

Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario



Assemblée
législative
de l'Ontario

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

No. 125

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

N^o 125

1st Session
42nd Parliament

Thursday
7 November 2019

1^{re} session
42^e législature

Jeudi
7 novembre 2019

Speaker: Honourable Ted Arnott
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
Greffier : Todd Decker

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



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

ISSN 1180-2987

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 7 November 2019

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 7 novembre 2019

The House met at 0900.

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

Prières/Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PROVINCIAL ANIMAL WELFARE
SERVICES ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 SUR LES SERVICES
PROVINCIAUX VISANT LE BIEN-ÊTRE
DES ANIMAUX

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 6, 2019, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 136, An Act to enact the Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act, 2019 and make consequential amendments with respect to animal protection / Projet de loi 136, Loi édictant la Loi de 2019 sur les services provinciaux visant le bien-être des animaux et apportant des modifications corrélatives concernant la protection des animaux.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): When we last debated this bill, the member for Brampton North had the floor and I'm prepared to recognize him again. The member for Brampton North.

Mr. Kevin Yarde: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I did start off by talking about how we got here. I'm not going to continue with that, so I'll just continue with the rest of the PAWS Act. For too long, animal advocates and stakeholders have demanded the need for change and for a revamped cruelty enforcement regime right here in Ontario.

For decades, animal welfare charities and their donors have been subsidizing this province. They have been the ones providing law enforcement—which is a public service—to investigate animal cruelty in a severely underfunded system. Private charities enforcing publicly enacted laws doesn't happen in any other area of law, so when you force a charity like the OSPCA to fundraise money, and work to enforce our laws—yes, we can say that the OSPCA is very passionate about protecting the welfare of our animals, and they have to pay for it for themselves—what we're doing, Mr. Speaker, is committing a disservice to the people of Ontario.

The OSPCA was forced to work with what they had, but there was always a need to move toward a public

system, and this bill, the PAWS Act, is an answer to the problems in the old system. Is it, or is it not? Well, that's what we're going to find out right now.

One of the key aspects is that there's going to be a public ministry inspectorate empowered to take the actions in various ways to protect animals, with a focus on oversight, transparency and accountability. Those are the three key aspects of this bill that people were asking for: oversight, transparency and accountability. Now, a lot is under review regarding regulations that this government is promising, so right now, Mr. Speaker, we are only seeing a partial picture of this act. Exactly how effective the laws will be, including their enforcement, remains to be seen, and I'm cautiously optimistic that this government will do the right thing.

Regulations on animal welfare have been long overdue in this province. It is very sad to see animal abuses continue in our province. Many of us have pets, and we consider our pets members of the family. This government, along with the previous Liberal government from what we've seen, has known that the system that was in place wasn't working. The Conservatives seem more focused on allowing dogs to sit on patios than to ensure that they are being treated humanely. Both this government and the Liberals have let animals and the people of this province down by allowing a broken animal welfare system, with little to no accountability, to continue. This government has failed to act until now, when the situation has clearly reached a boiling point and they have no other choice.

What we're seeing with this new legislation is encouraging. As I mentioned, I'm cautiously optimistic. Ontario, as some people may not know, is the only province to move toward a fully public model of animal law enforcement, and that is a significant step in the right direction. By employing public servants who are properly trained to handle the unique situations involved in animal welfare, it becomes much safer.

One example where safety became a concern and proved deadly was in Alberta, where they employed municipal bylaw enforcement officers and peace officers to enforce animal welfare legislation. I'll tell you a little bit about what happened in this case. Rod Lazenby, a municipal peace officer, was killed while investigating an animal-related complaint. The man who killed Officer Lazenby was found not criminally responsible for the death, due to a mental disorder. The more troubling part of this is that the man was known to other policing agencies, but the information was not communicated to the municipality or the peace officers dealing with the animal welfare complaints.

This story is a testament to the importance of taking seriously the occupational risks involved in enforcement work of all kinds and the need to take workers' safety very seriously when moving forward toward enforcing animal welfare issues here in Ontario. There will always be risks. We know that. There will always be risks in this kind of work; however, more training, resources and protections for these workers have a major effect on their safety.

Other provinces, such as Manitoba, do appoint animal protection officers who investigate and enforce provincial law, with some of them working directly for the government. However, in Manitoba, most are external staff contracted out, with some working for the Winnipeg Humane Society. Manitoba, like other places, has a hybrid public-private delivery model for animal welfare, whereas a completely public model will ensure more transparency, accountability and safety. That's what we are hoping to have here in Ontario.

In 2016—I just want to take you back a few years—there were only 91 investigation officers to serve the entire province of Ontario. By this year, that number has dropped to around 60. On average, they are tasked to investigate some 18,000 complaints of animal cruelty each and every year. On top of that, about half of these officers have other responsibilities within their affiliated humane societies and cannot focus their entire attention on animal cruelty investigations.

Many regions in Ontario do not have a humane society to service their area at all, and that is troubling. My members from northern Ontario are probably fully aware of this: In northern Ontario, there are many hours between communities—huge, vast areas. These areas will require the resources and finances necessary to represent such a vast area. Enforcement officers lack reliable communication tools in these areas, they have very large caseloads and they predominantly work alone in the field in potentially dangerous situations.

Many who abuse animals also tend to abuse children—we know that—women, the elderly and other vulnerable people, and they show signs of anti-social and destructive behaviour. If we can shut down the animal abusers at an early stage, it could prevent domestic violence from happening.

0910

I want to give you some statistics here: In 2017, the OSPCA investigation's data revealed that 15,519 complaints were investigated, 3,998 orders were issued, 573 provincial charges were laid, 21 Criminal Code charges were laid and 1,220 animals were removed from abusive situations. Obviously, it is sad that these abuses still happen in 2019. Animals do not have a voice, so we as politicians here in the Legislature will be their voice. We need to have meaningful measures in place and close the gaps we are currently experiencing to protect them.

Reform to the current deficiencies in animal cruelty enforcement can be seen in the many instances where blatant animal abusers have gone unpunished. What we need is training for crown attorneys and OPP officers, and that should be an important part of this legislation. We're going to continue to make sure it is in here because we've

seen in many cases that cruelty charges that could have and should have been prosecuted were withdrawn.

Let's take the owner of the Skyway Animal Hospital in St. Catharines, which is in the riding of my colleague here, who is probably fully aware of this case. A veterinarian was charged with 16 criminal counts of animal cruelty by the OSPCA: eight counts of causing unnecessary pain or suffering to an animal and eight counts of failing to provide suitable and adequate care for an animal. This, Madam Speaker, after four former employees submitted a dozen surveillance videos as evidence of the animal abuse, including choking and hitting animals in his care. In one video, the veterinarian can be seen hitting a dog over its snout with a nail clipper while being restrained. In another—and this is going to sound pretty horrific—the veterinarian is seen swinging a sedated cat around by its tail and slamming it down on the counter.

The OSPCA conducted an investigation that included reviewing video and conducting interviews with witnesses and the owners of the pets subject to the abuse. The College of Veterinarians of Ontario found the doctor guilty of professional misconduct and delivered a 10-month suspension. But when tried in court, all of the animal cruelty charges were dropped. The crown prosecutor stated that since the OSPCA started their investigation and obtained a warrant without receiving a formal complaint, the doctor should not have been charged criminally. The crown also asserted that the discipline from the College of Veterinarians of Ontario was enough for the veterinarian, and he was able to return to work.

If a straightforward case like this cannot get a conviction, and animal abusers just get a slap on the wrist, this is a major sign of a broken system that is failing to protect the animals in this province. The reason I bring this case up is that there has been concern for some time that the crown attorneys need greater training and understanding of these offences. I hope, Madam Speaker, that this new bill will include additional training needed to help them get that.

Animal rights advocate and labour academic Dr. Kendra Coulter undertook an online survey polling Ontarians for their views on the future of animal welfare enforcement in this province. What she found after more than 20,000 people completed the survey—this was a testament to the level of concern that the public has towards the state of our animal welfare laws in this province; the people of Ontario care deeply about the well-being of animals and want better from our government. What did she conclude after 20,000 people completed the survey? It was released in March of this year. It called for reform and to effectively end the OSPCA's role in enforcement, as 90% of respondents see animal cruelty investigations as a public responsibility—not a private, but a public, responsibility. Dr. Coulter also stated that "A well-trained and resourced provincial anti-cruelty unit would make Ontario a leader in anti-cruelty enforcement and send a strong message that crimes against animals are taken seriously in this province."

Dr. Coulter has responded positively to this bill, which is good. She states, "The framework is promising.... Our

research has found that a dedicated publicly funded anti-cruelty team would be the smartest option for Ontario so I am pleased that the government has made this the foundation of its new approach.”

Many other animal advocates remain cautiously optimistic, like myself. Animal Justice’s executive director, Camille Labchuk, responded in a statement, “Animal Justice is encouraged by Ontario’s announcement that animal welfare enforcement in this province will become a fully public function. We support a robust, well-funded public enforcement model because animal protection is a key societal value, and this is what Ontarians expect.”

