do the right thing, and I really strongly encourage you to do that.

0910

I look across and beside me, and everyone in the Legislature, I believe, is a decent person who wants to represent all of the people in their community. I don't think, when I look across, that people agree with those words, and people stand against them. The reality is sometimes you have to stand up. You have to stand up to the bully. You can't appease them. It just makes them stronger. So I encourage my colleagues, all of them in this room, with the greatest respect to not let schedule 2 remain in this bill. Chair, I want to thank you for your time.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you. MPP Piccini?

Mr. David Piccini: I just wanted to get on record my thoughts and the position of the government. I appreciate everybody's comments today.

To MPP Fife's comments, I spoke with the Clerk after the fact about the discussion. Certainly, I think there is an element of being online that is new for all of us, but still, your comment on decorum writ large is one that I hear and I think is well made for all of us to think about as members of this Legislature.

Just one of the things I wanted to read in, because we haven't had the time, not limited, to reference this. In PEQAB's organizational review structure on page 19, the organizational review, which this institution has gone before, consists of members with the following, and I just wanted everyone to hear:

—Accounting certification and experience in corporate financial management;

—Experience in admissions/registrarial roles, including admissions policies and academic records" etc.;

—Experience in managing learning resources;

—Senior management experience in a degree-granting institution;

—Experience with professional, accrediting and regulatory bodies for" a higher standard of "education within and outside of Ontario....

"The purpose of the organizational review" structure "is to review the applicant's organizational character"—their organizational character—"financial viability, and student protection policies and practices against the following board standards."

And here are the standards:

(1) Mission statement and academic goals

(2) Administrative capacity

(3) Ethical conduct

(4) Academic freedom and integrity

(5) Student protection

(6) Financial stability

(7) Dispute resolution

(8) Organization evaluation" etc.

Respectfully, I don't think we've spent enough time understanding the PEQAB process. Quite frankly, I don't know if we in this committee have wanted to genuinely in earnest understand this process, because I think for many it was rather that we assess an institution's viability—instead of on the process, we assess it on individuals and not against commonly understood metrics within the

Criminal Code or the Human Rights Code, but against individual judgment of who is and isn't deserving.

What I will say for everyone here is I find statements that many make—and being PA, I've been to a number of institutions. We can find things morally repugnant, we can find it reprehensible, but the day we start assessing institutional submissions based on our feelings and not on the laws and statutes of this land, I would submit that we would all be fundamentally worse off as a result. For that reason, this is about the PEQAB process. This is about processes that other institutions have gone before, similar to the PEQAB process. We look forward, as a government, to this process unfolding.

I think when we talk about bullying, I certainly heard the depositions from everyone and I just think we should take a step back. We should have respect and understand this process; let it go through. For those reasons, I'm a firm believer in this PEQAB process and I look forward to it playing out.

For anyone who, again, would wonder about that: peqab.ca/currentapplications—because I know there was a number of people who came before and, I think we can all agree, who had never visited that website, who knew nothing about the PEQAB process—nor should they. They are entitled to come for their opinion, but I do think it's important to note that we do have that process and it's a process that has done us well under a number of governments.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Fraser, and then—

Mr. John Fraser: I think Chris had his hand up. Did you have your hand up?

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Who has not spoken yet?

Interjection.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Okay, so MPP Glover and then MPP Schreiner.

Mr. Chris Glover: I want to add my support for what has been said about removing schedule 2 from this bill. MPP Piccini has said—we're talking about the PEQAB process. Nobody's objecting to the PEQAB process. The thing that we're objecting to is the current legislation and schedule 2 being in this legislation before the PEQAB process takes place. He compares it with other institutions that have gone through a similar process, but those other institutions are public institutions with a long record of service in Ontario, and all of them abide by the Ontario Human Rights Code, whereas what we heard in the deputations is that the admission policy for both staff and students at the Canada Christian College probably does not abide by the Ontario Human Rights Code.

The other thing that was mentioned as part of the PEQAB process is ethical conduct. One of the questions that came up continuously was the ethical conduct—or unethical conduct—of the director of Canada Christian College in hosting, for example, a session at his college with Geert Wilders, and making statements such as, “We're all for freedom of religion, but when its mission is a hostile takeover”—and he's talking about Islam here;

he's saying that the mission of Islam is a hostile takeover—“that's a different story. 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.”

When those words are said, especially in the context, in Canada right now, where we have seen continuous attacks on Muslims in Canada—we saw the massacre in Quebec City. There was a custodian in front of a mosque in Etobicoke just a couple of months ago, who was just sitting in front of the mosque, a volunteer custodian, and he was murdered. He was knifed. There have been threats against mosques across Canada and against Muslim community members.

Providing the special favour—as the member from Ottawa South said—of bringing this legislation forward is emboldening Charles McVety, and it endorses the Islamophobic, the homophobic and the transphobic comments that he has made. That is not something that we should be discussing here at the committee. Schedule 2 should be removed. The PEQAB process can go through, and then if the government chooses to, they could bring back some legislation and we can have another debate about this. But schedule 2 should not be part of this bill. It has no bearing on the rest of the content of the bill, and it's unethical for us to endorse the statements made by the director of Canada Christian College.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Schreiner.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I had intended to reserve my comments for schedule 2 when we get to that part of the bill, and I will discuss it in more detail at that time. But I did want to respond to MPP Piccini's comments, which are well taken, just to say that one of the challenges with this bill, and schedule 2 in particular, is that there are 29 schedules in this bill, so it's a bill that affects a number of acts, which requires us as legislators to do our due diligence and read, understand, listen to the people of Ontario.

We only had two days of hearings, and to have schedule 2 in this bill, a bill that really is about supporting businesses and making life better for people, then to put schedule 2 in this, knowing how controversial it would be, knowing that there would be people on both sides of the issue around their opinions about this particular college and its president—and it's clear that this debate has been a painful debate, for the people who were students at the college as well as people who feel threatened and deeply offended by the remarks of the president of the college.

0920

I agree that we all, for those of us who are not the minister or the PA, have an opportunity to learn how the PEQAB process works. I have spent a fair amount of time on the PEQAB website, getting myself up to date over the last few weeks. But to have something that controversial in the bill, something that requires an understanding of the PEQAB process—to have it in that bill with 29 schedules and to do it with two days of hearings to me doesn't seem to be the most responsible approach. We could actually give this particular schedule and this particular issue the due consideration it deserves, because clearly, given the

number of people who have come to committee to talk about it, it is an issue that a lot of people in this province have an opinion on and would like to have their opinion and perspective heard on.

My recommendation to government would be, given what we have heard from the public in this committee and outside this committee, to remove schedule 2, allow the PEQAB process to take place, and then we can reconsider this particular schedule at a later date, either in another piece of legislation, if that's the approach the government wants to take—that's certainly the government's decision to do. But I think that would give all of us, including the public, a better opportunity to understand the process and understand the implications of the process on this particular institution.

Given the hurtful and divisive comments of the institution's president, you can clearly see why there is deep concern among the public that this schedule is in this bill and that the government is using the PEQAB process to defend it at the time when in many respects, I would say, it hasn't done a good enough job of fully describing the process to the public.

I hope the government members can understand the perspective of so many people in this province that, by having the schedule in this bill, it is condoning what the president of this college says, which is deeply hurtful, deeply divisive and, I would argue, dangerous for this province.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you. Then we have MPP Sattler.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Thank you very much, Chair. I wanted to make some comments from a procedural point of view.

We were debating this bill just last week, actually, in the Legislature. The time allocation motion was passed one week ago. We moved two days later to public hearings on Friday and Monday, and two days after that, we're here doing clause-by-clause. There wasn't even time for Hansard to transcribe the public hearings to enable us to review what we heard and come up with amendments and input based on what presenters had said to us. This creates a real procedural challenge for us as MPPs to do our due diligence.

I also wanted to point out that over those two days of hearings on Friday and Monday, there were 37 delegations. More than one third—13—urged the government to withdraw schedule 2. More than one third of the public deputations called on this government to take schedule 2 out of Bill 213. Of those 13 delegations that called for the withdrawal of schedule 2, almost all of them represented provincial, national or community organizations. They were not speaking on behalf of a single individual. They were speaking on behalf of hundreds of thousands of people in the province of Ontario: citizens, workers, academics, researchers. They were expressing a view that is widely shared by many, many people across this province.

I'm just going to name some of those organizations. We had Carleton University Academic Staff Association. We

had the Canadian Union of Public Employees. We had the Continuing Education Students' Association of Ryerson, the National Council of Canadian Muslims, Queen's University Faculty Association, the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations, the Canadian Federation of Students—Ontario, the Muslim Society of Guelph, The 519 and Pride at Work Canada.

In addition, there were written submissions from Brescia Faculty Association; Brock University Faculty Association; the College Student Alliance; OUSA, the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance—so that represents all students across the post-secondary sector, with OUSA, the College Student Alliance and the CFS. There was also a written submission from the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, and there were letters signed by almost 2,500 individuals in this province, all asking for the same thing, for the province to withdraw schedule 2.

That is our job as a committee and as MPPs: to listen to what Ontarians have to say to us and to respond to the input that they provide.

Respectfully, to the members on the government side, I want to point out that Bill 213 never mentions PEQAB. There is no reference to PEQAB. Those words do not appear in Bill 213.

We are talking about a schedule that grants Canada Christian College, whose founder and president has made hateful, bigoted remarks—we are talking about a bill that will grant that institution the status of a university in this province and the ability to grant degrees in arts and science.

If the government says it's okay to pass this bill, but they won't enact it, it doesn't matter because Canada Christian College will be able to point to this bill and say, "Look, the government legitimized our institution. They passed a law allowing us to claim the status of a university and to grant degrees in"—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): I would like to remind all members to make their comments through the Chair, please.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Okay. Sorry about that, Chair.

I stand with the people who came to this committee, the organizations that presented to this committee, and urge this committee to support the amendments withdrawing schedule 2.

I also wanted to make some comments on some other schedules in the bill, particularly schedules 5, 23 and 18. Unfortunately, we didn't hear from presenters about those schedules—or we did hear one deputation on schedule 18, but nothing about schedules 5 and 23. However, we did receive written input from the Whitefish River First Nation and from the United Chiefs and Councils of Mnidoo Mnising. They expressed their opposition to Bill 213 and to those particular schedules, schedules 5 and 23, because as First Nations people, as partners in our treaty conventions with First Nations, they were not fully or accurately informed about the proposed changes under the bill or its implications. They were not provided the funding to do the analysis that would be required and the time needed to really understand the implications of these

changes. The Whitefish River First Nation says this is unacceptable and “risks violating the crown’s solemn promises and obligations flowing from the historic and constitutional obligations under the treaties.”

0930

This view is also shared by Six Nations of the Grand River, who also provided written input to Bill 213. Their input was specific to schedule 18, but they make the same point: that the bill was brought forward without any effort to obtain full prior and informed consent from the First Nations people who will be affected by this legislation.

With that, Speaker, I conclude my remarks.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you, MPP Sattler. Next we have MPP Piccini.

Mr. David Piccini: Okay. I know MPP Fraser wants to talk. It’s just one quick thing: in terms of how I would perceive this as an Ontarian, I’d lean to legislators in positions of authority. If a legislative member tells me this probably is in violation of the Ontario Human Rights Code, I’d be worried too, but that reflects a misunderstanding of the code. I have it before me: “Section 18 ... establishes three requirements that will allow an organization to provide a service or facility that would otherwise be regarded as discriminatory under the code,” and it goes on to talk about “religious, philanthropic, educational” etc.

I didn’t go to Havergal College in Toronto; it’s an all-girl school. There are others as well. I would just encourage everyone to give this specific piece of the code a quick review before information is conveyed to Ontarians that might lead them to believe something that is, in fact, not correct.

That’s all I wanted to add, Chair. Thanks.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Fraser.

Mr. John Fraser: I’m going to leave, because I’m not on this committee and I won’t be able to vote. I don’t want to take up any more of the committee’s time, because I know you have a long day, but I think this is important to say. The member from Northumberland, who I respect—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): We always have time for you, MPP Fraser.

