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Jeudi
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Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 1 November 2018

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 1^{er} novembre 2018

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We will begin this morning with a moment of silence for inner thought and personal reflection.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Todd Smith: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 47, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000, the Labour Relations Act, 1995 and the Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act, 2009 and make complementary amendments to other Acts, when the bill is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That the vote on second reading may not be deferred pursuant to standing orders 9(c) or 28(h); and

That at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs; and

That the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet on Thursday, November 15, 2018, from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. for public hearings on the bill; and

That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bill 47:

—That the deadline for requests to appear be 12 p.m. on Tuesday, November 13, 2018; and

—That the Clerk of the Committee provide a list of all interested presenters to each member of the subcommittee or their designate following the deadline for requests to appear by 2 p.m. on Tuesday, November 13, 2018; and

—That each member of the subcommittee or their designate provide the Clerk of the Committee with a prioritized list of presenters to be scheduled, chosen from the list of all interested presenters received by the Clerk, by 10 a.m. on Wednesday, November 14, 2018; and

—That each witness will receive up to five minutes for their presentation followed by 10 minutes for questions divided equally amongst the recognized parties; and

That the deadline for filing written submissions be 6 p.m. on Thursday, November 15, 2018; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 4 p.m. on Friday, November 16, 2018; and

That the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs shall be authorized to meet on Monday, November 19, 2018, from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. for clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

That on Monday, November 19, 2018, at 5:30 p.m., those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the Committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. At this time, the Chair shall allow one 20-minute waiting period pursuant to Standing Order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Tuesday, November 20, 2018. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called that same day; and

That, notwithstanding standing order 81(c), the bill may be called more than once in the same sessional day; and

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, two hours of debate shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill with 50 minutes allotted to the government; 40 minutes allotted to Her Majesty's loyal opposition; 15 minutes to the independent Liberal members, and 15 minutes allotted to the independent Green member; and

That at the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That, except in the case of a recorded division arising from morning orders of the day pursuant to standing order 9(c), no deferral of the third reading vote shall be permitted; and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to 10 minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Mr. Smith, Bay of Quinte, has moved government motion number 15. I return to the minister for any comments to open the debate.

None moved.

Further debate?

Interjection: Good job.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It's never a good job when you move a time allocation motion, I'll just say to the minister

across the way who made that comment to her minister. Time allocation, I think, is probably one of the worst things we've done, when it comes to making this place not function for members, because what it means is that all of us as individual members are essentially muted and not given the opportunity to use that power to put some pressure on our own caucuses about stuff—but, anyway, that's for another debate.

I want to speak a bit to the actual subject of the time allocation motion that we're dealing with here now, and that is around Bill 47. There are a few things that I want to put on the record that I know that the government is not going to agree with, because they see things a certain way. Obviously, I see things a different way.

I'm going to start with the College of Trades and the trade ratio part of the bill. I think what the government is doing here is, essentially, inserting itself into a debate that, quite frankly, it should not be mixed up in. The idea of the College of Trades—let's remember how the College of Trades came around.

I'm not a big fan of the College of Trades. I let my licence go as a result of the College of Trades, because I used to be able to renew my licence as an electrician for a pretty minimal fee. The College of Trades came in and the price of relicensing at the college went through the roof. There are some aspects about the College of Trades that I don't like, so I want to put that on the record.

However, when it came to the ratios, it was the body that brought together the contractors, the industrial sector, the unions and the lay people within our society in order to discuss what the proper ratio is when it comes to trades, because that is a forever-changing thing. In some sectors, for example, for small electrical contractors, it's essentially a 1-to-1 ratio. You have one journeyman to one apprentice, and that kind of works and that makes sense. There are other sectors where you don't want to do that. For example, if you're working at Pickering and you're a steamfitter, the ratio is three journeypeople to one apprentice. That's probably a good thing. Do you want unqualified people working on a nuclear reactor? Because, I can tell you, I was an apprentice, and when I started apprenticing, I didn't know very much about my trade. So do you want people who are untrained and unqualified to work on a nuclear reactor? I think the answer is no. So there are some reasons why in some cases we have 3-to-1, where it makes some sense, and there are some reasons where we have 1-to-1 that make some sense.

But when the government is the one who is trying to pick the winners and losers, as my friends on the Conservative side like to say—I think that government shouldn't be picking the winner and loser in this case.

Part of the idea of the College of Trades was that the College of Trades itself and its board would look at the ratios that were appropriate at the time for the various trades and the various workplaces, and then they, as a group, would decide what is best. Now, if I have the unionized and non-unionized contractors at the table, I have the journeypeople at the table, I have the unions at the table and I have the public at the table, who better to come up

with the answer as to what the ratios should be than a group of experts who happen to be working in that industry to inform us on what the ratios should be? Is everybody around the table happy with the decision? Absolutely not, because obviously, if I'm coming in as a contractor, I want one thing; if I'm coming in as a journeyman or journeywoman, I'm coming up and wanting something else. So there will always be somebody who is unhappy with the decision, but it is an informed discussion that brings us to a decision that we can all live with.

0910

What the government is saying now, by getting rid of the College of Trades in the way that you are, is: "We're going to pick. I, Doug Ford, know what's good for Ontario, and I'm going to decide what the heck the ratios should be." I think that's wrong, Mr. Speaker. I think the Premier of the province—or any individual member, for that fact—is not the one who should decide what the ratios are. I don't think I should decide what the ratio should be for an electrician, as a former journeyman electrician. I think the proper place for that to happen is at the College of Trades board, where they're informed about what the ups and downs are of the various ratios. In some trades, for example, in electrical—

Mr. Roman Baber: How is that going?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: What?

Mr. Roman Baber: How is that going?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: That goes pretty well, the part about the ratios. Listen, I don't disagree with you that there are problems at the College of Trades. I'm not a big fan of the College of Trades. This is not the point that I'm making. The point that I'm making is: The people who decide what the ratios are are the people around that board who are made up of all of the various people in the trade.

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Why not let the people who are involved in the trade—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Excuse me. The member for York Centre will come to order, please.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I think the member from York Centre protests too much. But my point is: Who better to make that decision?

I hear, over and over and over again, Conservatives in opposition and Conservatives in government say always the same thing: "Government shouldn't be trying to pick the winners and losers; we should let the market decide that." They're the market. They're the contractors. They're the consumers. They're the people who work in the industry. They're the ones who are deciding what the ratios should be under the current model. I may not like the result, but at least that's a sane way of coming to what the ratios are.

We tend to generalize because we're politicians. The great thing about politicians: We know a little bit about everything. But we're not experts in everything, right? The longer you hear, the more you know a few things about everything, but we're not experts on absolutely everything.

My point is that we now have politicians who know a little bit about trades saying, "Oh, well, I know what's best when it comes to a ratio in the trades." I think that's wrong.

Governments shouldn't be picking the losers and the winners; I think that we should allow the marketplace to do that. In that case, that marketplace happens to be the College of Trades board.

Are there problems in the College of Trades? I'm with you. As a New Democrat, I've never liked the College of Trades in the way it was set up; I think there are some things that, quite frankly, were missed in how this thing was set up. But one good aspect is how we get to the apprenticeship ratio.

The second point I would make in regard to the apprenticeship ratios: I've heard members in this House talk about, "Oh, yes, but electricians, this is their ratio." There are differences within the trades as to ratios. If you're a small electrical contractor company, the application is 1 to 1. If you're ICI, the ratio is either 2 to 1 or 3 to 1—I'm not quite sure, and I should know; I worked in the ICI years ago. But if you work in mining, there is no ratio. I come out of the mining sector, where I apprenticed as an electrician. There was no ratio. You hired as many apprentices as you wanted, and you didn't even have to have any journeymen, let alone one, because there were no ratios; it didn't apply in the Mining Act. There are other industries in Ontario where it's exactly the same thing. I made this point yesterday.

When I was hired in the 1970s at the Pamour group of mines, in this case the McIntyre mine in Timmins, I was one of seven people who were hired within about, I would say, a couple of months' period. I was one of the first ones hired, and they hired seven apprentices. When they hire the apprentice, you get paid code 3 or class 3, as we used to call it—third class. Once you go to school for the first time, you get second class, and then when you finish your trades training at school, you get your first class. You become a specialist once you actually become a journeyman with the required amount of experience. So what the company would do is, they would hire a group of apprentices. They would have us work to the point of getting to maybe a second-class electrician—in other words, you'd gone to basic training at trade school—and then there would be a layoff.

I worked in the gold sector, right? In the gold industry, the price is up; the price is down; the price is up; the price is down. The company utilized that—rightfully so—to adjust their workforce based on what the price of gold was. The effect was that one of the first places they would go was the trades, because all of these now second-class electricians were starting to cost more money, so they were able to put us out the door on layoff because our original layoff language when I started at that mine was one year. They would work a year, and then they would hire a whole new group of unqualified apprentices. So we would start all over again. Why? Because there are jobs in the electrical business that I worked in, at least in mining, that took some skill but you didn't have to be a journeyman. For example, servicing underground locomotives—those are electric motors that work with batteries, that run on tracks that haul ore and men—or fixing a trolley line underground. There are certain things that you can do with a

certain amount of supervision and do it effectively and do it safely.

But most what of what we did in our trade, quite frankly, like servicing man-hoists, where people get on a hoist and they go down 5,000 feet at the end of a steel cable—you need to have a journeyman who is licensed, he or she, to make sure that thing is certified and working in proper order. I was working on a hoist as a journeyman at the Hollinger, and it turned out that the company that designed the hoist put two safety limits, not in series, but they put them in parallel. Just to get a very long story—there was an incident where they had a skip man-hoist set up in that particular shaft so the top was the skip and underneath was the man-cage. What they did is, they pulled the skip into the sheave wheel up at the top of the headframe with the men inside the cage at the bottom who hit a sort of a bulkhead that we put there when we used to pull ore from the top loading pocket. The guys could have been killed, but the thing never tripped on safety.

I was the electrician on call. You wouldn't want an apprentice going in to do this. I went in and I took a look at the hoist. I had never worked on that particular hoist before. As I am looking at the drawings, the safeties on the underwinds and the overwinds on the safety limit on the Lilly were both in parallel. Well, that means to say that if one of them opens, the path goes through the parallel circuit, and so it never tripped out. Imagine: If you had an apprentice who wasn't certified do that, that would never have been caught. Maybe it would have happened again and maybe the next time it would have killed somebody. You have to have qualified people doing things.

The first point I just want to make is, you think you're creating a solution here by mucking around with the ratios? You're actually, I think, going to make things not better. You're going to make them worse.

The second effect of this is, and this is why I think the government is doing it: Let's say you're a unionized contractor and you're bidding on work and you're following the ratio, because now it's in your collective agreement, right? And you have a non-unionized contractor who is bidding on the same work but doesn't have the same requirement because they don't have a collective agreement and they're following the new ratio system that the Ford government wants to put in place. They're going to be able to undercut the contract somewhat because their labour costs will be somewhat less because they're going to have more apprentice-to-journeyman ratios. What you're essentially doing is, you're making it unfair for a whole group of contractors, especially in the ICI industry, who don't want this. There is a whole bunch of contractors—and I know you've talked to them—who don't want you to muck around with the ratios because it's going to give an unfair advantage to the other side.

So here you are, again, the party of business, open for business. You're putting signs down on the highways at the borders, "Open for Business," and here you are giving a certain group of our contractors who don't want the ratios mucked around with—you're going in and you're mucking around the marketplace deciding what is good

and what is bad, picking winners and losers, and you're helping another class of contractors who are not, in this case, unionized. You can't be the party of business and open for business when you're doing those kinds of things.

I look at what you've done on the select committee, where you've decided to release all kinds of private, personal information of companies—information at the IESO and at OPG. You've taken private, confidential financial information and made it available for the public at a point where anybody can see what was inside those documents. It was kind of funny because my good friend the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane was on the committee. He said, “I can't believe it.” It's got to be the New Democrats who are telling you you're doing something wrong. Even the NDP understands that you do not take personal, private information and make it public.

When we were on the committee that dealt with the government on the gas plants stuff, we had the same issue, where there was a huge document dump that was requested by New Democrats and Conservatives. When the information was about to be dumped, we were given the warning bell: “Hey, there's some stuff in here that might be—like chequebook numbers, cell numbers, social insurance numbers, all kinds of stuff like that.” We said, “All right. You give us all that stuff redacted, but we want the un-redacted not released but given to us, so we can look to see if there is anything that's off.”

0920

Mr. John Vanthof: That makes sense.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Right? This government, because now they don't have New Democrats helping them make decisions, I guess, decides, “No, no. It's okay. We'll take all that business information.” You know that company that came over, spilled their guts and put all their financials down in order to bid on a project? They've given their bank account numbers. They've given their net worth. They've given what their liabilities are. They've given all their financial data, phone numbers, addresses and all kinds of stuff. They give it to the IESO and OPG, and you guys say, “Yeah, yeah, yeah. Put it out there to anybody who wants to see it.”

Mr. John Vanthof: That's exactly what they did.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It took the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane, a New Democrat, to tell you guys, “Hey, whoa. What are you doing? You don't do that.” It took, what, a couple of days for them to finally figure it out?

Mr. John Vanthof: Twenty-four hours.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Twenty-four hours. They finally figured out that, holy jeez, this is a problem. The problem is that that information was out there for over two days. I'm sure somebody got a hold of that information by now.

Mr. John Vanthof: Anybody who was interested.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: When governments say, like yours, “We're open for business,” and “We're the government of the people; we're going to do all these things,” the reality is that you guys are the worst. You're worse than the Liberals, for God's sake, on this stuff. You absolutely are. You don't take personal, private information and make it public. That's not “open for business.” You don't pick winners and

losers when it comes to apprentice ratios either. That's the apprenticeship part.

Again, I just want to be clear: I too have problems with the College of Trades; don't get me wrong. But the basic idea of having the college decide what the ratio should be makes an infinite amount of sense rather than we, the politicians, making that decision.

The second thing I want to speak to is your changes to the Employment Standards Act. On this, I just have to say, you have got to shake your heads. Back in the day when people of my age went out to work—I'm 61 years old. When we started work in the early 1970s, it was a pretty highly unionized environment, the industrial workplaces of Ontario.

If you went to Falconbridge, Inco, Pamour, Stelco or you went to any of those companies, they were unionized. Those collective agreements were put in place and provided things like bereavement leave, when can you have three weeks' holidays, when are you allowed to have a sick day, what the rules are—all of those rules were spelled out in our collective agreements. That was the majority of workplaces back in the day.

I would argue through the 1960s, 1970s and even the early 1980s, to a degree, the workplaces of Ontario by and large were protected by collective agreements. Even places like Dofasco that weren't unionized made sure to follow the same standards that the unionized people had because they didn't want the union in. So there was a natural competition; there was a natural market within the workforce where employers who wanted to hold on to their employees and not have them unionize would offer what the unionized employees had.

For example, where I was, in Timmins, all of the mines in Timmins were all unionized under the steelworkers except for, at the time, Kidd Creek. So what did Kidd Creek do to keep the union out? They gave better benefits and they gave better wages. They decided as a corporation, “In order to keep the union out, we're going to sweeten the pot a little bit.” If we had two days floaters, they had three days floaters. If the rate was this, they paid a little bit more on the rate. There was a natural competition within the workplace, because there were employers that didn't want the union, and the way they kept the union out is to pay people a little bit more and to treat them better when it comes to basic benefits around things like holidays.

The economy of today is no longer the economy of the 1970s. The majority of people that work in our society are non-unionized. My daughter works in your riding, sir—I'm looking at the member from Whitby. She's a professional. She's a nurse practitioner. She's not unionized. So here's a person making over \$100,000 a year who is non-unionized.

There are all kinds of people in our society who work for employers that are not unionized who are the middle class. We're not talking about the \$14- or \$15-an-hour worker; we're talking about people that are \$60,000 to \$120,000 a year. There is a whole class of people who are non-union. People that worked on your farm, sir, were not unionized, right?

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: And you didn't pay them minimum wage, I would venture. You probably paid them more than minimum wage.

If you look around our society today, most of our workplaces are, unfortunately, more part-time work and smaller in size because now the economy we have today—the creation of the plant that hired—how many people in the heyday of Inco? Sixteen thousand? Eighteen thousand?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Twenty-two thousand.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Twenty-two thousand. When I was working at the Pamour, there were 22,000 people working at Inco. Today, they're what—3,000?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Yep.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Right.

The mine that I worked for, the Noranda group—we were probably around 3,000 in that group of three mines. There's zero now. It's a completely different workplace.

Guess who works in mining and guess who works in all of these things now? A lot of them are contractors. A lot of the mines subcontract the work of the actual mining and maintenance to contractors who are non-union. A lot of people who work in the health field are non-union because there has been more privatization in health care under the Liberals when they were in office for 15 years than there was under Mike Harris, for God's sake. My point is, the workplace of today doesn't have the protections of the collective agreement that it used to have in the past, so you have to modernize the Employment Standards Act. That's what this exercise was partly about.

I think the Liberal government did a terrible job. I don't think they dealt with half of what should have been done inside the changes of the Employment Standards Act. That's why we, as New Democrats, actually proposed some amendments to that legislation, because we thought, if you look around the world, everybody else in the industrial world except for North America—you've got Donald Trump and Mr. Ford, who kind of think the same way. The rest of the industrial world says, "You know what? You need to have your labour standards reflect the day."

The idea of the changes in the Employment Standards Act were, "Let's give workers and young professionals in our workplace some basic protections that used to be covered by collective agreements." For example, bereavement leave—that you don't need to bring in a death certificate to prove that you buried your father or your mother. Let's make sure that people have the ability to have a sick day and not have to come to work when they're sick, number one, and get everybody else sick, or have to lose a day's pay because they're ill, because in most unionized workplaces, you have that basic benefit.

When it comes to benefits around holidays, so that you have employers—and I know because I talk to a lot of these people around Ontario who have medium-sized firms and who are paying their people 18, 19 or 20 bucks an hour but give hardly anything when it comes to holidays. So there were some minimum standards put in for holidays. I think time off is what a lot the new workforce wants, more so than money sometimes.

We have two daughters. One is a psychometric therapist and the other one is a nurse practitioner. If you went to them and said, "I'll give you an extra \$1,500 a year or I'll give you a week's holiday," I'll tell you what they would vote for if they had a collective agreement. Both of them are professionals with no union where they work. They would take the time off.

What the Employment Standards Act changes were about was modernizing the Employment Standards Act from the standards of the 1960s and 1970s, when we were highly unionized, to a time today where we're not as unionized, so that workers and young professionals could at least get basic coverage when it came to benefits. That's what that was all about. And you guys are saying we're open for business? Oh, we're open for business because those at the top should make more money by denying those who work and do the work for them to get money—that they get less. I think that's pretty sad—very, very sad, quite frankly.

You've got on that side a government who is trying to drive us to the lowest standards, like we want to become the Alabama of Canada, while the rest of the world—in Europe and other places—has gone completely the other way. If you look at the economies that outperform us, who are they? They're the Danmarks. They're the Swedens. They're the Finlands. They're the Germanys. Guess what they do? They have employment standards that would make your head blow up as Conservatives. Their minimum wage in Denmark is \$22 an hour, in our dollars. Their standards when it comes to holidays and time off are far superior to anything that was even contemplated by the Liberals in that failed piece of employment standards legislation that they had. And guess what? Their economies are doing well, because business over there understands—with government—that if workers are motivated, are treated fairly and are happy, guess what? They're more productive. They come to work with a bounce in their step and they say, "I'm prepared to give extra to my workplace because I don't have to worry, when I'm sick, that I'm going to have to lose time because I'm sick. I don't have to worry, if I'm escaping domestic abuse, that I'm going to have to worry about losing time as a result of that stuff not being in the provisions of the Employment Standards Act back then." So you guys say you're open for business. No, you're not. You're trying to bring business back to the good old days.

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Let's just cut to the chase. Serfdom worked well for some. If you look at the Soviet Union prior to the czars being thrown out, and if you look at England prior to about the 1400s, serfdom worked really well. The guys at the top had everything. The rest of us—99% of us—had nothing, and we were beholden to our landowners. Well, that's where you want to bring us. Why don't you just say it? You're trying to return us to a modern type of serfdom. That's all you're trying to do here. You're saying the guys at the top should have more and those of us who keep all those people at the top—the people who work and make the money in the economy—should have less. Government of the people? Come on. That's not of the people; that's a government of the 1%.

Do I argue, as a New Democrat, that those at the top shouldn't have the ability to make money? I want them to make all kinds of money. The more people can dream their dreams and live their dreams and make money and be successful in business, the better it is for all of us, because they hire people, they do create wealth. We understand that. But there have to be some rules of civility in our society. There have to be some rules that say, on the one hand, yes, that company should have the ability to grow and prosper and make good profits—good for everybody, good for us because we get taxes, good for the workers because they get jobs, and maybe good when it comes to the product because they invent something that we would like, like an iPhone, or whatever it might be. But at the other end, those people who create the wealth—the real wealth creators—are the people who make the product, who sell the product, who service the product, who do all of the things that are needed for that company to work. From the bookkeeper to the person taking out the garbage, all of them have a role to play in making that money. If we don't treat those people well, the economy doesn't work well.

What you guys are really trying to do here is turn the clock back. And, yes, there are some working-class people out there who support you. I understand that. Jeez, as a New Democrat, if I don't understand that, I'm in trouble. But I'll tell you why. It's because a lot of people out there are very mad. They're frustrated at their lot in life. They say, "I work hard. I didn't get the same chance as she did down there or he did down there. My dad wasn't rich. I didn't have a great education. Our family struggled. There were all kinds of problems in the household, and I had to listen to arguments every day. I didn't get the chance to go to school, as other people did in order to be able to get the chances that they have now." So they end up in a job that makes a salary that allows them to survive. In some cases they like that job, and in some cases they don't. That's who you're playing to as your base—those people who don't—because they're mad. They're mad that they see other people getting ahead and they're falling behind. They're mad at the traffic on the road when they have to drive the one hour or two hours through traffic to get to where they have to go. They're mad when they look at their cheque and they don't have enough to make ends meet at the end of the day. You guys play on that.

It's a good thing that the Premier of Ontario makes bumper stickers, because that's what you are—you're a bumper sticker kind of government: "Government of the People"; "Cut the Minimum Wage"; "Get Rid of Employment Standards"; "Good for Business."

What's the one that Lisa MacLeod uses all the time? "The Best—

Hon. Rod Phillips: "The Best Social Program is a Job."

Mr. Gilles Bisson: "The Best Social Program is a Job."

Everybody in our society can work—is that what you guys are suggesting? You have constituency offices, like I do, and you see those people walking in every day. Some of them are victims of their upbringing. They've had a lot of trauma to deal with, and they're not doing too well these days. Some of them have mental health issues. Some of

them have physical issues. Some of them have health issues and are not able to work. My sister was schizophrenic. She lived on ODSP and the Canada Pension Plan her entire life. You're saying she could have gone out and gotten a job? Poor Louise had visions and voices at the same time. She didn't do too well in the workplace.

When you hear Conservatives playing that ratchet of fear and playing the bumper sticker stuff to those in our society who are not as fortunate as you and I—because all of us here were the lucky ones. We're the ones who probably did well because we had something good going on in our lives. Some people overcame very tough odds; I understand that. But the people who got to this place are the people who were able to make it through. But there are a lot of people who can't.

When we play that type of game and we say that employment standards are not important because they're going to get a better job by making an economy where everybody can work because employment standards kill jobs—no, it doesn't. Do you think any employer who is trying to run a company in Ontario is able to hold onto employees at 11 bucks an hour? I went in and met with a whole bunch of medium-sized and smaller businesses in my riding in the previous constituency week; not one of them was worried about the minimum wage, because they're all paying more than the minimum wage. Do you know why? Because if you want people, you have got to pay. It's like anything else: If you want a good steak, you pay a little bit more money. If you want fresher vegetables, you pay a little bit more money. If you want a loyal workforce with training, you pay a little bit more money. They understand.

The jobs we're talking about at the minimum wage are those jobs that, quite frankly, are the harder jobs to fill. When you talk to those people that are paying the minimum wage, they're having a hard time holding onto people.

Last summer sometime, I was talking to somebody—I walked into Walmart, and the guy said, "Hey, the McDonald's in Walmart is closed." I said, "Really? I didn't know they closed." Then he says, "Yeah, I went there to grab an Egg McMuffin this morning, and no staff showed up." Well, all right; if you're living in Timmins, where you can get a job at \$17 an hour or you can get a job at McDonald's at \$14 an hour, where do you think people are going to go? It's harder to staff up at the lower wages.

All you're doing is making that disparity even worse. You're not helping those guys at the bottom. At the end of the day, they're going to have a harder time trying to attract good employees at a lower wage than they will at a higher wage. That's the first thing.

The second thing is that those people who make more money, who went from \$11-and-something an hour to \$14 an hour, don't spend the money in the Cayman Islands—not like the people in the 1%, who make money, have investments and put their money in the Cayman Islands because they don't want to pay their taxes. All of these people pay their taxes and they spend their money in their local community, so the money recirculates and they do rather well.

I just wanted a chance to put some of the ideas on the record. At this point, I know that our deputy House leader wants to speak to this. But I'll just say to the government: You're going to have some hearings on this thing; I think you should have more hearings and I think you should hear what workers and others have to say and what small businesses have to say who are on the flip side of you when it comes to this, because I can tell you, they're out there. As I travelled my riding three weeks ago during constituency week and met with small business, there were a lot of people out there who were not—the minimum wage was not the issue to them. You guys think you're scoring one here; I think you're completely wrong and you're going in the opposite direction.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I know that other people want to speak to this motion.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very pleased to rise today as we're debating time allocation on Bill 47. As we know, Bill 47 is our government's repair of what the previous Liberal government brought in—their Bill 148. We're keeping some of the changes that they brought in for the employment standards with Bill 148 to help some of the more vulnerable people in our communities. But the fact is that we are committed: We ran on a promise to open Ontario for business and we ran on a promise to bring balance between the workers and the business owners who create the jobs.

Working people, we know, need the confidence of having a good job and a safe workplace, and businesses need the stability of reasonable and predictable regulations. Those two ideas are at the root of our approach.

We heard from the NDP just now—it's sort of a simple line that I hear over and over sometimes, not just here in the Legislature but out in the communities from NDP supporters—that if you pay workers more, they're going to have more buying power and they're going to buy from the businesses, and somehow that's going to build the economy up. We know that that's not the answer. It's as though we're saying that we should write a cheque for \$1 million to everybody in the province of Ontario—borrow money from a bank somewhere and give everybody \$1 million—and they're all going to go shopping, and that's going to somehow boost our economy and we're just going to be doing so well. But what about when we're going to have to pay that money back?

We know that there's a word that the NDP don't like to hear; it's called “profits” and profit margins. A lot of businesses are operating on very minuscule profit margins. If the government comes in and demands suddenly, as they did already with a 21% hike in the minimum wage—the Liberals had 15 years to slowly raise the minimum wage so that businesses could plan and adjust; instead, they waited till just before an election to hike it 21%. A lot of businesses weren't prepared, and so we're sort of pausing on raising it further.

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We're going to tie it in with the cost of living so that businesses are able to plan. Workers, as well, should be able to plan on their salaries going up as the cost of living goes up, because that is fair. We all know that.

We also know that the Liberals made decisions that raised the cost of electricity. They say their intentions were good. They wanted to create a green energy program and a green energy economy in Ontario, and that somehow by saying, “Our intentions were good,” that's good enough. Well, it's not good enough. There is an expression we all know about: good intentions and a place called hell.

We don't want to just go on good intentions. We want to go on sound business advice, and we've been consulting with representatives of small, medium and large businesses across Ontario. I'm going to read to you what some of them had to say:

Julie Kwiecinski—I'm sorry if I'm saying your name wrong—from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business: “87% of CFIB's members have under 20 employees, which means many don't have the luxury of having an HR department nor any financial wiggle room of their larger business counterparts to handle and absorb a massive spike in the minimum wage and other additional labour costs that were part of Bill 148.”

Sean Reid from the Progressive Contractors Association: “Bill 148 may have been well intentioned”—there are those words again—“but in the end it was poorly designed and too hastily implemented. It was a job killer and not a job creator, and combined with the Ontario College of Trades, there was a decline in apprenticeship registrations instead of creating more of them. The Making Ontario Open for Business Act is a game-changer, and some businesses are already indicating that they will be hiring new staff and expanding their workforce.” Those are wonderful words to hear.

Patrick McManus from the Ontario Skilled Trades Alliance: “I'm very encouraged by the proposed changes with a particular interest in the Ontario College of Trades, which created a mountain of red tape and added an administrative burden to employers. The Making Ontario Open for Business Act will bring us into modern times and reduce barriers to enter in the skilled trades. This act will allow businesses to start to train and prepare the next generation of employees for the upcoming 85,000 tradespeople that I believe are to retire over the next decade.” We're all worried about that, Mr. Speaker. We're hearing from a lot of businesses—I'm sure the NDP are as well—that they're worried about tradespeople retiring.