The founder of Reform Advocates for Animal Welfare, Lynn Perrier, is quoted as saying, “Of particular interest to me is the potential contribution crown attorneys can make to enforce animal abuse laws. To date, animals have not been well represented in our courts and abusers get away with a slap on the hand. Hopefully that will end now.” She’s obviously referring to some of the cases I just mentioned.

Humane Canada, which is Canada’s federation of the SPCAs and humane societies, also remarked on this bill. They stated, “SPCAs and humane societies are the leading agencies in Canada dedicated to law enforcement and animal welfare. While Ontario has moved to internalize it, SPCAs and humane societies continue to have an important role to play in law enforcement whether to lead, assist or consult.” Humane Canada’s CEO, Barbara Cartwright, also remarked on this bill: “Humane societies and SPCAs have been responsible for law enforcement in Canada for 150 years, taking on that mission when the government could not or would not, and developing a unique expertise in this field. While Ontario is stepping forward to assume the mandate, we will be watching closely and advocating to ensure animals don’t fall through the cracks.”

Humane Canada also notes that government commitments to more than just enforcement is key in a strong judicial system that better protects all animals. Cartwright added, in conclusion, “Crown prosecutor training is a breakthrough for Ontario in animal welfare. It will strengthen relationships between enforcement and crown leading to more convictions for animal abusers.”

As you can see, there are a lot of people here who have weighed in on this bill, and they are cautiously optimistic that the government will do the right thing.

Madam Speaker, what I’m going to do now is talk about a description of the bill. The Ontario government Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act, or PAWS, was introduced at Queen’s Park on October 29. Now, when this bill passes, enforcement will fall under the Solicitor General’s office. There are a number of major elements of this bill, and I’ll describe them to you. I will go through parts I through VIII.

Part I defines terms used throughout the act. These include “standard of care” and important definitions of “distress” and “critical distress” of animals.

Part II is the establishment of a chief animal welfare inspector. This position will be appointed by and report to the Solicitor General of Ontario, and may, in turn, appoint one or more deputy chief animal welfare inspectors.

0920

Let’s go through some of the duties of the chief animal welfare inspector. Here they are, as follows:

“1. To appoint animal welfare inspectors.

“2. To supervise, direct and control animal welfare inspectors in the performance of their duties and in the exercise of their powers.

“3. To ensure that animal welfare inspectors receive appropriate training respecting their powers and duties.

“4. To handle complaints about animal welfare inspectors other than the chief animal welfare inspector.

“5. To arrange for the provision of necessities to, and otherwise arrange for the care of, any animal in the chief animal welfare inspector’s care or otherwise in the possession of an animal welfare inspector.

“6. To arrange for analyses in relation to the following:

“i. The management or allocation of resources related to this act.

“ii. The delivery of programs and services related to this act.

“iii. The evaluation of programs and services related to this act.

“7. To perform such other duties as are assigned to him or her by or under this or any other act, including any duties prescribed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.”

In summary, the chief animal welfare inspector has several duties—as we can see—related to the appointment and oversight of animal welfare inspectors as well as the provision needed for animals in the chief animal welfare inspector’s care. He or she is an animal welfare inspector by virtue of being the chief animal welfare inspector.

The animal welfare inspectors, including the chief animal welfare inspector, are subject to a code of conduct. So Bill 136 creates a framework whereby animal welfare inspectors are members of the public service and accountable to the chief animal welfare inspector appointed under the act. Part III of the bill sets out a complaints procedure and standards about the conduct of animal welfare inspectors, including the chief animal welfare inspector. The Solicitor General will be handling complaints about the chief animal welfare inspector, and the chief animal welfare inspector handles all other complaints. If the animal welfare inspector who is the subject of a complaint has failed to comply with the code of conduct, they can take several actions against them, up to and including revoking their appointment.

Part IV sets out the duties and prohibitions in respect of animals. This bill establishes that every person must adhere to standards of care and administrative requirements in respect to the custody or care of animals.

This part also breaks down exceptions provided for agricultural activities and veterinary activities and establishes that veterinarians and other prescribed individuals have a duty to report abuse, undue physical or psychological hardship, privation or neglect. “No person shall cause an animal to be in distress, permit an animal to be in distress or knowingly or recklessly cause an animal to be exposed to an undue risk of distress, subject to certain exceptions.”

There are also several prohibitions relating to animal fights—I'm glad this is in here—including prohibitions on the possession of equipment or structures used in animal fights.

Dogfighting continues to be a problem here in Ontario and across Canada. Just as animal cruelty can be connected to domestic violence, there's also a link between animal cruelty and gang violence and organized crime. There is definitely a link.

This can take a number of forms, including illegal dogfights. Dogfighting is the act of baiting two dogs against one another for entertainment or for financial gain. It involves placing two dogs in a pit until one either quits or, sadly, dies. There are two main types of dogfights: street fights and organized professional fights. While street fights can involve betting on the animals, the dog may also serve as a status symbol and a weapon for the gang members due to the size and aggressiveness of the dog.

Studies have shown that when these dogfights occur in rings, they should be raided, and in many cases they are raided. Illegal drugs and weapons are also seized about two thirds of the time when we have raids. So I applaud the focus on combatting this horrible practice within the PAWS Act to also help prevent more serious violent crimes.

The PAWS Act also provides for protecting law enforcement or service animals.

"No person shall possess or breed an animal that has been prescribed by the regulations as a prohibited animal. Orca possession and breeding continues to be prohibited. In addition, the possession or breeding of animals that are prescribed by the regulations as a restricted animal requires authorization by the regulations."

Bill 136 adds some new offences, which is good, and tougher penalties for animal abusers, with some exceptions made for animals involved in agriculture and husbandry.

The bill states that the standards of care and administrative requirements for animals in part IV, subsection (1)—"does not apply in respect of any activity regarding agricultural animal care"—it's very important to mention this—"management or husbandry carried on in accordance with the reasonable and generally accepted practices of agricultural animal care, management or husbandry, unless the standards of care or administrative requirements expressly provide that they apply to that activity." What this means is that inspectors will have specific expertise in livestock, agriculture, equine, zoos and aquariums to support police and ground inspectors. So we are happy to see that our agricultural communities were consulted by the Solicitor General and represented in this bill.

Beef Farmers of Ontario have stated that the group "looks forward to engaging with government throughout the stages of the bill's review through the House."

Other livestock organizations have also been actively involved in the consultation process. It's easy to think that this bill just represents cats, dogs and other pets, but as you can see, it represents many more animals other than our pets. It represents farmers and our agricultural industry partners. They play an important role in animal welfare in this

province, so we need to keep working with them as well as our pet owners. We need to ensure that there is adequate regulation in place so that all animals are protected in this province, regardless of their location, context or the industry that's involved.

The Ontario government website has touted this bill as introducing the strongest penalties in Canada for offenders, and indeed, this is true. If this bill passes, it is the hope that dedicated animal welfare officers, with adequate support and resources, will be in a position to effectively police animal cruelty complaints, and that the crown prosecutors will effectively enforce the law by prosecuting offences. These are two key points. We need to make sure that they're able to effectively prosecute and, of course, make sure that they have the resources to do that. However, as always with this government, the wording is always strong, but the resources and finances aren't always there to close the gaps. Even the best legislation won't be able to protect our animals if the funding and resources fall short.

Part V of the bill sets out the powers of animal welfare inspectors to determine compliance with the act and to protect animals. Let's go through part V right now. Inspectors are empowered to enter a dwelling with authorization or with a warrant or telewarrant to conduct inspections. They may ask for police assistance, and they may use reasonable force to execute a warrant. Special provisions allow entry to a place where there is reasonable grounds to expect there is an animal in distress, and inspectors may enter a dwelling if the time required to obtain a warrant may result in serious injury or death to the animal. Inspectors may order the owner to seek care for an animal in distress, take possession or, if necessary, euthanize an animal on the advice of a veterinarian. So there are some key points right there. The police may be called to assist, and reasonable force may be used to take possession of the animal. The animal welfare inspector may also then decide to keep an animal in their care if certain concerns about returning the animal apply. An owner or custodian is liable for the cost of relieving an animal from distress, and forfeits their animal to the crown if they do not pay.

0930

In addition, persons to be prescribed in regulation are authorized to enter motor vehicles to relieve animals in critical distress, and they may cause reasonable damage in entering the vehicle to rescue an animal. We've seen this in many cases over several years. For instance, it can take mere minutes for a car to heat up to fatal temperatures on a hot summer day. Brain damage, pain and suffering, even death due to heat stroke or suffocation can be the outcomes if an animal is left inside a hot car. They must promptly notify an animal welfare inspector and must allow the inspector to inspect the animal and determine whether to take possession of it.

Let's go to part VI, Madam Speaker. Part VI of the bill continues to enforce the Animal Care Review Board, where owners or custodians of animals may appeal certain orders and decisions of the chief animal welfare inspector and other animal welfare inspectors to the board. The board

has the power to confirm, revoke or modify these orders and decisions and to order that animals be returned to their owner or custodian. The Animal Care Review Board of appointed people will virtually remain as is—nothing changing here—with a person having five business days after charges are laid to file an appeal.