Mr. John Fraser: Thank you.

I have a great deal of respect for him and for all the members on this committee, on all sides, but when he said we shouldn’t do things based on a feeling—the concerns I expressed weren’t my feelings; they were an objective assessment of the danger of the words that Mr. McVety uses and the other people that he associates himself with. When faced with a similar situation decades ago with Mr. McVety’s father, Bill Davis, for whom colleges and universities were a very, very important thing, shut it down. He knew.

I know how these committees work. I know where the direction comes from. I’ve sat on the government side. I’ve sat on this side. Sometimes you have to ask yourself: Are you being given the right direction? I’ve asked myself that in committee before. This is a really important thing.

The last thing I’ll say is that if two members on the government side do not vote against both of the next two amendments, you’ll be doing the right thing. I want to

thank you for your time and your respect, and wish you well in the rest of your deliberations.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you, MPP Fraser. I’ll see you on Friday.

Mr. John Fraser: Okay, you bet. Thank you, Chair.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Further debate? Seeing none, we’ll now be going to schedule 1. There are no amendments or motions brought forward from schedules 1 to 11, so I propose that we—

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Isaiah Thorning): Sections.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Sections 1 to 11, yes. I propose that we bundle sections 1 to 11.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Of schedule 1?

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Yes, sections 1 to 11 of schedule 1. Is there any comment or debate? Seeing none, are the members prepared to vote? All those in favour of schedule 1, sections 1 to 11, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 1, sections 1 to 11, carried.

Interjections.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Sorry. Shall schedule 1 carry? Any debate? Seeing none, all those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 1 carried.

Turning now to schedule 2: There are no amendments to sections 1 to 5 of schedule 2, so I propose we bundle them. Is there agreement for bundling sections 1 to 5 of schedule 2? Yes.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Do you have to do sections 1 to 5 first?

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): There are notices on the full schedule, so we’ll deal with those after we deal with the sections. Thank you.

Is there any debate on sections 1 to 5 of schedule 2? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? All those in favour of schedule 2, sections 1 to 5, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 2, sections 1 to 5, carried.

Is there any further debate on schedule 2? We have two notices from the NDP. MPP Fife.

Ms. Catherine Fife: The Ontario NDP recommends voting against schedule 2 to the bill, and I can speak to that in a second. Can I go ahead?

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Yes.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Already, members have articulated some of the concerns that we’ve had about schedule 2 being in the legislation, but I did want to raise the whole issue of financial transparency with Canada Christian College as well. We do know, through an FOI, that Charles McVety and his son Ryan have borrowed \$555,000, a balance on a loan advanced to McVety through the college, which is a registered non-charitable organization at present, and another \$172,000 owed by his son, who is also the vice-president of the college.

There has been a lot of talk about the PEQAB application process, Madam Chair, but the revelations are in CCC’s original PEQAB application for arts and science

degree-granting powers that was removed from the website. A redacted version was re-uploaded and scrubbed of information about the loans. I would think that the government would have some genuine concerns about that process before fast-tracking and including the degree-granting ability into a piece of legislation.

Also, the CCC's full application originally was on PEQAB's website for almost a month before the college asked for it to be removed, saying it contained personal information and violated the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. So they're not very keen on being open and transparent throughout this process. This was actually disclosed on the very day where Premier Ford admitted it hadn't been approved through the PEQAB process, even though Bill 213 was tabled. You do have some issues here with openness, with transparency and with undermining confidence in the overall academic degree-granting process.

I want to thank the academic institutions who did come forward and raised this with us. They made the point that while the bill is called "better for business, better for people," or something to that effect—it's really better for some people, but the academics who came before us argued that by undermining the transparency of that process, you actually are undermining degree-granting institutions across this province. I would argue that that is actually not very good for the economy or for instilling confidence in what is, to date, a very good PSE system.

0940

I also want to raise with the government members that our critic, our anti-racism critic, who has been on this file for some time now, since it was first raised, has already asked the Integrity Commissioner, Mr. David Wake, to determine whether he can investigate in light of revelations that CCC appeared to know in July that the legislation to give it degree-granting powers was coming via Bill 213—which is, as we all know, much ado about COVID-era red tape reduction legislation, which hit the Clerks' table on October 6. So they knew about this legislation in July. They knew that it was coming via Bill 213, so they definitely had insider information.

I think it's important to acknowledge and to be open and transparent about the fact that McVety and his college aren't registered lobbyists. Our critic, the MPP for Kitchener Centre, MPP Lindo, is concerned about how a new university designation and required legislation could be developed without extensive meetings with officials and politicians. There are no records of Mr. McVety meeting with the government side in an official capacity. This also undermines the confidence in how government establishes policy, how they establish legislation, who they are listening to, where they are listening to individuals who want something from the government. This investigation with the Integrity Commissioner is ongoing, and yet the government is moving forward with a piece of legislation like Bill 213, particularly schedule 2.

Finally, I just want to say the faculty and staff from 10—actually, now it's 14—post-secondary institutions also wrote to the colleges and universities minister, MPP

Romano, about two weeks ago, urging the government not to expand degree-granting powers to institutions—and this is in quotation—"that do not meet the anti-discriminatory and anti-hate speech principles outlined in the Ontario Human Rights Code."

There are so many moving pieces with regards to the PEQAB process and the questions that are surrounding the Premier's office and his connection with this particular individual, who is the president of Canada Christian College. I don't think that is a small issue here. Both he and his son have borrowed almost \$1 million from the college. There is a true lack of transparency around the finances of this institution. Obviously, there is an Integrity Commissioner investigation that must happen with regards to how Mr. McVety warranted the kind of attention that he has with the Premier's office.

Those are fairly big obstacles. In the past, the former Liberal government has run into issues like this, and they chose not to make it more of a story and inhibit some of the legislation by acknowledging that the opposition to schedule 2 is real.

The freedom of speech piece that the academic institutions have raised is also of interest to me, because as you know, the government, in 2018, put through regulation that all institutions must have a freedom of speech policy. This was raised as a concern because, of course, Canada Christian College doesn't have that, and there is a real question as to whether or not freedom of speech would actually be honoured for those who are in the LGBTQ community and obviously other parts of the population as well.

Aside from the discourse that we have already had on the nature of how this has come about and who's pushing for it, it also warrants some attention that Mr. Romano, the minister, has been fairly over-articulate, I would say, in talking about the so-called sacred, independent PEQAB process. It is also worth noting that Redeemer and Tyndale have not submitted any PEQAB application to seek a ministerial consent for the additional degrees being enabled by Bill 213, but they're in the legislation. The two amendments tie their expanded degree-granting authority to the successful completion of the PEQAB ministerial consent process without going through the process that the government says is so important and that the minister describes as "sacred."

So this is an opportunity, actually. If you withdrew schedule 2 and the fast-tracking of Canada Christian College and Redeemer and Tyndale, then you actually would be honouring the independent and so-called sacred process of PEQAB. The government has actually been arguing against themselves for this entire process by maintaining that schedule 2 stay within Bill 213.

It needs to be said that if Bill 213 passes as is, Canada Christian College will have everything it needs without completing the PEQAB process, just like Redeemer and Tyndale are getting everything that they need without the PEQAB process. This really does call into question the motivation of how and why schedule 2 in its entirety is here and why this special attention is being levied on Mr. McVety and his college.

Those are my comments with regard to voting against schedule 2.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Is there any further debate on the notice brought forward by the NDP or the notice brought forward by the independent member regarding schedule 2? MPP Schreiner.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I just want to speak to why I brought forward a notice to vote against schedule 2 of this bill. I don't see how any MPP in this Legislature in good conscience can vote in favour of schedule 2 given the numerous questions that exist around Canada Christian College. The college's president Mr. McVety's hateful words towards the Muslim community, the Haitian community and the LGBTQIA+ community are well-documented. We've had 14 post-secondary faculty associations, including the umbrella of faculty associations, and student associations come before committee and offer written submissions. We've had representatives from various Muslim organizations as well as representatives of various LGBTQIA+ organizations representing thousands of Ontarians in this province come to committee and raise significant concerns about Canada Christian College.

As the member from Waterloo just articulated, we've had serious questions raised around the financial improprieties that allegedly exist at Canada Christian College that are highly irregular compared to other post-secondary institutions. I would also like to comment that it's highly irregular to have a university-degree-granting institution that seems to have its presidency locked into the hands of one family. Usually, post-secondary institutions have presidents who change every five or 10 years to renew the institution.

We've had significant concerns raised around whether there is a freedom of speech policy that complies with the government's own freedom of speech rules. We have questions around whether Canada Christian College violates the Ontario Human Rights Commission's admission policy, hiring policies, anti-hate and anti-discrimination policies.

And so, regardless of what members think of the PEQAB process, to have this schedule passed, to have this law on the books prior to any PEQAB decision and to have it sitting there even if PEQAB denies the application, to have it just sitting there on the books, having been passed by this Legislature, seemingly condoning the actions of this college without an answer to the many questions that people across this province and members of the Legislature have raised—I think it's an embarrassment to the Legislature and to all members of this Legislature that we would even have the appearance of condoning this prior to Canada Christian College going through the process.

0950

To have this schedule on the books, I think, sends the wrong message to the people of Ontario. So I would ask members opposite to vote against schedule 2 of this bill or at the very least abstain and not have the stain of appearing to condone this schedule.

I'd just like to remind the members that, as the member from Ottawa South said in his comments, a former

Progressive Conservative Premier said no once before, and for good reason, and the documentation to validate that decision has only increased in the ensuing years.

So I, in good conscience, cannot support schedule 2, and I'd ask members of this committee to not support schedule 2.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Is there further debate? MPP Piccini.

Mr. David Piccini: MPP Schreiner, I just wanted to say, because it really—I understand you said earlier that I am the PA and that we would know things that perhaps others wouldn't know, but I just feel so strongly here. The Degree Granting Act of 1983—contrary to what people have said, that act brought forward by Premier Davis was to prevent degree-granting mills writ large across Ontario and to provide a structure around that. It had nothing to do with what you're asserting. You've got to go back and review the history—universities have written about the Degree Granting Act of 1983—before sharing this very confusing, I'll say, information with Ontarians. Come on; we've got to do better.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Further debate? MPP Sattler.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'll repeat what I had said earlier about Bill 213 and, in particular, schedule 2. The PEQAB process is not mentioned in schedule 2. We have heard from the minister in the Legislature, from the PA who sits on this committee, about the PEQAB process, about claims of procedural fairness, about how including schedule 2 in Bill 213 provides greater transparency. But there are so many questions, as my colleague the member for Waterloo pointed out.

When the Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction, who's responsible for this bill, appeared before the committee, I asked questions about how exactly the process works. How does PEQAB coordinate with the ministry and the legislative process in order to move an institution that's seeking a change in its status, in this case from college to university, or to be empowered to award bachelor's degrees in arts and sciences? The minister was completely unable to provide that clarity, to provide that transparency that Ontarians deserve about how PEQAB coordinates with the legislative process.

We did not get an answer to the question about whether the applicant—in this case, Canada Christian College— notifies the government that they're going through PEQAB and that they need enabling legislation, or whether PEQAB does it. Does PEQAB go to the government and say, "Hey, we've got this applicant and you might want to think about creating legislation just in case—just in case—we approve the application"?

We did not get an answer to whether there is a requirement for enabling legislation that might be required to be passed prior to PEQAB, which is what is happening in this case.

We heard repeatedly from the government comparisons to Algoma and OCAD, two other institutions that had also gone through PEQAB and had enabling legislation. But

we also heard that Algoma is still going through that process. Enabling legislation was passed more than a year ago, and Algoma is still going through the PEQAB process, and that legislation has yet to be proclaimed. So that certainly raises the question: What was the rush? If the PEQAB process in the case of Algoma can take a year or more, why do we need enabling legislation at this moment in Ontario's history, when we are in the midst of an unprecedented global pandemic, when all of our focus and energies should be directed at ensuring that our economy is able to recover and that people have the supports they need? Why is this enabling legislation being passed now when the results of the PEQAB process may only be known months or over a year from now, as is the case of Algoma?