I think I was supposed to say that I'm sharing my time with the member from King–Vaughan. Is it okay if I say that now, Mr. Speaker? I'm just looking at the clock.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Just for your information, there is no sharing of time during this debate. If we get around to the rotation, then they'll come up.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for letting me know that.

We are as concerned as everybody else in Ontario that we have the right workers for the right jobs of the future.

We need more skilled trades, so we're ensuring that there will be apprenticeship spots opening up and that people will be able to get into the trades. We want to ensure that our students are learning the skills that they need to learn for the jobs of the future, which we think are going to be in the high-tech sector—a lot of the jobs—and we cannot have people preparing and learning coding if they don't have the basic math skills in elementary schools. So we're preparing for that, Mr. Speaker.

We need to get predictable electricity rates. We need to get infrastructure. We need to get transit. We've got a lot of work to do in the province of Ontario, and I know that our government is looking forward to working with the opposition party and getting all those things done. We're not just looking at riding-specific. We have to look at the entire province and make sure that we're prepared and we're able to transport goods, transport workers and get everything that we need to do to get Ontario businesses growing and get investment into Ontario.

We hear stories about people going to the States, to Michigan, and they're met at the airport by an official, by a representative who takes them around and who is already showing them where they could build a factory or where they can rent space—just encouraging them to bring their business to the States and encouraging them to get out of Ontario or to not invest in Ontario. It's the same thing with other provinces. We all have been to the airport and we've gone through airport security, and we wonder to ourselves why in some airports the airport security just helps and moves you along and makes sure you don't lose your belongings and makes it a pleasant experience, and actually seems anxious that you should make your flight and be comfortable and have a good experience, whereas you go to other airports, unfortunately, and it's the absolute opposite.

I think that we want to model ourselves after the airport security that is helpful, that is professional, that is engaging and that wants your business—that good customer service, using your thoughts and seeing if somebody has a disability, somebody needs a little extra help, somebody has a small child or somebody has heavy luggage, instead of that confrontational experience where it's like they're trying to make you feel like a child who needs to go sit in the corner and be punished.

I wanted to talk a little bit more about that whole business idea of growing businesses in Ontario. I think I've said before that I was an optometrist for almost 30 years and always managing optometry clinics on my own. I had to learn the hard way sometimes that equipment breaks. I think sometimes patients show up because it's funded by the government and they assume that the government somehow pays for all this equipment.

The machine that we put in front of people's eyes is called a phoropter and it has lots of little lenses in it. I'm sure nobody here is going to be surprised to hear it costs in the tens of thousands of dollars for each of the separate pieces of equipment. Equipment breaks, as happens. There are wonderful companies out there in Ontario—Innova is one of the companies—and they will actually lend you a piece of equipment while they take yours to be repaired.

Sometimes you have to buy new equipment. All of a sudden you have a month where you have to buy a piece of equipment for \$20,000; that is going to be problematic. Yes, maybe you have a line of credit for part of it, maybe you put part on your personal credit card, but at the end of the day you have to pay your rent, you have to pay your staff, and you have to pay all the government expenses—the taxes that come off and the CPP and the unemployment insurance—everything that comes off for your staff. Now it's my husband's clinic on his own, but we have health benefits for some of the employees where they pay half and we pay half. We pay that every month.

If you have a month where you have to buy an expensive piece of equipment, which happens, the last thing to get paid is the proprietor. You're the last person to get paid. And until you're in that position, until you've run a business, until you've had to pay your staff and know that you're not getting paid, I don't think you really get it. All I can tell you is, I didn't get it. I did not get it until I was running my own business and I had those months where I had to make those tough decisions and juggle things around and realize, “Oops, I guess I am not going to plan a vacation this month because there is no way that I'm going to manage it. I have to make sure that I have enough money in the bank to cover all of my business expenses.”

It's a hard thing to learn until you have to do it yourself. I think that that's why it's so great—when we were kids a lot of us got allowance, if our parents were helpful that way. I always liked that I had my own spending money. From the age of 10 or 11, if I babysat my younger sister or the neighbour's kid and they would pay me a little bit, I always liked saving up my money and having a goal and knowing how much money I had to save up to get to that goal.

I want to leave some time on the clock for others as well, but I just want to say that politicians think that they understand every business, and they don't. We don't. We can't possibly. I might know a little bit about the optometry business or working in a medical centre, but I certainly don't understand how all the other businesses work. The best thing we can do sometimes, Mr. Speaker, is just get out of the way and let businesses expand the way they need to. If we're just making regulations blindly—we think we know what we're doing—we'd better ensure that that regulation is absolutely imperative for the safety of the workers and the public. Because if it's just a piece of regulation because we think it's necessary and it's hampering business growth and job growth in Ontario, we're really doing a disservice to all of our constituents.

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I have a few more words from people out there who know how to run their businesses. I want to mention, from the Ontario Home Builders' Association, Joe Vaccaro: “The legislation will move to better apprenticeship ratios, which will be better for jobs and members who are ready to hire new people. The changes are about keeping Ontario open for business, being competitive, and my members are extremely excited about the changes.”

Then we have Rocco Rossi. We all know Rocco Rossi. He ran for mayor of Toronto quite a few years ago. But he's also very well known for all the work he does for awareness of men's cancers. He comes to Queen's Park a lot to advocate on that. He's also the CEO of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. I'm going to quote Rocco: "Bill 148 was too much too fast, and what's needed is what's reasonable to employers and fair to employees. There is a skills crisis and there is a future of well-paying jobs and it's critical to foster even more growth. By moving on better apprenticeship ratios and eliminating the Ontario College of Trades—marks the beginning of a strategy that would allow businesses to match people looking for work with the jobs that desperately need them."

Mr. Speaker, part of the reason I'm reading out all of the quotes isn't just to get them on the record and to share with everybody else here but to explain why all of these business representatives, the people who hold the future of Ontario in their hands—it's not us here in the Legislature who do; they have the power to create those jobs. We just want to give them the ability to do it, but they actually have the power and the know-how to do it. They need to see Bill 47 passed quickly. That's why we're having this time allocation, because right now we're debating time allocation of Bill 47 to make the changes so that business can grow, so that jobs can grow, so that we have the great long-term, full-time, well-paid, with-benefits jobs of the future that we all know Ontario can provide. We know that Ontario was once the engine of Canada. We know we can get there again. We are confident. I don't think we're overly confident; I think we have just the right amount of confidence and understanding of the hard work.

The Legislature was recalled in the summer months, which is a little bit historic because normally we don't sit here in the summer. But Premier Doug Ford felt that anxious to get to work, to get Ontario on track, because he felt that every day that we're not building Ontario up, we're not just coasting; we're going down. That's a very common business expression, which is that you're either growing or you're shrinking. There's no coasting in business. I think that there's no coasting, maybe, in politics and a lot of other things as well; we all know that. You could have been elected—the member from Timmins, the House leader for the NDP, was just speaking. He has been here for almost three decades, I believe. I'm sure that he can tell us that there's no coasting in politics, that he goes to all of the events that he can manage to go to when he's back in his riding. He takes care of his constituents. He doesn't coast, thinking, "Well, I've been there for 28 years. I can coast."

I'm going to continue with some of the words of support because it does give me confidence and I think it gives everybody in the Legislature confidence that we're doing the right thing by moving time allocation on Bill 47 and getting the power where it has to be so that we can get those jobs created in Ontario.

Mark Josephs from Kisko Products: "The Minister of Labour is doing the right thing, and the new legislation no longer makes business owners and other businesses feel

like they are enemies of the province. With a tight labour market, businesses need to be competitive so that the market dictates what needs to be paid. Bill 148 had a huge impact on my bottom line, which impacts my ability to invest. If Bill 148 hadn't changed, I would have had to make tough decisions and plan to move my business elsewhere"—a scary thought, Mr. Speaker.

Then we have Norm Beal from Food and Beverage Ontario: "I have had several phone calls from other provinces and some US states trying to attract away investment in Ontario business, and that's created a great deal of trouble for the industry. Bill 148 was the last straw in many food processing plants that had been looking to other alternatives purely for competitive reasons. Due to the changes to Bill 148, we're going to start seeing a lot more capital investments."

Tony Elenis from the Ontario Restaurant Hotel and Motel Association was here at Queen's Park last week, and so were many of the names that I'm reading. He's very, very passionate and very, very happy. He has a big smile on his face because he feels confident in Premier Doug Ford's team and what we're doing for the province of Ontario.

I quote from Tony: "I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Ford PC government for taking the time to listen to the hospitality industry's concerns. Bill 148 has been harmful to our vulnerable sector. It's not about the minimum wage increase, it's about the unprecedented speed of the increase."

Noah Aychental, chair of the Ontario Convenience Stores Association: "The Making Ontario Open for Business Act will bring great stability to the industry by alleviating the increased operational pressures. In the last decade, small independent businesses have struggled to succeed with about five stores a week closing down."

I'm going to repeat that, Mr. Speaker: He has documented proof that about five convenience stores a week have been closing down in Ontario. And a lot of times we know that those are in small communities and they're like the hub of the community. That's kind of the hangout where you go for a walk in the evening in the summer and you go to the convenience store. It used to be one of my favourite things to do with my little sister, to take a walk and go to the convenience store and get a Popsicle. I'm just continuing the quote: "Many employees are new and young workers working part-time."

Jonathan Blackham, from the Ontario Trucking Association: "I'm encouraged by the legislation and believe the changes send a positive growth signal to the Ontario economy. While the vast majority of the trucking industry's workforce is made up of drivers who are paid above minimum wage, trucking is a demand-driven business and when customers suffer so does the industry. The proposed changes seem to strike a better balance bringing with it the benefit of spurring workforce investment and economic activity."

I want to jump, because I have a couple more pages of great quotes and we hear the NDP sometimes say, "Name one business." Well, I am giving you people who—I named associations of thousands of businesses.

Yesterday, the Minister of Labour and I met with the Ontario Long Term Care Association. I just want to read first from Candace Chartier, the chief executive officer: “We are pleased and endorse the government’s changes with regards to Bill 148. We believe these changes are both fair and balanced. Our sector is highly unionized and the union agreements in many cases provide a greater right of benefits than Bill 148. For the long-term-care sector, this will eliminate many ambiguities that were in Bill 148 and will help to improve and enhance resident care.”

We all know, Mr. Speaker, that long-term-care planning and expansion of the long-term-care sector is one of the pillars of the Doug Ford government. We want to see expansion of long-term-care facilities in Ontario. We believe the experts who tell us that by building more long-term-care beds we will be able to free up hospital beds and therefore get rid of a lot of the hallway medicine that so many families are experiencing in Ontario.

So we need to ensure that businesses have confidence in Ontario, that they have confidence in the government, that we know what we’re doing. We work on expert advice. We work on principles. We understand that businesses need to plan, that we’re predictable and that we’re confident and that we can sell our province. Because, Mr. Speaker, yes, we’re doing the right thing—I believe we are doing the right thing—but it’s also that we have to convince the rest of the world. And that’s why confidence is so important.

So I thank you for the opportunity to speak. I’m glad that we’re moving time allocation. I’m glad that we’re going to get businesses the help they need and get those great jobs for Ontario.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: It’s a pleasure to rise every day in this House to speak on behalf of the good people of London–Fanshawe and, in particular, today, Speaker. It feels like every bill that we have an opportunity to debate is being time-allocated. That isn’t giving the good people of London–Fanshawe an opportunity to have their voice heard. I think it was on Tuesday that we spoke to the bill. There was an hour lead by each party. There was opportunity for members to speak for 20 minutes. I was looking forward to having that time to speak about this bill. I’m really limited right now in how much time I’m going to have to thoughtfully go over the parts of this new legislation under the Premier, this Conservative government and what they’re doing to the workforce, what they’re doing to the labour force, what they’re doing, really, to businesses.

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There are a lot of great employers in my riding who believe in the current labour legislation, that it was actually helpful to their business. It wasn’t crippling them, as some of the members think that this was actually happening. I have a couple of examples of that, because last Friday, it was really my honour to be in my riding and have the pleasure of attending not just one, but two expansions of businesses in my riding that were already established,

and they were going to expand. They were going to hire more people. They were doing great things in my riding.

One of them was Sciencetech. They’ve been in the riding for 40 years. That is a great reputation. The jobs they provide are highly specialized professional jobs. Here they are, expanding after 40 years. They had a grand opening and they invited everyone to come and look at the good work that they’re doing. They do a lot of work outside of Canada, actually, primarily. I was very proud. Here’s a company doing work outside of Canada, and they are so highly specialized in what they do. There’s such a demand for the work that they do that they’re expanding. I wanted to say congratulations to Sciencetech.

The other one was Starlim. They’re a fairly new company in my riding, probably within the last 10 years. They’re expanding. Again, they have a highly specialized workforce as well as people on the manufacturing side that come in, so they have all different levels. The laws that are in today that are helping workers and businesses were not crippling them. They were saying that these things, by the nature of the expansion—Ontario already is an environment to create opportunity for businesses to flourish. Some of the rhetoric that the government is talking about isn’t really what’s happening on the ground everywhere. Maybe they have a couple of examples, but this bill that they’re presenting right now, Bill 47, really is taking us backwards in Ontario.

I want to talk about one particular area that I think was really important to all workers who are in high-profession jobs who don’t have unionized environments, workers who are on contracts who are doing really high-level wage jobs, workers who are at lower-paying wages—this particular example, the personal emergency leave, was going to help all workers. It was going to help all workers. By doing that, they have rolled things back.

What originally the current legislation has is 10 personal emergency leaves. What happened is, workers were entitled to those 10 unpaid personal emergency leave days. The first two days, when they were taken, were actually paid. So 10 days total: The first two days were paid and then the rest, the eight days under the personal emergency leave, weren’t.

What this government has done, what the Conservative government has done—and the Premier, really, with his leadership, has decided that that is not a good thing for workers; it is not a good thing for businesses. Businesses need to support their workers, because workers support businesses. What they’ve done is, they’ve changed all this. They’ve decided that, “You know what? We’re going to take it from 10 days and we’re going to reduce it to eight. And all workers are not going to be paid for two sick days.”

That is a highly problematic policy. I know this because I get constituents telling us this is a highly problematic policy. When someone is working a higher-paying job or a lower-paying job, two days’ wages is a lot to them. Things are expensive in Ontario. Things are expensive in life. Daycare is expensive. Your mortgage, your hydro—things cost money to survive. The basic cost of living takes a lot. Everybody knows that. So when you decide that

when someone is sick for two days, they're not getting their paycheque, that doesn't work out and that doesn't make sense.

Then, on top of that, with the rules that they've changed, this government has decided in their infinite wisdom that you now need a doctor's note. This government is all about listening to experts; doctors, who are experts, have said that it is not a good idea to have sick people come to their office to get a doctor's note. When you're home sick, the last thing that you are thinking about is dragging yourself out of bed and going to a doctor to get a sick note. My first thought is, "If I'm still contagious, I'm going to pass on my whole virus to other people." My second thought is, "I'm going to be catching other things that other people are bringing to the doctor's." And you know what? You can't always get in when you call. When you call the doctor, you can't always get in that moment to get an appointment to get a sick note. Doctors are very busy people, very busy professionals. Again, that legislation is misguided. They're not listening to the experts, and they're not listening to the needs of workers.

I was sick a couple of weeks ago, and I stayed home one day. I had my chicken soup, I had my ginger ale and I rested all day. Guess what? The next day, I felt better, and I came into work. Heck, if I had to run to the doctor to get a sick note, that defeats the purpose of getting better for those days that we need in order to come back to work.

The other piece that's really concerning to me is that when someone dies, you're going to need a death certificate, and then there are two days of bereavement. Who is going to say they need bereavement days when they don't have a funeral or a death to attend? That, to me, is beyond understanding, why that has to be in writing in the legislation. That really erodes the trust between a worker and an employer.

So it truly is hard to understand that those things are the focus and the priority of this government when it comes to workers. They have a right to change whatever they want under legislation, but to do those things is really quite heartless, I'm going to say. They're quite heartless.

The other piece of that, Speaker, in that vein of having to constantly debate during time allocation, is that we want to make sure that there are things in place so that there is some fairness around this legislation and this government. With that in mind, I move an NDP amendment. I move that the motion be amended as follows:

In paragraph 4, insert the words "Monday, November 19, 2018, Wednesday, November 21, and Thursday, November 22, 2018," after the words "November 15, 2018";

In paragraph 6, delete the words "November 15" and replace with the words "November 22";

In paragraph 7, delete the words "Friday, November 16" and replace with the words "November 26";

In paragraph 8, delete everything after the word "Monday" and replace with "November 19, 2018, from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., and Monday, December 3, from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m., for clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and";

In paragraph 9, delete the words "November 19" and replace with the words "December 3";

In paragraph 10, delete the words "November 20" and replace with the words "December 4";

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In paragraph 13, delete the words "two hours" and replace with the words "three hours and 45 minutes"; delete the words "50 minutes" and replace with the words "one hour and 30 minutes"; delete the words "40 minutes" and replace with the words "one hour and 30 minutes"; and delete the words "15 minutes" and replace with the words "30 minutes."

I give my motion to the page to deliver to the table.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Ms. Armstrong from London—Fanshawe has moved that the motion be amended as follows—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Dispense? I heard a no.

In paragraph 4, insert the words "Monday, November 19, 2018, Wednesday, November 21, and Thursday, November 22, 2018," after the words "November 15, 2018";

In paragraph 6, delete the words "November 15" and replace with the words "November 22";

In paragraph 7, delete the words "Friday, November 16" and replace with the words "November 26";

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Is it the pleasure of the House that the—no?

Further debate? I return to the member from London—Fanshawe.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, I'm glad I'm actually able to speak a little bit more on that, because some of the other things that the government has changed are also really a problematic thing.

They have changed the Employment Standards Act so that there is less oversight over the labour board. Back in the day when the labour board created regulation under the Employment Standards Act, the cabinet ministers would actually take the time to review that. That's no longer there. I think that's an important part of the process, that this government understands what changes the Employment Standards Act to the labour board would be—what happened—in order for them to look at and see if this is something there is some fairness around.

I would hope the Employment Standards Act is going to create those things that are going to benefit workers and benefit employers, but we need to have that oversight. Taking away that oversight, I think, is a problem.

The other thing they're going to be doing is changing the amount of fines with regard to employers. Then that does create precarious situations. There are many people who are workers in precarious employment. When you deter an organization with lesser fines, that means sometimes they may weigh the risk and take a chance on something because the consequences aren't as grave. Reducing the fines may not help that situation. It may not help promote employers to continue those good practices. They may fall behind a little bit. They may think to weigh the risk to the consequences. That is also a problematic thing, Speaker.

When we look at the legislation and when you talk about people on contract and they work part-time and the temporary agencies, that is precarious employment and some of that legislation is not helping those workers.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you very much.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Seeing the time on the clock, this House will stand in recess until question period at 10:30 this morning.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It's my pleasure to introduce the family of Albert Douglas, who is a legislative page from Windsor West. Here with us today are Alan Douglas, Johnathan Brunt and Ruth Douglas. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Ernie Hardeman: I would like to introduce John Gignac and Mary-Ellen Sheppard from the Hawkins-Gignac Foundation, here for Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week in Ontario. Thank you for everything you do to bring awareness to this important issue. Welcome to Queen's Park.

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: I want to welcome to Queen's Park Edwina Mayama, who is an intern with me in Ottawa with the Assemblée de la Francophonie de l'Ontario, and Michael Johnston, who's a lawyer in Ottawa. They are visiting Queen's Park because of my private member's bill. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's my pleasure to introduce to the assembly this morning some great friends of mine hailing from Chatham, Ontario, here to experience question period and to observe their grandson, Albert Douglas. They are Tom and Brenda Brunt. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Mike Harris: I have a couple of people I would like to welcome today. My legislative assistant, Jon Lesarge, and also my oldest son, Jaxon, are here with us today.

Ms. Doly Begum: It is an honour to introduce some amazing guests I have here today who are here for the

press conference for my bill this morning for quality child care.

I have Alana Powell, interim coordinator from the Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario. I also have Michelle Jones, an early childhood educator; Sonia Tavares, ECE, as well as the AECEO communications coordinator; and other ECE students. I have Esra Leia, ECE student. I have Melissa Wong and her daughter, Athena, a parent and a good friend of mine. I have Laura Casselman, another parent, as well as her son, Emmanuel.

I have a good friend and former councillor, Janet Davis, an amazing advocate for child care and the co-founder of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care. Thank you so much for coming here.

Hon. Jim Wilson: It gives me great pleasure to introduce Mr. Steve Martin, who is the proud father of Rose Martin-Chase, the legislative page from Simcoe-Grey. Welcome.

Ms. Sara Singh: I would like to give a very warm welcome to a very special guest, Emmanuel Casselman.

Mr. Vincent Ke: I would like to welcome grade 5 students from Cresthaven Public School from my riding of Don Valley North. They are visiting Queen's Park on a field trip today. Welcome, and I hope they enjoy their time here.

Mrs. Robin Martin: I'm just delighted to welcome today Dietitians of Canada to the Legislature. They had a breakfast for us this morning. I encourage you all to learn about what dietitians bring, which is evidence-based nutrition and food advice to all Ontarians. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Doug Downey: I have two guests here with me today, Michelle and Wayne Kobylnik, who won a lunch and a tour of the Legislature at a local church auction. I'm looking forward to meet them and get to know them better.

Ms. Jill Andrew: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. Back in 1998, I graduated from one of the best colleges in Toronto, Humber College. I'm so proud to have two Humber journalism school students here today, Ria Paul and Hadeel Al-Sayed. Welcome to the Legislature. Go, Humber, go!

Hon. Todd Smith: I'd like to wish a very, very happy birthday today to our director of issues management and legislative affairs in the Premier's office. Andrew Kimber is 33 years old today.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: Good morning, Speaker. I'd like to welcome my good friend Paula Poniatowska, who is visiting us today. She has recently completed her studies of law in the UK and we look forward to having her as a medical lawyer in Canada. Welcome.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I believe Netivot Hatorah Jewish Day School from Thornhill is here today. I want to say bruchim habaim, if that is you. Bruchim habaim, if it's another school. Welcome.

Hon. Todd Smith: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the government House leader, who has a point of order.

Hon. Todd Smith: On a point of order: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice that

Remembrance Day tributes take place before question period today.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent of the House to put forward a motion without notice to allow for Remembrance Day tributes to take place before question period today. Agreed? Agreed.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Hon. Todd Smith: I would move that Remembrance Day tributes take place on Thursday, November 1, with 90 seconds allotted to the independent Green member; followed by 90 seconds allotted to the independent Liberal members; followed by three minutes allotted to Her Majesty's loyal opposition; followed by three minutes allotted to the government.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Smith, Bay of Quinte, has moved that Remembrance Day tributes take place on Thursday, November 1, with 90 seconds allotted to the independent Green member; followed by 90 seconds allotted to the independent Liberal members; followed by three minutes allotted to Her Majesty's loyal opposition; followed by three minutes allotted to the government. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for Guelph.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: On November 11, we honour those who have served our nation and selflessly put themselves in harm's way to defend our democracy.

I can't tell you how humbling it is to be able to stand in this House and honour our veterans. We owe it to them to never forget—to never forget your heroism, your courage and your sacrifice. We are forever indebted to veterans, particularly those who did not return, and we owe it to their families who grieve forever to support them. For those veterans who do return home, we have the responsibility to provide you with the care and support you deserve. It's the least we can do.

My grandfather, among others in my family, served. He never wanted to talk about it, but shortly before his death I interviewed him because I wanted to capture it on tape. His story of loss, of fear, of courage, of sacrifice is a story that hundreds and thousands of veterans who served in both World Wars, in Korea and Afghanistan, and on peacekeeping missions and many other missions, share. And so we cannot forget their stories or their sacrifices, and we owe it to them to stand up for a peaceful world, a democracy, and the world that our veterans fought and served to defend for us.

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The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: It's an honour and a privilege to stand up and say a few words on behalf of my caucus and on behalf of the people in my riding about the sacrifices that

people have made and continue to make for our freedom, our democracy and our way of life. We owe them a debt.

I want to say thank you to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade for bringing forward Remembrance Week, a bill that he passed in the last Legislature. It starts next Monday, and I want to thank him for including other members of the Legislature on that bill.

War touches everyone, everyone's family somewhere. In my family, my wife's uncle died at Dieppe in 1942. It was not a pretty death. That was a fairly difficult battle. They never knew how he died until many years later.

My mother-in-law just passed away last year. She was 97. She was closest to her brother, Robert Ansley Cavanagh. She kept his picture on her dresser for 75 years. She never forgot.

We need to remember as well, too, all the families: their sacrifices, their hurt and their pain.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for St. Catharines.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I am honoured to rise on behalf of the official opposition as the critic for veterans, legions and military affairs, on this day of the 11th month of this year, to remind all of my fellow members that today is the first day of 11 days of remembrance.

All of us owe so very much to those who fought and to those who gave their lives so that we might be free to live a life of peace. Their eternal sacrifice has made it possible for us to be here without fear of reprisal, for it is their service to us that has preserved our freedom to be in this very House today.

This month we pay tribute not only to those men and women who served during the First and Second World Wars, but also to the 158 men and women who gave their lives for us in Afghanistan—the most recent only seven short years ago—and to the 800 servicemen and -women who returned in 2011 from the conflict in Libya. We pay tribute to those who served Canada in the South African War and the Korean War, and to all of our Canadian military, land, air or sea, who left homes and their families to serve as peacekeepers. We pay tribute to soldiers, sailors and airmen who guarded and continue to guard our freedoms through the NATO and the UN missions against terrorism and piracy.

Time and time again, Canadians have signed up to defend our country, to take a stand against tyranny and to help restore peace in times of conflict. More than 117,000 Canadians have given their lives.

The Royal Canadian Legion has declared this year as the year of the bells. Remembrance Day this year will mark 100 years since the bells rang across Europe with the news, "The war is over. It's time to come home." To commemorate the end of the First World War, the Royal Canadian Legion developed the Bells of Peace initiative in partnership with the government of Canada. One hundred bells will ring out this year on Remembrance Day.

As the sun sets, the dawning of the sun, on November 11, Canadians across our great country will be hearing and participating in the ringing of the bells, but this time with a different message: "We will remember them."

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Premier.

Hon. Doug Ford: On behalf of the government of Ontario, I'm honoured to join my colleagues to recognize the start of Remembrance Week next Monday. At that time, we will pay our respect to members of the Canadian Armed Forces, past and present.

Mr. Speaker, make no mistake, our veterans are true Canadian heroes. In World War I, World War II, Korea and Afghanistan, whenever the world's most evil ideologies rose up and needed to be confronted, Canadians were there. The men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces fought bravely and sacrificed so much to protect our freedom, our security and our values, including those bravest of heroes who never returned home at all.

Our government recognizes that Canadian heroes span every conflict and every generation, including the brave men and women who served our country in Afghanistan. That's why our government is proud to be moving forward with plans to build a monument to their service here on the grounds of the Ontario Legislature and why we are committed to providing all military families with a hotline support right here at home.

Two years ago, members of the Legislative Assembly came together in the spirit of unity and unanimously passed legislation introduced by Minister Wilson to designate the week leading up to Remembrance Day as Remembrance Week. I hope everyone, every person in Ontario, answers this call and takes their time to pause and find their own moment of silence in the days leading up to November 11. I hope every person in Ontario wears the red poppy with pride. Nothing should unify Canadians like wearing a poppy. When you choose to wear your poppy, you're standing up for Canadian values: freedom, justice and human rights. It's such a small but important patriotic gesture, and a way to say thank you to those who have sacrificed and continue to sacrifice so much to defend our security and way of life.

Most of us will never know the horrors of war or understand the sacrifices our Canadian Armed Forces have made and continue to make—everything they do to protect this country. These men and women are true heroes and many of them walk among us today. So I encourage everyone in Ontario to join your local community on November 11 to show your respect and your gratitude, to show our heroes that we stand with them and that we honour them, and to find your moment, wherever and whenever you can, to say thank you.

We shall not forget.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I want to thank all the members for their participation in the tributes.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Point of order, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order, the member for Windsor—Tecumseh.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: With all due respect, we lost people in Bosnia. We lost more than 130 Canadian soldiers fighting with the American forces in Vietnam. We have a huge monument in Windsor with the names of all those lost in those conflicts, and I would not want to forget them today either.

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

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Before we commence with question period, I wish to inform the House that it is now time to say a word of thanks to our legislative pages. Our pages are smart, trustworthy and hard-working. They're indispensable to the effective functioning of this chamber. They cheerfully and efficiently deliver notes, run errands, transport important documents throughout the precinct and make sure our water glasses are always full. We are indeed fortunate to have them here.

Our pages depart having made many new friends, with a greater understanding of parliamentary democracy and memories that will last a lifetime. Each of them will go home and carry on, continue their studies, and will no doubt contribute to their communities, their province and their country in important ways.

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We expect great things from all of them. Maybe some of them will someday take their seats in this House as members or will work here as staff. We wish them all well.

Please join me in showing our appreciation to our pages.

Applause.

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

FLU IMMUNIZATION

Ms. Sara Singh: My question is to the Premier. Earlier this week, the Premier was on Facebook urging Ontarians to get their flu shots. The Ministry of Health says it's safer and easier than ever. If that's the case, why are we hearing from constituent after constituent about the challenges of accessing a flu shot for seniors in our province?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Health.