Part VII of the bill breaks down enforcement and sets out the powers of animal welfare inspectors with regard to investigating offences under the act. So let's get into that just a little bit here. It allows the provision of a warrant or a warrantless search in circumstances where the inspector believes that evidence would be destroyed in the time it takes to acquire a warrant. In other words, it sets out provisions regarding warrants, production orders, evidence and the seizure of animals in certain circumstances. Animals used for fighting may be seized and are forfeited if any animal fighting conviction is established.

Finally, part VIII establishes both minor offences, such as restricted animals or failing to assist an inspector, and major offences, such as causing distress to an animal or participating in dogfighting activities, under the act. These are subject to different penalties. The penalties are established for individuals and corporations, and vary from minor to major offences.

The fines have been increased, and let's go through these fines. A first major offence committed by a corporation—not an individual, but a corporation—constitutes a fine of half a million dollars. The top fine is \$1 million for a corporation convicted of repeated major offences.

Individuals convicted of a major offence under this new legislation could be fined up to \$130,000 and up to two years in prison. If an individual is convicted of a second offence, the maximum fine doubles. Certain mandatory minimum sentences are also established, including \$25,000 for causing distress to an animal that causes or results in death, animal fighting or harming a service or law enforcement animal.

Animal welfare inspectors will have greater powers of enforcement, giving them a lot more capacity to go out, make these seizures and put these fines in place. Administrative penalties such as a ticket are also enacted for certain minor offences. Part VIII also contains a separate section providing for orders to remove orcas that are possessed in Ontario in contravention of section 19.

Let's go to a discussion on long-term plans for new regulations. Going forward, if passed, this bill is planned to be in place with transitional regulations by January 1, 2020. The ministry is planning further engagement of stakeholders in 2020 in order to develop long-term regulations, and I applaud them for doing that. These could include updated standards of care, banning certain exotic animals and the planned multidisciplinary table.

Due to the lack of clarity in these long-term discussions regarding modernizing animal welfare protection, it is hard to evaluate regulations that are still to come. We don't know what the regulations are, and that seems to be the case with every bill that has come through the Legislature here.

It looks like the government is empowering itself to ban certain types of animals. Ontario is the only province that

doesn't have any exotic animal legislation, which is surprising, besides the current bans on pit bulls, which we all are familiar with.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Don't forget orcas.

Mr. Kevin Yarde: And orcas—pit bulls and orcas.

This should not be a city-by-city process. It needs to be subject to laws that are province-wide. This way we don't get situations like we did in the past like the IKEA monkey, which we all remember and which I believe, Madam Speaker, is not acceptable in this province or anywhere.

This new bill could also empower new regulations on other industries that use animals, such as setting up legislation to regulate uses of animals in places like zoos and aquariums. This could involve recommendations such as those outlined by the organization World Animal Protection. World Animal Protection suggests establishing a comprehensive captive wildlife licensing scheme to put an end to roadside zoos and strengthen existing captive wildlife standards to better protect animals and better protect animal welfare and people's safety. This is something that the people of Ontario have long called for in this province. Now there is a chance to establish stricter regulations on these industries.

Moreover, specific animal practices such as cosmetic mutilations to pets, including cat declawing and tail-docking or ear-cropping of dogs, could be regulated here in this bill. That is something that many animal activists have been advocating for for a very long time.

Let's discuss funding, because this is a critical point here in this bill. Ontarians care about animals and are prepared to financially support an effective modern animal welfare system and law enforcement regime. While bringing both regimes into the public sector will require funding, the majority of Ontario pet owners understand the importance of protecting them, because they are like family, and making sure that all of the animals in Ontario are protected. That includes pets; that includes agricultural animals; that includes wildlife, in the wild and in captivity; and animals in research. We consider the investment to be well worth the return.

As stated, Madam Speaker, much more is needed to be revealed by this government in implementing new regulations necessary for a modernized animal welfare model in this province. This model will work if—that's a big "if"—it is public and well funded. Adequate resources need to be devoted to enforcement. If this work isn't funded, even the best legislation won't be able to protect our animals.

In the past, the proper funding was not being allocated to animal welfare, and this was one of the downfalls of the OSPCA. Former governments did not provide the necessary funding for the OSPCA to do their job effectively. In other words, we're not blaming them; they just didn't get the proper funding that was required.

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Indeed, the OSPCA, whose officers have police powers and had led both provincial offences and criminal cruelty charges, lacked funding for many years. They had financial losses as well. That also led to their decision to no longer provide their services here in Ontario.

The OSPCA looked for help for funding, but they did not get it from previous governments. So in the end, what did they have to do? They had to weigh the merits of remaining in the animal cruelty investigation field altogether, citing increasing costs. The OSPCA, for years, operated its enforcement arm at a significant loss and had to balance the books by pulling from the donor dollars that are used to fund other operations. These include shelters and rescue programs for vulnerable animals.

The agency itself brought in \$7 million from donations in fundraising in 2017, which is good, but they shouldn't have to rely on fundraising. It took in about \$2.4 million in municipal contract fees and \$2.1 million in shelter and veterinary revenue. Animal care—if you listen to this number—and protection cost nearly \$14 million. So you can see why the shortfall is there.

Now, this government says that they will provide adequate funding. However, Madam Speaker, they haven't given us a number. We don't know what the funding formula is going to be. We don't have a dollar amount. This is very concerning, as animal welfare and the need for inspectors, as we know, is great. So it would be prudent for the government to let us know how much they are going to allocate: \$5 million, \$10 million? More? Less? We don't know. A dollar amount, without surprises, is required.

We only have to look at the past experience with this government, in terms of funding, to be skeptical of their intentions this time around. They have cut funding, as we know, in health care, they have cut funding in education and they have cut funding where the needs are greatest.

So for this, Madam Speaker, I am deeply concerned, with regard to this bill and animal welfare, that the funding model will come up short. I'm hoping that it won't, but we don't have a number, and that's something that they should put forward for the people of Ontario.

I think the substance of what this bill has the potential to deliver is positive—we all agree, it is positive—and I'm cautiously optimistic that we're going to see more progress in the regulations. I'm confident it is heading in the right direction. Bill 136, the PAWS Act, is aiming to better protect animals from neglect and abuse, along with a strengthened enforcement system. But the key is that it will be a public rather than a private enforcement process.

If it is passed, it would put Ontario at the forefront of the strongest penalties for animal abusers in Canada. This is much needed to protect animals and to ensure justice for our four-legged and two-legged friends.

The PAWS Act would create a chief animal welfare inspector position to handle complaints and enforce policies. Animal welfare inspectors would be permitted to inspect places to ascertain compliance with the act. It would give them the power to submit applications for warrants and to enter dwellings, and the ability to ask police for help when needed.

Examining veterinarians will have a duty to report animal abuse for both physical and/or psychological harm.

The bill is planning to improve oversight and transparency for the public as part of the new regime.

I believe, Madam Speaker, that this is a direct response to the Bogaerts case, where the court had noted: "Although charged with law enforcement responsibilities, the OSPCA is opaque, insular, unaccountable, and potentially subject to external influence, and as such Ontarians cannot be confident that the laws it enforces will be fairly and impartially administered."

It is also encouraging to see partnerships with members of health and social services to deal with issues such as the hoarding of animals and the linkages between animal abuse and domestic abuse cases.

Madam Speaker, I'm happy that the Solicitor General has consulted with police, veterinarians, local governments, humane societies, academics and the public to create the regulations introduced in this PAWS Act. These consultations improve animal welfare by introducing new offences to combat activities such as dogfighting, as we mentioned earlier; giving inspectors necessary powers to help animals in distress and to hold owners accountable; giving government the ability to take action when an animal is in imminent risk of serious injury or death, or when a pet is left in a hot car; and significantly increasing penalties for serious, repeat and corporate offenders.

These new penalties, as the Solicitor General and her colleague mentioned, will be the strongest in Canada. They aim to improve oversight and ensure increased transparency and accountability, including establishing a one-window complaints mechanism for the public. This will build public trust in this new model. Moreover, establishing a multidisciplinary advisory table made up of a wide range of experts, including veterinarians, agriculture representatives, academics, animal advocates and others, to provide ongoing advice to the ministry to improve animal welfare is extremely important in order to improve conditions for animals in Ontario.

The fundamental goal in all of this is to create legislation that focuses on the animals. We need transparency, we need accountability, to make things better for the animals and to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves, to ensure justice for animals.

An animal that had been deemed under distress or whose owner had contravened standards of care under the old act had been subject to a maximum fine of just \$60,000. The fine, as we mentioned, has been increased to twice that amount for a first offence and then double that for a second offence, with the potential for jail time.

The definition of "distress" is outlined in the new act: the state of requiring proper care, food and water, or "injured, sick, in pain or suffering." For the very first time, the definition of animal distress also includes "psychological hardship, privation or neglect."