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): I'd just like to remind the member to make her comments through the Chair. Thank you.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Sorry. Okay. So I think that there are some real concerns.

The other issue, as was raised by the member for Guelph and as I had pointed out earlier this morning, is that passing this legislation, just having this legislation on the public record, granting Canada Christian College the legitimacy of being able to claim the status of university and empowering that college to award university degrees in arts and sciences, allows Canada Christian College to claim something that they are not procedurally able to claim unless they have completed the PEQAB process. Canada Christian College can go on big recruitment efforts and they can photocopy schedule 2 or hyperlink to schedule 2 of Bill 213, showing that the government of Ontario has passed legislation recognizing that institution as a university and allowing them to award arts and sciences degrees.

So there's a big problem when public legislation like Bill 213, that is supposed to be focused on helping businesses recover, is actually helping one business, a specific business, a business called Canada Christian College, which is a private educational institution, which generates revenues from tuition fees that are charged to students. There's no question that this will assist Canada Christian College in its marketing efforts, in its ability to recruit students, when they are able to claim a status in legislation that they have not actually earned through an independent process that PEQAB represents. So that is a big concern, and that is one of the reasons why the NDP has brought forward this recommendation to vote against schedule 2.

I want to quote from some of the written submissions that were received. I'm going to start with the submission from the National Council of Canadian Muslims, an organization that was shamefully maligned by one of the presenters to this committee. The National Council of Canadian Muslims points out toward the end of their submission, "It is ... important to note that it is not our position that the government should preclude faith-based institutions from achieving university accreditation because of an off-hand 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."

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That gets to the nub of the issue. By passing this legislation, it is fast-tracking a process that enables Canada Christian College to claim a status that it has not actually achieved through the public, independent, impartial processes that have been set up through PEQAB.

I also want to repeat or echo some of the concerns that were raised by presenters to the committee and in the written submissions about the extremist views that have been espoused by Mr. McVety. I want to quote from the brief that was provided by Dr. Seljak, who is a professor and chair of the department of religious studies at the University of Waterloo. He is a faculty member in a faith-based institution in the province of Ontario, but he raises a number of concerns about schedule 2 in Bill 213, and one of those concerns is around extremism. He states:

"The disconnection between Canada Christian College and Ontario values seen in the absence of academic freedom and human rights protections at Canada Christian College comes straight from the top. Its president, Charles McVety, is an extremist who, for example, openly promotes Islamophobic, transphobic, and homophobic views. For instance, Mr. McVety has called Islam a danger to the Canadian society. He cohosted an event featuring Geert Wilders, an extremist Dutch politician known for attacking Islam and Muslim immigrants. Defending the invitation, Mr. McVety said that Islam had a 'mandate for a hostile takeover'"—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): I hate to interrupt. MPP Bouma? Do you have a point of order, or are you just raising your hand because you would like to speak?

Mr. Will Bouma: Yes, a point of order, Madam Chair. There's nothing new in what's being said right now. I was wondering if we could return to the orders of the day.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Bouma, each member has up to 20 minutes for the initial discussion, and then it's after the 20 minutes, if they wish to speak again, if there is nothing new, then you may raise a point of order, at that time. But initially, each member does have 20 minutes. Thank you.

MPP Sattler, you may continue.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Thank you very much, Chair.

Professor Seljak goes on to say, "Ontario has many fine religiously identified colleges and universities, and, as a matter of fact, I work at one. The issue here is not religious commitment, but extremism. Mr. McVety promotes a chauvinistic and divisive form of Christianity that insults

many Ontarians (especially those from our Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Sikh, and Jewish communities).”

He goes on to say, “Given the role Mr. McVety plays in the running and direction of Canada Christian College, it is not surprising, but still alarming, that his views also inform the culture and curriculum at this private institution. To give the college university status would be to tell Ontarians that this government approves of Mr. McVety’s extremist views and exclusionary practices.”

I do have to reference the motion that was passed by the Legislative Assembly, by a majority of members of the Legislative Assembly, that condemned the extremist views of Charles McVety and called on the government not to grant Canada Christian College the status of a university.

I also want to draw committee members’ attention to the brief that was submitted by Queer Ontario. The brief sort of directly addressed one of the issues that we heard from several of the presenters around Mr. McVety’s rights to freedom of speech. That was raised by presenters as some kind of a justification for Mr. McVety proceeding with this application. We were urged to respect his rights to freedom of expression and allow Canada Christian College to go through this process and be recognized as a legitimate university in the province of Ontario.

But Queer Ontario, as well as, of course, pointing out the harm that has historically been inflicted on LGBTQ communities in the province because of the hateful views expressed by Mr. McVety and many, many others—as well as raising those issues in their brief, they also address directly the freedom of speech arguments.

Their brief states, “Arguments that rely on a classic framework of ‘freedom of speech’ are misleading and meant to divert attention from what is fundamental and germane to this matter. No one is attempting to shackle McVety’s freedom of individual thought or speech. He is allowed to think and say as he likes, as long as he does not violate a modicum of legal restrictions that have been placed on certain forms of speech that have been found to cause harm. When he enters the public arena and attempts to influence public policy, and circumvent a professional public body from enacting its statutory responsibilities, that is another matter. What strikes to the core of this issue for us, and arguably for many Canadians, is the preservation of the quality of post-secondary public education that is maintained through a publicly accountable democratic process that is held to the highest standards of excellence, is evidence-based, and conducted by an arm’s-length public institution. This is the very process that schedule 2 attempts to abrogate, and we find this unconscionable in a democratic society, and for a government that claims to uphold democratic and pluralist values.”

I think that Queer Ontario’s brief has hit directly at the heart of what this discussion is about. People can argue about Mr. McVety’s rights to spew whatever kind of hatred and bigotry he wants to about Muslims and LGBTQ communities. However, when his views are legitimized by the province of Ontario, that is another thing entirely. That

is why so many of the academic representatives from the post-secondary sector, from academic faculty, from university staff associations and from post-secondary student associations, felt so strongly about not including schedule 2 as part of this bill, because it effectively violates the Ontario Human Rights Code.

The Ontario Human Rights Code requires institutions to meet the anti-discriminatory and anti-hate-speech principles that are outlined in the code. As I said, by granting Canada Christian College this status, it is effectively condoning institutions that do not meet the Ontario Human Rights Code provisions. Surely that is not something we want to condone. That is something we want to expand: We want everyone in this province to understand the Ontario Human Rights Code and what that requires in terms of respect for religious minorities, respect for people of different sexual identity and gender expression, what that means in terms of respect for people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. We want broader commitment to the Ontario Human Rights Code. We want fuller understanding of the principles of the Ontario Human Rights Code, and we want more Ontarians to embrace those principles so that we can create a more welcoming and inclusive province.

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Given the overwhelming opposition to schedule 2 that we heard from more than one third of the presenters who spoke to this committee over two days of public hearings, I would strongly urge the government to support the position of the NDP in recommending that this committee vote against schedule 2 to this bill.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Skelly?

Interjection.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Skelly would like to call the vote. Is there any further debate? MPP Fife.

Ms. Catherine Fife: If there’s no further debate, I would like a recorded vote on the voting of schedule 2.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Seeing that there’s no further debate, MPP Fife has called for a recorded vote of schedule 2. Are the members prepared to vote?

Ayes

Bailey, Bouma, Piccini, Sabawy, Skelly, Wai.

Nays

Fife, Glover, Sattler, Schreiner.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): I declare schedule 2 carried.

Turning now to schedule 3, I propose that we bundle sections 1 to 12 of schedule 3. Is there agreement? Thank you. Is there any debate on schedule 3, sections 1 to 12? Are members prepared to vote? All those in favour of schedule 3, sections 1 to 12, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 3 carried.

Interjection.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Is there any further debate on schedule 3, as a whole? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? All those in favour of schedule 3, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 3 carried.

Turning now to schedule 4, I propose that we bundle sections 1 to 5 of schedule 4. Is there agreement? Is there any further debate on sections 1 to 5 of schedule 4? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? All those in favour of sections 1 to 5 of schedule 4, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 4, sections 1 to 5, carried.

Is there any further debate on schedule 4? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? All those in favour of schedule 4, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 4 carried.

Turning now to schedule 5, I propose—

Interjection.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): It's not 10:15 yet. We have to go—

Interjection.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): I'm the official timekeeper, and my clock is right here. It's 10:14. So we're going to do the last one, and then we'll resume.

Is there any debate on sections 1 to 4 of schedule 5? Seeing none—

Interjection.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): My apologies. Yes? Schedule 5, sections 1 to 4?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Yes. I just wanted to draw members' attention to the written submissions that were provided by the Whitefish River First Nation and the United Chiefs and Councils of Mnidoo Mnising. They raised some serious concerns about schedule 5, and in particular, the potential adverse impact—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Sattler, it is now 10:15, and we must recess. We'll resume at 1 o'clock.

The committee recessed from 1015 to 1300.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Good afternoon, everyone. The Standing Committee on General Government will now come to order. When the committee recessed, we were considering sections 1 to 4 of schedule 5, and MPP Sattler had the floor.

MPP Sattler?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I was raising concerns that were expressed to us in briefs that were submitted to the committee by Whitefish River First Nation and also the United Chiefs and Councils of Mnidoo Mnising. They raised concerns about the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act in schedule 5 and about the implications of the changes set out in this schedule on their Aboriginal and treaty rights. Given their view that these changes were developed without appropriate consultation with First Nations and without free prior and informed consent, we will not be supporting schedule 5.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Is there further debate? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Recorded vote.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Fife has requested a recorded vote. MPP Skelly?

Ms. Donna Skelly: Yes, I'm just double-checking. MPP Piccini, I think, just ran to the men's room, so I'm not sure if we can wait until—I'm just going to run out and see if he's right there, if I may.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Okay. Yes, you should probably do that. Thank you.

A recorded vote has been requested. Are the members prepared to vote?

Ayes

Bailey, Bouma, Piccini, Skelly, Wai.

Nays

Fife, Glover, Sattler, Schreiner.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): I declare sections 1 to 4 carried.

Turning now to schedule 5, is there any further debate? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Bailey, Bouma, Piccini, Sabawy, Skelly, Wai.

Nays

Fife, Glover, Sattler, Schreiner.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Schedule 5 is carried.

Turning now to schedule 6, I propose we bundle sections 1 to 12 of schedule 6. Is there agreement? Thank you. Is there any debate on sections 1 to 12 of schedule 6? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? All those in favour of sections 1 to 12 of schedule 6, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare sections 1 to 12 of schedule 6 carried.

Is there any further debate on schedule 6? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 6 carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 6

Turning now to schedule 7, is there any further debate on schedule 7, section 1? Are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 7, section 1, carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed to schedule 7, section 1, please raise your hands. I declare schedule 7, section 1, carried.

Turning now to schedule 7, section 2, I have an NDP notice—

Interjections.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): I would remind members to please keep their comments to a minimum. Thank you.

Turning now to schedule 7, section 2, we have NDP motion number 1, section 2.1. MPP Fife.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I move that section 2.1 be added to schedule 7 to the bill:

“2.1 The act is amended by adding the following section:

“No disqualification based on revenue

“119.1 An insurer shall not disqualify a contractor from being insured based on the contractor’s amount of annual revenue.”

I’m happy to speak to it as well.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you. MPP Fife.

Ms. Catherine Fife: We have seen some ongoing issues related to insurance delivery and insurance contracts and the awarding of policies. This was actually brought forward from the business community. Clearly, if you are a contractor and you have, obviously, fallen on some very challenging economic times because of COVID-19, and yet the act, which pretends to support businesses and make better people—I don’t know; it seems like a huge oversight on the part of the government.

In the interests of co-operation and non-partisanship, we’ve included this amendment so that we don’t disproportionately and negatively affect the contractors who will not be able to access insurance. So we move this amendment, and we’re hoping to receive full government support.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Is there further debate? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote?

Ms. Catherine Fife: A recorded vote, ma’am.

Ayes

Fife, Glover, Sattler, Schreiner.