Hon. Christine Elliott: I thank the member very much for the question, but in actual fact, we do have an adequate supply of flu vaccines here in Ontario. They were ordered in advance. We paid \$54 million for the flu shots. That is more than adequate to get over 30% of the population to achieve the vaccine, which is what it has been in the past. We hope it's going to be more this year, because it is so important. Flu is a much more deadly disease for many people than one may think.

In actual fact, you can go to your physician's office, you can go to a public health unit, you can go to a pharmacy to get your flu shot. We have not been advised in the ministry that there have been any significant concerns with accessing the vaccine—there may be from one location to another. But there are many locations where one can go to receive the vaccine, and I would encourage people to continue looking, calling around to make sure that that actual location has the vaccine in quantities that are necessary.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Sara Singh: The Ministry of Health says seniors are particularly at risk of serious complications due to the flu. But seniors tell us that they're struggling to find high-

dose vaccines that are recommended specifically for seniors. We couldn't find them either. Of the 20 clinics that we called around the province, 12 said they haven't been able to obtain any vaccines or they were already out. We're really concerned about that. A few of them did have vaccines but warned us that they would be running out of that supply very soon.

Minister, are we ready for flu season or not?

Hon. Christine Elliott: We are absolutely ready for flu season. That is why we have made the vaccine available. That is why we have boosted locations in hospitals across the province to make sure that we can handle the extra volumes.

In terms of the actual high-dose flu vaccine for seniors 65 years and older, it's not for every person, but many seniors should get that one. It's not available in pharmacies. It's only available at doctors' offices. There may be a little bit of confusion about that. If they are looking, they should probably call their doctor's office to make sure that they can get the high-dose flu vaccine there.

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

Ms. Sara Singh: Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the minister: Thank you very much. Perhaps we can make that information more readily accessible and available to seniors so that there is no confusion on where they should be accessing their shot.

A flu shot is the best defence when it comes to reducing the risk of getting and spreading the flu. The minister has been quite rightly urging people to get their flu shots, but when they go to get them, as we were mentioning, some seniors are actually being turned away. If there's a shortage, why has the minister not informed the public?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I stress to say, there is no shortage. We have an adequate volume of flu vaccines for anyone who wishes to obtain one in Ontario.

If there are seniors who are having difficulty accessing the high-dose flu vaccine, they are welcome to call my office, and we will connect them with a physician who is able to provide them with it, because it should not be that anyone who wants the vaccine can't get it.

We want everyone in Ontario to get the flu vaccine. It's simple to do and it's free, and everyone should avail themselves of it.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. John Vanthof: My question is to the Premier. A shortage of flu vaccine highlights just how important our health system is to people who rely on it. Since the election, the Minister of Health has told hospitals to tighten their belts and is promising more so-called efficiencies. Does the minister think cuts and privatization will improve our health care system?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Health.

Hon. Christine Elliott: I think the flu vaccine should be something that is basic for everybody in Ontario. I cannot understand why there's a big controversy on the other side about that. It is simple to obtain. It's free. It is your best defence against the flu. You can get it anywhere. You can get it at your doctor's office, at a public health

unit or at a pharmacy. We need to encourage more people to get the flu vaccine, and we have more than an adequate supply for this season.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. John Vanthof: For people who want reliable public health services when they need them, the signs are not encouraging, Speaker. The government has assembled the same experts who helped close 28 hospitals and fired 6,000 nurses. Local hospitals from the West Lincoln Memorial in Grimsby to the Ross Memorial in Lindsay are already being targeted for merger. The minister has called for efficiencies. Are these the kind that she has in mind?

Hon. Christine Elliott: It's a bit of a stretch from the flu vaccine to go to hospitals, but okay, I'll give it a try.

What we are trying to do is to make sure that people receive excellent-quality health care throughout this province. We are working with hospitals across the province to find out what they need in order to stay up to date with their capital projects. We are looking for internal efficiencies, of course, in the way that we do things, not in terms of lowering the health care available to people.

What we want to do is increase the level of health care services that are available in Ontario. We know we have a rapidly aging population. We have medications that are coming on stream that are extremely expensive. There are more and more pressures being placed on our system, but we are coping with them internally because we want to make sure that people in Ontario continue to have excellent quality health care now and into the future.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: People want a health system that's there when they need it, whether they need a flu shot or a hospital bed. While hospitals across Ontario continue to operate above capacity, patients wait for care in hallways and seniors can't even seem to get the flu shot the government is promoting where and when they need it. It's clear that our system can't afford another round of reckless Conservative cuts.

Will the Premier reject that agenda?

Hon. Christine Elliott: One of the reasons why we have so many strains in our health care system right now is because we've been left with a \$15-billion deficit by the Liberal government, which you supported, and so we have a lot of work to do to make sure we keep our health care system in excellent hands. And that is what we are going to do.

We are going to make sure that our public is protected against the flu and other health issues that they're going to be faced with. That is what we are doing. That is what we concentrate on each and every day.

We are working with our health care partners to make sure that not only will we have a health care system now, but we will actually have a health care system for the future. It's not sustainable the way we are going now. We are going to make it sustainable.

Interjections.

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

Start the clock.

ETHICAL STANDARDS

Mr. Kevin Yarde: My question is to the Premier regarding the government's policy on the ethics and integrity of their ministers—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order on the government side.

Mr. Kevin Yarde: There was a disturbing media report yesterday, Mr. Speaker, revealing that the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services and his law firm have been embroiled in multiple legal proceedings that include serious allegations of misconduct and fraud over a period of almost two decades.

Was the Premier aware of this history when he appointed this minister and put him in charge of overseeing Ontario's police services?

1100

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: That's nothing but a smear campaign. That's all it is, an absolute smear campaign.

The Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services is the most credible minister down here. He has integrity, he has transparency and he's an absolute champion. I'll stand beside him any day, 365 days a year.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Kevin Yarde: The people of Ontario have a right to know. The minister in charge of overseeing Ontario's police services must be above reproach. But two days ago now, we learned of multiple allegations made against the minister over several years, including a finding by the Ontario Securities Commission that the minister had known for at least three years that his business associates were illegally selling shares in Saxton Securities, a company at the centre of a massive stock fraud. This minister has already come under serious scrutiny when, as minister responsible for the OPP, he campaigned for a candidate at the centre of an OPP investigation.

Does the Premier still have confidence in this minister?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: I have 1,000% confidence in a credible man who has sacrificed his time down here to serve his community, to give back to his community. He has integrity. He has honesty. To put up a smear campaign like that—you should be ashamed of yourself. You should be ashamed. I could go around to every one of your members—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. Once again, I'll remind—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Order. The House will come to order.

Once again, I'll remind all members to make your comments through the chair.

Start the clock. The member for Mississauga Centre.

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: My question is for the Minister of Finance. Just over four months ago, our government for the people was sworn in. Back in June, people from all walks of life packed the front lawn of Queen's Park to meet the Premier and hear him speak. After an exciting campaign, the people of Ontario were eager to hear about our plan for the people.

Since that day, we have begun putting more money into taxpayers' pockets. We have sent the message that Ontario is open for business and we have taken action to restore accountability and trust in our province's finances. Could the minister please inform the House of our government's next upcoming milestone?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you to the member from Mississauga Centre. It has been a long and exciting road since the day we were all sworn in. Our government has taken swift and decisive action to reverse 15 long years of damaging Liberal policies in our province. Although there is much, much more work to be done, the people of Ontario can rest easy that their government is finally working for them.

We are excited to continue our work for the people with our government's first fiscal update, the fall economic statement. We intend to table the fall economic statement on Thursday, November 15, when we will share more of our plan to help families and make Ontario open for business.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: Thank you to the minister for his response. I am very excited to hear that our government's fall economic statement is coming on November 15. If our accomplishments to date are any indication, I know that this fiscal update will send a clear message right across Ontario.

People now have a government that respects their tax dollars and takes the fiscal challenges ahead seriously. We've learned over the past few months just how damaging and devastating 15 years of Liberal government have been for our province.

It is a relief to hear that help is here, and not a moment too soon. Could the minister please inform the House about what we can expect from the fall economic statement?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: The fall economic statement will turn the page on 15 long years of tax-and-spend Liberal policies. The days of attempting to balance budgets through one-time revenue are over. Hidden deficits are a thing of the past. As our first fiscal update, it will lay the groundwork for the continued relief we are bringing to families and businesses across Ontario.

Every decision that we make is for the people, and the fall economic statement will be no different. We understand the responsibility the people have given us, and we intend to get our province back on track. We are prepared to clean up the mess the Liberals left behind. On November 15, Ontario will know that help is on the way.

SELECT COMMITTEE
ON FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY

Ms. Sandy Shaw: My question is to the Premier. My question is about the Premier's Select Committee on Financial Transparency. There are no witnesses appearing this week, yet when the New Democrats proposed hearing from Hydro One's nine-million-dollar man, former CEO Mayo Schmidt, the Conservative MPPs blocked it. If the point of the committee is to let the sunshine of transparency in, why are government members trying to close the curtains?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: We began with an inquiry, a commission that showed us that there is a \$15-billion deficit. We followed that up with the line-by-line review, which has revealed a tremendous amount about the state of the Liberal finances. We know that all this has led to the select committee.

This select committee's job is to get to the bottom: What happened, how did this happen, and how can we ever stop this tragedy from happening again? Not only did the Liberals tell us we had a balanced budget in 2017 when it is now proven by the committee that it was a \$3.7-billion deficit, they left the people of Ontario with a \$15-billion hole to dig out of.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: So to hear the minister tell it—back to the Premier—the Select Committee on Financial Transparency is a serious exercise in fiscal accountability, but that's not what it looked like this week. After insisting that commercially sensitive documents obtained from the IESO be made publicly available on Monday, government members on the committee decided to make them secret again on Tuesday. Then they blocked witnesses who could shed some light on the issues that we're supposed to be investigating.

New Democrats want to hear from witnesses who could shed light on what's happening at Hydro One and what has happened. Why are Conservatives blocking an appearance from Mayo Schmidt?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: What we are witnessing is without precedent in recent Canadian history. It is more than just the numbers, Speaker; it is about the abuse of the public trust by the Liberals, backed up by the NDP. Their accountability did not end on election day; accountability in Ontario began on election day. We now have a far better understanding of the breadth and depth, the waste, the management at the highest levels of the previous Liberal government.

The NDP can continue to deal in chaos; we will deal in confidence. The NDP will deal in resistance; we will deliver results.

1110

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. Doug Downey: My question is for the Minister of Government and Consumer Services.

As my father was in the navy, and I'm a member of Legion 147 and an honorary member of the Grey and Simcoe Foresters, I'm proud to see the poppy being worn by so many in the House. It's a clear sign that Remembrance Day is fast approaching.

Remembrance Day, formerly known as Armistice Day, was born out of the armistice signed at the end of the First World War. This Remembrance Day is especially important, as it marks 100 years from the signing of that armistice and the end of the First World War.

With that being said, can the minister explain why it's so important for Ontarians to take a pause on Remembrance Day and remember the sacrifices of the brave men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces?

Hon. Todd Smith: Thanks to the member from Barrie—Springwater—Oro—Medonte for that very thoughtful and, of course, very important question this morning.

As the proud member for Bay of Quinte, which is home to Canada's largest air force base, CFB Trenton, I'm very pleased to have military members living in my community who I call friends.

From the world wars through to modern-day conflicts, including the war in Afghanistan—and keep in mind that, as our brave men and women of the Canadian Forces were being returned home after paying the ultimate price in Afghanistan, they were repatriated at CFB Trenton—the courageous people within the Canadian Armed Forces have kept us safe and far removed from war in our daily lives. Whether it be in the Canadian Army, the Royal Canadian Air Force or the Royal Canadian Navy, these incredible troops have kept our country strong and free.

That's why, as Ontarians, on November 11 we take time to pay a moment of silence at cenotaphs and assembly halls across Ontario. It's a small gesture that goes a long way and brings us together, as Canadians and Ontarians, to show our shared gratitude for their service.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Doug Downey: Through you, Mr. Speaker: Thank you to the minister for that response. It's my hope that Ontarians across the province will attend a Remembrance Day ceremony this year, whether it's here at Queen's Park or at home in their ridings.

This government understands the importance of not only remembering, but also commemorating the bravery and courage of our Canadian Armed Forces. That is why, during the campaign, our Premier and our party promised to build a war memorial to the veterans of the war in Afghanistan, who fought to promote and protect our democracy.

Can the minister please tell this House what our government will be doing to inform Ontarians of Remembrance Day and how they can honour the sacrifices of our military in their own ridings?

Hon. Todd Smith: Thanks again to the member for the question.

Our government is launching a comprehensive campaign—we have actually already done that—to inform people about Remembrance Day and ensure that as many Ontarians as possible get out to honour our veterans.

As the member alluded to before, our government will be paying tribute to all veterans of the war in Afghanistan by building a memorial in their honour on the grounds here at Queen's Park.

Beginning on November 5, next week, Remembrance Week, will be an opportunity for Ontarians to unite and pay tribute to members of the Canadian Armed Forces for their courage and sacrifice in serving Canada at home and abroad.

During this time, Ontarians can participate by organizing a Remembrance Day or Remembrance Week event and sharing their gratitude and respect online by using the hashtag #RemembranceDay. Residents can also visit the interactive map at ontario.ca/remembranceday to easily find a Remembrance Day ceremony that is near them in their community.

I encourage all members of the House and everybody watching to find your own way to honour our veterans a week from Sunday, November 11.

CANNABIS REGULATION

Ms. Sara Singh: My question is for the Attorney General. This summer, the government called emergency sessions to ram through unilateral cuts to Toronto city council. Yet this government chose not to spend any time preparing for the legalization of cannabis, something we had all known was coming for years. Now, media report after report shows that the government has botched the rollout of cannabis legalization, with over 1,000 complaints to the Ombudsman about the Ontario Cannabis Store in just two weeks.

Why was this government so wholly unprepared to handle the rollout of legal cannabis?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you for the question. It is our understanding that the Ontario Cannabis Store is indeed working with the Ombudsman on this matter. Customers have a right to great customer service, and we expect the Ontario Cannabis Store to deliver.

But I will say that Ontario received more orders for cannabis online—100,000 orders on the first day. That is more than every single other province combined.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Holy smokes.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: It is a lot of holy smokes.

We continue to work very closely with all stakeholders. These are uncharted waters. We've been in prohibition for 100 years. We've rolled out a multi-million-dollar business in a multi-billion-dollar sector.

We know that the Ontario Cannabis Store will continue to provide good service to our customers.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Sara Singh: Through you, Mr. Speaker: Other provinces are not having the backlog in delivery that our province is. The media are reporting that Ontario Cannabis Store customers are so frustrated by the current system that they are actually going back to the illicit market and black market in order to access legal cannabis. Every time the Ontario Cannabis Store botches or delays an order, they

are encouraging that customer to return to the black market.

Minister, what is this government doing to curtail the black market of cannabis and why are we not prepared to offer a legal alternative?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Certainly, we are prepared to offer a legal alternative. The Ontario Cannabis Store, ocs.ca, is open for business and making deliveries on a daily basis, despite the postal disruptions.

When it comes to these illegal dispensaries, let us be absolutely and crystal clear with this: If you are operating an illegal dispensary today, you will never, ever, ever have the opportunity now to own a legal bricks and mortar store. We're crystal clear on that.

You asked about the tools. We have given municipalities the tools to act—it is up to a \$250,000 fine, not only on the illegal dispensary for continuing to offer cannabis illegally, but it is also up to a \$250,000 fine for the landlord. This is one way that we are moving to curb this. If the building is owned by a corporation, it is up to a \$1-million fine. So the tools are being made to municipalities to thwart this. The whole goal is to curb the illegal market.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. John Fraser: My question is for the Premier. Good morning, Premier. I hope you had a fun Halloween.

Yesterday was a really scary day for Ontarians, and not because of all the little ghosts and goblins who came to the door, but because Ontario became the largest jurisdiction in North America without a plan for climate change—we're likely the largest place in the world.

Climate change presents a danger right now to our way of life. I know the Premier is busy with his federal leadership campaign, but it's sheer madness that we have no plan for climate change here in Ontario.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, can the Premier tell us if he has a plan for climate change, and if he does, what it is?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker, our government was elected to get rid of the inefficient cap-and-trade—a tax grab that this province and this country have never seen. It's about making businesses more competitive, about taking the burden off the backs of each individual in Ontario. It's about making Ontario thrive once again. As the Financial Accountability Officer said, confirming that we're going to save the taxpayers \$1.3 billion—that's \$264 a household so they might be able to go out and do the things they may not be able to do under the cap-and-trade, the carbon tax. It's the absolute worst tax ever.

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The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. John Fraser: I have your answer for you, Mr. Premier: You do have a plan for climate change. As a matter of fact, your Minister of the Environment signed on to it about this time last year. I think the Attorney General did, and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Actually, the whole front row signed on to the People's Guarantee that had a plan for climate change.

Interjections.

Mr. John Fraser: Well, you did—probably most of your caucus. You did; you did; there's one that didn't. There we go. We do have the anomaly.

So the question is this: What's changed in the last 12 months? What's the big change? The C.D. Howe Institute tells us we need a plan. Two of this year's Nobel Prize winners told us we need a plan. The Premier's own budget adviser has been telling people we need a plan. So how is it that the Premier can find the time to find jobs for his friends but can't find time to have a plan for climate change?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Rod Phillips: I'll tell the leader of the independent Liberals what happened and what changed. What changed was an election.

We've been clear. We will bring forward a plan this month that does not punish Ontario taxpayers, that does not punish Ontario families. What we won't have is the sort of out-of-control spending that was a part of the cap-and-trade program—money going to Warren Buffett to help him build an electric truck factory, hundreds of millions of dollars on window programs that were out of control.

Our program won't punish Ontario families. It rewards Ontario families. It rewards Ontario for the work it has already done on climate change. It will help reduce greenhouse gases, will plan for the future, but we won't punish Ontario families.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Michael Parsa: I'm trying to ensure my colleagues are ready for this.

My question is for the Minister of Finance. The nearly 10 million drivers across Ontario have sent us a strong message: They want an auto insurance system that meets their needs and works for them. We have heard a lot of ideas over the past weeks about the need to improve our auto insurance system. Some of these ideas, however, have been better than others.

I'm concerned that the member from Brampton East has brought forward a plan that would exacerbate existing insurance within the system. As the private member's bill introduced by the member from Brampton East will be debated this afternoon, could the minister please inform the House about the shortcomings of the proposed legislation?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you to the member from Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill for the question. The NDP member from Brampton East has introduced a bill that would cause auto insurance rates to increase across the GTA.

The member proposes that the GTA be considered a single geographic area when insurance companies set their rates. However, his failed attempt to address rate discrimination would only serve to spread the issue to more communities. In fact, his plan would cause rates to rise in NDP ridings such as Toronto–Danforth, Beaches–East

York, Toronto–St. Paul's, Parkdale–High Park and University–Rosedale.

I wonder if these members will be supporting their colleague's bill and voting for higher auto insurance rates for their own constituents.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. Michael Parsa: Thank you to the minister for his response. It's unfortunate that the member from Brampton East is promoting a policy that would only serve to increase insurance costs across the GTA. After the failed stretch goals of the Liberals and the NDP, drivers across Ontario demand better, and they deserve better. Thankfully, we have another option available to us.

Interjections.

Mr. Michael Parsa: As we all know—get ready, Paul—my caucus colleague the member from Milton has introduced a private member's bill, the Ending Discrimination in Automobile Insurance Act, 2018, that, if passed, will actually make a positive difference.

Could the minister please remind the House about the thoughtful proposals that the member from Milton brought forward to the Legislature?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: I'll begin by once again thanking the member from Milton for his leadership on this file. Unfortunately, the NDP member from Brampton East rushed to introduce his bill after the PC member from Milton introduced his thoughtful proposal. The member from Brampton East, again, was a few days late and many, many dollars short.

However, the member from Milton got this right. He took the time to consult, to listen and to develop a plan that, if passed, will deliver real fairness to the system. His bill proposes fundamental changes to the auto insurance system. We truly look forward to further discussing his bill when it comes to debate. Together we will ensure fairness in rate setting, end discriminatory practices, and work toward a system that puts drivers first.

YOUTH SERVICES

Mr. Percy Hatfield: My question is to the Minister of Education.

Speaker, I know you've heard of the organization Big Brothers Big Sisters. The government helps fund them to provide a mentoring program in schools. It's cost-efficient and it provides essential prevention and intervention for children already demonstrating negative behaviours toward their teachers and their peers. Some of these kids are already engaging in risky behaviour, such as drug or alcohol abuse, or they face mental health challenges.

Can the minister tell us why she is considering ending the funding to such a valuable mentoring program?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm pleased to stand and address this. First and foremost, Big Brothers Big Sisters are supported by amazing corporations and communities throughout this province. I tip my hat to those communities and those corporations, like Westcast. There's a bowl-a-thon that's going to be coming up shortly. I applaud

everyone who reaches out and supports Big Brothers Big Sisters from one end of this province to another.

But I need to be crystal clear on this, Speaker: When it comes to transfer payments, we are absolutely taking our time and making sure that, after a \$15-billion deficit, we get it right in education. We're working through a line-by-line audit to make sure that the programs that we support align with our education priorities.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Cutting this mentoring program will cause a great deal of damage and could well end up costing society much more in the long run. Let alone breaking the mentoring bonds, sometimes these are the only reliable, consistent influences in a troubled life. Thousands of troubled young people need this service, including more than 500 in my area alone.

Will the minister do the right thing and protect this valuable service offered through Big Brothers Big Sisters?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm going to do the right thing by clarifying and making sure every member in the opposition party knows that we are reviewing all of our transfer payment programs. We have hit pause so we can do a line-by-line audit and do the responsible thing.

Interjections.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: It's actually embarrassing for this opposition party to be fearmongering like they are. They are saying things that are absolutely wrong.

Our number one priority, as I said before, is making sure that our transfer payments align with our priority in ensuring a safe, supportive, meaningful learning environment for our students across this province.

Again, we are working very diligently to make sure, as we conduct our line-by-line audit, that we have programs that align with our education priorities.

1130

IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE POLICY

Mr. Roman Baber: My question is to the honourable minister responsible for citizenship and immigration. It's moving day in Ontario again: Anywhere between 450 to 600 illegal border crossers are looking for accommodations now that the federal government's October 31 deadline to cover their hotel bills has come and gone. Since crossing illegally into Canada, they went from sleeping in temporary holding facilities to college dorms to hotel rooms and now, potentially, to Ontario's homeless shelters. The illegal-border-crosser crisis is out of control.

Could the minister update the House on what the federal government is doing or isn't doing to address this crisis?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: An outstanding question by the member opposite from our own caucus, who's been a strong advocate for immigration and refugees in the province of Ontario, so thank you very much for that.

Today, the federal Minister of Immigration, who has some responsibility for immigration—but they have played musical ministers there—gave a speech at the Canadian Club, but he failed to address the illegal-border-crossing issue that has strained our budget here in the

province of Ontario, up to the tune of \$200 million. The lack of respect for Ontarians by the federal government is unacceptable, and I will continue to challenge the Trudeau Liberals.

It's important to note that all Premiers of all political parties, right across this country, stand shoulder to shoulder with Ontario and our Premier, Premier Ford, to call on the federal Liberals for leadership on this file. This is an issue, not even just as suggested by the government's own internal polling, but also by their own Liberal cabinet and their own Liberal government, where John McKay says the only fair thing for everybody is to process—

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

Supplementary?

Mr. Roman Baber: Back to the minister: Canadians are losing confidence in the federal government's ability to manage the crisis of irregular border crossers. We expect—no, we demand—better from the federal government, and we in this House certainly expect the federal government to pay their bills.

Could the minister update the House on what our government for the people is doing in response to the crisis created by the federal government?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks very much to the member opposite. Of course, we have spoken very loudly and clearly with the other provinces that this is a crisis. It is a strain on our budget, up to the tune of \$200 million and growing, in the province of Ontario. I've had numerous discussions with numerous federal ministers, but nobody wants to take responsibility on the federal level for this initiative. In fact, they play musical ministers. I'm now dealing with, I think, five federal ministers, on trying to obtain the \$200 million they owe the province of Ontario.

Let's go through those costs: \$90 million in social assistance costs; \$84 million and growing, on accommodation costs; \$20 million for education, and growing and over \$3 million to be provided to the Red Cross.

I have a message to the NDP and to the Liberals over there: Join us. Call on the federal government to pay its bills.

LABOUR DISPUTE

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Speaker, 58 public health nurses servicing the greater Thunder Bay region have been on strike for over three weeks now. After two years without a contract and with diminishing resources and dwindling numbers, they understandably have had enough. But these are health professionals, the front lines and often the first point of contact for thousands of Thunder Bay's most vulnerable residents.

What is the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care doing to bring their employer, the Thunder Bay health unit, back to the table and achieve an equitable end to the strike?

Hon. Christine Elliott: The situation is most unfortunate. What we are doing now is encouraging all parties to stay at the table and discuss. I know this is causing a lot of concern to the people in Thunder Bay, and

it's for the benefit of all patients that the parties get together and try to resolve their differences. We are doing whatever we are able to do, but that is a discussion that needs to happen between the parties.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: Our public health nurses are often the first line of defence against infectious disease outbreaks. Just prior to the strike, these nurses were dealing with a serious and potentially deadly tuberculosis outbreak. Tuberculosis, unfortunately, isn't so much a disease of the past but a disease of poverty, which only stands to grow in modern-day Ontario. Not surprisingly, Thunder Bay's Indigenous population has been the hardest hit.

The Premier makes great hay of his love and support for front-line health workers. So, to the minister: What is she doing to ensure that these front-line public health nurses have the support of this government to get back to work?

Hon. Christine Elliott: We certainly value the great work that's being done by public health nurses across Ontario. We understand there are situations where diseases that we once thought were eradicated, like tuberculosis, are now popping up again. It's another reason why we're talking about people getting the flu shot. That's another great public health initiative and announcement. Very similarly, we heard also with consumption and treatment services how valuable they were. Public health made a lot of inroads and provided us with good, evidence-based information that we can make decisions on.

Once again, all I can expect and hope for is for the parties to come together. We hope they're able to resolve their differences very soon so that they can get back to the really important work they're doing in our communities.

TAXATION

Mrs. Daisy Wai: My question is for the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. For months, we've heard our constituents tell us that life in Ontario is too expensive. With increasing fuel prices and inflated hydro bills, the people of Ontario have been struggling to make ends meet. Affordability is a concern that has been expressed by all parties in this Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be part of a government that is attentive and responsive to the concerns of the constituents. Yesterday, our government passed Bill 4, the Cap and Trade Cancellation Act. Can the minister share with this House how this legislation will provide relief for the people of Ontario?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member for Richmond Hill—and I must commend her on the great work she does for her constituents. Our government promised in the recent provincial election to get rid of the regressive, job-killing cap-and-trade program. We promised to make life more affordable for Ontarians. That's exactly what we've done.

The bill, as the member mentioned, passed yesterday. The Cap and Trade Cancellation Act, in passing, solidifies that Ontarians will be getting \$264 more. We've already

seen gas prices come down by 4.3 cents. That is an important first step on our way to fulfilling our commitment to reduce gas prices by 10 cents.

Getting rid of the cap-and-trade carbon tax will reduce home heating by \$80, and for a small business, that's \$285.

As promised, we are going to make life more affordable for Ontarians. Getting rid of cap-and-trade was just the beginning.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Thank you to the minister for his great answer. This is really, really good news. I can't wait to go back to my constituency office tomorrow and share it with them. I'm sure they will be thrilled to know the savings they'll see with the passing of this legislation.

Despite how firm our government has been, in addition to the number of provinces that have risen in opposition to his carbon-pricing plan, Trudeau still threatens this province with his job-killing carbon tax. The people of Ontario were clear that they could not afford the Liberal government's costly and ineffective cap-and-trade carbon tax, and they cannot afford Trudeau's carbon tax. Can the minister explain to this House what the government's plan is to combat climate change?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, the member is quite correct. When the Prime Minister talks about a plan, what he's really talking about is a tax. It's a tax on moms and dads who need to take their kids to hockey. It's a tax on families that need to commute. In my own riding of Ajax, 70% of the folks who live there work outside of the community. Most of them drive. Many of them have two cars. The costs on them will be just too much. When he talks about taxing polluters, he's talking about taxing commuters.

1140

That is why our government has said that we will do everything in our power. Led by our Premier, Premier Ford, we are supporting the Saskatchewan government in its court action. We have our own court action going forward, but we will use every tool that we have to stop the gains that have been made by Ontario families from being clawed back by the Prime Minister taxing families, making life less affordable for Ontarians and worse for Ontario businesses.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Gurratan Singh: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Today we will debate my private member's bill, which will finally put an end to the unfair practice of postal code discrimination in auto insurance rates, which penalizes good drivers just because of where they live.

During the campaign, the Conservatives promised to end this practice, and now is their opportunity. Will the government support my bill to end this unfair practice once and for all?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: I can't believe we get to do this again, Speaker. Somehow, I think we know what we're about to say.