There is a more open investigation process outlined in the act, with a policy of the complainant and the person who is the subject of the complaint being apprised of the ongoing investigation. If an animal is in distress in a vehicle, an inspector "may enter the motor vehicle for the purpose of relieving the animal from distress.... The prescribed person may cause damage to the motor vehicle that is reasonably necessary in order to enter it and relieve the animal"

who is in distress. If an inspector deems that an animal in a house is in distress, the animal inspector may, without a warrant, enter and search the place, as it states.

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I just want to talk a little bit about some equity considerations. Now in this bill, section 34, subsection (4) allows for the forfeiture of an animal if an owner is not able to settle their account with an animal inspector—these are some problematic parts of the bill that I'm having some concerns with—who has taken the animal into care or providing necessities. So there is a possibility with this that we could be revictimizing the poor. I'm concerned about that section in the bill. There are people who can't pay their vet bills. What are we going to do, revictimize the poor? We need more clarity on this section of the bill. I'm hoping that the government will bring forth clarity on that.

In conclusion, animal welfare is first and foremost about the well-being of animals. However, we must also take into consideration the direct connections that animal cruelty has with many social issues such as mental health, domestic violence, poverty, as well as the cost of animal care and public safety. The PAWS Act has the potential to finally create the well-coordinated and properly resourced and funded public animal cruelty investigation system that the people of Ontario are asking them to do for animals.

The reason why we are here, Madam Speaker, of course, is for the animals. I want to just mention some of the animals who cannot speak for themselves, so we'll speak for them. Our four-legged and two-legged friends: to them, we will be protecting you.

The Afghan hound, the Akita, the Alaskan malamute, the American Staffordshire, the Australian shepherd, the basset hound, the beagle, the bearded collie, the Bedlington terrier, the bichon frise, the border terrier, the boxer, the Brittany, the bull terrier, the bulldog, the bullmastiff, the chihuahua, the collies, the dachshunds, the Dalmatians, the Eskimo dogs, the fox terriers, the foxhounds, the French bulldogs—all are to be protected under this legislation. The German shepherd, the German shorthaired pointer, the golden retrievers, the Great Danes, the greyhounds, the Irish setters, the Jack Russell terriers, the Japanese spaniel, the Labrador retrievers, the Maltese, the mastiffs, the Mexican hairless, the Newfoundlanders—all protected under this bill. The Norwich terriers, the pointers, the poodles, the pugs, the Pulis, the Rhodesian ridgebacks, the Rottweilers, which I have, Madam Speaker—very impressive dog—the Salukis, the schnauzers, the Scottish deerhounds, the Shih Tzus, the Siberian huskies, the silky terrier, the Skye terrier, the Staffordshire bull terrier, the Sussex spaniel, the Yorkshire terrier—and of course the list goes on and on.

Mr. Jamie West: The golden doodle.

Mr. Kevin Yarde: The golden doodle. Yes. Sorry, I forgot the golden doodle—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: You forgot the yellow Labs.

Mr. Kevin Yarde: The yellow Labs.

Of course we can't forget our cat lovers out there. This bill will also protect our British shorthairs, the Burmese, the Cornish Rex, the Devon Rex, the Himalayans, the

Maine Coons, the Manx, the Persians, the Russian Blues, the Scottish Folds, the Siamese, the Sphynx, the Turkish Angora, the Turkish Van.

For you pet lovers out there who have birds, this legislation will protect you as well: the cockatiels, the parakeets, the golden conures, the parrots, the canaries, the macaws, the finches, the Moluccan cockatoos, and others I'm sure I've forgotten.

The guinea pigs, the rabbits, the hamsters, the goldfish, the gerbils, the box turtles, the leopard geckos, the mice, the ducks, the ferrets, the frogs, the horses, the pythons, the snakes: All will be protected under this legislation.

I'm surprised to see that I still have two minutes and 20 seconds left. But I just want to—

Interjection.

Mr. Kevin Yarde: Sorry, what was that?

Mr. Mike Harris: Keep going; you're doing great.

Mr. Kevin Yarde: Yes, I could go through all the animals. Exactly. I could continue all day. But the base of this bill is good. We are happy with the bill, overall. We probably will be supporting it. But we will be keeping our eye on the government to ensure that the funding mechanism is there, because we have seen in the past with this government that it hasn't been there in the areas of health care and education, so that's one area I'm cautiously optimistic about, Madam Speaker.

And, of course, regulations: We don't know what the regulations are. It's going to be a day-by-day routine to see what the government is going to put forth. Unfortunately, that's what has happened with every bill that has come through this Legislature: The regulations are not there. The funding mechanism is important, the regulations are important, and of course the equity considerations; that's the one concern I have. That was to subsection 34(4), which allows for the forfeiture of an animal if an owner is not able to settle their account with an animal inspector. I want more clarity on that. Not everyone can afford their vet bills. What are you going to do? Take the animal, the pet, away from people who can't afford it? So that's something—I see that the Solicitor General is paying attention, and maybe we'll get answers to that.

Also the concern, of course, with the chief inspectors is to make sure that we have proper training for our crown attorneys, and the police will be taking on some of these roles, so making sure the training is there, the funding is there and the regulations are there. We here at the NDP will be watching, because our four-legged and two-legged friends need somebody to be behind them and we want to make sure we get this right.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Questions and comments?

Ms. Christine Hogarth: It's always a good day when we are talking about protecting animals. We certainly appreciate the members opposite supporting this legislation, as pets have no political stripe. I know, as you mentioned all these animals, you forgot the mutts out there. We all love our mutts that we have in our homes and are close to our hearts. I have one of my own.

This animal welfare legislation is so important, and having the toughest fines in Canada—we can't state that

enough. What hurts most is the toughest fines, so this legislation will impose the toughest fines on first offenders and then second offenders. We want to make sure that is clear and we want to make sure we can get that message out to other provinces if they are discussing this legislation to make sure that, right across Canada, we have tough fines.

I just want to talk about some of the highlights, some of the things we are doing in this bill to protect our animals. One is, we are introducing offences to combat such activities as dogfighting. Can you believe that still happens today? I can't. But it does, and we need to stop that.

We want to give our inspectors the necessary powers to help animals in distress and to hold owners accountable. Those inspectors, as we talked about, will be directly employed by the provincial government and they will have the appropriate, specific powers to immediately relieve animals in distress and to inspect and follow up on owner compliance. That is a key piece, that they will be employees of the provincial government.

When we talk about distress, the Solicitor General made sure that we looked at the word "distress" and we enhanced that word "distress," because we talk a little bit differently today than we did years ago about animals and what a distressed animal is. That's when we look at animals who are stuck in cars—if we can get that message out to people: Please do not leave your animals in a hot vehicle—or a cold vehicle, for that matter. They get distressed. Now these inspectors and the police will have the authority to break those windows to free those animals who are distressed.

We already talked about the highest—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you.

Further questions and comments?

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Mr. Jamie West: I want to echo, also, the comments that the member opposite said about pets who are in distress in vehicles. I remember a couple of years ago going to Vaughan Mills mall, and they were checking every car to see if you had pets in your car. It's a move forward, and it's a initiative that's being brought forward by volunteers.

The member from Brampton North, when he talked about this being overdue—we had a system where a charitable organization, doing the best they can as a charitable organization, trying to do this on behalf of the government and having police-like powers but not the transparency that comes along with a publicly funded one. We talked about how we're very likely to support this, but the devil is always in the details. It comes down to the funding and the efficiency of this.

I think it's important to note—I think he had mentioned that it was in 2016 that we had 91 officers, which is not enough for the province of Ontario, but we dropped to 60. So that funding that comes down to—will we have adequate officers for the north, for example?

As the member from Brampton North mentioned, the north is vast. I remember driving through Algoma-Manitoulin and having to stop and refill for gas because of the vast distances in the north. The idea that when you're

driving in the south and there's a sign that notifies you that you've left the city and you're entered a new city—when you drive in the north, when I go to camp—and for those of you in the south, that's a cottage. When I go to camp, you drive, and my kids will fall asleep because there's nothing for an hour, and then you get to a town. So how do you resource that for those animal protection officers who are going to be protecting our animals?

I think one thing that really echoed for me was the frustration of the slap of the hand, when he told the story of the veterinarian who was swinging a cat that was sedated by the tail and slamming it on the ground. How can you get away with that and your result be a slap on the hand or, in that case, no result at all?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further questions and comments?

Mrs. Belinda C. Karahalios: First, I'd just like to say a big thank you to the Solicitor General and her parliamentary assistant, the member from Etobicoke-Lakeshore, on your hard work on this bill. I know, especially for the parliamentary assistant—she had her private member's bill. You have a really big heart when it comes to animals—and human beings too. But I just want to thank you for the work that you've done on this file.

I do want to mention to the member from Brampton North: the corgi. Everyone forgets the corgi. Let's remember the corgi. Thank you for that.