Nays

Bailey, Bouma, Piccini, Sabawy, Skelly, Wai.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): I declare the motion lost.

Is there any further debate on schedule 7, section 2? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 7, section 2, carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 7, section 2, carried.

Turning now to schedule 7, section 3, we have NDP motion number 2. MPP Fife.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I move that schedule 7 to the bill be amended by adding the following section:

“3.1 The act is amended by adding the following section:

“No disqualification based on revenue

“119.1 An insurer shall not disqualify a contractor from being insured based on the contractor’s amount of annual revenue.”

Once again, Madam Chair, this is an acknowledgement that we are in a pandemic. Contractors, small businesses

have obviously experienced great loss to their revenue. How the government put forward a bill that’s supposed to strengthen and support businesses through COVID-19 and not address—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Fife, before you begin, I still have to recognize you, because you introduced your motion first and then—with respect to motion number 2, the proposed amendment is out of order as it is identical to a previous amendment on which the committee has made a decision.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Too bad.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Is there any further debate on schedule 7, section 3? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 7, section 3, carry? All those in favour?

MPP Skelly, yes?

Ms. Donna Skelly: I just want clarification: We are not dealing with the NDP motion?

1310

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): That was out of order. It’s schedule 7, section 3.

Shall schedule 7, section 3, carry?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Recorded vote.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Sattler has requested a recorded vote. Shall schedule 7, section 3, carry?

Ayes

Bailey, Bouma, Piccini, Sabawy, Skelly, Wai.

Nays

Fife, Glover, Sattler, Schreiner.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Schedule 7, section 3, is carried.

I would just like to remind all committee members present in the room to please raise their hands before making a comment to the Chair, and to please wait to be recognized. I would also like to remind committee members to please keep their comments to themselves, and please, if you have to communicate something, please keep it at a very low whisper, because it’s a small room and everything echoes. Thank you.

Turning now to sections 4 to 17 of schedule 7: I propose we bundle sections 4 to 17. Is there agreement from the committee? Thank you. Is there any further debate on sections 4 to 17 of schedule 7? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 7, sections 4 to 17, carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 7, sections 4 to 17, carried.

Is there any further debate on schedule 7? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 7 carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 7 carried.

Turning now to schedule 8: I propose we bundle sections 1 to 6 of schedule 8. Is there agreement from the committee?

Interjection.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Yes, MPP Fife?

Ms. Catherine Fife: So we're going to bundle all of schedule 8, even though the government is recommending voting against—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): As a matter of process, that would happen after. It's a matter of process, so first we have to deal with the sections, and then we deal with the schedule in its entirety.

Is there any further debate on schedule 8, sections 1 to 6? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? All those in favour of schedule 8, sections 1 to 6, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 8, sections 1 to 6, lost.

Is there further debate on schedule 8 in its entirety? I see there is a government notice. Would someone like to present that notice? No? Okay. Is there any further debate on schedule 8 in its entirety? MPP Fife.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you, Madam Chair. It's very unusual for the government, at this late stage, to be withdrawing an entire schedule in a piece of legislation like Bill 213. It's interesting that they chose to pull schedule 8, but still keep schedule 2 in. The reason that I wanted to debate what's happening right now with regards to the government pulling a whole schedule—I just want to remind folks that schedule 8 made powers so that the minister may make regulations setting out a code of practice for persons authorized to solemnize marriage.

I believe the minister was bringing forward this piece of legislation and this new regulation because there have been a number of fly-by-night individuals who perform marriage ceremonies, and then there have been several of late—I don't know if any of the committee members have heard some of this—who have been refusing to perform same-sex marriage ceremonies. There was quite an outcry, actually, prior to us rising in the last session.

And so, I was sort of doing a little bit of digging around and saying, "Well, why would the government pull this whole section?" Ideally, these new regulations would ensure that those individuals who are performing marriages are adhering to, perhaps, an Ontario Human Rights Code standards code of practice, which would formalize the role of those who perform marriage ceremonies.

Then I found some media reports. I looked all the way back to October 23, when the minister basically announced on Twitter that she was going to be amending schedule 8, not withdrawing the entirety of it.

But it does seem that there have been some folks who have been able to get to the government on this and get their ear on this issue. I noticed that on the LifeSite website, about "news of life, family and faith," one of the key stories from October 27 was, "After Outcry, Ontario Government to Amend Bill That Would Force Christian Wedding Officiants to Adhere to Govt 'Code Of Practice.'" It said, "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'....

"As it is currently written"—and, of course, the government is going to be withdrawing it—"schedule 8 of Bill 213 proposes to amend the Marriage Act by adding wording which—should the bill in its current form become law—potentially force wedding officiants to adhere to a yet-to-be-determined government 'code of practice.'" Clearly, the concerns from those who support LifeSite—it's very interesting, Madam Chair, to see who has the ear of this government in withdrawing the schedule.

When we reviewed this schedule, the idea of actually putting some standards and some oversight into who marriage officiants are and how they conduct themselves seemed like a very progressive idea. Unfortunately, the government has turned their back on that, and it does appear they have succumbed to the fears that certain groups are bringing forward.

Originally, the intention was—and this is a quote from the minister, Lisa—what's her name?

Interjection.

Ms. Catherine Fife: No. It's okay. She said, "We had a proposal on the table to address issues that occasionally arise for couples getting married, such as fly-by-night officiants. A code of practice was one potential tool to use to prohibit and deter this bad behaviour." You imagine how upsetting it would be to go to a marriage officiant as a same-sex couple and hear that they will not perform that ceremony because it does not line up with their Christian values. That's something that I would think that the minister would be concerned about.

It's interesting, because in the same article it says, "LifeSiteNews contacted the office of Minister Thompson to ask if the apparent backtracking of Bill 213 will address concerns raised by some over its alleged attack on religious freedoms.

"Linsey Lim, senior communications adviser," said that there is "some misinformation" out there, and yet the government has pulled the entire schedule.

This is a quote as well: "Let us be clear: Premier Ford" and the government support the Constitution "and will always protect the notion of marriage" and "religious freedoms...." And yet you have caved to a group—a very vocal group, I will admit—that does not think that oversight over marriage officiants should be happening.

Schedule 8 of the bill says that "every person authorized to solemnize marriage shall comply with any code of practice set out in the regulations." And then the minister was also going to keep a register of the name of every person who was authorized to solemnize marriage. What is that so controversial?

If you continue reading, and you go down this rabbit hole, you'll find out that what motivated the withdrawal of schedule 8 in its entirety from Bill 213. You'll find Jack Fonseca, who is the operations director for Campaign Life Coalition. He believes the goal of Bill 213 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.”

1320

He goes on to say, “This is a truly shocking attack on religious freedom and the Church itself, perpetrated by the Doug Ford administration...” He goes on and says some very un-nice things about the Premier.

But then, it does appear that that kind of pressure and those kinds of tactics have worked with the Premier’s office, because a very reasonable and relatively progressive direction to create, essentially, a code of conduct for the people who, on some people’s very special day—it seems very suspect. No reason has been given by the government as to why they have withdrawn the entire schedule 8 from this piece of legislation.

They’ve kept very controversial components of this bill at the behest of Charles McVety, and yet they also seem to have withdrawn or decided that they’re not going to take a stand on having a code of practice for marriage officiants in Ontario. That, I feel, is something that needs to be explained by the government. It certainly will be a topic for us to pursue as well, because we want to make sure that anyone who goes to a marriage officiant in the province of Ontario, be they homosexual or in a same-sex marriage, that they have the right to be treated with respect and dignity and have this service, which is regulated by the Ontario government, uphold the Ontario Human Rights Code.

I look to the government side to have an honest and transparent discourse on why the entirety of schedule 8 must be removed from this piece of legislation, when it was one of the rare schedules that actually aligned with some of the goals of the title of the bill. So I’m open for debate.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Is there further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Well, I just want to say, Madam Chair—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Fife, please wait to be recognized.

MPP Fife.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you. I just want to say it’s quite shocking, because the silence that we are faced with at this committee clearly is condoning some of the very things that we have heard, because there was no good reason to pull this entire schedule. It should raise many red flags about who has the ear of this—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Fife, thank you. I just wanted to remind you that the second time around when you speak, it’s to bring new comments and not repeat points that have already been made. So if there are no new comments to be made, thank you.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Is there any further debate? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote—oh, MPP Schreiner.

MPP Schreiner, you have to unmute your—

Mr. Mike Schreiner: There we go.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): There we go.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Thank you, Chair. I just had a quick question for legislative staff. Will removing schedule 8 affect any of the changes that were brought in under Bill 161 that allows Indigenous marriage ceremonies? Because there is a section of this bill, 33.0.2, that talks about that. I’ve been trying to figure out the relationship between this section of this bill and Bill 161. Is there any staff who could answer my question?

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Schreiner, I believe we have legislative counsel on the line.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Thank you, Chair.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Catherine Oh, would you like to respond to MPP Schreiner’s question? You have to unmute yourself, Catherine.

Alternatively, we have staff from MGCS.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Sorry to complicate things, Chair.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): That’s okay, MPP Schreiner. It’s a valid question.

Who do we have on the line from MGCS? Could you please unmute your microphones and introduce yourselves? Ministry of Government and Consumer Services? This is with respect to schedule 8. Neil Salter or James Stebbing? Do we have Neil Salter or James Stebbing? Can you please unmute yourselves?

Let’s take a five-minute recess and—Neil is unmuted now. Neil, could you please just state your name for Hansard, and then if you could respond to MPP Schreiner’s question, please?

Mr. Neil Salter: It’s Neil Salter, with MGCS—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): If you could increase your audio. We’re having difficulty hearing you.

Mr. Neil Salter: Apologies. It’s Neil Salter with MGCS. I just wanted to note that participants are not able to unmute themselves, which is part of the challenge.

So we do have my colleague James Stebbing from legal services who’s prepared to jump in on this matter, but he can’t unmute himself.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Can we unmute him, please? Thank you.

James, you’re unmuted on our end, but I don’t think we can hear you. Is there something with your audio on your end? Oh, we can hear you now. If you could please state your name for the record and then respond to MPP Schreiner’s question.

Mr. James Stebbing: It’s James Stebbing. I’m counsel with the legal services branch, Ministry of Government and Consumer Services. The question was, will pulling schedule 8 or voting it down have any effect on the amendments with respect to allowing Indigenous solemnizers to become registered as authorized to solemnize a marriage. The answer is no, that still proceeds.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Thank you for that. I appreciate that.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Is there any further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Recorded vote.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Fife has requested a recorded vote. Shall schedule 8 carry? All those in favour, please—

Interjection.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): No. Any more process questions?

Shall schedule 8 carry?

Ayes

Fife, Glover, Sattler, Schreiner.

Nays

Bailey, Bouma, Piccini, Sabawy, Skelly, Wai.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Schedule 8 is lost.

Turning now to schedule 9, I propose we bundle sections 1 to 10. Is there agreement from the committee? Thank you. Is there any debate on schedule 9, sections 1 to 10? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare sections 1 to 10 of schedule 9 carried.

Is there any further debate on schedule 9? Are the members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 9 carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. Schedule 9 is carried.

Turning now to schedule 10, I propose we bundle sections 1 and 2. Is there agreement from the committee? Thank you. Is there any further debate on schedule 10, sections 1 and 2? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? All those in favour of schedule 10, sections 1 and 2, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 10, sections 1 and 2, carried.

Is there any further debate on schedule 10? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 10 carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 10 carried.

1330

Turning now to schedule 11: We have a government motion regarding schedule 11, section 1. We have government motion number 3. Who would like to move this motion? MPP Piccini.

Mr. David Piccini: I move that section 1 of schedule 11 to the bill be amended by adding the following subsection to section 6.1 of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act:

“Same

“(3) Nothing in this section limits the application of an exemption from development charges provided in any other act with respect to a university described in subsection (1).”

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Further debate? MPP Fife.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Just a question for the government: Was there a rationale for why this was not included in the first writing of the legislation?

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Piccini?