Let me first congratulate the member from Milton. The member from Brampton East wants the GTA to be con-

sidered a single geographic area when insurance companies set their rates. As I said in an earlier answer, this is going to raise NDP members' rates, as well as others. But let me just remind you—Toronto–Danforth: Your rates will go up; Beaches–East York: Your rates will go up; Toronto–St. Paul's: Rates are going up; Parkdale–High Park: up; University–Rosedale: Rates are going to rise.

This is your own member. This is what you are about to do throughout Ontario—

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

Mr. Gurratan Singh: Back to the minister: According to dozens of lawyers who examined both my bill and the bill put forward by the member from Milton, only my bill will actually end the practice of postal code discrimination in auto insurance. In fact, these lawyers said, "On the surface, they may look the same, but to those of us with experience fighting for drivers, there are important differences that make Bill 44, introduced by Gurratan Singh, superior to Bill 42," the member for Milton's bill.

"Simply put, Bill 42 has vague language which creates a loophole that insurance companies can exploit, and Bill 44 does not. Mr. Singh's bill will protect safe drivers, while Mr. Gill's bill would let companies continue to exploit drivers just because of where they live."

Minister, why is the government allowing insurance companies to continue gouging good drivers because of where they live?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: I can tell the member from Brampton East a small history lesson: It was the Liberal government back in 2012 that was attempting to get their budget passed that asked the NDP for what concessions they could make. Together, they conspired to come up with a 15% savings on insurance rates. There was never any plan, there was never any hope of that ever happening, but they got into bed with each other on this deal that was going nowhere, and that's what happened, Speaker.

That's why—unlike our party, where we acknowledge that there are 10 million drivers in Ontario who expect us to do everything we can to ensure the auto insurance system is working for them. We congratulate the member from Milton for his bill.

CARBON MONOXIDE MONOXYDE DE CARBONE

M^{lle} Amanda Simard: November 1 of every year marks the beginning of Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week in Ontario. Over 65% of all carbon monoxide deaths and injuries occur in the home. Thanks to our Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs's private member's bill passed on December 12, 2013, the Hawkins Gignac Act, carbon monoxide alarms are since mandatory in all Ontario homes. This law has helped ensure that Ontario families are protected in their homes and has resulted in the creation of Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week.

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services: Can the minister

please tell us why Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week is so important in Ontario?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Ernie Hardeman: I thank the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell for her important question about the most important week in Ontario. I'm proud to have introduced and seen the Hawkins Gignac Act passed as my private member's bill in 2013.

A constituent in my riding, Laurie Hawkins, faced tragic consequences within her family in 2008 when a blocked chimney vent had forced carbon monoxide from the gas fireplace back into her home, ending in a fatality.

My bill required carbon monoxide alarms to be in all homes across Ontario. These alarms help notify you at the early stages of poisonous gas in your home and are the best preventive measure to save lives.

As we look forward to observing the fourth annual Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week in Ontario, I would like to thank all of the fire departments, along with all of our first responders across Ontario, who help ensure Ontarians are safe each and every day.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

M^{lle} Amanda Simard: Thank you to the minister for his answer and for his hard work on his private member's bill that now helps save lives across Ontario.

Malheureusement, encore beaucoup de Canadiens ne remplacent pas les piles de leur détecteur de monoxyde de carbone, croyant qu'elles durent beaucoup plus longtemps que c'est le cas.

Unfortunately, there are still many Canadians who do not replace the batteries on their carbon monoxide alarms, believing that they last much longer than they actually do, and still many do not have their heating systems checked annually. There are also still many who believe you only need a carbon monoxide alarm if you have a gas furnace.

Back to the minister: Can the minister please tell us what this government is doing to promote best practices and raise awareness on the dangers of carbon monoxide in household appliances and in family homes?

Hon. Ernie Hardeman: Back to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Thank you to the member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell for that very important question. I would also like to thank the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs for being a leader on this very important issue.

My ministry is committed to ensuring that all Ontarians are safe across the province and especially in their own homes. Since 2013, all homes across the province, including apartment buildings and condos, are required to have carbon monoxide detectors in their units. My ministry recommends that Ontario residents have all their fuel-burning appliances and vents inspected annually, and that all installed carbon monoxide alarms are tested regularly. Our ministry provides online resources and assistance in our communities to educate Ontarians on best practices to keep their families safe every day and especially during this important week.

I would like to thank John Gignac and his family for raising awareness on this important issue, which has

tragically impacted his family, and all of our firefighter departments and first responders across the province for keeping Ontarians safe.

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Ms. Jennifer K. French: My question is to the Minister of Labour. Adam Brunt died tragically three and a half years ago while training to become a firefighter. Five years earlier, Gary Kendall also died in a safety training exercise. Both men died while taking an unregulated, unsafe private training course with the private company Herschel Rescue.

When it comes to these private training companies, there are no rules or regulations, but there can be tragic consequences. The minister knows that. One year ago, as the PC critic for community safety, she wrote a letter of support for the adoption of the jury recommendations from the inquest into the deaths of Gary Kendall and Adam Brunt. She wrote, "It is clear that establishing clear training standards and regulations along with proper mechanisms of oversight and regulation would prevent further deaths and/or injuries."

Does the Minister of Labour still believe in standards, regulation and oversight of private training companies to keep our future firefighters safe?

1150

Hon. Laurie Scott: To the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, please.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: As we've always mentioned, public safety is a primary concern of our ministry. As such, we remain committed to improving and enhancing public safety.

Over the last few months, including at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario's annual conference, we heard very clearly from municipalities and stakeholders that the certification regulation would present significant challenges for fire services and municipalities, in particular small, rural and northern municipalities with volunteer fire departments. We intend to work with municipalities and with the fire departments to ensure that adequate training is presented. But it will take into account the finances and—

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: With all due respect for that answer, that answer is completely irrelevant. The question is about unprotected private safety trainees, not about firefighters, not about certifications. That is completely a separate issue.

Back to the Minister of Labour: Since the tragic and preventable death of 30-year-old Adam Brunt, I have called on the government for three and a half years to regulate this rogue industry. We regulate and license driving instructors, but not private instructors of safety and rescue courses. Adam was not yet a firefighter and did not die in a workplace or while taking a college course, so he wasn't protected by the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services or by the Ministry of Labour or by the

Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, but he did deserve to be protected.

Last year, my motion to adopt the inquest jury recommendations was unanimously adopted by all parties. Now I'm asking this government to support my bill, the Brunt and Kendall Act, to regulate, license and oversee private safety and rescue training courses in Ontario.

As the Minister of Labour once said, we should "protect our brave first responders from unnecessary risk of loss of life." Will the minister and this government support my bill to protect future firefighters and firefighter trainees going forward in their careers to keep us safe?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Respectfully, I disagree with the premise of the question. In effect, public safety is something that concerns the province. We are looking at the entire issue relating to fire regulations, and we will deal with the issues.

SKILLED TRADES

Ms. Lindsey Park: My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. BuildForce's labour market forecast says that 250,000 construction workers, or 21% of Canada's construction workforce, will retire this decade. Meanwhile, youth unemployment is consistently double the unemployment rate for the rest of the population.

I know from speaking with our job creators in Durham that many businesses find the current regulation of skilled trades—specifically, the Ontario College of Trades—to be ineffective. The college's overly burdensome red tape drags down Ontario's economy and negatively impacts businesses' ability to grow and create good jobs.

The government recently introduced a bill which, if passed, will wind down the Ontario College of Trades. Can the minister tell us how the bill would help address the skills gap, create good jobs for our young people and make Ontario open for business?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the member for the question and the work she does every day for the people of Durham.

Our legislation, if passed, will wind down the Ontario College of Trades. We've heard from employers that the current system is not delivering for Ontario's workers, employers or its economy.

Patrick McManus from the Ontario Skilled Trades Alliance has said, "I'm very encouraged by the proposed changes with a particular interest in the Ontario College of Trades, which created a mountain of red tape and added an administrative burden to employers. The Making Ontario Open for Business Act will bring us into modern times and reduce barriers to enter the skilled trades."

Speaker, we promised the people of Ontario to create good jobs in Ontario, fill the skills gap and make Ontario open for business.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time for question period.

A number of members have informed me that they have points of order they would like to raise. The first one is Mississauga—Erin Mills.

VISITORS

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I would like to welcome the grade 10 students and their teachers from Loyola Catholic Secondary School from my riding, who are coming to visit the Legislative Assembly today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

ADAM SHAW

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I'd like to say the name of my great-uncle in this House. He was killed 100 years ago this week in action, and it was just a few short days before Armistice Day. He was only 18 years of age and his name was Adam Shaw.

MEMBER FOR TORONTO–DANFORTH

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Next, we have the member for Windsor–Tecumseh.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Toronto's NOW Magazine has just published its best list, and I'd like to congratulate the member for Toronto–Danforth, Peter Tabuns, for being named NOW Magazine's best member of provincial Parliament.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Congratulations to the member for Toronto–Danforth.

CARBON MONOXIDE
AWARENESS WEEK

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Next, the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Hon. Ernie Hardeman: I would just like to ask all members of the Legislature to join us on the grand staircase for a picture to recognize Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Next, we have the member for Brantford–Brant.

Mr. Will Bouma: I just wanted to take a moment to welcome my friend Mr. Girish Dhawan to the House this morning in the members' gallery.

CANADIAN SOLDIERS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Next, we have Scarborough–Agincourt.

Mr. Aris Babikian: I would like to add the names of the Canadian soldiers who paid the ultimate price during their peacekeeping mission in Cyprus to the list of the Canadian soldiers who perished serving our country.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Is that it for points of order? Okay, I'm going to clarify.

The Speaker can't read your mind. If you want to do a point of order, it would be helpful if you would stand in

your place and shout out "point of order" audibly, so the Speaker can hear you.

Are there any other members who would like to do a point of order? The member for Mississauga Centre.

ALL SAINTS' DAY

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: Yesterday we celebrated Halloween, but today we are celebrating All Saints' Day. In the Catholic tradition, in the Christian tradition, today we offer our prayers and we visit the graves of our beloved deceased. I just wanted to remind all members that today is All Saints' Day.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Ottawa South has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Premier concerning climate change. This matter will be debated Tuesday, November 13, 2018, at 6 p.m.

This House stands in recess until 1 p.m. this afternoon.
The House recessed from 1158 to 1300.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Oshawa has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services concerning private safety training protection for trainees. This matter will be debated Tuesday, November 13, 2018, at 6 o'clock.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I don't think they've arrived yet, but I just want to make sure I get it on the record. I have two residents here from my riding: Anne McMinn and Kathleen McMinn.

They have guests from Northern Ireland, Lynne Kit and Allan Rainey, who's currently a sitting councillor for the Northern Ireland council. He's visiting us in the Legislature today and touring around Toronto. He is also the councillor for the community that my grandfather's family was born in. I'd like to welcome them when they arrive to the Legislature.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

SUDBURY WORKERS EDUCATION
AND ADVOCACY CENTRE

Mr. Jamie West: Today, I'd like to recognize the work of SWEAC. SWEAC is the Sudbury Workers Education and Advocacy Centre. It's an organization of workers helping workers. They're committed to improving the

lives and working conditions of people in low-wage and unstable employment.

Mérodie Bérubé, SWEAC's outreach worker, explained to me that Ontario's low-wage workers are diverse. They are single mothers who are living paycheque to paycheque, they are students trying to get out of debt, and they are seniors who can barely afford to stay in their homes. Many of the low-wage workers who SWEAC and Mérodie help are working in unstable jobs and are vulnerable to exploitation.

One of these vulnerable and precarious workers is Machaela Burcher. Machaela is a young worker from Sudbury, living on her own, earning minimum wage, struggling to make ends meet while trying to save for college. SWEAC helps workers like Machaela know and understand their rights.

Workers like Machaela know first-hand that bad employers will break the law because they know they can get away with it. Machaela's former employer treated her so badly for calling in sick that Machaela still has a fear at the back of her mind whenever she needs a day off.

It's frustrating for SWEAC and workers like Machaela that this government wants to make it even worse for those worst-case-scenario, bottom-of-the-barrel employers to get away with mistreating workers.

DOWN SYNDROME

Mrs. Belinda Karahalios: Today, November 1, marks the beginning of Canadian Down Syndrome Awareness Week. This week, we celebrate Ontarians with Down syndrome. We celebrate their abilities, their love and affection, and all the joy and colour they bring to the lives of their families, their communities and Canada as a whole.

We also celebrate those who work on their behalf, including the provincial Down syndrome organizations who work connecting families together, providing information and resources and reaching out to new parents.

New parents just meeting their child with Down syndrome especially need that support. Despite the value those with Down syndrome bring to our province, negative stereotypes persist, and parents are often greeted with a discouraging picture of their future. New parents don't need condolences. They need our congratulations and our understanding that while being a new parent is often overwhelming, there are supports and resources available, and they can do it.

And more than anything, they need to know that, in Ontario, we value those who are differently abled. They are a treasured part of our community. That is why this week, from November 1 to 7, we celebrate those with Down syndrome.

BRAMPTON UNIVERSITY

Mr. Kevin Yarde: This week, during a town hall meeting, I had the chance to meet and interact with citizens of Brampton from all five ridings. We took the time to

listen to their concerns, and to no one's surprise, one of their main concerns was the cancellation of the university.

The Markham campus was supposed to start construction—and, as a matter of fact, they were supposed to start digging this fall.

Residents and students are unhappy that they will not get a university in Brampton and will continue to have to spend hours and hours every day commuting to other cities across southern Ontario for post-secondary education.

With the population of those aged 18 to 24 forecast to increase between 2011 and 2021 in Brampton, the demand for a university education is increasing and will continue to increase.

Business owners are unhappy with this decision, as well. It has been estimated that the university campus in Brampton would have created thousands of good-paying jobs, and estimates from the region of Peel and the city of Brampton also show that there would be an ongoing economic impact of over \$286 million in Brampton annually.

The Ford government is once again neglecting the great people of Brampton. This short-sighted decision is going to cost the city hundreds of millions of dollars in economic activity and thousands of good-paying jobs, and that is not what the people of Brampton want.

POLISH INDEPENDENCE DAY

Miss Kinga Surma: I am honoured and extremely proud to announce that next week, Mr. Stanislaw Karczewski, Speaker of the Senate of Poland, and Mr. Krzysztof Grzelczyk, consul general of Poland, will be visiting the Legislature.

This year marks Poland's 100th independence day commemorating the country's regained independence on the 11th of November, 1918, after 123 years of partitions and rule by Russia, Prussia and Austria. It is one of the most important national holidays in Poland and to Polish Canadians. It is a day to reflect on their history and an opportunity to express their patriotic sentiment.

Historically, Poles suffered under foreign occupation, discrimination, persecution and massive deportations. This only strengthened the Polish spirit, and they never gave up fighting. So today I would like to pay respect to the millions of Poles murdered in German concentration camps and Russian gulags and to the countless and often unknown and forgotten Poles who fought for independence and freedom all over the world by saying the famous Polish phrase, *cześć i chwala bohaterom*.

For the first time in modern history, Poland is a free country. After decades spent fighting for independence, for their native language and for their own identity, Poles can finally enjoy their freedom and be proud of their homeland.

Long live strong and independent Poland.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Jill Andrew: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

I will not support the Doug Ford Conservative government's Bill 47. This bill is ripping two paid sick days away from Ontarians, away from the residents in Toronto—St. Paul's. Bill 47 is an attack on the most vulnerable Ontarians.

Furthermore, by stripping away the promised \$15-an-hour minimum wage increase, the Conservatives are stealing \$2,000 out of the pockets of the lowest-paid workers—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the member to withdraw.

Ms. Jill Andrew: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): You have to stand up so your microphone comes on and then say, "Withdraw."

Ms. Jill Andrew: Withdraw.

Your Conservative actions violate Ontarians' trust. How are Ontarians supposed to believe that their lives matter to this power-hungry government if you keep slashing Ontarians where it hurts the most: their wallets and their health care? The Conservatives must stop bulking up the back pockets of their 1% big bosses, CEOs and legal buddies, and start paying Ontarians.

What about Dora? She has been working 15 years in the same job, and she's still part-time. She needs her two paid sick days. She needs them for her physical and mental health.

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Workers in low-income jobs, part-time, precarious, contract and impoverished workers, disabled workers, single parents: They should matter. They shouldn't have to choose between sickness or having to get a death certificate for their dead mother before her body is even cold. Ontario isn't open for business; it's open for poverty—shame.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm just going to remind all members that when they're referring to another member, to refer to them by either their riding name or their ministerial responsibility.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: It's a pleasure to rise in the House today. Several years ago, I was on a commission supporting Frances Lankin and Munir Sheikh to review social assistance in this province. It took well over 100 days to do that because it was such a complex review that affected the lives of so many Ontarians. This government is attempting to do a social assistance review in 100 days, and many people are relying on the outcome.

Last week I sat down with my community in my riding of Scarborough—Guildwood and discussed the growing issue of poverty in the community and in the province of Ontario. I spoke to Bee and Theresa, and they told me that living conditions have worsened considerably due to the Conservative cuts to social assistance and the Basic Income Pilot.

Just yesterday, the Daily Bread Food Bank released a report that outlines that in the inner suburbs of Toronto and

Scarborough and Etobicoke, food bank usage is up and people's dependency is up. There was one silver lining: The report notes that the \$14-an-hour minimum wage has seen a decrease in food bank usage in the past year. That is definitely a positive sign.

Mr. Speaker, I am calling on this government to stop cutting services and to support people who rely on services and supports like ODSP and OW. Thousands of people in my riding rely on that, and I am calling on them to be thoughtful in their choices ahead.

DIWALI

Mr. Deepak Anand: Today I'll be talking about Diwali, the festival of light, which is celebrated by over 1.1 billion Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains around the world.

It is a day of hope and new beginnings for Hindus, who believe that the goddess Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, will enter their clean homes. Businessmen open new accounts. This is the time people offer prayers for health, prosperity and, most importantly, wealth.

Through Ramayana, a festival reinforces the idea that good prevails over evil. The day is also celebrated as Bandi Chhor Divas, a prisoner liberation day when the sixth guru, Guru Hargobind Ji, was liberated from Gwalior Fort and took 52 prisoners to freedom along with him.

The lighting of candles is especially significant. It refers to knowledge, wisdom and prosperity, and the prevalence of knowledge and wisdom over ignorance.

Diwali—and not only Diwali; every festival—isn't and should not be only about firecrackers, new clothes or sharing gifts or sweets. The true essence of Diwali is Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, a Sanskrit phrase which means, "The world is one family," and it should be about celebrating together with everyone.

This Diwali, let's spread the light and joy not only to friends and family but reach out to everyone, especially those who are less fortunate. I sincerely hope that this Diwali brings you, us, and everyone endless joy, good health and prosperity. I wish everyone happy Diwali.

LOCAL BUSINESS

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: It is always an honour to rise and speak on behalf of the good people of London—Fanshawe. Today I want to highlight the local businesses that have been investing in our province and creating good jobs for the people in my riding.

This past weekend I visited the celebrations of two businesses expanding. Starlim North America, an Austrian-based company, invested in expanding their operations in London. It will be the largest single-step expansion in Starlim's history, and it happened right here in London. They specialize in custom silicone products, and produce everything from automotive parts to medical devices to waterproof seals and baby soothers. This will be creating 120 good-paying jobs for the people of London—Fanshawe.

Sciencetech has been employing constituents of mine for over 40 years. The company reinvested back into our community and built a brand new addition. The facility will feature new dedicated testing labs, expanded manufacturing space, and a new shipping dock for larger products and projects. A large part of their business is solar simulation, which helps develop more efficient solar panels. Like Starlim, they will also be hiring more staff. This is a positive addition to our community, and it serves as an example of how businesses were already confident in investing in Ontario.

I want to thank Starlim and Sciencetech for being good business neighbours in our community.

ATTACK IN PITTSBURGH

Mrs. Gila Martow: This past Monday, United Jewish Affairs—UJA—and CIJA—the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs—held a community-wide vigil to honour the victims of the horrific tragedy in Pittsburgh. More than 5,000 residents of all religions were in attendance.

Premier Doug Ford spoke on behalf of the Ontario government and stated the following: “for us to come together as a community, to grieve, to remember, and to stand united in the face of anti-Semitism and hatred,” said the Premier. He also said, “Our government of Ontario and the people of Ontario are standing shoulder to shoulder with the Jewish community, our friends, and our neighbours. I can tell you, my friends, we will always, always stand with you, and we will never, ever waver.”

I want to just list the victims’ names: Dr. Jerry Rabinowitz, Richard Gottfried, brothers Cecil Rosenthal and David Rosenthal, husband and wife Sylvan and Bernice Simon, Melvin Wax, Daniel Stein, Irving Younger, Rose Mallinger and, of course, Joyce Fienberg from Toronto.

She had been a member of Holy Blossom Temple in Toronto, where she got married to her husband, Stephen Fienberg. She graduated with a degree in social psychology from the University of Toronto before moving to Pittsburgh, where she was a researcher at the University of Pittsburgh. She was known to have a gentle heart and was often worrying about the needs of others before her own. She leaves behind a brother who lives in Thornhill, two sons, and a congregation that will miss her dearly. May her memory be a blessing.

OXI DAY

Miss Christina Maria Mitas: Last Sunday, the Greek community of Toronto celebrated their 109th anniversary as a strong and vibrant organization. But that was not the only thing that they were celebrating. Greeks across the world were celebrating Oxi Day. In Toronto, Greeks celebrated with a parade and a wreath-laying ceremony, which I had the honour of attending and speaking at.

Oxi Day commemorates a key date in modern Greek history. On October 28, 1940, Fascist Italy demanded that the Greek government allow them occupation of strategic

military points on Greek territory, or face war. The answer of Greek Prime Minister Ioannis Metaxas was simple: “Oxi.” Oxi means “no” in Greek. On the morning of October 28, Greeks across the country poured into the streets shouting “Oxi,” irrespective of their political affiliations.

While many countries celebrate the end of wars, Oxi Day is different. It marks the celebration of the beginning of a war and Greece’s courage to stand against the overwhelming odds of the Axis powers. They did so for one reason: freedom. The Greeks would not be occupied.

This day was a key point in the unfolding of the war, as the Italians found Greece to be a tough and resilient enemy. Greece, against all odds, was not an easy target, and in recognition of their resistance, Churchill famously said, “Hence, we will not say that the Greeks fight like heroes, but that heroes fight like Greeks.”

On Oxi Day and every day, I am proud to be a member of this strong and proud community, a community that always stands up for what we believe in.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes our time for members’ statements.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

SELECT COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: I beg leave to present the interim report of the Select Committee on Financial Transparency.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Sarkaria presents the committee’s report. Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: As chair of the Select Committee on Financial Transparency, I am pleased to table the committee’s interim report. I would just like to take an opportunity to thank the members of the committee: Roman Baber, Doug Downey, Catherine Fife, Robin Martin, Lindsey Park, Ross Romano, Sandy Shaw and John Vanthof. The committee also acknowledges the assistance provided by the Clerk of the Committee and the staff in the legislative research service.

Report presented.

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INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

JURIES STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT (JUROR ELIGIBILITY), 2018 LOI DE 2018 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LES JURYS (HABILITÉ DES JURÉS)

Madame Des Rosiers moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 52, An Act to amend the Juries Act with respect to juror eligibility and to make related amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 52, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les jurys en ce qui concerne l'habilité des jurés et apportant des modifications connexes à d'autres lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the member for Ottawa–Vanier care to give an explanation of her bill?

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: Yes. This bill amends clause 4(b) of the Juries Act, which currently provides that persons are ineligible to act as a juror if they have been convicted of an offence that could have been prosecuted by indictment. This bill repeals this section and provides that persons are ineligible to act if they are confined in correctional institutions. The bill follows recommendations by Frank Iacobucci's report to ensure that juries are more representative, in particular of Indigenous communities and other overly represented communities in the criminal justice system.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

CRIME PREVENTION WEEK

SEMAINE DE LA PRÉVENTION DU CRIME

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: It's my distinct privilege to rise in the House today in recognition of Crime Prevention Week, taking place next week from November 4 to November 10. Crime Prevention Week provides an opportunity for local police services across the province to showcase the successful partnerships they have built within their communities to prevent crime and increase community safety as a whole.

I'm happy to rise in the Legislature today to announce the theme for this year's Crime Prevention Week: Help Us Help You. My ministry has worked alongside the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police to make this year's Crime Prevention Week a success. I want to thank Chief Kimberley Greenwood of the Barrie Police Service and current president of the OACP for all of her support.

Through their hard work and dedication, Mr. Speaker, Ontario's front-line police officers ensure that our communities are safe. They put their lives on the line each and every day to protect the people of Ontario from the menace of crime and the threat of gun and gang violence which, sadly, we have seen too much of recently. For that, we will be forever in their debt.

We, the government for the people, are committed to giving our men and women in uniform the tools and resources they need to keep our communities safe, because we believe that effective, integrated police forces are the cornerstone of community safety. That is why, as soon as we assumed power, we took immediate action by investing \$25 million in new funding to support the Toronto Police

Service to combat gun and gang violence. With this investment, we are sending a clear message to criminals that their actions will not be tolerated in our communities.

What's happening in Toronto is not the entire story. Our plan will include a strategy to help police combat gun and gang violence across Ontario, including our smaller communities and rural areas, because crime doesn't have geographical boundaries.

Investing in state-of-the-art technology and infrastructure is another way we are providing our police officers with the tools they need to fully engage in 21st-century policing. Over the summer, we announced that we are investing over \$182 million to replace aging policing facilities with nine new Ontario Provincial Police detachments so communities can continue to receive modern, cost-efficient and high-quality policing services.

Last month, we took immediate action to replace the province's crumbling Public Safety Radio Network, which OPP officers, along with more than 31,000 other provincial front-line and first responders, rely on to communicate in emergencies. Last replaced a generation ago, the current network is in a serious state of disrepair. It experiences up to two hours of service outage daily. It's not encrypted, and fails to meet P25, the industry standard, which most major municipal police services in Ontario—and throughout North America, I may add—are presently using. Not only does this compromise the effectiveness and safety of our first responders, such as the OPP, and their ability to respond to emergencies, but it also limits the capacity of other municipal police services when cross-agency collaboration and communication are required. This modernization project is long overdue, and I'm glad that this government is making sure it's under way.

Last but not least, we will continue to work with our policing partners to ensure they can enforce the federal legalization of cannabis. Our top priority remains protecting our children, ensuring road safety, and combatting the illegal cannabis market. To that end, we're contributing \$40 million to municipalities over the next two years to help with enforcement costs. We're also expanding training and detection by implementing a number of initiatives to address anticipated increases in drug-impaired driving. We're putting pressure on the federal government, which, after three years, still cannot provide front-line police officers with reliable equipment to test for drug-impaired driving.

Helping our police officers get the tools they need to fight crime head-on is only one part of the equation. We also need to address the root causes of violence by stopping its vicious cycle and preventing crime from happening in the first place. This work, of course, should not rest solely on the shoulders of police and law enforcement professionals. To support better collaboration in communities, we will engage with our policing and community partners to develop integrated community safety and well-being plans that address local crime and complex social issues on a sustainable basis. Police will have more support and interaction with community partners as well as members of the public, and take a more

proactive approach to develop and implement evidence-based programs and strategies to address local priority risks before they escalate.

I would like to commend the many police services across the province that go above and beyond their core responsibilities to develop local partnerships that tackle crime and violence, and focus on social development, prevention and risk intervention. Individual citizens, too, hold a key piece of the puzzle. Every Ontarian should feel empowered to help prevent crime and be engaged in the safety of their communities.

Our society is at its best when we work together and collaborate. Let everyone do their part. Help us help you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Responses?

Mr. Kevin Yarde: Thank you to the minister for his statement.

It really is a great privilege to rise and speak of Crime Prevention Week. As the critic for the official opposition for public safety and correctional services and as a member of the NDP caucus, I want to make one thing very clear: We put the safety of our communities and our citizens at the top of our priority list. However, where we differ from the government side is in how we go about achieving this.

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I think it's important to understand that crime prevention is something that requires the help of the government as well as the collaboration of all the ministries. To start off, let's look at the current situation that we have. We have communities across Ontario, including my own community of Brampton, that are concerned with violence, especially youth violence. The best way to combat this is to attack the root cause, and I did hear the minister mention the words "the root cause." So if we want to reduce violence and crime in our communities, we actually have to invest in our communities.

Currently, there is a lack of funding to help provide services to those suffering from mental health illnesses. We need to ensure that we take the adequate investments and make the adequate investments to ensure that those who need to get the services they deserve get them in a timely manner. But we have a government that has made cuts to mental health services in Ontario.

Secondly, we have an opioid crisis in the province, and we need to be mobilizing resources across the province so we can help those in need. Yet, with this ministry here, we have not seen the government take any major steps to address that.

We need to invest in education so we can put our youth on the right track and ensure their success in life. We need to make education more accessible as well as more affordable. What we do not need is to make education more inaccessible by not funding campuses in Brampton, Milton and Markham.