What I want to talk about in this bill is that people sometimes forget that for individuals who will go as far as to harm an animal, there is usually a link to those individuals who will then harm human beings, and so a lot of people in law enforcement will monitor the severity of abuse that occurs to this animal, what's happening. There are some pretty nasty things happening out there that I will not repeat or put on the record. Police do monitor that as it is, because we know there is a progression, and things can happen to individuals.

The fact that the minister has introduced this bill and is increasing penalties and putting in more oversight when it comes to having these inspectors I think is a really good thing, because this is one of many levels of things for policing. That's why this falls so well under your ministry, Ms. Solicitor General.

I'd like to also talk about keeping animals in cars. It's very wrong. It's interesting because it's actually linked to Bill 132. We talked about allowing people to bring dogs onto patios. I'm hoping that we'll see less of dogs in cars when individuals are, in the summertime, going for a couple of appetizers with their friends and family—to bring their dog. Dogs are part of your family. You want to include them, so I do see a good linkage between those two bills.

I think there was a lot of thought that went into this, and I'm looking forward to further debate.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'm an animal lover, so it's a pleasure for me to rise today.

When we take a look at this bill, it reminds me that how we treat others who have less power shows who we are as

individuals and also as a government. So I'd like to congratulate the government for their focus on providing support for the more vulnerable, because we know that animals cannot speak for themselves.

The member from Brampton North brought up some very disturbing comments about an investigation involving animal abuse. It's absolutely horrific to think of, and it's disappointing to me as an Ontarian that Ontario has not stepped forward until now, leaving the OSPCA to fund, enforce and look after animals.

Really, what this comes down to is both funding and responsibility. So many institutions within Ontario require the charity of others, and they require volunteers—we take a look at hospitals; we take a look at social service institutions—and it shouldn't have to be that way. Things should be funded properly. Volunteers should be able to contribute to and enhance the services that we already rely upon. They should not be there to fill the holes, stop the gaps and make up for the cuts. I implore this government to listen to the stakeholders who pointed out that proper funding for this is crucial.

Now I also have a couple of questions: How will this government take care of its enforcement role? Who are they talking about when they talk about a “prescribed person” who can relieve an animal in distress? These are questions that need to be answered. But further, the concerns about the forfeiture of an animal because someone can't pay: Let's not revictimize the vulnerable, because who is going to suffer here? That will be the animal who is removed from the person they love.

Remember: Responsibility is fundamental here, but that responsibility includes proper and adequate funding.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I return to the member from Brampton North for his reply.

Mr. Kevin Yarde: First of all, I would like to thank the OSPCA for their 100 to 150 years of service in protecting animals in Ontario. We are now changing from a private to a public model, and unfortunately for 100 to 150 years, they were not funded properly. We applaud the work that they have done.

As my colleague mentioned, one of the main concerns is funding. We have to get this right. We have to make sure we have the proper funding for this model. Also, we have to make sure that we have the proper resources and training.

Now for lawyers as well as for policing, they have to be able to charge. We have seen in the past that there haven't been convictions where abuses have been 100% clear, so we need to make sure that they are able to put those cases to rest, that the ability to try and charge is there, and make sure that that definitely goes through.

So the funding model is key. It's good here to see this new bill. We will now have more oversight and public trust and accountability under the chief inspector. Stakeholders were consulted. I'm glad to see that this government has spoken to agricultural members as well as spoken to the police, and other areas that are concerned about this bill.

Now the one concern, as the member mentioned as well, is the equity consideration here where a person is unable to pay a bill—say, a vet bill. What is going to happen? I

want to find out exactly from this government, will the animal be taken away from this person? I don't think we need to be revictimizing the poor. This is one of the concerns we have with this bill.

But overall, the framework is good. I applaud the Solicitor General and her parliamentary assistant, but we will be watching. We will be watching. Why? Because our four-legged and two-legged friends need the support, and we will make sure that they get that.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate? I recognize the member from Kitchener–Conestoga.

Mr. Mike Harris: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I know we're running a little short on time, but we will get things started and hopefully get a little bit more of a chance to continue this another day.

I am very happy to have a chance to speak to this very important bill here today. Like so many other members on both sides of this House, I full-heartedly support strong animal welfare and protection. We often think of animal welfare as protecting cats and dogs from abuse and neglect, and it's true. With six in 10 families being pet owners, this is an important part of the animal welfare system. But we are discussing more than just our pets here today. We are talking about a framework for the protection of animals in this province, and it is important to farmers that the highest level of care be provided to their livestock.

As an avid outdoorsman, I take the stewardship of our wildlife very seriously. It is our responsibility to do all that we can to ensure the protection and safety of animals in this province, which is why I am especially proud to stand up here today in support of this legislation which, if passed, would see the first provincially operated enforcement system in Canada. I want to take a moment and thank the Solicitor General for all the work she has done to build and design a system that would ensure the highest standard of protection for animals across this province.

Madam Speaker, when we formed government, we inherited an animal welfare protection system that was completely inadequate and lacked oversight. We took action in our first year in government after the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, better known as the OSPCA, ceased to provide animal welfare services. After passing Bill 117, our government launched a public survey to hear from Ontarians on how to improve animal protection. To echo the fine member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, the response from the public was overwhelming.

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Madam Speaker, this is an issue that the people of Ontario really care about. As with everything else this government does, we are listening and we used what we heard to inform the content of this legislation. What Ontarians want is a clear and accountable animal welfare regime with appropriate oversight, transparency and consistency. The same rules and enforcement practices should be there for all Ontarians.

The system we're proposing is the product of extensive consultation with a multitude of stakeholders, including humane societies from across the province. These organizations are the front lines of animal welfare education and

enforcement, working in the past with the OSPCA. I was glad to have the opportunity to sit down on multiple occasions in the last few months with the Humane Society of Kitchener Waterloo and Stratford Perth to hear their suggestions on the transition from the old act to developing a new, better system for Ontario. I'm happy to say that many of their suggestions are incorporated into the PAWS Act we're debating here today.

Before I provide a few examples, let me just first thank the organization, staff, volunteers and financial contributors for the amazing work and advocacy they do on a daily basis in Waterloo region and beyond. The humane society has been proudly investigating and enforcing the OSPCA Act in the region of Waterloo, the city of Stratford and Perth county. In 2018, their agents and inspectors investigated 769 animal cruelty cases, 650 in Kitchener and Waterloo alone, and provided pound services for the two cities and Wilmot and Woolwich townships in my riding. Also in 2018, they rescued 2,109 animals, successfully adopting 1,626, and they were able to return home 656 of those animals. Above and beyond all that great work, they perform thousands of surgeries and rabies vaccinations, while also helping 30,000-plus students learn more about animal welfare.

Madam Speaker, in April of this year I sat down with the humane society's executive director to discuss the need for new legislation. She recommended right off the bat that during the transition period, the province should extend investigative and enforcement authority to affiliated humane societies. That was done. She also suggested that the name of the act be modified from the Ontario SPCA Act to clarify the responsibilities between a modified SPCA and a new framework focused on animal welfare, protection and enforcement. This is being proposed. In a subsequent meeting to discuss ideas for new legislation, she suggested that the government create its own force of inspectors under a chief inspector who would enforce a province-wide model. That is also being proposed.

I was glad to share the voice of my local humane society, adding it to the thousands of people who responded to a public survey earlier this year asking how animal welfare in Ontario could be improved. I was glad to learn from the KWSP humane society that they welcome the proposed changes and are willing to work with our government to get the system right.

I've got a release here that I'm going to kind of paraphrase a little bit, because it does get a bit into the weeds. This is from the Humane Society of Kitchener Waterloo and Stratford Perth:

"The Humane Society of Kitchener Waterloo and Stratford Perth welcomes today's announcement from the Ontario government, introducing the Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act (PAWS) and to share their plans for a new government-focused enforcement model starting in 2020.

"We were pleased that we were able to step in and provide a lifeline to the animals and the government through this recent six-month transitional period," stated Kathrin Delutis, executive director, Kitchener Waterloo and Stratford Perth—"I know it's a long name—"humane society. 'Today's announcement is a critical first step in establishing a new structure for protecting animals in Ontario.'"

It goes on to say, "While Ontario has moved to restructure animal protection enforcement and bring it directly under the government policing umbrella, SPCAs and humane societies will continue to have a role to play in law enforcement, whether to lead, assist or consult." I look forward to working with them as we move into this new system. Of course, I don't need to remind the members of this House about the legal imperative for passing this legislation—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you. I'm sorry to interrupt the member.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands in recess until 10:30 today.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature two constituents from my riding of Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas: Graham McDonald, who's a good friend, and his son Malcolm McDonald, who is an aspiring politician running for council at his school, R.A. Riddell in Hamilton. Welcome to the Legislature.

Mr. David Piccini: I rise today to recognize and thank the unsung heroes of our Highway of Heroes. Throughout the year, often braving the elements, these incredible volunteers clean up litter, garbage and all sorts of horrid things along the sacred stretch of highway from Trenton to Toronto, officially renamed the Highway of Heroes. Welcome to the people's House. We thank you. I thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to ask that military members, veterans, first responders and families of the fallen please stand.