Mr. David Piccini: Yes, thanks, happy to answer that. Thank you, MPP Fife. There was just some concern. This amendment was brought in, designed because a number of institutions in the province of Ontario currently are exempt under the Development Charges Act, and this was brought in to ensure transparency and equity across the board for all universities. There were some concerns over those existing universities which already received the development charge exemption—that with this act this would now somehow reinstate discussions with their development charge exemption, so this just limits the exemption provided in any other act with respect to the subsection. So those who already have the exemption of development charges will continue, and those who were inequitably treated for DCs—now there will be parity across post-secondary institutions across Ontario.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Further debate? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Shall government motion number 3, with respect to schedule 11, section 1, carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare government motion number 3 carried.

Shall schedule 11, section 1, as amended, carry? All those in—

Mr. David Piccini: Recorded vote.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Piccini has requested a recorded vote.

Shall schedule 11, section 1, as amended, carry?

Ayes

Bailey, Bouma, Fife, Piccini, Sabawy, Sattler, Skelly, Wai.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): I declare schedule 11, section 1, as amended, carried.

Schedule 11, section 2: Is there any further debate? Are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 11, section 2, carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 11, section 2, carried.

Shall schedule 11, as amended, carry? Is there any further debate? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 11, as amended, carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 11, as amended, carried.

Turning now to schedule 12, I propose we bundle sections 1 to 3. Is there agreement from the committee? Is there any further debate on schedule 12, sections 1 to 3? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? All those in favour of schedule 12, sections 1 to 3, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 12, sections 1 to 3, carried.

Is there any further debate on schedule 12? Are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 12 carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those

opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 12 carried.

Turning now to schedule 13, I propose we bundle sections 1 to 4. Is there agreement from the committee? Thank you. Is there any further debate on schedule 13, sections 1 to 4? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 13, sections 1 to 4, carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 13, sections 1 to 4, carried.

Shall schedule 13 in its entirety carry? MPP Piccini.

Mr. David Piccini: Just a recorded vote, please.

Ayes

Bailey, Bouma, Fife, Piccini, Sabawy, Sattler, Schreiner, Skelly, Wai.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 13 carried.

Turning now to schedule 14: I propose we bundle sections 1 to 7 of schedule 14. Is there any further debate on schedule 14, sections 1 to 7? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? All those in favour of schedule 14, sections 1 to 7, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 14, sections 1 to 7, carried.

Is there any further debate on schedule 14? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 14 carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 14 carried.

Turning now to schedule 15, I propose we bundle sections 1 to 3. Is there any further debate on schedule 15? Is there agreement from the committee? Thank you. Is there any further debate on schedule 15, sections 1 to 3? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? All those in favour of schedule 15, sections 1 to 3, please raise your hands. All those opposed? I declare schedule 15, sections 1 to 3, carried.

Shall schedule 15 carry? Is there any further debate? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? All those in favour of schedule 15 carrying, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 15 carried.

Turning now to schedule 16, I propose we bundle sections 1 to 7. Is there agreement from the committee? Is there any further debate on schedule 16, sections 1 to 7? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 16, sections 1 to 7, carry?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Bailey, Bouma, Piccini, Sabawy, Skelly, Wai.

Nays

Fife, Glover, Sattler, Schreiner.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): I declare schedule 16, sections 1 to 7, carried. Is there any further debate on schedule 16?

Interjection.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Oh, my apologies. We have two notices regarding schedule 16. We have one from the NDP and one from the independent member. Is there any debate on these notices? MPP Fife.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Just to review, schedule 16, the Ontario Highway Transport Board Repeal Act, enables the repeal of the Ontario Highway Transport Board Act and the dissolution of the Ontario Highway Transport Board, which is in charge of maintaining an orderly intercity bus system and controlling market entry for private intercity bus services in Ontario. The board's role includes adjudicating bus company applications under the Public Vehicles Act, which is also being repealed. In short, schedules 16 and 24 enable the deregulation of intercity bus service in Ontario.

I think it's really important for us—and I'm surprised that I didn't see something from the government on schedule 16, because the overwhelming response to this legislation from those who run private bus and transport companies was essentially, "Why are you doing this now?"

I want to make sure that we get Douglas Badder's perspective on this schedule in particular. I just want to point out that they've been in the bus business for over 70 years. His mother and his father started it, and he has continued it all of these years.

He goes on to say—and this is Douglas Badder. All of us got this delegation's writing. He said, "Other than being a president of our family companies, I am also on the executive ... of the Ontario Motor Coach Association as the vice-chair. All of the operators in the association are talking about the decision to have deregulation in the bus industry and why now, in the middle of a pandemic.

"Before the" COVID-19 "pandemic hit, there were companies that" wanted "deregulation and" others that didn't, "but I have to tell you, I haven't talked to any companies that want it right now, including my company. Right now, many of the companies are trying to survive because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The passing of Bill 213, sections 16 and 24, 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."

They also raised the issue that this would give increased access to Quebec and the United States of part of Ontario's market. By passing this, you're actually giving an economic advantage to the province of Quebec and to the United States. To say that this legislation which, ironically, calls on addressing the economic crisis and helping businesses get through this very challenging time—this schedule is actually going to further disadvantage these private bus operators.

They raised another issue around safety. This is still Douglas Badder. He says that safety is a major concern that everyone should have. If this Bill 213, sections 16 and 24, goes through, "It takes a lot of money to keep

equipment safe, and also training to know that your drivers are operating the vehicle safely. There need to be provisions in place and enforcement in place to keep unsafe operators off the roads.

“There is also the possibility that there could be unfair competition from government-funded competitors. Any operation that gets fully or partially funded from the government could do charters in a deregulated environment.”

I have to say, his last paragraph really struck me. He says, “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. We need safe Ontario roads and a level playing field, and it won’t be here next summer. There are a lot of questions but not enough “answers for this to work at this time.” This is not the right time to move forward with this schedule 16 of Bill 213.

Everyone who heard these delegations—these are individual private operators, family-run businesses. They’re looking to the government at this time for some support. They’re not looking for you to give an advantage to another sector or another jurisdiction. MPP Bailey had said how much respect he has for the sector, and yet with the passing and the voting of schedule 16, you are actively saying to these independent bus operators that you don’t share their safety concerns and that you think it’s just the Wild West out there with regard to bus transportation.

Given what has happened in other jurisdictions with very tragic bus accidents, it defies all logic from a health and safety perspective and from an economic perspective to deregulate this sector at this time. You actually have somebody advocating for higher regulation, a higher regulatory threshold for safety. That is what’s happening right here, right now, all under the name and under the guise of reducing red tape. And you have the sector asking you for a higher regulatory threshold for the operations of safety.

So I have to say, if the government keeps this schedule 16 in its entirety in this bill, then they should know that they are actively undermining any economic progress that the sector would have seen with a levelling of the playing field, whatever that would look like—and to add insult to injury, they weren’t consulted at all. It’s just one more case and one more instance where we have to ask: Who is the government listening to? It isn’t the independent bus operators in the province of Ontario because you didn’t even ask them. You didn’t even do the consultation. You didn’t do your due diligence, and now you will be deregulating a sector, which will actually negatively economically impact these operators. It just does not make sense at all.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Further debate? MPP Glover and then MPP Schreiner.

Mr. Chris Glover: I just want to add my comments to the MPP from Waterloo. We heard from five different private bus operators—Greyhound Canada, Coach Canada and three others—and they all said the same thing: They could not understand why this government is bringing schedules 16 and 24 into this legislation at this time.

They are in the midst of a pandemic. They have been almost completely shut down for the last nine months, but still have the carrying costs of their fleet of buses, each of which costs \$650,000. At this point in history, the government is opening up the intercity bus market to competition from companies that go back into the United States, without reciprocal access to their markets. In the future, if Ontario is negotiating with Quebec or with the United States around bus operations, we no longer have the leverage of saying, “Well, look, we’ll review your company’s access to our market if you reciprocate.” So we’re actually undermining our own leverage point for future negotiations if the province chooses to go in that direction.

The other thing that we’ve heard is that the competition for Quebec operators is unfair because the Quebec operators have access to the very lucrative Montreal market, whereas the Ontario operators do not have access to the major-city market in Toronto and around Toronto. Those markets, which are the ones that you can really generate some revenue from, the Ontario companies don’t have access to. So these Quebec companies can come in. They can cherry-pick the most lucrative routes from the Ontario operators and take away routes from many communities. One of the operators said that potentially 83 communities will lose access to intercity bus travel if these schedules, 16 and 24, go through and the government does deregulate.

I have yet to hear a rationale for the government doing this. Those bus operators at least deserve an explanation of why you are jeopardizing their businesses—and that’s what they said. They all said that this could jeopardize their business. Many of those businesses are family-owned. They’re multigenerational businesses that are being put at risk by these schedules.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you. MPP Schreiner.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I just wanted to provide a quick explanation, in the interests of time, for why I put forward a notice to vote against schedule 16. We heard from numerous coach companies that repealing or dissolving the Ontario Highway Transport Board and deregulating the industry at this moment in time would be kind of the final nail in the coffin.

So many sectors of our economy and so many small businesses obviously are hurting because of the COVID pandemic. To take actions that will further hurt an important industry in our province—to me, it’s just the wrong schedule at the wrong time. Especially, to create an un-level playing field for Quebec and US operators almost seems like we’re trying to export jobs and businesses to other provinces and other countries, which I think is the wrong way to go.

I have a strong interest in figuring out how we can expand intercity bus services, particularly in rural communities. The fact that we had companies coming and saying that 83 communities’ bus service is now in jeopardy if this schedule passes, deeply, deeply concerns me.

1350

I think the much better approach would be to look at, are there regulatory changes that need to take place? Are there ways in which the government could work with the private sector to create some subsidies to enhance intercity bus services, particularly for rural communities? To me, it seems like a much better approach for both our economy and preserving jobs in the coach industry, but also better serving transit in communities and especially rural communities.

So I would strongly recommend that this particular schedule be removed and that we make an effort to work with the industry to come up with a plan that enables both public and private services to operate in a way that better services our communities, and especially rural communities.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you. Is there further debate? MPP Glover.

Mr. Chris Glover: Thank you. I just want to quickly summarize. So the risks that we were told about by the bus operators, summarized into three main points: One is that these schedules could bankrupt Ontario bus operators, they could deprive 83 communities of bus service, and they could lower the standard for safety on intercity bus routes and put us at risk of a Humboldt crash.

I just wanted to state those three points for the record, because when these things come to pass, I want to be able to look back at Hansard here and say to the Conservative government, to this Conservative Party, “Why did you do this? You were warned that this was going to happen. Why did you bring these schedules forward? Why did you support them?” Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you. MPP Sattler?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Thank you very much, Chair. I want to add my voice to the opposition to schedule 16.

Certainly, we heard from the eight bus operator companies who appeared before the committee and represented various parts of the province: Kasper Transportation in northern Ontario; we had Coach Canada, which serves southwestern Ontario and southern Ontario. So we clearly heard the concerns of these small bus operators and what deregulation will do to their sector at this point in time. Even those who were open to deregulation were still opposed to deregulation at this point.

But the other thing that we heard through written submissions is from transit workers. Amalgamated Transit Union provided a submission echoing the same concerns of the bus operators. They said that schedule 16, and 24, which we’ll get to later—that those two schedules “will only facilitate the entry of new companies to the public transportation market without any consideration of safety or the public interest, fuelling a race to the bottom in terms of working conditions and service standards.”

They went on to address working conditions directly in their submission. They said, “For existing intercity public transportation providers, licensing considerations, where for example OHTB approval was needed to transfer licensing rights, will no longer be a disincentive to

contracting out or other mechanisms used by corporations to defeat bargaining rights. This could facilitate contract flipping, which would greatly diminish the working conditions of transit workers.”

They made the point, the excellent point, that these schedules will make it more difficult for the government to achieve one of its stated transit policy goals, which is the service of rural communities in Ontario by intercity operators. They said, “This outcome will not be achieved through deregulation, as there is no rational business case for servicing rural areas.” And that point was already made. “Instead, private bus companies will flood the most profitable intercity transit routes, thus fuelling an even quicker race to the bottom.”