We need to make life more affordable for citizens so that they are not left in precarious situations. We need to take action to make housing more affordable so everyone can build their best life right here in Ontario. We need to

ensure that our youth and our communities have well-paying jobs with workplace protections, benefits, paid sick days, and living wages—not wages; living wages.

The point I'm getting at here at the end of the day is that to ensure public safety and to prevent crime, we need to stop looking at this as a solo issue or in a silo. The government cannot make cuts to essential services such as mental health care, post-secondary education and health care, and continue to neglect the housing and opioid crisis.

If the government is serious about preventing crime and keeping our communities safe, then they would go and invest in those essential services that people in Ontario deserve and are counting on. Otherwise, the actions of the government would be misaligned with its goal to ensure the safety of our communities.

In addition, I also want to take a second to talk about the cuts and freezes that this government has made to provincial grants from the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Cities like Kingston could be facing funding shortfalls. Some of these grants are supposed to fund programs that integrate police services with mental health professionals and to connect people with the necessary community resources and support systems to prevent further crises. We need those investments, not cuts. We need to give our police services the resources and the tools they need so they can do their jobs effectively and ensure our communities are safe.

Therefore, we, as the official opposition, will continue to fight for better health care, post-secondary education and mental health services in this province. I'm hoping the members on the other side can join to help ensure that our communities are all well taken care of. We, Mr. Speaker, care about the police as well.

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

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: It's a real pleasure for me to rise to comment on Ontario's Crime Prevention Week, which runs this year from Sunday, November 4, until Saturday, November 10.

La Semaine de la prévention du crime est un événement annuel au cours duquel les services de police veulent mettre en valeur les domaines de la prévention du crime qui existent un peu partout en Ontario.

I first want to thank all the volunteers who participate in Crime Prevention Week. I think we owe them a lot. We owe them a lot for their commitment to the safety of their own community. It takes an entire community to keep us safe, the same way it takes a village to raise a child. We need to approach this question with an open mind, recognizing both the needs of the police and also the needs of the community.

I know that in Ottawa–Vanier, the riding that I have the privilege to represent, people know how important it is to alleviate poverty to prevent crime. Ottawa–Vanier is the 18th-poorest riding in Canada. We know, on the ground, what the impact is of poverty in terms of trying to alleviate crime.

We all are committed to the eradication of the roots of crime, and I was pleased to hear the minister talk about

this. But I think it is important to look at this issue in a global way. The availability of guns and ammunitions is and can be controlled. Crime prevention is a shared responsibility, and we want to ensure that all levels of government and community organizations and individuals are connected. We must combat poverty. We must also be relentless in trying to ensure that everyone has access to services. Harm reduction approaches work, and they work well in areas like Ottawa–Vanier. So we need to continue to invest in the health care system, in the justice system and in all poverty reduction initiatives.

I was disappointed with the eradication of the basic income project before we could assess whether indeed there were some good results in terms of crime prevention and reduction in our health care expenses. I do hope that next week, when we hear what the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services has in mind for changes in her social assistance review, that she will keep in mind the connections between poverty and crime. We know—in Ottawa–Vanier, we do—that for true partnerships for the community, we need good schools and we need to have an all-ministries approach to crime prevention. That’s what I hope to see next week.

Crime prevention is about safety, but it’s also about the dream of prosperity without fear, prosperity without poverty. It demands equality within our society; otherwise, it’s not true crime prevention. I want to see in this government a commitment to true crime prevention, which is about the support of equality within our communities.

I want to speak, just with the little time that I have left, about the fact that November is also the month where we want to eradicate violence against women. I hope that the government, in this Crime Prevention Week, will realize how important it is to prevent crime against women and prevent violence against women. I hope that in the months to come we will see in this government a renewed commitment to supporting the women’s organizations throughout Ontario that are there for women, that are there to give them advice when they find themselves in court, that are there to give them support when they find themselves to be victims of crime. I know that police services across Ontario do want to have good prevention of crimes against women.

I urge the government to continue its efforts to prevent crime, to prevent all crimes against all Ontarians, but also to commit itself to objectives of equality within our society to ensure that we truly get at the roots of crime.

PETITIONS

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Marit Stiles: I’m very pleased to present this very large number of petitions on behalf of constituents in my riding of Davenport. The petition reads as follows:

“Petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly:

“Don’t Take Away Our \$15 Minimum Wage and Fairer Labour Laws.”

“Whereas the vast majority of Ontarians support a \$15 minimum wage and better laws to protect workers; and

“Whereas last year, in response to overwhelming popular demand by the people of Ontario, the provincial government brought in legislation and regulations that:

“Deliver 10 personal emergency leave days for all workers, the first two of which are paid;

“Make it illegal to pay part-time, temporary, casual or contract workers less than their full-time or directly hired co-workers, including equal public holiday pay and vacation pay;

“Raised the adult general minimum wage to \$14 per hour and further raises it to a \$15 minimum wage on January 1, 2019, with annual adjustments by Ontario’s consumer price index;

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“Make it easier to join unions, especially for workers in the temporary help, home care, community services and building services sectors;

“Protect workers’ employment status, pay and benefits when contracts are flipped or businesses are sold in the building services sector;

“Make client companies responsible for workplace health and safety for temporary agency employees;

“Provide strong enforcement through the hiring of an additional 175 employment standards officers; and

“Will ensure workers have modest improvements in the scheduling of their hours....”

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to honour these commitments, including the \$15 minimum wage and fairer scheduling rules set to take effect on January 1, 2019. We further call on the assembly to take all necessary steps to enforce these laws and extend them to ensure no worker is left without protection.”

I fully support this petition. I’m happy to affix my signature. I’ll hand it over to Olajire, our page, to table it for me.

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas certain commercial operations known as ‘puppy/kitten mills’ have been reported to keep animals in precarious conditions in breach of provincial animal welfare laws; and

“Whereas dog/cat breeding in accordance with the law is a legitimate economic activity; and

“Whereas it is the duty of any government to ensure the laws of Canada and Ontario are respected and that the health and well-being of innocent animals is protected;

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

“That the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services work proactively with all amateur and professional dog/cat breeders, as well as consumers, with the intent to tackle confirmed animal cruelty cases in

puppy/kitten mills and to educate all stakeholders about animal welfare standards.”

I agree with this petition, and I sign my name to it. I will hand it to page Taya.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Bhutila Karpoche: I'd like to thank Andrea Hatala for this petition.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas we, as a community, have not been consulted at all by our current provincial government regarding revisions to social assistance that will come after completion of the government's '100-day review.' As a result of our exclusion in this decision-making process, scheduled to end Nov. 8th, any changes that are made to our social assistance programs will not include input from the very people who are at their very core, know the most and are the most affected by these programs. Our government can and must do better;

“Whereas members of our community were consulted on the recommendations to forming a clear path forward to social assistance and income security reform. These recommendations were put forward October 2017 in *Income Security: A Roadmap for Change*. They spelled our truths, addressed some of the most difficult corners of the system, while still staying very conservative in terms of the proposed rate increases.... Regardless, we were still going to be well below the poverty line for a while;

“Whereas before the June 2018 elections, the Liberal government passed several recommendations from or inspired by the Roadmap, including 19 improvements to the ODSP and OW that were to start this fall. On July 31, 2018, Minister MacLeod announced that the rate increases would be cut to a one-time, cross-the-board 'compassionate' increase of 1.5%, and the 19 improvements were 'on pause,' pending the '100-day review' on which our community has not been consulted;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reinstate all 19 improvements to ODSP and OW on which our community was consulted, including, but not limited to:

“—3% increase to basic needs and shelter rates;

“—2% increases to other allowances;

“—changing the definition of 'spouse'—from three months of cohabitation to three years (as per family law);

“—replacing the board and lodge rate with full basic benefits;

“—doubling of the ODSP/OW earning exemption and reducing OW waiting period;

“—full exemptions of TFSAs, RRSPs, gifts and voluntary payments;

“—fully exempting in ODSP, payments from trusts or other life insurance policies;

“—expansion of remote communities allowance;

“—allowing dependent adults to get OW on their own when living with family due to lack of housing.”

I fully support this petition and will be affixing my signature to it as well.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Jill Andrew: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. I stand proudly to present this petition on behalf of the residents of Toronto—St. Paul's and \$15 and Fairness.

“Petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly:

“Don't Take Away Our \$15 Minimum Wage and Fairer Labour Laws.”

“Whereas the vast majority of Ontarians support a \$15 minimum wage and better laws to protect workers; and

“Whereas last year, in response to overwhelming popular demand by the people of Ontario, the provincial government brought in legislation and regulations that:

“Deliver 10 personal emergency leave days for all workers, the first two of which are paid;

“Make it illegal to pay part-time, temporary, casual or contract workers less than their full-time or directly hired co-workers, including equal public holiday pay and vacation pay;

“Raised the adult general minimum wage to \$14 per hour and further raises it to a \$15 minimum wage on January 1, 2019, with annual adjustments by Ontario's consumer price index;

“Make it easier to join unions, especially for workers in the temporary help, home care, community services and building services sectors;

“Protect workers' employment status, pay and benefits when contracts are flipped or businesses are sold in the building services sector;

“Make client companies responsible for workplace health and safety for temporary agency employees;

“Provide strong enforcement through the hiring of an additional 175 employment standards officers; and

“Will ensure workers have modest improvements in the scheduling of their hours, including:

“—three hours' pay when workers are expected to be on call all day, but are not called into work;

“—three hours' pay for any employee whose shift is cancelled with less than two days' notice; and

“—the right to refuse shifts without penalty if the shift is scheduled with fewer than four days' notice;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to honour these commitments, including the \$15 minimum wage and fairer scheduling rules set to take effect on January 1, 2019. We further call on the assembly to take all necessary steps to enforce these laws and extend them to ensure no worker is left without protection.”

I proudly affix my signature in support of this petition, and I hand it to page Maya.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mrs. Gila Martow: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Justin Trudeau government is not doing enough to protect the people of Ontario from convicted terrorists; and

“Whereas safety, security and peace of mind is of the utmost importance to the Ford government; and

“Whereas Ontario residents who have not been convicted of criminal acts could find themselves unable to gain access to various privileges they enjoy; and

“Whereas there are no provisions to prevent convicted terrorists from accessing privileges in Ontario;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 46 and disallow anyone convicted of a crime under section 83 of the Criminal Code of Canada and any international treaties that may apply from receiving:

“(1) a licence under the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997;

“(2) health insurance benefits under the Health Insurance Act;

“(3) a driver’s licence under the Highway Traffic Act;

“(4) rent-geared-to-income assistance or special needs housing under the Housing Services Act, 2011;

“(5) grants, awards or loans under the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act;

“(6) income support or employment supports under the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997;

“(7) assistance under the Ontario Works Act, 1997;

“(8) coverage under the insurance plan under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.”

And 1997 must have been a busy year. Of course, I affix my signature and give it to page Jacob.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I’m happy to table a petition on behalf of the great people of York South–Weston, a petition entitled, “Don’t Take Away Our \$15 minimum Wage and Fairer Labour Laws.

“Whereas the vast majority of Ontarians support a \$15 minimum wage and better laws to protect workers; and

“Whereas last year, in response to overwhelming popular demand by the people of Ontario, the provincial government brought in legislation and regulations that:

“Deliver 10 personal emergency leave days for all workers, the first two of which are paid;

“Make it illegal to pay part-time, temporary, casual or contract workers less than their full-time or directly hired co-workers, including equal public holiday pay and vacation pay;

“Raised the adult general minimum wage to \$14 per hour and further raises it to a \$15 minimum wage on January 1, 2019, with annual adjustments by Ontario’s consumer price index;

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“Make it easier to join unions, especially for workers in the temporary help, home care, community services and building services sectors;

“Make client companies responsible for workplace health and safety for temporary agency employees;

“Provide strong enforcement through the hiring of an additional 175 employment standards officers;

“Will ensure workers have modest improvements in the scheduling of their hours, including:

“—three hours’ pay when workers are expected to be on call all day, but are not called into work;

“—three hours’ pay for any employee whose shift is cancelled with less than two days’ notice; and

“—the right to refuse shifts without penalty if the shift is scheduled with fewer than four days’ notice;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to honour these commitments, including the \$15 minimum wage and fairer scheduling rules set to take effect on January 1, 2019. We further call on the assembly to take all necessary steps to enforce these laws and extend them to ensure no worker is left without protection.”

I add my signature, support this petition and give it to page Honora.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Michael Parsa: I have a petition to the Parliament of Ontario.

“To Ensure the Safety of Residents of Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Justin Trudeau government is not doing enough to protect the people of Ontario from convicted terrorists; and

“Whereas safety, security and peace of mind is of the utmost importance to the Ford government; and

“Whereas Ontario residents who have not been convicted of criminal acts could find themselves unable to gain access to various privileges they enjoy; and

“Whereas there are no provisions to prevent convicted terrorists from accessing privileges in Ontario;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 46 and disallow anyone convicted of a crime under section 83 of the Criminal Code of Canada and any international treaties that may apply from receiving:

“(1) a licence under the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997;

“(2) health insurance benefits under the Health Insurance Act;

“(3) a driver’s licence under the Highway Traffic Act;

“(4) rent-geared-to-income assistance or special needs housing under the Housing Services Act, 2011;

“(5) grants, awards or loans under the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act;

“(6) income support or employment supports under the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997;

“(7) assistance under the Ontario Works Act, 1997;

“(8) coverage under the insurance plan under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.”

I’ll proudly affix my name to this and submit it to page Amani.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: This petition is entitled, “Don’t Take Away Our \$15 Minimum Wage and Fairer Labour Laws.

“Whereas the vast majority of Ontarians support a \$15 minimum wage and better laws to protect workers; and

“Whereas last year, in response to overwhelming popular demand by the people of Ontario, the provincial government brought in legislation and regulations that:

“Deliver 10 personal emergency leave days for all workers, the first two of which are paid;

“Make it illegal to pay part-time, temporary, casual or contract workers less than their full-time or directly hired co-workers, including equal public holiday pay and vacation pay;

“Raised the adult general minimum wage to \$14 per hour and further raises it to a \$15 minimum wage on January 1, 2019, with annual adjustments by Ontario’s consumer price index;

“Make it easier to join unions, especially for workers in the temporary help, home care, community services and building services sectors;

“Make client companies responsible for workplace health and safety for temporary agency employees;

“Provide strong enforcement through the hiring of an additional 175 employment standards officers;

“Will ensure workers have modest improvements in the scheduling of their hours...;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to honour these commitments, including the \$15 minimum wage and fairer scheduling rules set to take effect on January 1, 2019. We further call on the assembly to take all necessary steps to enforce these laws and extend them to ensure no worker is left without protection.”

I’m proud to support this, will affix my signature to it and give it to page Marcel.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The time for petitions has expired.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

ENDING AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE DISCRIMINATION IN THE GREATER TORONTO AREA ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 METTANT FIN À LA DISCRIMINATION EN MATIÈRE D’ASSURANCE-AUTOMOBILE DANS LE GRAND TORONTO

Mr. Singh moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 44, An Act to amend the Insurance Act to prevent discrimination with respect to automobile insurance rates in the Greater Toronto Area / Projet de loi 44, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les assurances pour empêcher la discrimination en ce qui concerne les taux d’assurance-automobile dans le Grand Toronto.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Gurratan Singh: The NDP has a long-standing history working on finally bringing more fairness to auto insurance rates. The member before me, Jagmeet Singh, my brother, the MPP for Bramalea–Gore–Malton, on numerous occasions put forward legislation to address this incredibly important issue of auto insurance discrimination.

Let’s be clear, Mr. Speaker: Auto insurance is broken in Ontario. We need a complete overhaul of the auto insurance system. There have been systematic cuts to the benefits of Ontario drivers across the board. We pay some of the highest car insurance rates in this country, despite having some of the lowest accident rates. On top of it all, insurance companies are making record profits. A report came out earlier this year stating that insurance companies have overcharged Ontario drivers as much as \$4.5 billion.

Today’s bill is to address but one of these many, many important issues—postal code discrimination in auto insurance—and I am hopeful that today all members will rise in support of this legislation.

Auto insurance discrimination is one of the most important issues in Brampton. It is there alongside the issue of the university and the hospital. Over the past 10 years, as I have been communicating, meeting and talking to people in Brampton, it has been very clear: Auto insurance rates make it very tough for people to get by. They’re feeling the pinch.

To understand how much of an impact auto insurance premiums have on Bramptonians, we have to understand the situation of Brampton. We don’t have a robust system of transit in Brampton. If you can’t get around without a car, you’re not left with many other alternatives. If you want to get to work, to school or to university, a car is often the only means of transportation. People’s lives and their livelihoods depend on their ability to use a car. That’s why this issue of auto insurance is so pressing in Brampton: because if people can’t afford to drive, in many circumstances they can’t afford to put food on the table. They can’t afford to get to work.

Further, when we look at what we are actually arguing for, what we are looking into in regard to this bill, we’re looking at the fact that if you live in Brampton right now, you pay a higher rate of car insurance just by living in Brampton. You could have no tickets, you could have a clean record, and you could be one individual who lives in Brampton and your rate will be higher. If you live in another city—if you live in Caledon—your rates could be as much as 50% less.

If you look at it, it’s just one road. Take Mayfield Road, for example. It divides Brampton and Caledon, and just by living on the other side of that road, despite the fact that you might work in Brampton, your friends might be in Brampton and all your areas of involvement might bring you to Brampton, just by crossing over the road, all of a sudden your rate for car insurance will drop as much as 50%.

That’s problematic, because people should not be penalized for living in Brampton. It should not be a punishment to live in Brampton. That’s why this bill is

effectively looking forward to change the system, to say that your car insurance premium should be based on your record, not based on where you live.

It's also important to understand that this is not just a Brampton issue. This issue of postal code discrimination impacts communities across the GTA, including Scarborough, Jane and Finch, and Weston. It makes no sense that these communities, along with Brampton, are paying this higher rate, because if we look at the GTA, I reject this premise by the auto insurance companies that we are not in a regional integrated community. I reject this premise that because you live in one aspect of the GTA and not in another aspect, you pay higher or lower rates, because the GTA is an integrated area. The GTA is a place where people live in Brampton, they work in Toronto and they go to see friends in Scarborough.

1400

It does not make sense. When we look at the GTA, there are so many similarities: similarities in terms of density, similarities in terms of demographics, similarities across the board. In a region that's so integrated, in a region that has so much in common, and in a region where we are promoted to travel amongst these different municipalities, it doesn't make sense that there is such a disparity in regard to our car insurance rates. That's why I put forward this private member's bill. I put it forward to address the root cause of the issue.

Now, we wrote this legislation with a very focused intention. It's to ensure that within the GTA, you are paying a premium based on your record, not based on where you live. How do we do that? When we look at Brampton and the different areas within the GTA, we will see that in some areas, like Don Valley North, if you compare it to Brampton, you will have a difference of as much as \$1,000 a year, despite the fact that someone could actually be living in Brampton and working in Don Valley. Despite that fact, just because you come home at night and you lay your head to rest on a bed in Brampton, and despite the fact you might even spend more time where you work, you are going to be spending and paying more. You will be penalized for that.

How does our legislation work? How does the legislation I put forward work? It's very, very simple. There are two ways that it tackles the issue of postal code discrimination.

The first is that it prevents the superintendent from approving an application made by any auto insurance company that is based on a risk classification system that considers someone's geographic region. What does that mean? The superintendent who approves any increases to car insurance rates will say no to an auto insurance company if their policy assesses that individual based on where they live.

Because we understand that the Insurance Act is complicated, we understand that there are a lot of different factors, we wanted to keep this legislation very focused, with a very, very clean cut into how to fix the situation. So we said, "Let's even go further. Let's prohibit insurance companies from offering or even offering to renew contracts or policies that consider one's geographic region."

I'm emphasizing this language because legislation lives and dies based on language. As a lawyer by background, I know that the language we use is purposeful, that the language we use has impact.

That's why we also wanted to ensure that this legislation has teeth. If insurance companies are breaking this law, if insurance companies are providing policies based on geographic location, they can be fined as much as \$250,000 to up to \$500,000 for these infractions.

Now, we know that the Conservatives have put forth their own legislation. I want to point out how problematic their legislation is.

First and foremost, I'm going to point out the fact that I think it is incredibly problematic that they chose to put this matter forward by way of a private member's bill. For the watchers, the people who are watching us right now on television, to explain this: As a member of the opposition, we have one path to put forward legislation, and that is private members' bills. But for the government, they can put forward government bills. They can put forward something that demonstrates that this has severity and importance, that it has the whole government behind it.

That's why it's problematic that they chose this manner, because auto insurance is something that affects millions of Ontarians and it should be given the priority of a government bill. By relegating it to a private member's bill, they're demonstrating that this government doesn't really care about this issue. That's why numerous times the Minister of Finance has stated—as early as October 18, when referencing this bill, he said "if passed." Why is there doubt on the side of the government? They have a majority government. They could pass this legislation tomorrow if they wanted to. They could pass this legislation immediately. Instead, though, we have equivocal language coming forth from the minister.

Continuing on this path of uncertain language, let's look at the language put forth by the member in this bill. The language in this bill states that—and I've read this bill numerous times; I've looked at it multiple times—it will prohibit insurance policies that primarily consider postal code. It will look to prohibit insurers from using factors primarily related to the postal code or telephone area code of an individual who is trying to get an insurance policy. Well, as a lawyer, when I look at that word "primarily," I see one thing. I see a loophole. "Primarily" is not defined in the legislation. There are no areas in the legislation that say "primarily" means this much or that much. That means that the insurance company can very easily say, "Do you know what? This is not our primary factor. Postal codes are a secondary factor," or "It's our tertiary factor," or "It's our fourth factor." The Conservatives' bill does not eliminate postal codes from the table. Instead, if people look at this legislation, if auto insurance companies look at this legislation, they're going to see that it provides a gigantic loophole.

This is not just my opinion. This is the opinion of dozens of lawyers who signed on to an open letter that states that the Conservatives' bill will not stop auto insurance discrimination. They write in their letter:

“Bill 42, Mr. Gill’s bill, is based on the premise of banning rating factors ‘primarily related’ to where a driver lives. That sort of wording is not the specific language that will protect people. Bill 44, Mr. Singh’s bill, is specific that GTA drivers will not be rated differently based on where they live and a safe driver in Brampton will be treated the same as a safe driver from Lawrence and Yonge. One bill is clear. One has language that insurance companies will use to their advantage.”

Further, they write, “Lawyers know that insurance companies will take advantage of every loophole, no matter how minor it appears. It means that at the most basic level Bill 42 won’t stop so-called postal code discrimination. Bill 44 will.”

Mr. Speaker, it’s clear. Other lawyers have looked at it. This letter was signed on by law firms across the GTA. This letter was signed on by lawyers across the GTA. Just around 30 lawyers have signed on to this letter looking at both pieces of legislation. Both pieces of legislation were put before these lawyers, but they’ve shown very clearly that the Conservatives’ bill does not address an issue.

If the government is serious about fixing this issue of postal code discrimination, then they will vote yes in support of my private member’s bill today.

I want to wrap up my comments by saying as follows: If the government was serious about fixing rates of auto insurance in Ontario, then they would never have approved an 11% increase in auto insurance rates. If they were serious, they would have shown from the beginning that this is a priority of this government. Instead, we see a piece of legislation that, in my opinion and those of other lawyers, does not go far enough. It was put together haphazardly. It will not fix this very, very important issue.

My final comments are to please support this piece of legislation. Let’s put it forward to ensure that we are really advocating for the people of Brampton, Ontario, and all drivers.

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

Mr. Michael Parsa: I just want to start off before I go any further: We don’t just consult lawyers when we put it forward. We do work for all Ontarians, so we consult all Ontarians, not just lawyers.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak against Bill 44 and to elaborate on why I’ll be voting against it.

Bill 44, An Act to amend the Insurance Act to prevent discrimination with respect to automobile insurance rates in the Greater Toronto Area, put forward by the honourable member from Brampton East, seeks to amend the Insurance Act to require the superintendent of the Financial Services Commission of Ontario to refuse auto insurance risk classification systems if the system does not consider the greater Toronto area as a single geographic area. I’m standing here today to tell you, members of this House, that if this bill passes, there will be unintended consequences for the residents of this province, the same residents that it seeks to help.

Mr. Speaker, our government has committed, and is committed, to ensuring fairness in rate setting, ending

discriminatory practices and working towards a system that puts the drivers first.

By tabling this bill, Bill 44, my colleague across the aisle is hoping to lower rates in places like Brampton by requiring the GTA to be considered as a single geographic area by all insurers. However, I’m here to tell you, this will not work. By implementing a law that will allow auto insurers to consider the GTA as a single geographic area, the high costs of auto insurance will ultimately be spread across all the zones that currently make up the GTA. This will raise insurance rates for many, and it will only serve to increase costs for drivers all across the GTA.

1410

In fact, if this bill passes, many of the member’s own NDP colleagues would see rates increase in their own ridings. As the Minister of Finance indicated earlier today, the members from Toronto–Danforth, Beaches–East York, Toronto–St. Paul’s and Parkdale–High Park would all see rates increase in their ridings. I ask, what benefit would this serve to the residents of these ridings or the greater Toronto area?

As the Insurance Act and its regulations currently stand, insurance companies are able to charge rates based on geographic zones. Certain zones, such as Brampton, see higher rates than neighbouring areas based on this geographic distinction.

Mr. Speaker, as the representatives of the people, we are here to make life more affordable for all residents of this province. Therefore, instead of voting to increase auto insurance rates for their own constituents, I encourage all members to support my colleague the member for Milton’s proposed legislation, Bill 42.

Interjections.

Mr. Michael Parsa: That’s my honour.

My colleague the member for Milton has taken the time to get this right. His proposed initiative is a great way to combat rate discrimination right across our province, by proposing to make fundamental changes to the auto insurance system which will ultimately benefit drivers in the GTA and across this province.

Our government and our Premier have made it crystal clear that we are committed to ensuring fairness in rate setting and ending discriminatory practices. Bill 44, as it stands, will not make auto insurance fairer and will not end discrimination. While both Bill 42 and Bill 44 attempt to end rate discrimination in the auto insurance system, only the member for Milton’s bill is positioned to achieve positive results for drivers. My colleague’s bill, Bill 42, will ensure fairness in rate setting, it will ensure the ending of discriminatory practices, and it will work toward a system that puts the drivers and the residents of this province first.

It is for these reasons that I’ll be voting against Bill 44, and I urge everyone in this House to do the same.

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

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I’m proud to rise during this time of remembrance. My thoughts are with the souls of the veterans.

I want to sincerely thank the member for Brampton East for this important bill to end postal code discrimination in the GTA. I want to thank Brampton members for an excellent town hall meeting, where we heard with one voice that people want a change on this matter. Thank you.

I've been fighting this issue of auto insurance postal code discrimination for years. I've hosted town hall meetings—including one coming up in my riding on November 13. I've done research and written about the matter extensively.

The people of my riding of Humber River–Black Creek are sick and tired of getting gouged by auto insurance companies. Years ago, I found that the Jane and Finch community within my riding paid the highest rates in Toronto, but we were neither first in accidents nor in vehicular crime.

What's the rationale here? Well, these companies look at the amount that they're paying out in claims and what they're collecting. It has nothing to do with whether you're going to have a crash in the area or not. That means, if you live in a working-class neighbourhood where people do not have jobs with benefits—and that's only going to get worse under this government—if a person suffers a crash, the insurance company pays out.

Let's say your neighbour decides to go on a road trip to Ottawa, has an accident, heaven forbid, but does not have decent workplace coverage or benefits. They draw money from the insurance company. Your rate will go up, too. Yes, you have a clean driving record, but if your neighbour has a crash, your rate goes up. That's the system.

I met a tenant in my community who suffered a life-changing accident, lost his home in the 905 and became a tenant in my community. With him came his claim, so the premiums of his neighbours were now affected. What did they have to do with the crash?

Is this fair? No. This is a flawed risk factor.

This government is more interested in golfing with auto insurance execs than helping working-class people in the GTA. The PCs are absolute experts at kicking the little guy in the teeth and handing over more and more power to wealthy elites and rich corporate execs, like in the auto insurance industry.

Quarter after quarter, auto insurance companies jack up rates and are given a rubber stamp by FSCO. Ontarians pay the highest rates in the country but have the lowest claims per capita. Research has shown that Ontario drivers have overpaid by billions, yet still, quarter after quarter, rates go up. If you need to drive a car in Ontario, you have to do business with these companies, but do we know where they're spending their money; what they're making? Nope. Where's the transparency?

This morning, an important press conference here at Queen's Park shone a light on the practices of auto insurance companies that are withholding hundreds of millions of dollars in payments to accident victims. In describing these companies, Paul Harte, a lawyer representing the plaintiffs, said that these auto insurers are placing profit ahead of accident victims and that, "Anyone buying insurance from these companies is being gouged." He went on

to say that, "They're paying for coverage that the companies have no intention of paying."

Sadly, this government takes direction from the auto insurance industry. This government should do the right thing and stand up to these auto insurance companies, but of course they won't. That's why they're talking about private members' bills instead of bills from the government.