In addition, I would like to introduce two mothers of fallen Canadian soldiers: Anna Loveman, mother of Craftsman Kyle Sinclair; and Honorary Lieutenant-Colonel Nancy Siew, mother of Captain Cletus Cheng. Welcome to the people's House. Thank you for what you do.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'm pleased to rise today to introduce Sam Hammond, the president of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, and many ETFO members who are here as well.

I also want to welcome and say hello to the students and teachers from Bennetto elementary school, who are here from my riding of Hamilton Centre.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It's my honour to introduce two guests today. The first, in the members' gallery, is my friend and University of Guelph alumni, Mike Bumby. I'd also like to welcome the chair of LUMCO and the mayor of Guelph, His Worship Cam Guthrie.

Hon. Todd Smith: It's a special pleasure today to welcome His Worship the mayor of Quinte West, Jim Harrison, with us today, and his better half Jane is with us today as well. They're sitting with the volunteers who maintain and look after the Highway of Heroes, as the member from Northumberland—Peterborough South had

mentioned earlier. I would just like to say, and the mayor will appreciate this: Quinte West is the best.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I would like to welcome Loyola Catholic Secondary School grade 10 students from my riding who are visiting Queen's Park for the first time. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I have two introductions this morning. Nicole Schram, from York University, who is doing a student placement in my constituency office—I'm deeply indebted for the work you do; and also, my constituent Joy Lachica, who is the head of Elementary Teachers of Toronto. Both of you, welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I would like to welcome Amarjit Bola, mother of page Robbie, who has joined us in the gallery today. Welcome.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I would like to welcome folks from Oshawa and from the Durham Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario: Mary Fowler, president; executive member Angela Inglis; and former president Dave Mastin.

I recognize Eva Guta and Kaitlyn Jefferies, also from the Oshawa area.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Michael Parsa: I want to introduce my good friend George Habchi, visiting me here today all the way from Ottawa. It's his first time at Queen's Park. Welcome. He's one of the smartest guys I know. Thanks very much for joining me, George.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: There are a number of people here from the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network, and I want to welcome them all here to Queen's Park on behalf of the official opposition.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch, Speaker.

Remarks in Oji-Cree.

I'd like to welcome Frank McKay, council chair for Windigo First Nations Council, and his senior adviser, Anne Chabot.

Ms. Jane McKenna: The very first time I've ever had a page—and I'll say he's the best page: from Burlington, Owen Welch. Thank you so much for being here. You did a phenomenal job with the rest of the pages. I look forward to lunch today.

Mr. Parm Gill: I also want to recognize Omar Sinno, the page from my great riding of Milton. He goes to Irma Coulson Public School. I want to wish him all the best.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I'd like to welcome Mario Spagnuolo, who is on the executive of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, from Windsor-Essex county. Welcome back to Queen's Park, Mario.

Mr. Stan Cho: I've got six constituents visiting me today. It's my great pleasure to welcome Jenya Drazman and her children Ariel and Naena to the Legislature. I'd also like to welcome back Brian Lukshis and Lynne Morrison, proud parents of today's page captain Elizabeth, and Liz's brother Deckert, the kid with the awesome hair. Welcome to the Legislature.

Ms. Jessica Bell: I'd like to introduce Catherine Nasmith, Anne Washington, Dianne Robinson and Betty Robinson—people who live in my riding and nearby. Thank you for coming.

Mr. Billy Pang: I'd like to welcome champions for lupus awareness, Linda Keill and Diana Bozzo, in the east members' gallery; also, my staff Larry Lau, a volunteer to clean up the Highway of Heroes.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'd like to introduce members of the Retired Teachers of Ontario: Gordon Lynden Hough, Anna-Rita Lunghi and David Kendall. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Mike Harris: I just wanted to give a quick welcome. I see Jeff Pelich up in the gallery and the other members who are here from ETFO Waterloo region.

Mr. Joel Harden: It's a great pleasure to see Jim Grieve in the members' gallery. I encourage all of us to head to the Retired Teachers of Ontario reception at noon. It's nice to see you, Jim.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I would like to welcome Neeru Arora and Tarun Arora, parents of page Alisha, from the riding of Mississauga Centre. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'd like to welcome Lindsay Gillis. She's here today to spend the day with her favourite MPP, who just happens to be me. What she doesn't realize is, I'm the only MPP that she has, as well. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Lindsey Park: I'd like to welcome my new OLIP intern, Misha Apel. She's in the east members' gallery today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I'd like to welcome members from Ontario Racing here today: John Siscos, John Hayes and Kathryn Curry. Welcome.

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'd like to introduce Cindy and Tracy Otter, who are the parents of page McKenna Otter. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Marit Stiles: It gives me great pleasure to welcome here to the House my new OLIP intern, Kieran Lawlor, who is returning here after having been a page before. We're very excited to have him here with us.

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Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to introduce and welcome to Queen's Park today my page from Sarnia-Lambton, Davina Bhola, who's following a Bhola family tradition. She's the third Bhola family member to be a page at Queen's Park.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It is my pleasure to welcome the president of ETFO down in my area, Windsor-Essex: Adelina Cecchin. Welcome to Queen's Park.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa South on a point of order.

Mr. John Fraser: Point of order: I'm seeking unanimous consent to ask a question on behalf of my colleague from Thunder Bay-Superior North.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa South is seeking unanimous consent of the House to ask a question today in place of the member for Thunder Bay-Superior North. Agreed? Agreed.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding Remembrance Day.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent of the House to put forward a motion without notice regarding Remembrance Day. Agreed? Agreed.

Once again, the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I move that Remembrance Day tributes take place before question period, with two minutes allotted to the independent Green member, followed by two minutes allotted to the independent Liberal members, followed by two minutes allotted to Her Majesty's loyal opposition, followed by two minutes allotted to the government.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Calandra has moved that Remembrance Day tributes take place before question period, with two minutes allotted to the independent Green member, followed by two minutes allotted to the independent Liberal members, followed by two minutes allotted to Her Majesty's loyal opposition, followed by two minutes allotted to the government. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

JOUR DU SOUVENIR

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It is an honour today to rise on behalf of the Green Party to express our sincere gratitude for the sacrifices our veterans and first responders have made.

Speaker, those who risk their lives in defence of democracy and freedom must never be forgotten. It is our solemn responsibility to cherish their legacy, courage and heroism.

We must also continue to honour the values and institutions that veterans have defended and military personnel and first responders continue to defend.

We owe veterans a debt of gratitude that can never be repaid. For those veterans who have returned home, it is our duty to ensure that you receive the care and support you deserve. We must continually honour and support the families of those veterans who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

Speaker, war touches us deeply, personally and across generations. Several of my family members, including my grandfather and father-in-law, served. Like many veterans, they did not like to talk about the horrors they experienced. They wanted to protect us, their family members, from the pain and horror they saw. But we must continue to tell and remember their stories: stories of loss, fear, courage and sacrifice.

Let us remember and honour veterans of both World Wars, Korea, Afghanistan, multiple peacekeeping missions and all the other conflicts that Canadians have engaged in. We continue to benefit from their sacrifice, and we owe a debt of gratitude to them.

Lest we forget, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. John Fraser: C'est un honneur et un privilège de prendre la parole et de dire quelques mots, au nom de mon caucus et de ma circonscription, au sujet des sacrifices qui ont été faits et qui continuent d'être faits pour notre liberté, notre démocratie et notre façon de vivre.

I want to acknowledge that it's Remembrance Week in Ontario right now. It started this past Tuesday. Our colleague the member from Simcoe–Grey brought this initiative forward in 2016. I want to thank him for this and for his efforts to include members of all parties on the bill. I was honoured when he asked me to do that, as I know Cheri DiNovo was as well. I know that all members in this House appreciate it, as do the men and women who have served our great country.

War touches everyone, everyone's family, somewhere. In my family, my wife's uncle, Robert Ansley Cavanagh, died at Dieppe in August 1942, along with thousands of other young men. We never knew how he died until many years later. Thankfully, it was swift; however, the loss remained. My mother-in-law passed away just two years ago. She was 97 and she was closest to her brother, Ansley. She loved him dearly. She kept his picture on her dresser for 75 years; that's a long time. She never forgot him.

We now have his picture in our house, along with his letters home. And thanks to her, we'll never forget him and the sacrifice that he made, and that's why I mention him today.

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

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: It is my distinct honour to rise today and speak in recognition of Remembrance Day and Remembrance Week.

On November 11, Canadians across our country will stand in silence, united in remembering more than 118,000 Canadians and Newfoundlanders who, since Confederation, have given their lives for our freedom. Remembrance Week justly extends the opportunity that Remembrance Day has long provided to honour the heroism and the sacrifice of men and women of all orientations who helped to shape our fine country's history.