So it’s not only the business operators who presented to the committee who are concerned about these schedules but also the transit workers who work for these companies.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you. MPP Piccini?

Mr. David Piccini: Certainly I know we’ve heard about the need for new carriers to address service gaps, but I’m going to propose a 20-minute recess, please, Madam Chair.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Okay. At this point, we’ll take a 20-minute recess.

The committee recessed from 1354 to 1414.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you. The Standing Committee on General Government will now resume. At this time, we were debating schedule 16 in its entirety. MPP Piccini.

Mr. David Piccini: Chair, I just wanted to thank everyone for the opportunity, for the short time there. I just wanted to read in for the record that the Ministry of Transportation has been working actively with all of the stakeholders. There are currently over 400 charters in the province of Ontario. We did hear in committee, definitely, for some of the larger legacy carriers—and I will note that their major competitor often is GO Transit.

One of the things that we’re doing, and I know that the NDP would support us in this, is ensuring high safety standards. By bringing in GO Transit and others, we ensure high safety. That’s not going to be compromised. MTO is working on the regulations on that. I will note that schedule 16 specifically says that it authorizes the Minister of Transportation to make transitional regulations to phase out the act’s application before it is repealed.

I’m happy to continue to facilitate a dialogue on this over the coming weeks and months, but I do think that it’s important that we allow providers like GO to have that, because overnight, you don’t see the same sort of service disruption from a public carrier like GO, which really has a mandate to service the people, versus larger, perhaps private, carriers, where there might not be that incentive financially to service those smaller municipalities. I think this is servicing to address that, and I look forward to the minister and the ministry continuing to work hard on that. They have been in active consultation with the sector on this.

That's all I wanted to just mention. I appreciate everyone's interventions on this.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Fife and then MPP Glover.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I would love to be reassured by what MPP Piccini has said to us; however, I will note that in schedule 16, "passenger transportation vehicle" is not defined and presumably includes intercity buses but also taxis, limos, Uber, Lyft and school buses. From a regulatory authority perspective, it includes qualifications for drivers and operators, fares, safety and inspection standards, required equipment, signage, number of passengers and insurance requirements, but it also allows for exemptions from such requirements.

I think deregulating at this point in time, as I made my two points earlier, from an economic impact will be negative. It would be a negative for these private, independent operators. And obviously we still have some safety concerns. So we cannot support this schedule.

If the government wants to engage in a new discourse on how to support intercity bus travel, which is particularly hard for rural and northern communities, we would love to engage on that. Just vote against schedule 16 and then we can work together. Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Glover and then MPP Schreiner.

Mr. Chris Glover: I appreciate the comments from the MPP for Northumberland, but also, I don't take reassurance from them. There is legislation in place right now that is going to be repealed if this schedule passes. Those regulations provide for the safety of bus travel in this province. To say, "Okay, we're going to repeal it, but then we're going to bring in safety standards in regulation"—regulations brought in by the minister are not debated in the Legislature or in committees like this. It will all be backroom, and that's not a way to create safety standards for the bus industry in the province. So I'm not reassured.

I would ask any government member: We heard very clearly from those Ontario bus operators that this could, especially coming in the middle of this pandemic, break up their businesses. It will mean that potentially 83 communities will lose their bus service, and it will mean that there will be a lower safety standard. We risk having a crash like the one in Humboldt.

I don't understand why we would repeal this current legislation on a verbal statement that some of the measures will be replaced in regulation. Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Schreiner?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I appreciate MPP Piccini bringing that information to committee; it's helpful.

I would just ask members to still vote against this schedule. It seems to me to be a substantive change that could potentially be beneficial in the future, but it's clear the timing right now could be potentially catastrophic to certain sectors of the industry. My hope is that such a substantive change in what is being proposed in this schedule would be introduced as separate legislation that we could review in a responsible way and hear from a variety of voices within the industry. We simply haven't

had time to do that over the last two days of public hearings. So I would recommend that the government come back with a bill that addresses this issue, which we can view in a more responsible and substantive way.

1420

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you. Is there further debate? Seeing none, are the members prepared to vote?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Bailey, Bouma, Piccini, Sabawy, Skelly, Wai.

Nays

Fife, Glover, Sattler, Schreiner.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): I declare schedule 16 carried.

Turning now to schedule 17, I propose we bundle sections 1 and 2. Is there agreement from the committee?

Is there any further debate on schedule 17, sections 1 and 2? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 17, sections 1 and 2, carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 17, sections 1 and 2, carried.

Turning now to schedule 17, shall schedule 17 carry? Is there any debate? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote?

Shall schedule 17 carry?

Mr. David Piccini: Recorded vote, Madam Chair.

Ayes

Bailey, Bouma, Piccini, Sabawy, Skelly, Wai.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): I declare schedule 17 carried.

Turning now to schedule 18, section 1, we have independent motion number 4. MPP Schreiner.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I apologize to my colleagues for the length of this motion, but I was told this was the most efficient way to bring it forward, so I appreciate your patience.

I move that section 1 of schedule 18 to the bill be struck out and the following substituted:

"1. The Ontario Water Resources Act is amended by adding the following section:

""Support for water bottling application

""34.0.1(1) A person to whom this section applies shall not make an application under section 34.1 for a permit to take ground water for the purpose of producing bottled water, or to increase the amount of ground water the person is permitted to take for the purpose of producing bottled water, unless the person,

""(a) has requested the council of the local host municipality, the council or councils of any other affected

municipalities and the band council or band councils of any affected First Nations to pass a resolution supporting the proposed ground water taking; and

“(b) having made the request, is permitted to proceed with the application under this section.

“Application of section

“(2) This section applies to a person who intends to take a total of 379,000 litres or more of ground water per day from one or more locations in the local host municipality for the purpose of producing bottled water, whether under a new permit, a renewal of an existing permit or by increasing the amount the person is entitled to take pursuant to an existing permit.

“Making request

“(3) A person who makes a request to the council of the local host municipality or ... an affected municipality, or to the band council of an affected First Nation, under this”—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Schreiner, sorry. I’m just going to interrupt you because I want to make sure, as we’re going through, that you say what is actually written. Could you just please repeat from “(3)” and go a little bit more slowly? There were a few words that were missed. Thank you.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Sure. Thank you, Chair.

“A person who makes a request to the council of the local host municipality or of an affected municipality, or to the band council of an affected First Nation, under this section,

“(a) shall give the request to the council or band council together with a description of the proposed ground water taking, including,

“(i) the location of the ground water taking,

“(ii) the amount of ground water the applicant would be authorized to take if the application under section 34.1 is granted, and

“(iii) any technical studies that would support the application; and

“(b) shall give the director notice of the request together with the information described in subclauses (a)(i) and (ii).

“Resolutions

“(4) The council of a local host municipality or of an affected municipality, or the band council of an affected First Nation, that receives a request under this section may pass a resolution,

“(a) supporting the application; or

“(b) objecting to the application.

“Copy of resolution

“(5) The council of a local host municipality or of an affected municipality, or the band council of an affected First Nation, that passes a resolution under this section shall give a copy of the resolution to the person making the request and to the director.

“Where support

“(6) If the council of the local host municipality, every council of any affected municipalities and every band council of any affected First Nations pass a resolution under clause (4)(a) supporting the application, the person

who made the request may proceed with the application under section 34.1.

“Where objection

“(7) If a council of the local host municipality or of” any “affected municipality, or the band council”—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Schreiner, sorry. Could you please repeat from after “host municipality?”

Mr. Mike Schreiner: In (7)?

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Yes. Actually, just start subsection 7 again.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Sure. No problem.

“(7) If a council” or “the local host municipality”—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Sorry, MPP Schreiner, again, if you could please repeat, because you have to say what’s in the motion.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: “If a council of the local host municipality or of an affected municipality, or the band council of an affected First Nation, has passed a resolution under clause (4)(b) objecting to the application, the person who made the request may not proceed with the application under section 34.1, subject to subsection (8).

“Where objection withdrawn

“(8) Where the council of the local host municipality or of an affected municipality, or a band council of an affected First Nation, has passed a resolution under clause (4)(b) objecting to an application, then passes a subsequent resolution withdrawing the objection, the person who made the request may proceed with the application under section 34.1.

“Where support withdrawn

“(9) Where the council of the local host municipality or of an affected municipality, or the band council of an affected First Nation, has passed a resolution supporting an application, then passes a subsequent resolution withdrawing the support, the person making the request is not prohibited from proceeding with the application under section 34.1, but the director may take the withdrawal of support into account in considering the application.

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“Where objection reinstated

“(10) Subsection (9) applies with necessary modification where the council of the local host municipality or of an affected municipality, or the band council of an affected First Nation, withdraws its objection to an application and then subsequently passes another resolution to again object to the application.

“Where no resolution

“(11) If the council of the local host municipality or of an affected municipality, or the band council of an affected First Nation, does not pass a resolution under subsection (4) within 12 months of being given a request under this section, the council shall be deemed, for the purposes of this section, to have passed a resolution under clause (4)(a) supporting the application.

“Duration of effect

“(12) Where a resolution has been passed under this section supporting an application or withdrawing an objection to an application and the person making the

request has not applied under section 34.1 within five years from the date of passage, the person making the request may not proceed with the application unless they comply with all ... the requirements of this section as if the first request had never been made.”

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Schreiner? Sorry, could you please repeat after the word “comply”?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: “comply with all of the requirements of this section as if the first request had never been made.

“Regulations

“(13) The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations clarifying and governing the application of this section.

“Not in public utilities sphere

“(14) For greater certainty, a resolution described in this section is not a matter that falls within item 4f of the public utilities sphere of jurisdiction in the table to section 11 of the Municipal Act, 2001.

“No abrogation or derogation

“(15) Nothing in this act or the regulations is to be construed so as to abrogate or derogate from any existing Aboriginal or treaty rights of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada under section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

“Definitions

“(16) In this section,

““affected First Nation” means a First Nation community whose drinking water is taken from,

“(a) a wellhead protection area where the taking of ground water or increased taking of ground water for the purpose of producing bottled water would take place, or

“(b) a wellhead protection area that would otherwise be affected by the taking of ground water or increased taking of ground water for the purpose of producing bottled water; (“Première Nation concernée”)

““affected municipality” means a municipality whose drinking water is taken from,

“(a) a wellhead protection area where the taking of ground water or increased taking of ground water for the purpose of producing bottled water would take place, or

“(b) a wellhead protection area that would otherwise be affected by the taking of ground water or increased taking of ground water for the purpose of producing bottled water; (“municipalité concernée”)”—excuse my French.

““bottled water” means potable water that is intended for human consumption and that is packaged in bottles or other portable containers; (“eau embouteillée”)

““local host municipality” means the local municipality where the taking of ground water or increased taking of ground water for the purpose of producing bottled water would take place; (“municipalité locale hôte”)

““local municipality” has the meaning assigned to it by subsection 1(1) of the Municipal Act, 2001; (“municipalité locale”)

““wellhead protection area” has the same meaning as in the Clean Water Act, 2006. (“zone de protection des têtes de puits”)

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you, MPP Schreiner. Just to confirm: The “pardon my French” comment is not part of your motion, correct?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: True. Thank you for that clarification.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you, MPP Schreiner. Is there any further debate? MPP Schreiner.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Thank you, Chair. Again, I appreciate my colleagues’ patience in reading that out. This amendment is motivated by a request from the city of Guelph and from Six Nations, and is reflected and highlighted in the presentation from Wellington Water Watchers.

I want to be very clear for the record. I have stated this publicly in the media and I believe I have said this in the House, but if I haven’t, I want to put it on the record: I’ve been generally very supportive and complimentary of Minister Yurek for the proposed regulations that have been brought forward for new water bottling applications. I’ve been supportive of the minister extending the moratorium on new water bottling permits, and I appreciate that the minister has listened to many of the recommendations that I have put forward. I’ve really just been voicing what members in my community, in our region of the province, who are concerned about protecting water, have put forward. The regulations for new permits reflect that. In fact, I think they’re so good I would love to see them applied to all water permits—aggregates, other commercial purposes etc.—but we’ll have that debate another day.