The people of Humber River–Black Creek, Scarborough, Brampton and many others deserve a fair system of auto insurance. All Ontarians deserve a fair system of auto insurance.

To the government: Please stop playing games. Do the right thing. Support this bill or face the wrath of drivers who are tired of this injustice.

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

Miss Christina Maria Mitas: Today I will be speaking to Bill 44, a bill to end automobile insurance discrimination in the greater Toronto area.

Bill 44 amends the Insurance Act to prevent residents from paying different rates for automobile insurance based on the municipality they currently live in. Sounds great, right? But there is a "but." Bill 44 requires the Financial Services Commission of Ontario to refuse auto insurance risk classification systems to determine the rates of drivers if the system does not consider the GTA as a single geographic area.

While the member from Brampton East's bill does have good intentions—namely, to confront rate discrimination in his Brampton community—this bill would mean financial consequences to the rest of the GTA. The bill would only spread the issue of discrimination across a broader scale.

I am very concerned that Bill 44 would negatively affect my constituents in Scarborough Centre by increasing their auto insurance rates unfairly. Most of the residents of Scarborough Centre already pay higher-than-average car insurance rates. According to a 2017 report on the most expensive rates in Toronto, Scarborough tops the list with nine neighbourhoods paying over \$2,000 a year, making it one of the most expensive neighbourhoods in this city. The cost of car insurance in Scarborough is already prohibitive for many of our residents, is what this tells us, and we cannot afford our rates to go higher.

This is not the first time that this House has tried to address auto insurance problems in Ontario. The previous Liberal government introduced the Fair Auto Insurance Plan. According to a 2017 report titled "Fair Benefits Fairly Delivered," this benefit system did not effectively provide assistance to people injured in vehicle accidents because too much money was spent on lawyers and competing medical opinions. This clearly highlights the need to get any further insurance changes right. We cannot afford to bungle this.

Unlike the previous Liberal government, our Conservative government is committed to ensuring fairness in setting rates and ending discriminatory practices as we work towards a system that puts Ontario's drivers first.

Bill 44 unfortunately fails to achieve its stated goal, but luckily there is a way forward. The bill introduced by the member from Milton, the Ending Discrimination in Automobile Insurance Act, tangibly moves us towards the goal of ending discriminatory rates based on postal codes. This is exactly what the member from Brampton East says he wants to achieve, and I hope he shows his sincerity by voting in favour of it.

Bill 42 seeks to end discrimination related to a driver's postal code or telephone area code. The member from Milton's initiative is not only a great way to fight discrimination in the GTA but across all of Ontario.

Bill 42 seeks to evaluate drivers based on their driving record and not where they currently reside, full stop. I think the majority of the House agrees that if you're a good driver, you should be paying less in auto insurance rates.

The existence of rate discrimination based on postal code was also previously mentioned by my colleague from Flamborough—Glanbrook, who noted in the Flamborough Review that one woman at Rockton World's Fair addressed her regarding rate discrimination and noted that she was paying \$150 more a month based only on her postal code. This is shameful.

While Bill 44 fails to address the root cause of rate discrimination, Bill 42 seeks to provide a province-wide remedy that fundamentally changes the auto insurance system to deliver benefits to all of our drivers.

1420

Although the bills mutually address concerns regarding automobile insurance rate discrimination, Bill 44 does not address the unfair reasons used to justify rate discrimination affecting Ontarians. The Insurance Bureau of Canada has stated that existing regulations are outdated and don't reflect the realities faced by today's drivers in Ontario. It is time to modernize the system.

Since Bill 44 does not effectively address and tackle discriminatory automobile insurance rates, and since it would have a negative financial impact on many drivers across the GTA—including the good people of Scarborough—I suggest that my colleagues in the House vote against Bill 44 and instead opt to support Bill 42, to bring a real end to province-wide auto insurance rate discrimination. Thank you.

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

Ms. Sara Singh: It is a pleasure to rise here in the House today and speak on the bill from my colleague the member from Brampton East. I'd like to begin by congratulating him for his efforts in bringing this forward. I'd go over and shake his hand, but we'll do that after.

This week we had a very well attended town hall on the issue of auto insurance in my riding. People from across Brampton had the opportunity to attend this town hall and raise concerns about the lack of action from this government to reduce the sky-high auto insurance rates that they've been paying. They were thrilled—thrilled—to hear that our member is serious about addressing the issue through his private member's bill. I am so happy to be

speaking in support of this piece of legislation, and congratulate him again for bringing this forward.

This is not a new issue. This is something that the members of this House are very well acquainted with. As I was out door-knocking, this issue came up time and time again. When we would ask folks what concerns they had about their community, issues of hospital wait times would come up. But by far the most pressing issue for them was the auto insurance rates that they were paying. Because many of them may not have needed to visit a hospital, but without access to a vehicle, they could not do basic things like get to work, buy groceries or take their kids to school. It was a necessity to them.

Continuously we hear about these concerns on auto insurance rates. Every day, actually, I get calls in my office from constituents who are letting us know that their rates have increased over the last couple of months and they are very, very worried that no tangible action is being taken by this government to help reduce the cost for them. It's concerning to a lot of us that this government has dropped the ball on an issue that they—and we all, collectively, together—can work on to ensure that we lower those rates.

I think of one constituent in particular who contacted us to say that she is a senior citizen who is having trouble affording her auto insurance rates. They are a staggering \$2,300 a year for a senior citizen.

Interjection.

Ms. Sara Singh: Well, maybe if she lived in Milton she'd be paying lower auto insurance rates, but unfortunately she's in Brampton, so that's the rate she's paying. She can come over and talk to Mr. Gill but unfortunately that's not going to help her unless she moves across the border into Milton. I'd like to thank the member for his comments, but perhaps you should look at how the auto insurance rates are distributed for you to understand where the rates actually increase.

She needs a car to get to her doctor's appointments. She can't take transit because of the chronic pain in her knees. If she can't afford to keep her car, both her health and quality of life will take a steep decline.

As the critic for the Attorney General, I also want to highlight that legal professionals with expertise in auto insurance have come together to back this piece of legislation. Industry professionals continue to signal that there is a serious, serious concern that inequalities within the auto insurance system exist, and that good drivers are being forced to pay the price. This is simply unfair, Speaker, and something tangible needs to be done.

These legal experts noted that Bill 42, the Ending Discrimination in Automobile Insurance Act, brought forward by the member for Milton, contains very vague language, with many loopholes, which creates opportunities for consumers to continue to be exploited by insurance companies. I wonder why, instead of protecting drivers, it looks like this government is more concerned with protecting the interests of those large companies and allowing them to continue, month after month, making profit off of Ontario's drivers.

Another concern that came up at our town hall the other day was the fact that these drivers are paying the highest auto insurance rates in the country, and yet, if they have an accident and they are not at fault and they go to seek accident benefits, they are actually being denied those benefits—another aspect of how this auto insurance industry is ripping our consumers off. This government hasn't addressed that concern either.

I'd like to close my remarks by just highlighting again how happy we are to support the bill being put forward by our member. We encourage members of the government to also stand up, work with us and support this bill to actually end postal code discrimination for communities like mine, and many others across this province. This is an issue that New Democrats have a long history of fighting for, and the bill that comes from our member from Brampton East is coming after years of hard work; it's not rushed-through legislation to try to get there first.

Other than that, I'd like to urge this government to think carefully—there were some things I was going to say; I'm not going to say them. In the spirit of being collegial, I'll stop there. I'd like to urge this government to think carefully about the next steps you're about to take. Think about how we're tangibly going to solve the problem, and the fact that we need to work together to ensure that communities across this province are not being discriminated against because of where they live.

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

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Today we are talking about Bill 44, which attempts to amend the Insurance Act. Having come from the insurance sector prior to having the privilege of being elected, I know there are many reasons why this bill will do nothing to improve rates in most areas. MPP Singh's bill does nothing to address the cause of rate discrimination. Should the GTA be considered as a single geographic area, costs will increase for the entire GTA.

Our government remains committed to ensuring fairness in rate-setting, ending discriminatory practices and working towards a system that puts drivers first. I intend to work very hard to address the inconsistencies we currently face in the auto insurance sector.

I can tell you for a fact that many of MPP Singh's own caucus colleagues would see rate increases in their own NDP-held ridings if this bill were to pass. I'm not sure they would be very happy about that. We did the math. Members from Toronto–Danforth, Beaches–East York, Toronto–St. Paul's and Parkdale–High Park would all see rates rise in their ridings if the bill passes.

I would just like to point out—the member from Brampton East may not know this, but the finance minister has to say “if passed.” He can't presume the will of this House.

It is understandable that we all want lower insurance rates, Mr. Speaker. Me too. However, there are realities that exist. Claim payments can be significant, whether it is for damages to the vehicle, accident benefits if you're hurt, or if litigation is involved.

There are many factors involved in determining premium rates: your age, gender, years licensed in Canada, commuting distance. Do you have a driver's training certificate? How does your motor vehicle record look? Do you have speeding tickets, seat belt tickets? How about careless driving? Impaired driving? Where do you live? How many accidents have you had which you're at fault for? How many years have you owned your own vehicle? These are amongst many others. This is what we call individually rated premiums, which most companies use today.

As you can see, geographical location is just one factor in determining your insurance premium. That's the problem with MPP Singh's bill. Having all of us in the GTA pooled together, perhaps there may be a small savings for me, but I doubt very much that the MPP from Beaches–East York over there will be happy to pay more for me.

Also, there are serious issues of fraudulent claims, high payments, accident benefits and litigation where lawyers take a lot of the payout.

The poorly-thought-out Liberal-NDP 15% stretch-goal insurance act in 2012 has done nothing to help Ontario drivers. The initial savings were soon lost. MPP Gill got it right: His proposed initiative is a great way to combat rate discrimination.

I recommend that all members of this House vote against Bill 44. I look forward to working to provide Ontario drivers with real solutions—

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

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I am happy to rise in support of Bill 44, put forward by my colleague from Brampton East.

Auto insurance is a big issue in my riding of York South–Weston and across the GTA. The decent and hard-working people in my riding are being hit hard by high auto insurance rates simply because of their postal code. My constituents pay higher premiums because of where they reside. This is unfair. It is time to end community discrimination. If this bill is passed, it will end the practice of auto insurance based on postal code discrimination.

1430

For many in York South–Weston, owning a car is a necessity. Fifteen years of neglect under the previous Liberal government resulted in fewer and fewer job opportunities in York South–Weston, forcing people to look far from home for work. Moreover, that same neglect has left York South–Weston with inadequate public transportation options to reach those jobs. The only way to get to work is to drive, because the jobs are outside of the community, and the long commutes are time spent away from family. For those people facing a two-hour commute by bus, driving to work is the only way they will have enough time to see their children off to school in the morning and tuck them into bed at night.

Nevertheless, owning a car is extremely expensive for my constituents, and it is becoming more and more expensive every year. I hear from people in my riding every week who have good driving records but who are paying upwards of \$500 every month for car insurance.

Postal code discrimination means that insurance companies are punishing people who made all the right choices—they bought safe cars and maintain good driving records—because of where they live. It means that working families in my neighbourhood do not have the same opportunities to send their children to extracurricular activities or save for retirement as others across the province because they are spending their money on auto insurance.

Many experts support Bill 44, including—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you. We'll return now to the member from Brampton East for his response.

Mr. Gurratan Singh: I'm going to say a comment right now, and I'll let the government—please correct me if I'm wrong, but I don't believe any of the lawyers of their caucus actually spoke to this issue in debate today. I'll let them correct me if I'm wrong. If any of their lawyers had actually spoken to this issue, they would have read this legislation and understood that the opinion that I hold, and that of 30 other lawyers, rings true: that they have a glaring issue in their legislation. They have yet to address or speak to this issue of “primarily.” Their legislation is written in a fashion that leaves a glaring loophole. I have yet to hear any response to say if they will address this issue or what their response is to the fact that they have a glaring loophole.

We know that this issue of auto insurance is a very, very big issue. We know that families across the board are feeling the pinch.

I implore the government side, I implore members across the aisle, to vote for their communities. Take this opportunity to put partisan politics aside and finally vote for the communities that put you here and ensure that they who are paying more money, they who are paying exorbitantly high car insurance rates, can finally have a degree of fairness in their lives.

We have a piece of legislation which is before you today. You can show them that this issue is something that matters to them. You can show them that this is a priority to them and that their voices and their everyday, effectively, pocket matters to you.

Ultimately, we have two pieces of legislation—the language is clear. You can choose to vote to stop postal code discrimination with Bill 44 and you can choose to vote for Ontarians, or you can once again leave them in a situation where they will be facing discrimination for years to come.

BRUNT AND KENDALL ACT
(ENSURING SAFE FIREFIGHTER
AND TRAINEE RESCUE
TRAINING), 2018

LOI BRUNT ET KENDALL DE 2018
(FORMATION SÉCURITAIRE
DES POMPIERS ET DES ÉLÈVES
POMPIERS EN SAUVETAGE)

Ms. French moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 10, An Act to amend the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997 and the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005 in relation to rescue and emergency services training for firefighters and firefighter trainees / Projet de loi 10, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la prévention et la protection contre l'incendie et la Loi de 2005 sur les collèges privés d'enseignement professionnel en ce qui concerne la formation des pompiers et des élèves pompiers en services de sauvetage et d'urgence.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Today, together with the families and friends of two men who tragically died, I am calling on this government to support and pass my private member's bill, Bill 10, the Brunt and Kendall Act, to ensure the safety of future Ontario firefighters and trainees. I've been working with these families and firefighter safety advocates for three and a half years now. It has been an emotional journey, but it is my honour to welcome many of them back to Queen's Park today.

I'd like to welcome the Brunt family, Adam's parents, Al and Christy Brunt; and family and friends Debbie and Larry Brunt; Brent Pearce; Tracey Pearce; Derek Reynolds; and Terry Smith and Mary Smith.

We welcome the friends and family of Gary Kendall and recognize his family who are watching from home today.

From the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association, we are joined by OPFFA Executive Vice-President Mark Train and Oshawa Professional Firefighters Local 465 President Peter Dyson and Vice-President Nathan Langille.

T.J. Thompson was a student with Adam in the course, and joins us along with Alex Van Kralingen, a lawyer involved for over eight years, who spoke today at our press conference. Welcome.

Speaker, my bill seeks to keep firefighter trainees safe in an unregulated, private training environment. They are not firefighters. They are not protected. This bill is comprehensive legislation that creates an entire framework to approve, regulate, register, levy penalties, license and oversee private safety training in Ontario.

I asked the Minister of Community Safety this morning if this government would support my bill, and he said that he rejected the premise of the question. I want to make the case very clearly to this government in hopes of changing their mind. This bill has nothing to do with regulating or certifying firefighters. This is about protecting those who one day want to become firefighters and are vulnerable to a rogue, unregulated private training landscape.

Speaker, three and a half years ago, I learned of the death of Adam Brunt, a young man who wanted to be a firefighter and who tragically died during a private rescue training course. I felt heartsick and was compelled to know what had gone wrong. We then found out that another family, the family of Gary Kendall, had lost a loved one the same way five years before. It has been a long and emotional journey for everyone involved. It has been my

privilege to know these families and to struggle through this exhausting and frustrating process with them. It has taken a long time to get here, but hopefully today we can finally move forward.

Before we do, though, I would like to take us back a bit. The reason we are here is because two men died, and I want us to know who they were. Gary's daughter Myrissa wrote this for me to share: "Gary was 51 when he was involved in the ice water training exercise.... Everything he did in life was for his family.... When he joined the Point Edward fire department he was beyond happy because it was something he could do to not only help protect his community, but it was something he could do to give back."

Adam Brunt's father, Al, shared this on behalf of their family: "Adam was our second child, born on January 31, 1985. He touched many lives in his 30 years.... He was unique, with his own style sense.... He was daring and fun-loving, always looking for new challenges...."

"Adam ... wanted to be a firefighter," like his uncle, "a career in which he could dedicate his life to helping others. He had never been happier in school than when he was doing the firefighting program at Durham College. Adam had found his calling...."

"We can only imagine the things he would have done if he was still with us."

Both men died under similar tragic circumstances five years apart. Gary Kendall's family called for an inquest after his death in 2010 but there wasn't one. Instead, there was another death five years later and another family grieving.

Like many firefighter hopefuls, Adam wanted to gain experience and pad his resumé to compete for a job with a fire service. There are many private safety and private rescue courses marketed to firefighter hopefuls, and Adam found a Herschel Rescue course on Facebook and assumed it was legit because others had taken it; however, it was an overnight weekend course with 12 students. On the last run of the second day, all 12 students and the instructor jumped in the Saugeen River and floated down one after another through a narrow, swift-moving section of river between two sides of ice. One by one they emerged through the narrow rapids, bobbing out the other side downriver, but Adam didn't. When he went through the narrows, he was forced under the water and his exposed strap got caught on underwater metal. The young students had neither the skills nor the equipment to reach or save him. They desperately tried, but it was many minutes before actual firefighters arrived, and then it was not a rescue but a recovery.

1440

T.J. Thompson was one of the other students on that course, and joins us today. She worked with the other students to try to reach him. She even ran up to the road to flag down passing cars to beg for an ice scraper or an axe or a rope or anything to use to reach him. They had no rescue equipment there. So many things went wrong that day, and nothing has been made right.

Adam was a firefighter trainee; however, he was unprotected, and others continued to be, and here is why.

These private companies are unregulated. They do not have to adhere to safety standards or industry best practices. Their homemade certificates mean nothing. Their only value is what the fire services give them at job interviews. It is a "buyer beware" situation. Trainees unfortunately assume that private courses must be legitimate since they are allowed to operate in the province.

Adam was a college student, but he took a private course that was not affiliated with his or any other college. Adam was unprotected by any laws or regulations under the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Adam was not yet an actual firefighter, so he was not protected by the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services. If he had been employed by a fire service, their training would have had to have met safety requirements.

The Ministry of Labour does not have any jurisdiction because these training environments are not technically workplaces and these trainees are not employees.

While these firefighter trainees are learning to keep us safe, we still haven't figured out how to keep them safe. None of these ministries is technically responsible for these trainees or their safety. This is an area that doesn't fall under any ministry's jurisdiction, which makes it, in my way of thinking, all our responsibility, and we can fix this today.

Alex Van Kralingen spoke earlier at our press conference. He was the lawyer for the Kendall family in 2010 and again during this inquest. He has invested much time into pursuing justice and solutions. He has said:

"It is crazy, given everything that we regulate in our everyday lives, that this sort of high-risk and technical firefighting training is not regulated.... The government has the power to fix this problem, and this matter needs to be dealt with now. This is not a partisan issue. Keeping firefighters and pre-service students safe is not controversial."

Mr. Van Kralingen had the opportunity to speak with the current labour minister when she was the PC critic for the Ministry of Community Safety. In fact, there's a part of her letter that I would like to share now:

"I am writing to you as the PC critic for community safety to express my support for the jury recommendations arising out of the inquest into the deaths of volunteer firefighter Gary Kendall, and pre-service firefighting student Adam Brunt, both of whom tragically lost their lives during separate training exercises operated by the same unlicensed private company...."

"It is clear that establishing clear training standards and regulations along with proper mechanisms of oversight and regulation would prevent further deaths and/or injuries."

Speaker, I hope that this government will decide to stand up for safety and standards and will pass this bill through to committee.

I would also like to share a part of a letter from Miss Thompson, who, as I mentioned earlier, has been a relentless advocate since Adam's traumatizing death. She testified for hours at the inquest, and I thank her for her perseverance. She has said:

“I was one of the 12 students training on the swift, icy Saugeen River on February 8 when Adam Brunt was killed. Adam’s death was preventable in many ways and completely unnecessary. Firefighters take risks when there is life and property to be saved and protected. This was training. There was no reason for unnecessary risks. Reasonable precautions for safety were not taken. It was not a sacrifice for another life....

“I call on this government to protect this vulnerable group of inexperienced trainees from unregulated training providers who choose to operate below the best industry practice. They need to be protected.”

Speaker, I have written four letters to government ministers. I have given two members’ statements. I have asked a direct question to the former Premier about regulating this industry. I held a press conference with the families and firefighters to call for an inquest. There has been a police investigation and a Ministry of Labour investigation. I have met with former ministers and their policy folks. We had a two-week inquest in May 2017. My motion to adopt all of the recommendations of the coroner’s inquest jury passed through this House last year with unanimous support. I have introduced this bill twice. I asked another question of this government today and, this afternoon, held another press conference. Now, here we are, deciding finally whether or not to regulate this rogue industry.

When I spoke to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services after question period, he said that I should have told him about it. He had been briefed that it was about an unrelated issue. Well, how can that be possible? I have not surprised anyone. I am not playing “gotcha” with this government. I have sincerely worked to ensure that this bill will pass and become law so that people don’t die.

For the government and the government members who also were not clear about what was in this bill that I tabled back in July: Most private members’ bills require a few lines to solve a specific issue. This bill is unlike any that I have undertaken. I want to thank legislative counsel, Lord love them, and the experts who worked with me line by line for months to get this right.

It is seven pages; it’s essentially government legislation. It is comprehensive framework legislation that gives the responsibility for development and design of courses, their regulation and oversight to the Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management, where it belongs. It amends various acts and brings all of the pieces relevant to safety and rescue training under their jurisdiction, where it belongs.

Right now, the Minister of Community Safety and I could decide to make a few thousand dollars on a weekend and advertise and offer a course on ropes, swift-water rescue, high-angle rescue—or bungee-jumping rescue, if we want to invent that—and offer it to students, make up what we want to teach, charge whatever we want, cross our fingers that no one is injured, and print off a homemade certificate for them to show a fire chief at a job interview, because all of that is allowed.

This bill changes that. Instructors would need to be licensed, satisfy the fire marshal that they would be teaching a standardized course that is needed in the province, meet basic safety standards during training, and appropriately assess and certify participants through the Office of the Fire Marshal upon completion.

The bill lays out a penalty structure, should something go wrong or if the course instructors do not comply with the rules and standards.

Students would be learning something of identified value and getting something measurable out of it.

All of the students at the inquest said that if there was a legit course offered by the fire marshal, something like what they found on Facebook through this private company, they all would have taken it because they would have known that it was legit. Every safety or rescue training course offered in the province should be registered, regulated and overseen by the province. We should know what we’re teaching and where—in this case, appropriately through the Office of the Fire Marshal, who is already responsible for training curriculum for firefighters. It is the right solution.

Any fine-tuning that the government would suggest, they are welcome to do, and it should happen at committee, to ensure that future trainees are protected.

Gary and Adam are remembered as being men who wanted to keep others safe and protected, and I challenge all of us in this House to endeavour to do the same. We must pass this bill that establishes the framework for licensing, curriculum, regulation, penalties and oversight of the private safety training industry, and keep firefighter trainees safe. We must keep them safe, Speaker, because they would do it for us.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate? I recognize the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: I want to thank the member from Oshawa for bringing forward this bill today and giving us this opportunity to debate it.

I’d like to first begin by thanking our brave and hard-working front-line officers, including the many dedicated firefighters across this province, for the tremendous and dangerous work they do to keep our communities safe.

Thank you also to the families of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to their community, their province and their country. Words cannot express how truly grateful all of us are for their service. Our thoughts are with the families and their loved ones today and this month of November and always.

Mr. Speaker, we must do more to protect the hard-working and dedicated men and women of our fire services within this great province. However, there are some serious concerns that may emerge, should the bill be passed in this Legislature in its present form.

During the election campaign, we stated that the status quo had failed. We committed to providing the necessary tools and resources to our dedicated front-line officers, so they would be able to perform their duties safely and effectively.

Our government for the people recently acted to repeal a regulation under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act which would require all firefighters in this province—be it full-time firefighters or volunteer firefighters. We took action to repeal this regulation, based on our consultations with municipalities and their respective fire services. An extraordinary number of these municipalities and fire services voiced their concerns regarding the mandatory certification that was to be implemented in 2019.

1450

Our government for the people is hard at work to develop the best policy interventions and solutions to help keep our first responders and the many people of this province safe.

As I've said before in this Legislature—I believe in July, as reported in Hansard—I welcome any and all members to work with me and discuss how we can best address public safety across the province. Unfortunately, the member from Oshawa did not approach me at any time to discuss how we could work together to address public safety in the province. I hope that in the future this will change. I truly believe that we are all here to make a difference and ensure our communities are safe.

Speaker, I stand here today and support this bill. However, there are some unintended consequences posed to the public safety of the people of this great province. It also places a tremendous burden and pressure on the province's Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management. This bill that we are debating here today would force the Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management to develop minimum safety standards for rescue training courses based on the National Fire Protection Association standards. While the National Fire Protection Association standards are utilized throughout the world, requiring the Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management to have the ability to create or adopt minimum safety standards is duplicative of the work that already is provided by National Fire Protection Association standard number 1670.

In addition, there are significant consequences presented within the bill. The Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management does not have the authority to accredit training delivery providers to provide certified courses. Furthermore, the number of providers of courses will see an increase, though we will not know to what extent this increase will be. In other words, the Office of the Fire Marshal does not currently have the resources to implement the proposed certification contained within the bill.

I'd like to thank the member for bringing this bill up for debate here in the Legislature this afternoon. As Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, I must do what is right to ensure the safety and security of the great people of this province as well as our hard-working and dedicated emergency responders and front-line officers. Notwithstanding the consequences associated with this bill, I support this piece of legislation here today. I hope that in committee it can be streamlined to fulfill its intent in not creating any unwarranted consequences.

Our government for the people is continuing to ensure public safety across the province. As I've stated many times before in this Legislature, public safety is of paramount concern to our government.

At the Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference, our government heard, loud and clear, about how many of the province's fire services were being unfairly burdened by the previous government's legislation. We're working hard to correct these pieces of legislation so that we continue to ensure public safety across the province. Ontarians deserve to feel confident in the safety of themselves and their families. I can assure all members of the Legislature that we will continue to work hard to keep all Ontarians safe.

Again, I'd like to thank the member for bringing this bill before the Legislature this afternoon. I truly hope that in the spirit of working for the best interests of the people of this province, we can collaborate and speak about these things early on as opposed to waiting for the last minute.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: It's an honour to be able to rise today, on behalf of the NDP caucus on the Brunt and Kendall Act.

First of all, I'd like to express our condolences to their families and to their friends, and our respect for the work you have done since to help protect others.

Everyone in this House has been elected because they want to represent people. They want to do good things for people, regardless of party. Having been in this House since 2011, I fully realize that. This is a partisan place. We disagree with each other on a lot of issues.

There's a habit in this place of saying, "the magnificent work done by member such-and-such." I'm not always in that habit, but you could not have a better member to drive an issue forward than the member for Oshawa. She listed the things that she has done to push this issue forward.

I commend the minister and his members for, compared to what we heard this morning, recognizing and changing the direction. But to say that the member for Oshawa—that this was a last-minute thing, is incorrect. Since the election, you've been very busy—I can understand that—with the change of government. But this issue has been before this House for a long time. And because of the severity of this issue, it has tugged at our heartstrings for a long time. It's one of those where you wonder why it wasn't acted on before.

As with any legislation, will there be problems to try to get it done? I have full faith that the member for Oshawa has gone above and beyond what any opposition member would do to make sure that this legislation would work, knowing the member. I don't always agree with the member for Oshawa, but having been on the other side of the table sometimes from the member of Oshawa, I know she does her homework.

So this isn't a last-minute issue.

One of the things the minister said was that the fire marshal would be forced to create minimum safety standards and that would cause grief for the fire marshal's

office, maybe because the fire marshal's office needs more support. But right now, for people who aren't firefighters yet and who want to be trained to do the best job they can to save other people's lives—these are the people who run toward danger while we are running away, and the people are looking for that training because they want to do that. I commend firefighters and anyone who wants to be a firefighter, whether they're professional or volunteer. They're the people who want to do that. The fact that there is no minimum safety standard at all currently in this province for someone who wants to take that training—that is not something that we can, in all good conscience, leave on the table. We cannot leave that on the table. The fact that that has been left on the table is a travesty. The fact that we lost one—one is one too many—but the fact that we lost two, that two families had to lose precious lives because we have no minimum standard, no standard at all.

We've just had a change of government. This is an issue that—I thank the minister for his support. I'm hoping that the government does support this bill. This bill has to go to committee, and this has to get done. It is fully within your power to get this done.

I know it's often said, "Oh, this is a partisan issue"; this one isn't. For the families who might not know, there are lots of political issues in firefighting. We know that. The minister described some of them. This one really isn't. We know that people who take that training currently—and there might be good training spots and bad training spots, but there's no minimum standard. When you have no minimum, you have a problem.

Can you imagine, Speaker, if at some point a third family has to go through what those two families have gone through because we are worried that the fire marshal might not have the resources to do minimum standards? We have got to do better than that. You have the chance to do better than that. We will fully support your efforts to do better than that in this bill.

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This bill needs to not just pass here today. It needs to go to committee, where it will be fully studied and amended, to make sure it can work and be passed so that for families like that—no one should have to die in vain, but so that their family members didn't die in vain. We can do this together.

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

Mr. Will Bouma: It's an honour to rise today in the House to talk about this important private member's bill, and I want to thank the member from Oshawa for bringing it forward.