I am fortunate to come from a community in St. Catharines that has a rich tapestry and celebrated history with veterans and their Legions. St. Catharines will remember our own local heroes as well as all of our heroes—our most recent, Warrant Officer Dennis Brown. Dennis was a reservist in the Lincoln and Welland Regiment. He was a son, he was a husband and he was a father of three boys, Mac, Owen and Ben. Dennis was a very dear friend of mine. Dennis was killed 10 years ago while deployed with the Canadian contingent of NATO in Afghanistan at the age of 38.

Remembrance Day carries a special meaning for myself and my family. I'm a very proud mother of an active service member, Jonathan Lindal, Petty Officer Second Class in the Royal Canadian Navy. Jonathan has completed three tours of duty abroad.

I would like to say I know the importance of recognizing our veterans and recognizing their families. We can never repay the debt we owe, nor will we ever have enough gratitude for the freedom we enjoy every day. We must remember our veterans answered the call to defend freedom—those who served in Korea, the South African war, the conflict in Libya, the 158 men and women who gave their lives for us in Afghanistan, and our veterans who fought in other conflicts, which include peacekeeping missions.

We must remember the soldiers, the sailors and the airmen who guarded and continue to guard our freedom through NATO and UN missions against terrorism and piracy. We thank them all for their sacrifices.

On November 11, Royal Canadian Legions across Ontario will be hosting ceremonies to reflect and acknowledge the sacrifices of all our veterans, past and present, our men and women in uniform. We join together in a moment of silence. We will remember them.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Next I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Doug Ford: Mr. Speaker, it's an honour to rise in the House today to recognize our veterans ahead of Remembrance Day next Monday, the 11th of November. Next year we'll be celebrating victory in Europe, or VE day, marking 75 years since the fall of the brutal Nazi regime, and also marking Canada's pivotal role in the Allied victory. On that day, our country joined together with the rest of the world in saying, "Never again." We would not allow such atrocities to happen again. VE day is not only a celebration of the liberation of Europe and the ultimate defeat of the Nazi forces, but also the triumph of good over evil.

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Throughout history, Mr. Speaker, Canadians and Ontarians have proven that our commitment to one another and to our fundamental freedoms is unbreakable. From Cambrai in World War I to Kabul in our own recent memory, Canadians have stood fast against tyranny and against terror. They left their homes, their families and their communities to defend our way of life and to protect the values we hold dear.

Mr. Speaker, this is a debt that we can never repay, but we can begin to show our gratitude by paying tribute to these brave men and women who gave their lives in the call of duty, today and every day, and especially on Remembrance Day, by honouring those heroes who still walk among us today. As we rise together in the House to pay our respects to our veterans, their tremendous sacrifice puts our role as legislators into perspective.

When Ontarians were called to defend Canada, they were not asked, "Are you black or white? English or French? Conservative or progressive?" They were asked, simply, "Are you ready to serve your country?" And they were, and so are we all, and we will remember them.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to take the liberty of asking all members to rise and observe a moment's silence in memory of all who served in a Canadian Forces uniform.

The House observed a moment's silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We will remember them. Thank you.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My first question this morning is to the Premier. For weeks we've been hearing disturbing details of the ongoing crisis in hallway medicine: hospitals regularly operating above 100% capacity; patients being treated in hallways and going days without basics like a shower; one woman in Ottawa trapped in hospital for two years waiting for home care supports.

Despite this crisis, last spring's budget laid out a plan for spending restraint in the health care sector, including a plan to hold funding below the rate of inflation over the next three years. That plan remains unchanged. When does the Premier plan to fix this and start to take on the hallway medicine crisis that was left by the Liberals?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Health.

Hon. Christine Elliott: To the leader of the official opposition: Well, we can certainly agree on one thing, that we were left a huge mess by the previous government, which did basically nothing over 15 years, which led to this crisis of hallway health care. It didn't just spring up overnight. It's been building and building and building for years.

We promised the people of Ontario that we would do something about it. As you heard in the fall economic statement yesterday, we are adding \$1.9 billion more into the health care budget this year than last year. With that, we are also transforming our health care system into one that's truly patient-centred, that brings in the latest technology and the latest techniques, and it is going to work to break down that number of people receiving health care in hallways.

It's not acceptable. We are working on a number of fronts to deal with that. I'll have more to say on that in the supplemental.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: There is absolutely no doubt in anybody's mind that the Liberals—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Don Valley East will come to order. I can hear you.

I apologize to the Leader of the Opposition. I'll give you extra time.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Speaker.

There's no doubt that the Liberals left health care hanging by a thread, but the Premier seems to think the status quo of cuts is good enough. Can the Premier confirm that,

despite hospitals in Brampton, Sudbury, Hamilton and Markham operating above 100% capacity, and independent reports confirming hallway medicine will grow worse if the government fails to take action, the Ford government is still offering hospitals hundreds of millions dollars less than the amount necessary to prevent further deterioration in the hospital system?

Hon. Christine Elliott: It is important to stick to the facts, and the facts are that we are increasing funding, as I indicated before, by \$1.9 billion this year over last year. That's a 3.1% increase. We have added \$384 million this year to hospitals' operating funds, in addition to \$68 million that has been divided up amongst small to medium-sized hospitals that had a structural funding deficit due to a funding formula that was put in place by the previous government. They didn't do anything to fix it, but we are. Those small and medium-sized hospitals are very happy to receive the funds that they have. They're using it to reduce hallway health care, as we are across many, many priorities that we're putting in place.

We have tried to move people into reactivation care centres. We are moving some people who are in alternate level of care into retirement homes, with appropriate home care supports. We've also invested an additional \$155 million into home and community care, which is also a key part of the solution to this problem. When people don't need to be in hospital—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, health care inflation runs at about 4.3%, and this government's funding health care at an 1.6% increase. That means a serious cut to our health care services in this province. Do you know what? For patients caught waiting in hospital hallways, the new Ford government looks a lot like the old Ford government. It's the same Premier making the same cuts and taking the crisis in hallway medicine that the Liberals left us from bad to worse.

Can the Premier explain how he plans to move patients out of hospital hallways when his plan, like the Liberals before him, consists of health care funding that doesn't keep pace with the patient needs of an aging population?

Hon. Christine Elliott: As you know, we are introducing a system transformation in our health care system, and it's not always hospitals where patients need to receive care. That's why we are investing across the board in home and community care supports as well, so that people don't need to end up coming back to hospital time and time again.

The best example of that is in mental health and addictions care, where we see the same people in many, many hospitals circling in and out because they don't know where else to go when they have a mental health emergency or crisis. If they're feeling suicidal, they go to the hospital emergency department. It should never get to that, and that is why we are coming forward with a comprehensive mental health and addictions plan that will ensure that people can receive the mental health care they need in the community before it ever reaches that crisis point. That's why investments in both hospital care and home and community care are so important.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also to the Premier. Parents and students are also concerned about cuts in the classroom and the quality of their education. Students are seeing course options disappear. Teachers and education workers are disappearing with them. Can the Premier confirm the government is still on track to fire 10,000 teachers?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Education.

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Hon. Stephen Lecce: Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Finance reaffirmed that this government is absolutely and firmly committed to the maintenance, defence and improvement of public education in the province of Ontario with a plan to invest an additional \$200 million more, an historic investment, the highest levels ever recorded in provincial history to support our young people. This is in addition to \$500 million to rebuild schools and in addition to our plan to invest \$200 million to increase math scores over the next four years.

Mr. Speaker, our plan is working. It is helping to ensure young people are able to achieve their potential and get good jobs in the labour market. That's our vision; that's our aspiration. We're going to keep working hard to ensure every student succeeds in this province.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, apparently yesterday in estimates, this minister actually confirmed that they're on track to ditch 10,000 teachers out of the education system in Ontario.

The Ford government was clear in last spring's budget, and that plan did not change yesterday, Speaker.

Over the next four years, the government plans to hold education funding below the rate of inflation, even if it means school roofs will continue to leak, courses will continue to disappear, and 10,000 teachers will lose jobs. If the Premier has a different plan, when is he going to reveal it?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: To the member opposite, Mr. Speaker: This year we intend to spend \$1.2 billion more than we spent last year in the defence and the improvement of public education. Let those facts permeate the debate.

Mr. Speaker, our plan is to get labour deals, as we've done in our agreement with CUPE, which has restored over 1,000 front-line workers in schools in every region of this province. My aim as the minister, in conjunction with the leadership of our Premier, is to make sure that our students remain in class. That's the first point of this discussion. We are working hard, in good faith, so that parents know with confidence that we're going to continue to keep their kids in mind and keep them in class, so they can focus, they can learn and they can get a good job at the end of their journey.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, delaying and repackaging cuts does not make them go away, and it does nothing to reverse the deep cuts to public services and the harm that they've already done.

The Ford government's plan will mean fewer courses for students, fewer teachers in schools, and a backlog of school repairs that keeps growing. If the Premier is genuinely interested in cleaning up the mess left by the Liberals, will he stop trying to repackage cuts, actually reverse them and work with parents and teachers to improve the quality of education in our schools?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Mr. Speaker, I think it is important for families at home to know the investments we are making, just to debunk the narrative of that question. We intend to spend \$1.2 billion more than we did last year. We have doubled the mental health envelope from the peak of Liberal spending in the former government. We're spending the most, over \$3.1 billion—the highest levels for special education needs, the highest levels for transportation, the highest levels for First Nation education.