The city of Guelph in particular put forward a request to the minister that adjacent affected municipalities be included in the ability to grant authorization for a new permit renewal or increased permit, because many municipalities, like Guelph in particular, which is the city that I know the best and which I represent, have wells that that provide drinking water for the city that are located outside of the city’s boundaries that could very well be affected by water bottling permits.

If the application is for a well that’s in the wellhead protection zone that’s established in the Clean Water Act—I just want to read from a letter from the city of Guelph to Minister Yurek, on November 20, 2020: “The city would suggest that the municipality that will likely be impacted by the bottled water-taking, one which is within the wellhead protection area for a municipal ground-water-based drinking water supply system, also be included as part of the approval process in order to preserve the concept of priority of use and ensure protection of existing and future municipal drinking water, as is the purpose of the Clean Water Act.”

The city went on to say, “The city would strongly suggest that the approval should apply to renewals of existing permits for bottled water-taking.” That’s essentially what this amendment, my proposed amendment, does, is to say, “Hey, you did a good job. Thank you, Minister, for including a local municipal approval. Please allow municipalities that are directly affected by these applications to have a say as well, in confining it to the wellhead protection areas that affect municipal wells”—so

not a broad application, but a very prescribed one. I think it was a very reasonable suggestion put forward by the city and echoed by Wellington Water Watchers in their presentation.

1440

Six Nations: They did not give an oral presentation. They gave a written presentation that says something very similar to what the city of Guelph has said. I just want to quote from Rod Whitlow's written submission: "For the government of Ontario to go forward with Bill 213, schedule 18: Amendments to the 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."

This amendment, I would say, doesn't go as far as Six Nations would like it to go—I'll be the first to concede that—but it is consistent with recognizing First Nations as a government and giving them the same opportunities that host municipalities and affected local municipalities would have to comment on water bottling applications that affect First Nations' water supply as well.

I felt that these were very reasonable amendments and, in some ways, highlight what I believe is a positive step forward for water regulations in Ontario. This is really an opportunity to make a slight, small, but I think very important improvement to this schedule of the bill.

Again, I appreciate my colleagues' patience in having me read all of that. Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you. Is there any further debate? MPP Sattler.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: We're going to be supporting this amendment. I won't repeat the reasons that MPP Schreiner brought forward for this amendment, but certainly, the absence of this kind of consultation was noted in the presentation that we received from Wellington Water Watchers and also in the written submission from the Six Nations of the Grand River.

One of the points that was raised in the presentation from Six Nations of the Grand River was around Canada's commitment to UNDRIP. MPPs on this committee will recall that more than a year ago, there was unanimous support for a private member's bill brought forward by my colleague the MPP for Kiiwetinoong for the provincial government to pass UNDRIP, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. That declaration, article 43, recognizes that UNDRIP constitutes the minimum standards for the dignity, survival and well-being of the Indigenous peoples of the world, and that includes First Nations water rights.

If we are serious about supporting the principle of that private member's bill around our collective commitment

to UNDRIP, then this is the least we can do to make good on that commitment.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you. Is there further debate? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote on Green motion number 4? MPP Schreiner?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Yes. Could I request a recorded vote, please?

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Schreiner has requested a recorded vote. Shall independent motion number 4 carry?

Interjection.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): It's with respect to schedule 18, section 1.

Ayes

Glover, Sattler, Schreiner.

Nays

Bailey, Bouma, Piccini, Sabawy, Skelly, Wai.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): I declare motion number 4 lost.

Turning now to independent motion number 5: MPP Schreiner.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I move that section 1 of schedule 18 to the bill be amended by striking out subsection 34.0.1(2) of the Ontario Water Resources Act and substituting the following:

"Application of section

"(2) This section applies to a person who intends to take a total of 379,000 litres or more of ground water per day from one or more locations in Ontario for the purpose of producing bottled water, whether under a new permit, a renewal of an existing permit or by increasing the amount the person is entitled to take pursuant to an existing permit."

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Further debate? MPP Schreiner.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: This certainly doesn't provide the same level of protection to affected municipalities or First Nations, but at least it provides some protection to local host municipalities, especially those—I think of communities like Centre Wellington—that the province is mandating to grow who are very concerned about the availability of a quantity of water to service a growing population. What they hope is, with growing economic development and job creation, to at least add that this would apply to a renewal of permit as well.

As we heard very eloquently from Wellington Water Watchers, conditions change over time, and they change for a variety of reasons—changing weather patterns; it could be climate change, population growth, economic development within a community—and there could be increasing competition for fewer water resources that could really constrain a community's ability to service its people and its businesses. To have that taken into consideration during the renewal process would be really

important. So I hope members will support this amendment.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Further debate? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Thank you. MPP Schreiner?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: May I have a recorded vote, please?

Ayes

Glover, Sattler, Schreiner.

Nays

Bailey, Bouma, Sabawy, Skelly, Wai.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): I declare independent motion number 5 lost.

Is there any further debate on schedule 18, section 1? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? All those in favour of schedule 18, section 1, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 18, section 1, carried.

Turning now to schedule 18, section 2, is there any further debate? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 18, section 2, carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 18, section 2, carried.

Is there any further debate on schedule 18? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 18 carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 18 carried.

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Turning now to schedule 19: I propose we bundle sections 1 to 8 of schedule 19. Is there agreement from the committee? Thank you. Is there any further debate on schedule 19, sections 1 to 8? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 19, sections 1 to 8, carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 19, sections 1 to 8, carried.

Is there any further debate on schedule 19? Are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 19 carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 19 carried.

Turning now to schedule 20, I propose we bundle sections 1 to 3. Is there agreement from the committee? Yes. Is there any further debate on schedule 20, sections 1 to 3? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 20, sections 1 to 3, carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 20, sections 1 to 3, carried.

Is there any further debate on schedule 20? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 20 carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 20 carried.

Turning now to schedule 21, I propose we bundle sections 1 to 3. Is there agreement from the committee? Is there any further debate on schedule 21, sections 1 to 3? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 21, sections 1 to 3, carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 21, sections 1 to 3, carried.

Shall schedule 21 carry? Is there any further debate? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 21 carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 21 carried.

Turning now to schedule 22, I propose we bundle sections 1 to 3. Is there agreement from the committee? Thank you. Is there any further debate on schedule 22, sections 1 to 3? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Shall sections 1 to 3 of schedule 22 carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 22, sections 1 to 3, carried.

Is there any further debate on schedule 22? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 22 carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 22 carried.

Turning now to schedule 23, I propose we bundle sections 1 to 5. Is there agreement from the committee? Thank you. Is there any further debate on schedule 23, sections 1 to 5? MPP Sattler.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I wanted to draw the committee's attention to the written submissions that were provided by the Whitefish River First Nation and the United Chiefs and Councils of Mnídoo Mnising. They point out that schedule 23, the Public Lands Act, did not go through an appropriate consultation process with the First Nations. Tribal Chair Chief Patsy Corbiere states, "What is certain is that the bill is highly likely"—and here, she's referring specifically to schedule 23—"to have potential adverse effects on our Aboriginal and treaty rights, including existing Aboriginal title and rights claims, livelihood, and interests. Any process that does not properly account for this is unacceptable and risks being challenged."

Similarly, the Whitefish River First Nation also raised concerns about schedule 23 and the adverse impacts of that schedule on the First Nations and point out that these proposed changes could have serious prejudicial impacts. So for that reason, we will not be supporting schedule 23.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you. Is there any further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Recorded vote.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Fife has requested a recorded vote. Shall schedule 23, sections 1 to 5, carry?

Interjection.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Sorry. MPP Sabawy?

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Chair, there is a vote bell ringing now. Can we—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): No, this isn't a vote. The House is resuming, MPP Sabawy. It's not a vote. Shall schedule 23, sections 1 to 5, carry?

Ayes

Bailey, Bouma, Piccini, Sabawy, Skelly, Wai.

Nays

Fife, Glover, Sattler, Schreiner.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): I declare schedule 23, sections 1 to 5, carried.

Is there any further debate on schedule 23? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 23 carry?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Bailey, Bouma, Piccini, Sabawy, Skelly, Wai.

Nays

Fife, Glover, Sattler, Schreiner.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you. I declare schedule 23 carried.

Before we continue, I just wanted to confirm, MPP Kramp, that you are actually MPP Kramp and that you are present in Ontario.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Yes, I am Daryl Kramp, and I am here in the Legislature.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you. We will now continue.

Turning to schedule 24, I propose we bundle sections 1 to 14. Is there agreement from the committee? Thank you.

Is there any further debate on schedule 24, sections 1 to 14? MPP Sattler.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: We do not support schedule 24 for many of the same reasons that were initially raised when we had the discussion about section 16. Schedule 24, along with schedule 16, will lead to the deregulation of intercity bus transportation at a time when this province's economy is very fragile as a result of the pandemic. Bus operators are very concerned about what it will do to their businesses, and communities are very concerned about the loss of intercity bus options. In addition, transit workers believe that this plan to deregulate will just lead to a race to the bottom and will diminish the working conditions of transit workers. So for those reasons, we will not be supporting any of the sections of this schedule.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Is there any further debate? MPP Fife.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Just to build on a little bit but with a little bit of nuanced commentary, obviously this section—the repeal of the Public Vehicles Act and the dissolution of the Ontario transport board does not bode

well for anyone hoping for a well-planned, coordinated and integrated province-wide intercity system outside of a few well-served areas in the province. The existing system can't really get much worse, and this certainly isn't the solution, through deregulation.

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Quite honestly, if you look at the fact that there has been so little consultation—the government has not consulted the public about deregulating intercity bus services. They barely talked to the very people who were going to be directly affected, nor has the government published any plan or proposal. Its recent draft transportation plan for southwestern Ontario, for instance, was merely a plan to make a plan, and its recently posted public survey about transportation of the greater Golden Horseshoe has no explanatory detail about what changes the government is considering.

Certainly, the dissolution of the Ontario Highway Transport Board and the economic deregulation of intercity bus travel would mean that bus companies will no longer have to apply to the board for permission to operate certain scheduled routes within the province. But it also means that companies that operate certain routes will no longer be protected from competition, and we did hear first-hand from operators who are very concerned about Quebec and the US. Certainly, we've been fairly vocal.

I think that government members would be well-positioned to vote against this schedule, because that's the only option that we have at this stage in the game, to vote against poor government policy—which is what they did with schedule 8, so precedent has already been set here today, and I would encourage members to not support this schedule.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Further debate? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 24, sections 1 to 14, carry? MPP Glover.

Mr. Chris Glover: Recorded vote, please.

Ayes

Bailey, Kramp, Piccini, Sabawy, Skelly, Wai.

Nays

Fife, Glover, Sattler, Schreiner.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): I declare schedule 24, sections 1 through 14, carried.

I have a notice from the NDP and also from the independent member. Would anyone like to speak to those notices? MPP Schreiner.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Yes. In the interests of time, I'm not going to completely reiterate all of this, but I just want to say that the government members could be putting the final nail in the coffin of an industry. At the very least, I implore the members, if they're going to move forward with this, to engage in consultation with public and private

carriers, because we simply can't afford to see a deterioration anymore in intercity bus transport, particularly in so many rural communities where this is a growing problem. To potentially make it worse at this particular moment in time, especially with the pandemic, seems to be the wrong schedule at the wrong time.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Further debate? MPP Fife.

Ms. Catherine Fife: We would echo some of those concerns as we have already articulated, but just to remind members, schedule 24 enables the complete deregulation of private intercity bus services by repealing the Public Vehicles Act. We can't ignore that this will have an economic impact not only on the operators, but obviously for workers who require and rely on intercity bus services across the province.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Further debate? MPP Sattler.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: To add further to the concerns that were raised by Amalgamated Transit Union and which we earlier spoke about regarding the safety of transit operations, this schedule of the bill, which is proposed to be repealed, contains substantive safety obligations that would be lost under Bill 213, including provisions addressing the amount of luggage that can be carried in the bus and emergency exits. There are a number of safety obligations that are imposed on operators through this schedule of the bill. Those safety regulations would be compromised when the Public Vehicles Act is repealed, and public safety could well be put at risk.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Further debate? Seeing none, are the members prepared to vote?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Bailey, Kramp, Piccini, Sabawy, Skelly, Wai.