I do have to respond on behalf of the minister. It is unfortunate that there wasn't a lot of direct communication between the member and the ministry regarding this, and I think that's where these miscommunications come from.

As many of you know, I am a volunteer firefighter in the county of Brant and have been one for the last 10 years.

Bill 10, Brunt and Kendall Act (Ensuring Safe Firefighter and Trainee Rescue Training), 2018, makes

amendments to the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997, and the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005, to implement important measures to provide for the safe training of firefighters and firefighter trainees in rescue and emergency services.

There are thousands of young men and women in Ontario who want to become firefighters. Many of these people seeking employment have to compete with thousands of other candidates vying for the few positions that become available. It's not easy, and the best way to stand out above the others is to have an impressive resumé with a lot of rescue training. The issue before us today is that we do not have minimum safety standards for these rescue training courses taken by or offered to firefighters or firefighter trainees.

The Brunt and Kendall inquest of 2017 has put the spotlight on this issue. Mr. Adam Brunt, 30, died on February 8, 2015, and Mr. Gary Kendall, 51, died on January 31, 2010, during activities involved in firefighter cold water rescue training. The 30-year-old Adam Brunt drowned in Hanover, Ontario, when his survival suit got caught on a piece of metal underwater, as we heard.

Terri Jo Thompson, one of the five others in the river with Brunt on February 8, 2015, testified that she only learned that their instructor had a knife during the inquest. It's a piece of equipment that all of the students should have been given, she said, alleging that Brunt might have used it to be able to cut himself free.

"We had nothing in that first five minutes," she told CBC Toronto. "We had nothing to work with until Hanover Fire [department] brought us tools."

Speaker, according to the testimony of several witnesses, Brunt was underwater for roughly 15 minutes.

The events leading up to his death and that of firefighter Gary Kendall, who died in a course given by the same company five years earlier, were the subject of the coroner's inquest.

One of the questions that came up repeatedly throughout the inquest was why private companies offering the arduous ice and water rescue courses are not regulated by the province.

That's why I will be supporting this private member's bill, and I encourage every member in the House to do so today.

I want to mention a couple of key items that this bill will do.

The fire marshal will be required to develop and maintain minimum safety standards for rescue training courses taken by or offered to firefighters or firefighter trainees. The bill sets out requirements respecting the development of the minimum safety standards that the fire marshal is required to meet.

The fire marshal must publish the minimum safety standards on the website of the Office of the Fire Marshal. It requires that a committee of subject matter experts be established to conduct reviews of the minimum safety standards, and to make recommendations respecting any necessary changes.

The fire marshal is required to respond to recommendations and make any necessary changes to the minimum safety standards.

The bill also provides for the certification by the fire marshal of rescue training courses to meet minimum safety standards.

All of this is good. These changes are needed and will protect firefighter trainees and firefighters down the road from potential accidents.

Again, thank you to the member from Oshawa for bringing this important bill forward today.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to be a firefighter all my life. When I was 18, our hoof trimmer on the dairy farm was going to get me into London full-time. He said, "You're a big guy and you're strong." My brother said I had the brains to go to university and I needed to do that instead. Look where it brought me.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Boy, you're really slumming it now.

Mr. Will Bouma: Absolutely. Bad company corrupts good morals.

But I still get such a thrill out of riding in the red trucks, and I know exactly what those young men wanted to do. And I understand: I've been to the testing—2,000 guys out in a place in Hamilton, and they're taking 10 to 20 people. It's so competitive, and you'll do anything to get that edge.

I know how these companies are able to stay in business. That's not painting them all with the same brush; I don't mean to do that at all. But I think it's time that we stood up for these young men and women who are so driven to protect our people. I think we need to pass this legislation today.

To the families who have come: Thank you so much for being here. I offer my sincerest condolences for your loss. I know what drove them, and it is the greatest feeling in the world to be running towards something that other people are running away from. Thank you for being here today. I really appreciate it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'm glad to be able to speak to this motion. I just want to echo something my colleague from Timiskaming—Cochrane said, and I think it needs to be said, which is that the member did her homework on this. It's not as if this is something that came out of nowhere. She has been working on this issue for years. She has been dealing with the families and firefighters in order to be able to rectify what is a really tragic situation that was allowed to happen. It's something that we can do to fix it.

I want to draw members' attention: We're all wearing poppies here. We're wearing poppies because we are respecting and saluting those who served in our Canadian Armed Forces over the years, some of whom gave their lives, some of whom served and came back. Imagine if we were in a situation today where we were talking about an initiative in order to support our veterans when it comes to the equipment that they need to do their job in the field.

I was a soldier; I was a member of the Royal 22nd Regiment. I was a very fortunate individual because I lived

in a country called Canada that had the Canadian Armed Forces that provided the equipment and the training to the soldiers that we trained. It was known at the time, and it's probably still known today, that the Canadian Armed Forces were the best-trained forces in the world. Alexander Haig—I remember listening to him at a parade I was at one year—said, "Give me the Canadian soldier and give me the American equipment, and I can take it all over"—as a joke.

But the point was, we provided the supports to our soldiers so that they could be trained, go in harm's way on behalf of their nation and do their job. We not only trained them; we provided them with the equipment.

Why would we, as a Legislature, not do the same thing for the people who rush into fires in order to take us out of harm's way? Why don't we provide the training and the support to those who are putting their lives on the line, to make sure that if a tragedy happens to us, we're made safe?

I never wanted to be a firefighter, because I'm a bit of a coward, to be honest. I don't want to run into a burning building. Don't ask me why I went into the Armed Forces—that doesn't make any sense. But my point is, I chose not to. But to those men and women who decide to go, we owe them everything.

For the Solicitor General to say that maybe the fire marshal can't do it right now because of circumstance or whatever—poppycock. We can do anything we want in this Legislature. We're not talking about billions of dollars here. We're talking about setting up a regulatory standard that is enforceable, so that those who are being trained to run into situations to save us when we're in harm's way have the training and the support they need to be able to do their jobs and not unnecessarily put their lives at risk in that training. If we can't do that, as a minimum, I think it reflects badly on all of us.

I get a sense that there's a bit of a change of mood here in the House today. We started the day and it didn't look as if the government was going to support this initiative. It looks as if it's going the other way, and I'm glad that's the case.

We owe it to those people who are out there every day, who never know, when the bell rings, what they're going to run into. That might be their last day. If it is their last day, for those of us who survive and for the colleagues they work with—they're prepared to make the sacrifice, but let it not be a sacrifice in vain because we did not train them well, we did not support them well and we did not do the things that had to be done in order to make sure that they have everything they need when it comes to being able to do their job.

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With that, Mr. Speaker, I thank you for this time in debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Further debate? Further debate? Then I turn to the member from Oshawa for her—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Then I assume you have two minutes plus two minutes.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'd like to thank my colleagues around the Legislature, the members who spoke during this debate and discussion. I, again, would like to thank the families and safety advocates who have been to Queen's Park, now, a lot of times for three and a half years. So thank you very much for your support and your guidance.

I think it's important for this government and this House to do the right thing, because it is about basic safety and creating a system to ensure that rogue enterprise can't operate in this province and endanger our future first responders and our future firefighters. This bill has been a labour of love born out of loss. There was a lot of emotional and expert input that went into its creation, and the solutions are the right fit in order to pass the bill to committee.

I appreciate the comments from the Minister of Community Safety. He is not wrong in his comments about the capacity of the Office of the Fire Marshal and emergency management. As it stands now, they do not have the capacity or the resources to enact all that is in this piece of legislation.

But that's where it will come out in committee because, I'll be honest, what happened—taking us back in history—with the last government is, we were beating our heads against the wall, trying to get somewhere and having meetings with assurances that this would move forward and it was a priority of the government. It got to the end of the session and I realized I was going to have to do it myself.

So along with legislative counsel, the families and experts, we drafted that legislation on behalf of the government. We literally wrote what could have been government legislation, creating a structure and hoping for that capacity and the resources, to the minister's point, for the Office of the Fire Marshal—because it didn't belong. These individuals didn't belong to any ministry. We came up with a solution that could work.

So it is a really strong piece of legislation, but I will absolutely admit that should this bill go to committee, it's going to take a fair bit of time, because someone has to be responsible, someone does have to take this on. We felt that the Office of the Fire Marshal was the right place, but it is very involved. It is sticky and tricky, and that is why it took us so darn long to come up with that piece of legislation. But it deserves a fair shake in committee. By the way, a heads-up, it won't be one to time-allocate; it's going to take the time.

This bill really has been my privilege to work on. I am sorry that the government felt surprised by it, but at the same time, as I outlined, this has been a long time coming. It has been on the order paper. I gave a full heads-up that it was coming; I haven't been hiding it. Maybe that's an internal look for folks who are watching our bill.

Some of them are going to be worthwhile and worth embracing and considering, so thank you for giving the opportunity to me and to the families today to have this bill move forward. I thank the minister for his support on

this initiative. I hear him and believe him when he talks about prioritizing public safety. This is the perfect opportunity to bring all of those minds to the table and ensure that it happens.

Again, thank you to the family, and thank you, Speaker.

CHILD CARE AND EARLY YEARS
AMENDMENT ACT (NOT-FOR-PROFIT
CORPORATIONS), 2018

LOI DE 2018 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LA GARDE D'ENFANTS
ET LA PETITE ENFANCE
(ORGANISATIONS SANS BUT LUCRATIF)

Ms. Begum moved second reading of the following bill:
Bill 45, An Act to amend the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 to limit funding of child care and early years programs and services to not-for-profit corporations / Projet de loi 45, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2014 sur la garde d'enfants et la petite enfance pour limiter aux organisations sans but lucratif le financement des programmes et des services pour la garde d'enfants et la petite enfance.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Doly Begum: Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to debate Bill 45, an act to provide quality child care for Ontario families. Although this is the first time I have introduced this bill, I must recognize two fierce women leaders for inequality of child care who have introduced this bill, or a version of this bill, before me. First it was our leader, the leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition, Andrea Horwath. Later it was introduced by my colleague and our former critic for child care, the member for Waterloo, Catherine Fife. Today, as we debate this bill once again, with new members in the House and a new government, I truly hope that this government will be on the side of the parents and Ontario families and support this bill.

Mr. Speaker, our children are our future. Providing quality child care is not only an investment for our future but it is a necessity for the growth of Ontario, strengthening our province. Quality child care is an economic priority to strengthen our families and build this great province for the better.

Child care is an economic issue that is at the core of this province's ability to allow for a strong workforce. If you want to talk about jobs: Without quality child care, working parents will not be able to go back to their jobs. If you want to talk about helping families: Without affordable child care, parents are forced to compare how much they earn versus the cost of child care spaces, and sometimes the cost of a child care space is higher than the parents' income.

Parents in Ontario pay the highest child care fees in this nation. A 2017 report by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives found that the average monthly cost of full-

day child care for infants in Toronto can be as high as \$1,758; in Mississauga, \$1,452 per month; in Vaughan, \$1,415 per month. How is a family supposed to pay for that? Are they going to pay for their rent or for child care? Speaker, as far as I know, it's hard enough to pay for one mortgage. This is like a second mortgage for families.

The cost of child care is not the only issue. The wait time to get a space is the longest in Ontario for subsidized child care. There are only enough licensed child care spaces in Ontario for one in five children. This bill would mean the opportunity for many non-profit child care centres to be able to be equipped to serve more Ontario families.

I also want to point out that helping non-profit child care providers means creating good jobs for many early childhood educators. Earlier this year, the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association shared their research and opinions. I want to highlight some key points from their submission because they really touched the right chords with this argument in terms of quality as well as the workers in this important profession:

"The government must ... ensure that the early childhood educators (ECEs) who are tasked with supporting young learners are compensated fairly.

"The benefits of investing in integrated early childhood development are many, and have proven to increase equity in learning outcomes, reduce poverty, and create a strong foundation for lifelong learning.... In fact, educators, academics, and business leaders agree that targeted investments in early childhood education and care (ECEC) are one of the most effective uses of our tax dollars. "These investments yield both short- and long-term returns for children and society as a whole."

The teachers' association also noted, "It is critical to remember that ECEC must not be driven by 'bottom-line' economics—doing so shifts the focus toward profitability, and away from optimizing children's development. Currently, roughly 26% of licensed ECEC spaces are run by for-profit enterprises." The association marks this as a concern.

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Research indicates that in both Canada and abroad—for example, in Australia—for-profit child care models are consistently associated with a lower quality of early childhood educators, education, and care due to lower staff-to-child ratios, lower wages for staff, and lower levels of specialized training for caregivers. I want to emphasize to all the members in this House that this conclusion has been drawn from years of research from various parts of the world and from various experts in child care.

Mr. Speaker, any move towards privatized child care is extremely dangerous. We cannot and should not be making money off the backs of our children, and we cannot and should not allow big-box corporations, Walmart-like corporations, to make money off the backs of our children.

Child care advocates have argued for years and years that for-profit providers offer lower-quality child care

services, fail to provide specialized care, and do not serve low-income families. Then why should we give government funding to big-box, for-profit child care providers who are there for the money and not for our children?

There is plenty of evidence to show that we need to help our child care providers. It's time to act for better and more affordable child care spaces for our children.

Speaker, this morning I was pleased to invite parents and children—some adorable children—to this House, as well as some child care advocates and some ECEs and ECE students, all of whom support this bill. They talked with me about the quality of care that's provided in non-profit child care, as well as the job quality for ECEs in those child care spaces.

Given the social and economic benefits for our families, for ECEs and, most importantly, for our children, the government has an obligation to help provide affordable child care for our children.

Mr. Speaker, for any parent, leaving their most precious one, even for a few hours a day, can be daunting. But for thousands of moms and dads in Ontario who are working hard to put food on the table, a safe, quality space with the best care and best standards for our children can be the only hope to go back to work and continue to provide for their families.

It's quite clear. For years, we have heard from parents, caregivers, early years and child care providers, employers, municipalities, school boards, experts and the public about the need for and importance of quality care for our young ones.

Ontario families want access to quality child care spaces, and we as policy makers should be able to do just that. We should be able to take bold steps so that parents in this province can feel at peace leaving their children in a child care space that's safe.

The former Liberal government had failed to recognize this for about 14 years, until it was election time. Just a year before, pushed by the Ontario NDP, they finally listened to experts and parents and to prioritize affordable child care. But it was too late for them.

I hope that this government will recognize this sooner. The Conservative government's quiet cancellation of the for-profit maximum threshold is a step backward that puts Ontario at risk and our children's future in the dark. But it doesn't have to be this way. Parents have suffered for far too long. We can make quality child care more available and more affordable for families in Ontario now. We can do better; I know we can.

If you care for our families, if you care for our workers and if you care for our children, then every member in this House should support Bill 45, which will provide quality child care for Ontario families.

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

Miss Christina Maria Mitas: It is my pleasure to stand before you today to speak against Bill 45. This act aims to ensure that government funding is not provided for child care and early years programs unless they are not-for-

profit corporations. This move comes as hundreds of child care spots are sitting unfilled in Toronto's privately-owned day cares and as thousands are sitting on their waiting lists because they are parents on subsidy who cannot afford to place their children in the programs they want without assistance from the government.

The NDP claim to be about helping people thrive, but the member from Scarborough Southwest is moving to block parents from choosing the best child care options for their individual children.

Education is not a one-size-fits-all undertaking. A holistic education approach is one that takes the whole learner into consideration and tailors their education according to their individual needs. Limiting the choices available to Ontario's parents is prescriptive and pushes families to make difficult decisions regarding juggling their family resources—which are already in short supply for many of our province's families—in order to make the right decisions for their children.

In addition to the negative effects on parents and children, small business owners, who are overwhelmingly female in this sector, are being hurt by these changes as they simply try to provide high-quality child care options to the people of Ontario.

To wrap this up, I'm going to address a question that I received from the member for Toronto—St. Paul's when she asked me if I was a lawyer, as she questioned whether I was qualified to speak on a private member's bill regarding the auto insurance rates earlier. While I find her question and her premise to be offensive and inappropriate, I'm going to speak to it and say that I'm not a lawyer. I'm a teacher. I've studied leadership and policy in education as a graduate student at Canada's number one education institution, the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, and I'm an expecting mother. This is my background, and I'm here to tell the members opposite—

Ms. Jill Andrew: I'm a teacher of—

Miss Christina Maria Mitas: Great, but that's your background—I am no more qualified than any Ontarian who cares about educating our children to speak on this matter. This government is here for all people, and we will ensure that no voice is left out of a conversation because someone like the NDP—which is now apparently the arbiters of qualification—thinks that their point of view is not valuable.

As an Ontarian, full stop, I know that this bill would disadvantage our children, our parents and our small business owners. I firmly stand against it.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I want to start by thanking my colleague the member from Scarborough Southwest for introducing this bill, and for her excellent explanation of why this bill is important.

Speaker, I had the opportunity a few years ago to be the education critic for the Ontario NDP, which I have to say was a learning experience all on its own. I had an opportunity to talk at length with those who worked in the

child care sector, people who had studied child care around the world, people who were familiar with those policy directions that actually made a difference in the lives of children and a difference in the lives of families.

I also have to say that, as an MPP in an area that has gone through substantial demographic change in the last 12 years, I've seen a community that increasingly is home to young families for whom the affordability of, availability of and quality of child care is a major issue. So this bill that's been brought forward by my colleague from Scarborough Southwest is really critical.

There is no doubt that when you look at the literature assessing the quality of the child care that is provided, non-profit care is overwhelmingly superior to private care. It is very simple: If you have to take a chunk of operating costs and move it over into profit, less is available for the children, for the child care workers, for the operation overall. There is just no two ways about it. To the extent that we set things up so that big-box child care centres can come in and operate in a way that provides care at a lower level of quality, we are putting forward a disservice to the children and families of this province.

Interestingly, a few years ago, the Auditor General of Ontario—not looking at child care quality at the time—looked at the quality of education in private schools in Ontario. Uniformly across this province, our public school system produced higher-quality education outcomes than private schools, because the money in the schools goes into the children, goes into the education, and not into somebody's pocket.

If you look at the United States, where you see a proliferation of private and charter schools, where, again, the money is drawn out of the system and goes to those private operators who are making a buck off of it, the quality of education in that system is not the same as we have here, in a fully publicly funded education system.

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I urge the government to rethink the position they've taken, because the position they've taken opposing this bill is one that will guarantee great trouble for parents and children in the years to come.

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

Mr. Mike Harris: There has been a lot of talk just in the last couple of minutes about qualification for people to be able to speak to bills. Well, Mr. Speaker, I have five children—one of them happens to be here today—so I think I'm in a pretty good position to be able to speak to this.

It has been a top priority of our government to make life more affordable for everyday Ontarians. That is why this past summer, our government opened up new child care spaces for working Ontario families by removing the for-profit threshold. This was a Liberal government measure which limited the ability of for-profit providers to access public child care funding. As a father of five, I know how important it is to access quality child care for working families across this province.

The Waterloo region includes a vibrant tech sector and world-class universities and colleges. These have attracted many young families with children who need affordable and high-quality child care. Above all, these parents want choice. They want what is best for their kids.

Allow me to break this down further for those who may be listening at home: Under current regulations, based on income level, parents can receive partial or full fee subsidies for child care. Two years ago, the Liberal government put in place restrictions through the for-profit threshold, which capped for-profit funding at a previous year's level and prioritized funding for the not-for-profit centres.

Why was this the wrong move? For starters, the government should not be dictating to parents where their child care dollars are best spent. Such a policy robs Ontario's hard-working parents of the opportunity to find the best child care for their kids, and it robs the market of the opportunity to provide the best possible child care for Ontario families.

Our government's policy is a win-win for Ontario families and child care providers. What the member representing Scarborough Southwest is proposing is not a step forward; it is a step backwards. It seems that the opposition member wants the previous government's trend of reducing child care access to continue.

Bill 45 amends the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 so that corporations are not eligible to receive funding for child care and early years programs unless they are a not-for-profit corporation. Why the favouritism, Mr. Speaker? Why the restriction? By removing the Liberal for-profit threshold on fee subsidies, our government is opening up more child care spaces for low-income families. And what does the opposition want to do? They want to take these additional spaces away from low-income families.

During question period on September 19, the member representing Scarborough Southwest stated: "We know that the biggest issue in the child care sector is the lack of affordable, high-quality, safe child care spaces." Do you know what, Mr. Speaker? I agree with the member. But my question is, why does the opposition member contradict her own position by introducing this bill?

Interjection.

Mr. Mike Harris: Mr. Speaker, it's not out of context.

I am not going to be supporting this bill. As a father of five, I know what it's like to bring children up in this current economy. I want to see more spaces open for children, and I want to see more choice for parents.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you. I did have the privilege of meeting your young son at lunch. Welcome to the chamber this afternoon.

Further debate?

Ms. Marit Stiles: First of all, I want to start by thanking the member for Scarborough Southwest for bringing forward this really important legislation.

Also, as the critic for the official opposition of education, I want to reiterate what many others among my colleagues have already said about the amount of research and study that is being done in this area that speaks to the

importance of the non-profit sector providing that child care. I'm going to speak more about that now.

If there's one thing that I think we can all agree on, it is that there is nothing more important than ensuring the safety and well-being of our children. As we all know, Ontario faces many issues around the child care sector, especially though with the lack of affordability and the lack of availability of safe, quality child care spaces. Ontarians pay the highest child care fees in Canada, with Toronto, where my riding is, having the highest fees in the country at almost \$1,800 a month. Ontarians also wait the longest for subsidized child care, and there are only enough licensed child care spaces for one in five children.

Sadly, too many cities in our province are seeing child care fees increase faster than the rate of inflation, by a long shot. Speaker, I can tell you, both as a former school board trustee and as a parent myself who was a working parent for my children's entire lives and relied very much on child care, which I'll speak about more—but also from speaking to people in my community, canvassing and talking to constituents—that in my riding, access to quality, affordable child care is one of the number one issues facing parents and grandparents; I want to add grandparents and other guardians, as well. As of 2017, Toronto had approximately 37,000 child care spaces licensed, and that's only enough for 31% of Toronto children. Parents in my riding are left waiting on long waiting lists for years in order to access spaces, and then pay a huge part of their monthly income on skyrocketing fees.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to speak very briefly about my own experience as a working parent of two children. My partner and I both moved from Newfoundland to Toronto many years ago. We had no family here. Like so many people who come to this city, we had no family. When we had our children, we both had to work to afford to live and to provide them with even the most basic things. I'll tell you, we were on waiting lists for both of our children for well over a year, which is nothing compared to what people now have to wait to get into those same spaces. But if it had not been for the fact that we had a safe, accessible—I'm not going to call it affordable, because it wasn't—child care space for our kids, we could not have done what we did. We could not have raised our children here. What made it work every single day was the quality care provided by those early childhood educators, and that's because they were unionized, they were paid decently and they were in a non-profit environment. It was excellent.

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

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I'd like to thank the member from Scarborough Southwest for providing us the opportunity to discuss this important issue of child care. I know that it's an issue that was top of mind for many families in Etobicoke–Lakeshore when I was knocking on doors during the campaign.

Our government was elected because we listened to families across the province telling us they could not afford more of the same types of policies that were put

forward by the previous government, and they certainly could not afford the policies put forward by the NDP. Our government has been working since day one when we were elected to help reduce the burden on Ontario's families. One way we are doing so is to provide greater access to a provincial child care subsidy.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure many members in this Legislature know the difficulty of trying to find child care space for their children. Many families have to wait a year. They actually put their names on a list when they become pregnant, although there are hundreds of spaces available right here in Toronto.

Under the previous Liberal government, families who needed the provincial subsidy had the additional stress of needing to ensure that the child care option they chose would be covered by the subsidy. That's right: The previous Liberal government placed a cap on the amount of money that families would receive through the provincial subsidy if the family's child was attending a daycare outside the not-for-profit sector. Even if someone's income may have qualified for support, the previous government decided that they were deserving of less support than others.

Our government took quick action to help alleviate this unfair burden by removing that cap on subsidies. This means that as long as your income meets the requirement for provincial support, it doesn't matter what kind of licensed child care you enrol your child in. Removing the cap has allowed more families in need of provincial funding support to get access to child care.

The bill proposed by the member opposite would reduce the number of child care spaces available to the public most in need of those spaces. Mr. Speaker, through you I would ask: What is the point of a government subsidy for child care if the people who need to use it are not able to find child care to use it on? This bill would not just return Ontario back to the days of the previous government; this bill would go further than even the Liberals wanted to go by eliminating any subsidy for any child care that is outside the not-for-profit sector.

1540

Mr. Speaker, Ontario parents deserve to have a subsidy that they can actually use. There are many reasons why a family may not be able to rely on not-for-profit child care, such as a lack of available child care spaces through the non-profit sector or because the non-profit options do not allow them to make the choice that fits the needs of their family. I strongly believe, and the people of my community believe, that parents deserve that choice and that flexibility.

Our government stands by parents. Our government respects the right for parents to choose their form of child care.

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

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: It is a pleasure to rise in the House today to speak to this bill from the MPP for Scarborough Southwest. Thank you for bringing the debate around child

care onto the floor of this Legislature. I think it is extremely important that we talk about our children and how the decisions that we're making here affect them.

There's nothing that is more important than the decisions that we make around children and the future of this province. They're just absolutely fundamental and important. When we think about the debate around child care, it reminds me of a time that I was Minister of Education and really looking at Ontario's education system and recognizing that it is a world-regarded system of education. Thousands of people from around the world, in fact, come to Ontario to learn from our systems, our educators and our boards.

But I have to tell you that there is one area, even amongst the OECD countries and comparators, even in the US, where we can and need to do better in Ontario, and that is in the area of early childhood education. Looking at how we can make those improvements was something that the former government made a priority because it was one of those things that we knew we wanted to tackle. We had already done full-day kindergarten, where all four- and five-year-olds had the opportunity to enter school at the same time, regardless of socio-economic background or experience. We saw the benefits of that early learning. We wanted to take it a step further and look at child care early learning as the next opportunity.

That is exactly what we did. In our budget in March 2018, we put a policy in the budget that would begin as of September 2020, where all preschoolers would have access to free public child care; and that would be consistent across the province, regardless of background.

I remember a young mother—she was actually going to be having twins. She said, "My goodness." Looking forward to her two-year-old becoming part of this public system was something that she welcomed, because it would allow her family to make choices.

We know that when we invest in child care, we're actually unlocking the economic potential of our province. Some of the benefits that would ensue to the children themselves:

- their own readiness for learning, giving them the best chance and the best start at life. The academic outcomes are better;

- reducing income inequality. That is a big area. If I had more time, I would talk about my own experience in Scarborough—Guildwood, where I work with families that struggle with income inequality; also

- boosting women's economic opportunity and choice, their choice to participate in the labour market. We know that the bulk of the responsibility for child care often rests on the woman.

It is important as we have this debate to look at the full range of opportunities, access, quality, choice and affordability. I want to say to my colleagues who are here that one size does not always fit all. Oftentimes, when we table, allow room for this bill to go forward to committee to explore deeper, to hear from experts and others about this policy and how it will have an impact across the board.

To my colleagues opposite: Make sure you give the space to hear the other side, because you don't have all the answers. Giving this bill some consideration, even if you think it needs to be changed, is an opportunity.

I just want to say in closing, Speaker, that there is no greater investment that we can make than in our early years learning for children, early childhood education. We can't forget about those who work in the system as well, who need this investment, who need this improvement.

I just want to thank the member from Scarborough Southwest for giving us a chance to talk about early learning—

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

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you to the member for Scarborough Southwest for introducing this important bill.

The child care system in University–Rosedale and in Toronto and Ontario is not working, in so many ways. I have many women friends who have given up their careers because it's hard to go to work just to pay someone else to raise your kids. I have a neighbour, a working mom, a single mom, who shares a room with her seven-year-old son because she can't afford to move out and rent her own apartment, because she has to pay the bills and the rent and the child care costs so that she can continue to work as a secretary.

I know many parents who cannot find a daycare spot exactly where they need it and when they need it, so they spend upwards of three hours a day doing multiple drop-offs to get to the daycare spot that's available for them.

I also find it so heartbreaking that the child care workers whom I know cannot afford, on their chronically underpaid wages, to access the child care that they provide to other parents.

In our child care system, there is a lot to fix. But instead of making child care more affordable, the Conservatives are taking us from bad to worse by opening the door to permit more big businesses to take over our child care sector and take on the job of raising our children.

This government wants to increase the amount of government funding that goes to companies that are traded on the stock exchange, that create low-wage jobs and that have high staff turnover so they can cut costs so that shareholders can profit more.

Letting big-box child care businesses take over child care will not make child care more affordable and will not help those parents that I talked about earlier.

We believe that companies shouldn't profit off the job of raising our children. That's why there are better solutions that you should look towards, such as increasing the number of affordable and public and non-profit child care spots available, increasing government funding so child care can be cheaper for parents, and increasing the wages of child care workers so they can also have a chance of putting their kids in quality child care.

That is the way to fix child care. I encourage you to look at those options.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: The member from Scarborough Southwest is putting forward a private member's bill today to amend the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, to limit funding of child care and early years programs and services to not-for-profit corporations.

Obviously, "profit" is a very dirty word to the New Democratic Party. That's what is very clear today.

Interjection: Shame.

Mrs. Gila Martow: It is quite shameful, actually.

We've talked here about the nanny state. I think that they really give new meaning to that today in the debate: that the state knows better, that parents should have no choice and no say, and that parents actually don't even have the ability and the intellectual capability to decide what's best for their child.

The Liberals actually put restrictions on daycares. We removed restrictions. Now the NDP want to put on restrictions, multiplied.

We see that there is a crisis across Ontario. We see the affordability issues in Toronto. In rural Ontario, they have another added problem, which is that they have distances to travel. The Liberals made it very difficult for people to operate home daycares, with all of their restrictions. There often aren't large daycare centres in rural Ontario, for obvious reasons, and people have to travel far distances. It makes it impossible.

We know that it's the women who often have the difficulties when they can't find child care. We know that a lot of people like co-ops and different types of choices in daycare. In my riding of Thornhill, we have a lot of for-profit, faith-based early childhood programs and daycares as well. They complain about all the restrictions and the rules. They had to spend thousands of dollars putting in bigger windows, they were told, because of some new rules that the Liberals brought in. Then they were told that because of privacy issues, they have to put blinds on those windows. They're really quite frustrated.

1550

I just want to say, Mr. Speaker, that we keep hearing from the NDP that daycares should not be profiting off of our children. Well, we have long-term-care facilities that are for-profit that are fantastic. We have businesses. We have food providers. Somehow, that's all—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you.

Further debate?

Ms. Bhutila Karpoche: I rise today on behalf of my constituents in Parkdale–High Park and as a parent to speak in favour of Bill 45, An Act to amend the Child Care and Early Years Act, brought forward by my friend and colleague the member from Scarborough Southwest.

Speaker, we must say no to further privatization of child care and yes to putting children first, ahead of profits and ahead of big business.

There's a child care desert in our province, certainly in my riding of Parkdale–High Park. What do I mean by "a desert"? I mean that in my riding there are three children for every licensed child care spot. Parents are being placed on impossible wait lists. Some 95% of all child care

locations in Toronto have wait lists, some of which take years, by which time children may be too old for organizations to want them.

Even when a spot does open up, it is expensive and unaffordable. It costs an average family \$20,000 a year to put an infant in child care. Most families don't even come close to being able to afford this. Other provinces have made child care affordable and accessible, so why can't we? Child care costs \$17 a day in Manitoba and \$7 a day in Quebec. Here in Ontario, we are forcing Ontarians to pay over \$100 a day—10 times what Quebec pays per child. This is wrong.

Privatization—putting profits before children's well-being—is not the answer. Recently, the Ford government removed the for-profit threshold. Now there is no longer a limit on how much of our public money is channelled into corporatized child care spaces. The Ontario government should be moving towards universal child care; instead, they're moving backwards.

This bill calls for an end to the government putting money into big-box child care and instead to invest in non-profit spaces. Parents are asking for more affordable child care, and yet this government chooses corporate profit over Ontario's families.

Studies have shown that non-profit spots provide better care for our children and better wages for our workers. When corporations aren't chasing profits, they also put more money into training their workers. Over half of all child care workers in Ontario are being paid less than \$15 an hour. We are trusting people with our kids, and yet we can't pay them a living wage.

In my riding of Parkdale–High Park, mothers have chosen to stay home with their children. I say “mothers” because we know women carry most of the caregiving work. Why? Because the math doesn't add up. They are being forced to spend their entire paycheque on child care.

Right now in Ontario, one in four child care spots are for-profit. This number is too high. Child care should not be a means for profit. It should be provided safely and accessibly by the government.

I urge my colleagues in the House to rethink their position. We owe it to our constituents to make sure their kids are in safe places. Women shouldn't be—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you.

We'll return to the member from Scarborough Southwest for her two-minute response.

Ms. Doly Begum: I want to thank all the members for speaking. I should have taken all my time and read the whole bill to the members, because I think some of the members opposite disregarded it, in terms of reading the actual bill itself.

I want to thank the members for speaking to it, because it looks like you do care about providing good child care spaces for our families. But it's unfortunate that many of the members did not read the subsection of this bill.

The member from Scarborough Centre spoke about the bill and how it's going to close down a lot of these centres. That is really unfortunate, because in the subsection it

clearly states that this bill does not affect any funding that has been entered into before this section comes into force. I just wanted to make that very clear.

Speaker, it's no secret that all Ontario needs more affordable—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member for Scarborough Centre is warned.

Ms. Doly Begum:—child care, and yes, that includes rural and urban Ontario, and yes, some of those communities have for-profit providers. Do you know what? I like those too, because those are small businesses. But do you know what will happen to those when you allow big-box child care to open up and take over? Those will be wiped out when the big guys come and bulldoze through, taking over. Big-box child cares only care for the money, and they won't be letting those home-owned child care and those businesses stay. They will wipe them out. This government cannot be complacent.

During the first years of our kids, their brains develop. It's the most important time of development for our children. When you buy something, at Walmart for example, there is a return policy. But if something happens to our children, Speaker, there is no return policy on that.

More than anything, if there is one thing we should all invest in, it's proper care for our children, and quality child care is the only way—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you.

ENDING AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE
DISCRIMINATION IN THE GREATER
TORONTO AREA ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 METTANT FIN
À LA DISCRIMINATION EN MATIÈRE
D'ASSURANCE-AUTOMOBILE
DANS LE GRAND TORONTO

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): We will deal first with ballot item number 28, standing in the name of Mr. Singh, Brampton East.

Mr. Singh, Brampton East, has moved second reading of Bill 44, An Act to amend the Insurance Act to prevent discrimination with respect to automobile insurance rates in the Greater Toronto Area. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

I think I went the wrong direction there.

Interjection: You did.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: We're going to have to vote anyway.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): All right. I don't know what I'm doing. It's not the first time.

We will deal with this vote after we have finished the other business.

BRUNT AND KENDALL ACT
(ENSURING SAFE FIREFIGHTER
AND TRAINEE RESCUE
TRAINING), 2018

LOI BRUNT ET KENDALL DE 2018
(FORMATION SÉCURITAIRE
DES POMPIERS ET DES ÉLÈVES
POMPIERS EN SAUVETAGE)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Ms. French has moved second reading of Bill 10, An Act to amend the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997 and the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005 in relation to rescue and emergency services training for firefighters and firefighter trainees.

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

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member from Oshawa will state the committee she wishes this referred to.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: To justice policy, thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Justice policy: Is that agreed? Agreed.

CHILD CARE AND EARLY YEARS
AMENDMENT ACT (NOT-FOR-PROFIT
CORPORATIONS), 2018

LOI DE 2018 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LA GARDE D'ENFANTS
ET LA PETITE ENFANCE
(ORGANISATIONS SANS BUT LUCRATIF)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Ms. Begum has ordered second reading of Bill 45, An Act to amend the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 to limit funding of child care and early years programs and services to not-for-profit corporations. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I believe I heard a no.

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

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

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1600 to 1605.

ENDING AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE
DISCRIMINATION IN THE GREATER
TORONTO AREA ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 METTANT FIN
À LA DISCRIMINATION EN MATIÈRE
D'ASSURANCE-AUTOMOBILE
DANS LE GRAND TORONTO

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Mr. Singh, Brampton East, has moved second reading of Bill 44, An Act to amend the Insurance Act to prevent discrimination with respect to automobile insurance rates in the Greater

Toronto Area. All those in favour, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Andrew, Jill	Glover, Chris	Rakocevic, Tom
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Hassan, Faisal	Shaw, Sandy
Begum, Doly	Hunter, Mitzie	Singh, Gurratan
Bell, Jessica	Karpoche, Bhutila	Singh, Sara
Berns-McGown, Rima	Mantha, Michael	Stiles, Marit
Bisson, Gilles	Miller, Paul	Tabuns, Peter
Burch, Jeff	Morrison, Suze	Vanthof, John
French, Jennifer K.	Natyshak, Taras	Yarde, Kevin

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Anand, Deepak	Harris, Mike	Roberts, Jeremy
Baber, Roman	Hogarth, Christine	Romano, Ross
Babikian, Aris	Kanapathi, Logan	Sabawy, Sheref
Bailey, Robert	Karahalios, Belinda	Sandhu, Amarjot
Barrett, Toby	Ke, Vincent	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Bouma, Will	Khanjin, Andrea	Scott, Laurie
Calandra, Paul	Kusendova, Natalia	Simard, Amanda
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Lecce, Stephen	Skelly, Donna
Cho, Stan	Martin, Robin	Smith, Dave
Clark, Steve	Martow, Gila	Smith, Todd
Coe, Lorne	McDonell, Jim	Surma, Kinga
Crawford, Stephen	Mitas, Christina Maria	Tangri, Nina
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Mulroney, Caroline	Tibollo, Michael A.
Downey, Doug	Oosterhoff, Sam	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Dunlop, Jill	Pang, Billy	Wai, Daisy
Fee, Amy	Parsa, Michael	Walker, Bill
Fullerton, Merrilee	Phillips, Rod	Yakabuski, John
Gill, Parm	Piccini, David	
Hardeman, Ernie	Rasheed, Kaleed	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 24; the nays are 55.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I declare the motion lost.

Second reading negatived.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): There will be 30 seconds, and then we'll do another vote.

CHILD CARE AND EARLY YEARS
AMENDMENT ACT (NOT-FOR-PROFIT
CORPORATIONS), 2018

LOI DE 2018 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LA GARDE D'ENFANTS
ET LA PETITE ENFANCE
(ORGANISATIONS SANS BUT LUCRATIF)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Ms. Begum has moved second reading of Bill 45, An Act to amend the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 to limit funding of child care and early years programs and services to not-for-profit corporations. All those in favour, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Andrew, Jill	Glover, Chris	Rakocevic, Tom
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Hassan, Faisal	Shaw, Sandy
Begum, Doly	Hunter, Mitzie	Singh, Gurratan
Bell, Jessica	Karpoche, Bhutila	Singh, Sara
Berns-McGown, Rima	Mantha, Michael	Stiles, Marit
Bisson, Gilles	Miller, Paul	Tabuns, Peter
Burch, Jeff	Morrison, Suze	Vanthof, John
French, Jennifer K.	Natyshak, Taras	Yarde, Kevin

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Anand, Deepak	Harris, Mike	Roberts, Jeremy
Baber, Roman	Hogarth, Christine	Romano, Ross
Babikian, Aris	Kanapathi, Logan	Sabawy, Sheref
Bailey, Robert	Karahalios, Belinda	Sandhu, Amarjot
Barrett, Toby	Ke, Vincent	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Bouma, Will	Khanjin, Andrea	Scott, Laurie
Calandra, Paul	Kusendova, Natalia	Simard, Amanda
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Lecce, Stephen	Skelly, Donna
Cho, Stan	Martin, Robin	Smith, Dave
Clark, Steve	Martow, Gila	Smith, Todd
Coe, Lorne	McDonell, Jim	Surma, Kinga
Crawford, Stephen	Mitas, Christina Maria	Tangri, Nina
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Mulrone, Caroline	Tibollo, Michael A.
Downey, Doug	Oosterhoff, Sam	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Dunlop, Jill	Pang, Billy	Wai, Daisy
Fee, Amy	Parsa, Michael	Walker, Bill
Fullerton, Merrilee	Phillips, Rod	Yakabuski, John
Gill, Parm	Piccini, David	
Hardeman, Ernie	Rasheed, Kaleed	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 24; the nays are 55.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I declare the motion lost.

Second reading negatived.

1610

REPORT, INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I beg to inform the House that the following document was tabled: a report concerning the review of cabinet ministers' and opposition leaders' expense claims, complete as of October 31, 2018, from the Office of the Integrity Commissioner.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 1, 2018, on the amendment to the motion regarding allocation of time on the following bill:

Bill 47, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000, the Labour Relations Act, 1995 and the Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act, 2009 and make complementary amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi

47, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi, la Loi de 1995 sur les relations de travail et la Loi de 2009 sur l'Ordre des métiers de l'Ontario et l'apprentissage et apportant des modifications complémentaires à d'autres lois.

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

Mr. Stephen Lecce: I am very proud to rise today and inform this Legislature about the importance of moving forward with our actions to help open Ontario up for business, to instill confidence in our economy and to get investment in this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to inform my colleagues across all parties of a position taken by a major employer in the province of Ontario, a major employer in this country. That is the CEO of Magna, a Canadian company, founded in this country, employing over 20,000 people. They invest over \$300 million in capital investments every year in the province of Ontario.

I want to help define the problem, to contextualize why we are moving aggressively on this legislation and why we believe that in the absence of leadership, in the absence of action, more stories like the one I'm about to enumerate and share with this House will be a reality in Ontario. I think all of us, irrespective of party, should be seized with the problem facing the competitiveness of our economy and the jobs that are in peril if we do not act.

Mr. Speaker, allow me to read a few headlines that I think are rather informative. From the *Globe and Mail*: "I'm Worried About What's Going On in Canada": Magna's CEO Concerned About Competitiveness." The subline is, "The US is becoming increasingly attractive for investment due to its competitive tax system and significant changes to automotive provisions in NAFTA could also hurt North America."

Allow me to carry on. BNN had an online article entitled, "Magna Warns Ontario at a 'Tipping Point' Amid Mounting Costs."

Mr. Speaker, I need not remind someone like you, an honourable member serving from Windsor in a community with so many automotive jobs, about an industry that is so consequential to the future of prosperity in this province—in your region, in mine, in north Toronto and right across Ontario.

In King–Vaughan, we are blessed to have many companies that support the supply chain in the automotive sector. In fact, Vaughan is one of the highest manufacturing and producing municipalities that supports the supply chain for Canada's automotive sector. So we all have an interest in getting this right and ensuring the competitive advantage of our industry.

I'm going to read a couple of quotes from the CEO. These were taken—in fair disclosure—earlier this year, but I do think it is important that we all hear them: "We find ourselves in the very untenable position of questioning whether we will be able to continue to operate at historic levels in this province."

The tipping point that the CEO of Magna speaks about is in direct relation—and I'm quoting from the article. The

future increase—the \$15 minimum wage, hydro prices, all of the ancillary increases to small, medium-sized and large business in this country—has reached a tipping point, because what’s happening now is that future investment will be predicated on the competitive advantage of our industry.

I’m going to keep reading, Madam Speaker, because—
Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I would invite the members of the House to please come to order. The side conversations are keeping me from hearing the member who does, indeed, have the floor.

I apologize to the member. Please continue.

Mr. Stephen Lecce: Thank you, Speaker. I want to carry on reading from this article because I think it’s important that we all hear this. If the members opposite do not accept the premise that perhaps I’m an authority on the economy, on competitiveness, then let a person who helps manage 20,000 Canadians, many of which are in Ontario, many of which reside and operate in York region—listen to his advice. A job created on the front lines—we should have a shared interest in keeping production in the auto sector in this province.

Madam Speaker, the quote: “We believe the tipping point for Magna may well be the Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, 2017.... Ontario’s overall cost model must remain comparable to the market that we compete with for business.”

I’m going to carry on, Madam Speaker: “This is especially important when our main competitor to the south is working harder than ever to reduce costs, regulatory burdens and promote business efficiency and productivity. From our perspective, the province of Ontario seems to be moving in the opposite direction.”

Madam Speaker, we have a choice—Mr. Speaker—in this Legislature. Speaker, we have a choice in this Legislature. We can choose to be part of the problem, where we have seen over 320,000 manufacturing jobs being lost between 2003 and 2009. This represents 30% of all manufacturing employment in that industry. Madam Speaker—Mr. Speaker. It’s not a good day, Mr. Speaker. This is all part of a grand plan to throw me off, I know. The deputy Speaker and the other deputy Speaker are very much involved in this.

Mr. Speaker, I do feel rather passionate about the defence of our competitive advantage. Look, I get it. We have different ideologies that inform our perspectives and how we vote, but I’d like to believe that basic economics will dictate how we govern ourselves in this Legislature. I do believe, Madam Speaker—Mr. Speaker—when we have a company—I’m doing this on purpose now, sir.

Laughter.

Mr. Stephen Lecce: I’m not; I’m not. When we have industries in this province that are looking to move south, we must take action.

To contextualize why we are here: We have a scenario where a company—a company, I will mention, that is moving their headquarters into the riding of King—

Vaughan—where we all have an interest in keeping production jobs in this province, where 20,000 well-paying workers want to maintain the dignity of work. If we don’t act—and I will not allow myself and, I think, all members of our Conservative team will not exacerbate an existing problem when it comes to the competitive disadvantage of our industry. Because when you look outward, when we look outside of our province—I know that the left is historically more protectionist, but we must trade, we must export, and we must reach new markets.

I am absolutely confident that the bill we’ve introduced is going to help reduce the burden on our small businesses, on the supply chain that depends on Magna, and will create better jobs. It will add value to our economy. It will grow the competitive advantage, and it will help retain the skilled workers we need in our economy. For this, Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to look beyond the blind affinity of ideology and support a bill that will help increase job creation and ultimately get our economy on the right track.

1620

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It is never a pleasure to speak to time allocation. But I will indulge, just so you know. Listen, as I was saying this morning on this particular motion—and the wonderful thing about the amendment is I get to say it all over again—is that there are two basic problems here. The first one is that they’re trying to amend, by way of this act, the Employment Standards Act in a way that, quite frankly, I think brings us completely in the wrong direction.

The workplace of the 1970s and the 1960s was highly unionized. For most of us who were lucky enough—like yourself, Mr. Speaker—to work in those workplaces, factories and different places, there were unions. Many of the benefits that they tried to put into the Employment Standards Act were already in our collective agreements. There were provisions that if your parent died, you had bereavement leave and you didn’t have to bring in a slip to prove that your parent had died. There was language about how many holidays you get every year after how many years that you’d worked in a particular place. There was language about what we used to call floaters in our old collective agreements so that you could take last-minute sick days if you were sick. Some people had two sick days or two floaters a year; some people had as many as five. The employer allowed that, and it was part of our collective agreements.

The Employment Standards Act that was probably last really modernized as far as basic standards, hasn’t been modernized in over 30 or 35 years. Yes, we have changed the Employment Standards Act but we’ve never really dealt with the benefits. So where are we today? We’re in a workplace that is not as heavily unionized. Most people today work more than one job. They work for small employers. They work for employers that are not unionized and employers who don’t offer, in many cases, the type of

benefits that we used to get in our industrial or institutional workplaces that were unionized.

For example, we pushed the government, when they did the employment standards changes the last time—and I've got to fault the government. The Liberals never did anything for 14 years, never moved on employment standards when it came to holidays, bereavement leave, sick leave, minimum wage. They never moved on any of it for 14 years. And on the way to the election—they were converted on the way to Damascus—they all of a sudden decided, oh, they have to do something in order to deal with this whole issue.

They were worried about the NDP when it came to the next election—which was last June—and so they put forward changes that were piecemeal changes, I would say, to the Employment Standards Act. Where we end up is that we end up with some changes that modernize the Employment Standards Act in a way that recognizes we are no longer the workplace of the 1970s.

Most people, as I say, work in multiple jobs. But a lot of young professionals working jobs are not unionized. Both of our daughters, Julie and Natalie—Natalie is a psychometric therapist and works at a university. She is not unionized. Our other daughter, Julie, who works in Whitby at Ontario Shores, is a nurse practitioner in a department that is non-unionized. Both of them are making very good money. They're probably making quite a comfortable income, I would think. But the issues of benefits and stuff are left to individual negotiations between themselves and their employers when they get hired.

In some cases—I know this has happened because I've had people come to my office—the worker, the young professional, goes to the employer, and the employer says, “Well, I'm going to give you three weeks' holidays in the first year and I'm going to give you four weeks' holidays after three years and I'm going to give you five weeks after five years.” I'm just laying out an example. Both our daughters, in previous jobs—not these particular employers but previous employers that were non-unionized professional employers—the employers changed the game after they were hired.

Our eldest daughter, Julie, negotiated the first collective agreement at CMHA in Timmins when she was in the bargaining unit. One of the things they did to her was they took away the benefits that she negotiated when she was hired with that particular agency.

There's no protection in the Employment Standards Act for these young professionals who spent a whole bunch of money to go out and get educated—and we all have them in our families; we all have them in our constituency; we all have them among our friends—and who don't have basic benefits covered by their employers in the way that we used to under the old collective agreements.

So the attempt here was to put into the Employment Standards Act some basic benefits. If your mom and dad die, you don't need a doctor's slip to prove that they died to have bereavement leave. If you're sick and you need to come back to work after being off a day—first of all, you

have a couple of sick days, which is a good thing. Why should people lose salary because they're sick?

If it's short-term sickness, there should be some basic provisions for a number of days that you can take off if you're sick for a short time—the flu or whatever it is. It's good for the workplace, because people don't come to work and get everybody else sick. But for our health care system, the Tories are now saying we've got to go back to the days that you've got to get a doctor's slip in order to return to work after you've taken one or two days off because you're sick. Well, where I come from, you can't get a doctor. You can't get a nurse practitioner, in some cases. There are 8,000 people in our community who don't have a doctor or nurse practitioner. What do they do? They've got to go argue with their employer.

Do we really need to put our health care system under strain that it doesn't need to be in? All of the doctors, professionals and nurse practitioners have said, “Don't worry about the work slip, because if somebody comes in with the flu two days later, how do I know that person was actually sick? I have no way of diagnosing the person who was sick.” They may have been sick; they may not have been sick. They have no way of knowing, but they've got to sign a slip that said they were sick, and that puts them in conflict with their own professional colleges. So they've asked to have that provision in the Employment Standards Act—this government, because they want to be seen as friendly to business—well, the only thing they're trying to be friendly to is not workers; they want to give a one-off to their employer friends—is going back to the system of having to get a sick slip for being sick for a day or two. This government is taking away basic—basic—benefits that workers should have and used to have in the workplaces of yesterday.

But we are no longer in yesterday. The world has moved on. We live in a world now where most workers work in non-unionized workplaces, and I'm not talking about only McDonald's at \$14 an hour or whatever people get. I'm talking about not-for-profit agencies that care for people in our communities, like my daughter does at Ontario Shores. I'm talking about young professionals in engineering firms. I'm talking about the self-employed. I'm talking about people who work in the farming industry. There are all kinds of people who are not covered by collective agreements, and this government says, “We shouldn't be looking at how to modernize our economy and provide basic provisions for people.” You're winding the clock back to the previous century.

If you took the benefits that are in Europe, in places like Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, France, Greece or Spain, all of which are doing pretty well if you look at their economies—

Mr. Dave Smith: Greece?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Are you trying to tell me that Europe is an economic backwater? They're way ahead of us.

Mr. Dave Smith: You used Greece as an example.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, you may not like the Greeks, but that's okay. I'm a pro-Greek kind of guy, so I'm not going to start disparaging the Greeks out there.

But my point is that if you look at the standards they have and you applied them here in Ontario, your heads would blow up as Conservatives, because the basic benefits that people get in Europe far exceed what we get in North America. There are only the Alabamas, the Donald Trumps and the Doug Fords of this world that are trying to take us backwards. You're out of step with the rest of our society.

People who work in this assembly are non-unionized, except for the NDP caucus. There are people who work in this assembly who you see every day who are working for minimum wage. One of them stopped me the other day and he said, "Mr. Bisson, I did the calculation. I was going to get a \$15 minimum wage, which was a \$2,000 increase to my salary. Now the Ford government tells me I'm going to get a tax cut. I've done the math. I'm down 1,200 bucks." For that worker, that's a lot of money. For you and I it doesn't matter. We make over \$100,00 a year; we're fine. But there are people in this building who don't have basic security when it comes to benefits and wages that we take for granted.

Both people who work at \$14 an hour and young professionals, the middle class, who work in all kinds of jobs where there is no union, don't have the basic protection of the things that we take for granted. Why shouldn't people get three weeks' holidays after a year, or two years at the very most? Why shouldn't they get four weeks' holidays after three or four or five years? Those are the things that make people productive.

We've all had a conversation with employers out there in our ridings, and I can tell you that the progressive employers who are doing well are able to keep their staff, and when they keep their staff they make money. Why? Because those people are much more productive.

Interjection: Motivated.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: They're motivated. It's the people who take care of their staff by making sure that they're paid well and making sure they've got basic benefits. But there are employers out there who don't want to do that, and that's who you're playing to. You're playing to the bad employers. There are a lot of good employers out there. We can all point to them in our ridings.

1630

Interjection: Lots of great ones.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: A lot of good ones, and farmers and others who try to do the right thing. But man, there are people out there who try to play the system and put us in a position where workers get hardly anything.

So I just say to the government across the way: To first propose this bill, but then to say, "We're going to time-allocate the bill, so there will be one day of hearings"—I'll tell you why you're doing that. You don't want employees coming in here and telling you what you're actually doing and how it's going to affect them. You're already lining up all your friends at the—what do they call them?

Interjection: The chamber of commerce?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: No, not the chamber of commerce. The other big business—the independent business—

Interjection: CFIB.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: CFIB. You've already got your CFIB friends who are lining up and who are coming here to present and repeat all the things you want them to tell.

And do you know what? If I was one of those bad employers—and I'm not saying all CFIB employers are bad. There are lots of good ones. I was a member of the CFIB, with my small business. But my point is, are we really getting anywhere when we encourage bad employers to do the bad thing? It's a race to the bottom, and it's an unfair competition for those employers that are doing the right thing.

You pretend, as Conservatives, to be good for the economy and to understand business. Listen, if I'm an independent business person who's paying his people, let's say, 17 or 18 bucks an hour to do whatever, and I give them some basic benefits around time off and different things, and I do that in order to attract my employees and keep them—and you're going to give my competitor the ability to race to the bottom? Man, you're giving that guy or that woman who owns that business an unfair advantage to undercut those employers that are trying to do the right thing. I say to you, you're not helping anybody here. What you're doing is continuing with people being taken advantage of in the workplace.

The last thing I would say on the minimum wage issue is, \$14 an hour to \$15 an hour—you guys are saying, "Oh my God, the world is going to come to an end." There are all kinds of jurisdictions that have gone to a higher minimum wage, and do you know what happened? Those people have spent the money in their local economy. Do you know why? I don't know anybody at 14 bucks an hour who can go to the Cayman Islands and open a bank account. But I know a lot of people at the top, in the 1%, who can afford to do that.

All you're doing is, you're rewarding the bad employers. You should be standing with progressive employers in this province, and individuals who work for those employers, and doing what's right for them, so that they can continue to grow this economy in our province and do so in a way that's not only profitable for them, as employers in business, but also for their employees, so that we understand at the end of the day that it's not about the top 1% getting everything they want à la Doug Ford. It should be about everybody making sure that they get a just return for the work that they do when they're an employee and are treated fairly overall.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for this time in the debate.

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

Ms. Armstrong has moved an amendment to government notice of motion number 15, relating to allocation of time on Bill 47, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000, the Labour Relations Act, 1995 and the Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act, 2009 and make complementary amendments to other Acts.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a nay.

All those in favour of the motion, please say “aye.”

All those opposed, please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

Mr. Bill Walker: Speaker?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Yes?

“Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on government notice of motion 15 be deferred until deferred votes on Monday, November 12.”

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I have a note. It’s dated Toronto, November 1. It says:

“To the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly:

“Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on the amendment to government notice of motion 15 be deferred until deferred votes on Monday, November 12, 2018.”

It’s signed by Bill Walker, MPP, chief government whip, Progressive Conservative Party.

Vote deferred.

Mr. Bill Walker: A pleasure doing business, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): A pleasure doing business with you.

Orders of the day? I recognize the member for King–Vaughan.

Mr. Stephen Lecce: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member for King–Vaughan, the parliamentary assistant, has moved adjournment of the House.

Is it agreed? I did hear a no.

All those in favour of adjourning the House, please say “aye.”

All those opposed, please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Interjection: On division.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Carried on division.

This House stands adjourned until Monday, November 12, 2018, at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1636.

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Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

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Roman Baber, Rudy Cuzzetto
Amy Fee, Vincent Ke
Andrea Khanjin, Marie-France Lalonde
Taras Natyshak, Rick Nicholls
Jeremy Roberts, Marit Stiles
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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Aris Babikian
Roman Baber, Aris Babikian
Nathalie Des Rosiers, Jill Dunlop
Parm Gill, Lindsey Park
Ross Romano, Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria
Sara Singh, Monique Taylor
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**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
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Michael Coteau, Mike Harris
Faisal Hassan, Jane McKenna
Christina Maria Mitas, Sam Oosterhoff
Amanda Simard, Gurratan Singh
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Catherine Fife, Goldie Ghamari
Jim McDonnell, Norman Miller
Suze Morrison, Michael Parsa
Peggy Sattler, Kinga Surma
Daisy Wai
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Toby Barrett, Will Bouma
Mike Harris, Randy Hillier
Mitzi Hunter, Laura Mae Lindo
Paul Miller, Billy Pang
Kaleed Rasheed, Amarjot Sandhu
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Deepak Anand, Doly Begum
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Michael Gravelle, Joel Harden
Belinda Karahalios, Robin Martin
Sheref Sabawy, Nina Tangri
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Roman Baber, Doug Downey
Catherine Fife, Robin Martin
Lindsey Park, Ross Romano
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