Nays

Fife, Glover, Sattler, Schreiner.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): I declare schedule 24 carried.

Turning now to schedule 25, I propose we bundle sections 1 and 2. Is there agreement from the committee? Thank you.

Is there any further debate on schedule 25, sections 1 and 2? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 25, sections 1 and 2, carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 25, sections 1 and 2, carried.

We now turn to schedule 25, section 3. We have NDP motion number 6. MPP Fife.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I move that section 3 of schedule 25 to the bill be amended by striking out clause 7.1(i) of the Redeemer Reformed Christian College Act, 1998 and substituting the following:

“(i) grant a degree set out in the schedule, consistent with the university’s objectives, if the minister has given consent, under subsection 4(1) of the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000, to grant such a degree;”

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Further debate? MPP Fife.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Just for a backgrounder, Madam Chair, this schedule amends this private statute to change this private Christian college’s name from “Redeemer University College” to “Redeemer University.” It extends the college’s degree-granting authority to include a large list of additional non-theological degrees, including bachelor of engineering, bachelor of fine arts, master of arts, master of education, master of science, master of business administration. Bill 213 also amends the private statutes in this schedule for two other Christian colleges—Canada Christian College and Tyndale University College—to expand their degree-granting privileges and remove the word “college” from their name.

We heard from academics from 14 well-established universities across the province that there’s a lot in a name. I know that our critic MPP Glover is probably going to want to speak to this, but there has to be some due diligence done here. We raise this as a legitimate concern on behalf of the post-secondary education sector, which has genuine concerns about the government moving in this direction and also the fact that it’s contained within Bill 213, which is supposed to be an economic recovery bill. Perhaps these institutions may be able to be more profitable; I don’t know. However, I think it’s questionable at best that the government has made decisions to include name changes in Bill 213.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Piccini.

Mr. David Piccini: The government cannot support this motion. I would just add as an aside, Chair, that I find this ironic. Apparently, the members opposite aren’t consulting with one another on this, because on November 27, our ministry received a letter from the member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas. I think it’s important to read this into the record. She writes, “As an institution within my constituency with vibrant undergraduate programs,” she goes on to say, “I urge that speedy consent be given to the PEQAB recommendation” regarding Redeemer’s need for a timely process.

1510

That, of course, was for a faith-based institution in that member’s riding. She understood the PEQAB process, which, again, is online. They went through that process for nomenclature change and were approved. She understood that independent process. This government understands that process. I wish her fellow members opposite would understand it as well. Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you. Further debate? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote on NDP motion number 6? All those in favour, please—

Mr. David Piccini: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Fife, Glover, Sattler, Schreiner.

Nays

Bailey, Kramp, Piccini, Sabawy, Skelly, Wai.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): I declare NDP motion number 6 lost.

Is there any further debate on schedule 25, section 3? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? All those in favour of schedule 25, section 3, to be carried, please raise their hands.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Bailey, Kramp, Piccini, Sabawy, Skelly, Wai.

Nays

Fife, Glover, Sattler.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): I declare schedule 25, section 3, carried.

I propose we bundle sections 4 to 7 of schedule 25. Is there agreement from the committee? Thank you.

Is there any further debate on schedule 25, sections 4 to 7? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 25, sections 4 to 7, carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 25, sections 4 to 7, carried.

Is there any further debate on schedule 25? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 25 carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 25 carried.

Turning now to schedule 26: I propose we bundle sections 1 to 3 of schedule 26. Is there agreement from the committee? Thank you.

Is there any further debate on schedule 26, sections 1 to 3? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 26, sections 1 to 3, carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 26, sections 1 to 3, carried.

Is there any further debate on schedule 26? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 26 carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 26 carried.

Turning now to schedule 27: I propose we bundle sections 1 to 7 of schedule 27. Is there agreement from the committee? Thank you.

Is there any further debate on schedule 27, sections 1 to 7? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 27, sections 1 to 7, carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 27, sections 1 to 7, carried.

Is there any further debate on schedule 27? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 27 carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 27 carried.

Turning now to schedule 28: With respect to schedule 28, section 1, is there any further debate? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 28, section 1, carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 28, section 1, carried.

Turning now to schedule 28, section 2, we have government motion number 7. MPP Skelly.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Thank you, Madam Chair. Motion 7, schedule 28: I move that section 2 of schedule 28—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Sorry. Could you just read it into the mike?

Ms. Donna Skelly: I apologize. I move that section 2 of schedule 28 to the bill be amended by striking out the definition of “survey records” in subsection 4(1) of the Surveys Act and substituting the following:

“‘survey records’ means paper or electronic data prepared or captured in the course of performing a field survey, including field notes, sketches made in the field, copies of observations and measurements collected in the field, statements or oaths collected, the reasons for decisions that are related to the survey, and the resulting plan. (‘dossiers d’arpentage’)”

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Is there further debate? Seeing none, are the members prepared to vote? Shall government motion number 7, regarding schedule 28, section 2, carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare government motion number 7 carried.

Shall schedule 28, section 2, as amended, carry? Is there any further debate? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? All those in favour of schedule 28, section 2, as amended, carrying, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 28, section 2, as amended, carried.

Turning now to schedule 28, section 3, is there any further debate? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? All those in favour of schedule 28, section 3, carrying, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 28, section 3, carried.

Is there any further debate on schedule 28, as amended? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 28, as amended, carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 28, as amended, carried.

Turning now to schedule 29, I propose we bundle sections 1 and 2. Do we have agreement from the committee? Thank you. Schedule 29, sections 1 and 2: Is there any further debate? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 29, sections 1 and 2, carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 29, sections 1 and 2, carried.

Turning now to schedule 29, section 3, we have NDP motion number 8. MPP Fife.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I move that section 3.1 be added to schedule 29 to the bill:

“3.1 Clause 5(2)(k) of the act is repealed and the following substituted:

“(k) grant a degree set out in the schedule, if the minister has given consent, under subsection 4(1) of the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000, to grant such a degree;”

So this amendment—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you. On NDP motion number 8, schedule 29: Committee members, the proposed amendment is out of order because it seeks to amend a section of a parent act that is not before the committee. As Bosc and Gagnon noted on page 771 of the third edition of the House of Commons Procedure and Practice, “An amendment is inadmissible if it proposes to amend a statute that is not before the committee or a section of the parent act, unless the latter is specifically amended by a clause of the bill.” Thank you.

MPP Fife?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Yes. Well, I’ll still continue to speak to schedule 29, but I am curious, because you did allow the other amendment to move forward, and it’s similar.

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The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): This is the ruling that I’ve received from the legislative Clerk and the ruling is final.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Okay. It’s just that—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): That ruling is final. Thank you, MPP Fife.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It’s just that on a process piece—

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Fife, you have to wait until I call upon you, and this is the ruling that I have received from legislative staff. That’s the procedure. Thank you.

Yes, MPP Fife.

Ms. Catherine Fife: So speaking to schedule 29, the sections that have not been bundled, I do want to point out to committee members that what should actually be in this schedule is ensuring that Tyndale undergoes the PEQAB ministerial consent process prior to receiving the authority to grant additional degrees. The Minister of Colleges and Universities has insisted that the government is not bypassing the PEQAB consent process by tabling Bill 213 to allow not only this institution but Canada Christian College to grant degrees without a PEQAB recommendation and ministerial consent under the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, but Bill 213 does indeed bypass the PEQAB process. In fact, schedule 25 would expand Tyndale’s degree-granting authority even though they have not gone through the process. So the argument that the government has been using all along is negated with a schedule like schedule 29.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you. MPP Piccini.

Mr. David Piccini: I just think it’s important to note—I know you’re not allowed to use props, but under Current Consents on PEQAB, it’s right there. I just wanted to share that with the committee.

Thank you, Chair. There are no further comments.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you. Is there any further debate on schedule 29, section 3? MPP Glover.

Mr. Chris Glover: I couldn’t hear MPP Piccini’s comments. I heard him say something about PEQAB in the schedule, but I’ve read the schedule a few times and I don’t see PEQAB mentioned in it.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): I believe MPP Piccini simply referred to the PEQAB website. That’s what would be recorded in Hansard.

Mr. Chris Glover: Okay. So then the comments made by MPP Fife stand, that this schedule bypasses the PEQAB process. It gives this college the name of a university, but it also gives them degree-granting powers without going through the PEQAB process. As she said, the government has been arguing for the last two weeks that they stand by the independent PEQAB process, but here they are bypassing that PEQAB process. So there’s a contradiction between what they have argued on one side and what they’re actually doing with this schedule. I just want that in the record. Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Thank you. Is there further debate? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Bailey, Kramp, Piccini, Sabawy, Skelly.

Nays

Fife, Glover, Sattler.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): I declare schedule 29, section 3, carried.

I propose we bundle schedule 29, sections 4 to 7. Is there agreement from the committee? Thank you.

Is there any further debate on schedule 29, sections 4 to 7? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Shall schedule 29, sections 4 to 7, carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare schedule 29, sections 4 to 7, carried.

Turning now to schedule 29, is there any further debate on schedule 29? Seeing none—

Ms. Catherine Fife: Recorded vote.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): MPP Fife has requested a recorded vote. Shall schedule 29 carry?

Ayes

Bailey, Kramp, Piccini, Sabawy, Skelly, Wai.

Nays

Fife, Glover, Sattler.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): I declare schedule 29 carried.

Turning now to section 1: Is there any further debate on section 1 of Bill 213? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Thank you. All those in favour of section 1 carrying, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare section 1 carried.

Turning now to section 2: Is there any further debate on section 2? MPP Sattler.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I just want to say that I find it extraordinary that we had a public input process that included both in-person presentations and written submissions, and there was an overwhelming call for the government to withdraw schedule 2. The government has ignored that input that was received and later withdrew a schedule that we did not hear a word about during the public input process. So I'm very disappointed. It really seems to make a mockery of—we go through the motions of soliciting public input and then we ignore it. So I'm very disappointed.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Further debate? Seeing none, are members prepared to vote? Shall section 2 carry?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Bailey, Kramp, Piccini, Sabawy, Skelly, Wai.

Nays

Fife, Glover, Sattler, Schreiner.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): I declare section 2 carried.

Turning now to section 3, the short title: Is there any further debate, or are members prepared to vote? Shall section 3 carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare section 3 carried.

The title of the bill is Bill 213, An Act to reduce burdens on people and businesses by enacting, amending and repealing various Acts and revoking a regulation. Shall the title of the bill carry? Is there any debate? Are members prepared to vote? All those in favour of the title of the bill carrying, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare the title of the bill carried.

Shall Bill 213, as amended, carry? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare Bill 213, as amended, carried.

Shall I report the bill, as amended, to the House? All those in favour, please raise their hands. All those opposed, please raise their hands. I declare the motion carried.

Thank you, everyone. That concludes our business for today. I just wanted to thank all committee members for their co-operation and participation. I appreciate everyone's input and feedback. I also wanted to thank again our legislative staff: broadcast, Hansard, everyone who's on the line on the Zoom call with us. Of course, as well, I have to thank Isaiah, our legislative Clerk, for all his hard work in making this process run very smoothly.

Applause.

The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari): Yes, for Hansard, we'll put the clapping on the record there. Thank you, MPP Piccini.

With that, our committee is now adjourned. That concludes our business for today. Be well, everyone.

The committee adjourned at 1529.

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Ms. Peggy Sattler (London West / London-Ouest ND)
Ms. Donna Skelly (Flamborough–Glanbrook PC)

Also taking part / Autres participants et participantes

Mr. John Fraser (Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud L)
Mr. James Stebbing, counsel, legal services branch,
Ministry of Government and Consumer Services

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Mr. Isaiah Thorning

Staff / Personnel

Ms. Catherine Oh, legislative counsel