Our plan is to invest in the areas of need. We're helping our kids achieve their potential. We're doing it through investments, but we're also doing it through a modernization of our curriculum, because we know that young people need to have the core competencies in order to succeed with their careers in the job market. We're going to continue to focus on those investments, on improving our schools, updating our curriculum, and giving young people the tools to succeed in life.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is to the Premier. Amidst growing concern about the climate emergency, Ontarians are desperate for real action from their government. Can the Premier explain why the \$50-million budget cut to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks announced in last spring's budget grew even deeper in the fall economic statement, and is now a \$76-million cut to environment and conservation programs?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Jeff Yurek: Thanks very much to the member opposite for that question. I want to be clear with the member opposite and members of this House that there is not a reduction in environmental programs or productions. This is a part of the broader effort to centralize money and be more efficient and effective in the delivery of government services. There is no impact to the ministry's services and the delivery of our mandate.

The \$25-million decrease to the ministry's funding is due to the centralization of several government services. The centralization of these internal government services impacts all ministries, not just the Ministry of the Environment. The funding has been reallocated to other ministries and therefore is fiscally neutral to this government.

Mr. Speaker, the member ought to rest assured we will continue to protect the environment, implement our environment plan for Ontario, and ensure there is a healthy balance between a healthy economy and a healthy environment.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, when it comes to responding to the climate crisis, people were desperate for a

change, but sadly, they see the same Ford government fighting in court against putting a price on pollution, spending millions on partisan ad campaigns promoting climate denial and threatening small businesses with fines if they fail to promote their partisan campaigns. Now we see even deeper cuts to environmental initiatives. Why is this Premier going to war against the environment?

Hon. Jeff Yurek: Since we were elected last June, we've moved forward with a plan for the environment for Ontario to not only balance the healthy economy, but also balance the environment as well. It's interesting that it comes from the member opposite whose party, in the last election, didn't even mention climate change once, Mr. Speaker. We are moving forward with changes.

Just this morning, for the member opposite's interest, we announced our new climate impact assessment across this province. What this will do is analyze different parts of the province so we know where impact to climate change is going to occur and how municipalities, communities, Indigenous communities and people can focus on what to prioritize to deal with climate change, to adapt in order to ensure that, as the changes grow in the climate change emergency that's going on, we make the changes that are necessary and prioritize what projects we're putting forth in our communities so that we can become more resilient to climate change and better prepared for the upcoming changes. We will continue to produce our Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan.

FISCAL AND ECONOMIC POLICY

Ms. Jane McKenna: My question is to the Premier. When our government was first elected, we inherited a dangerous fiscal and economic situation. The people of this province were struggling. They were being squeezed by higher gas prices, more taxes and skyrocketing electricity costs. They were working harder, paying more and getting less.

When it came to the vital services that people require, we inherited a broken system from the previous government, whether it was hallway health care, declining math scores, overcrowded transit systems or congested highways.

Premier, can you speak to the vision and plan that our government has laid out in the fall economic statement that is helping to turn this province around?

Hon. Doug Ford: I want to thank our all-star MPP from the great city of Burlington. What an incredible job she's doing, Mr. Speaker.

Our government's plan is a balanced, prudent and thoughtful approach to governing, which puts more money into people's pockets. We're investing \$1.3 billion more in critical public services this year alone: increasing health care by \$1.9 billion, education by \$1.2 billion.

We inherited a \$15-billion disaster deficit on the backs of the people of Ontario. Our deficit now stands at \$9 billion. That's \$1.3 billion lower than the \$10.3 billion of last year.

Mr. Speaker, our government has proved that we can be fiscally responsible and very thoughtful when it comes to

health care, education and creating 272,000 jobs. Our economy is booming because of the policies of—

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

Ms. Jane McKenna: Thank you for the response, Premier, and for your strong leadership.

Ontario is truly turning around economically because of the strong and prudent plan that has been laid out, and we are already seeing the results of our plan come to fruition: 272,000 net new jobs since we formed government in 2018; 80,000 new self-employed and 41,000 public sector positions have been created this year alone.

Premier, can you elaborate on the other measures our government has announced that will help to make life more affordable for the people of this province?

Hon. Doug Ford: I want to thank our MPP for the great question.

Mr. Speaker, for northerners, we are proposing to reduce the aviation fuel tax, saving money for individuals and families on vital issues like groceries and travel costs. It's putting more money in the pockets of the people in the north.

Our government is making life easier for families by letting kids ride for free on GO trains and buses.

We're helping over 100,000 low-income seniors by providing them with free, publicly paid dental care.

We're providing free museum admissions for young people.

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We're proposing to cut small business taxes by 8.7%. Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, and they have been crushed for the last 15 years. Finally, they're seeing the light. They are so grateful for our policies that are putting \$1,500 in the pockets of small businesses.

We're also saving the taxpayers of this province—\$3 billion back into the pockets of the great people—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. Next question, the member for Toronto–St. Paul's.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Ms. Jill Andrew: My question is for the Premier. Just this morning, CBC News is reporting that this Conservative government's cuts to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board have resulted in sexual abuse survivors no longer receiving the therapy they are entitled to. These cuts also mean that survivors of childhood abuse are no longer eligible to apply for funding for supports.

I am a survivor of child sexual abuse. One in three women will experience some form of sexual violence in their lifetime. That means that many women in this very Legislature—MPPs and visitors—will be or are survivors of sexual violence.

Why is this government refusing to honour promises made to survivors of sexual abuse?

Hon. Doug Ford: Attorney General.

Hon. Doug Downey: This is a serious area—and thank you for sharing that, member from Toronto–St. Paul's. It is critical that we provide resources immediately after violence, and so we have taken the VQRP program and

doubled the funding from \$6 million to \$12 million to have the resources there for those people immediately after a violent incident. The VQRP program—that \$12 million—allows victims to receive supports, whether it be cell-phones, fixing locks, immediate counselling, residential. It's critical that we have those supports for them when they need them immediately.

We've not only doubled it. What isn't widely known is that this allows them to not be out-of-pocket. That \$12 million is not a capped limit. If the need is greater, we will increase the fund, and we've said that publicly on the record; it's not new right now.

Mr. Speaker, this is a critical issue. We have to be there for victims. I'll have more to add in my supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question?

Ms. Jill Andrew: My question is again for the Premier—and just to state, gender-based violence, including sexual violence, disproportionately impacts women-identifying people. I wanted to put that on record.

Last night we were contacted by a survivor of sexual violence, Kelly Grenier, who says that despite a signed settlement with the board, she can no longer access funding for therapy that is rightly hers, and no one in this Conservative government is picking up her calls. She doesn't know where to turn next.

She and other survivors were never consulted or informed about these cruel and retroactive cuts. It's not too late for this Conservative government to do the right thing and reverse course.

Mr. Speaker, my question is this: Why is this government so intent on revictimizing Ontario's most vulnerable people? What does this Conservative government have against survivors of sexual violence, for goodness' sake?

Hon. Doug Downey: I want the opposition and the public to know how seriously we take victims of violence. It is a critical issue. I would like to tell you this, Mr. Speaker: This is a personal issue for me as well. My mother was a counsellor. She was one of the founders of the York region victim abuse program, which is still operating. I've been dealing with shelters and understanding that reality for a very long time. This is not a new area of interest and passion for me.

Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, the Victim Quick Response Program that I spoke of has not only doubled the funding—not capped the funding—we've expanded services, because we know things like human trafficking are such heinous crimes. We know when people come out of those situations, that immediate aftermath of violence, that they need supports right away.

Mr. Speaker, we have done some reforms to deal with outdated programming that actually did revictimize individuals, and we're putting the resources in their hands immediately, at every turn.

PROVINCIAL DEFICIT

Mr. John Fraser: My question is for the Premier. I know he's mentioned this this morning, so I'm looking

forward to his answer because I know he'll be anxious to talk about this.

Yesterday, Speaker, the government introduced the fall economic statement. While the Minister of Finance sang sweetly and, I might add, in very dulcet tones, it's the same old song that we've heard before. Will the Premier tell us why he manufactured a phony \$15-billion deficit and why he continues to—

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

Mr. John Fraser: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): He may place his question.

Mr. John Fraser: I will rephrase it.

Will the Premier tell this Legislature why there was a manufactured \$15-billion deficit—

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

Mr. John Fraser: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I look to the Premier now to reply. Premier?

Hon. Doug Ford: I can't believe what I just heard from the leader of the no-name party.

Mr. Speaker, you know something? When we went into the election, we didn't know if the deficit was \$3 billion, \$5 billion, \$10 billion, \$15 billion—it was all over the place. But what we did do, Mr. Speaker, was something that they never did: We confirmed it with the Auditor General, with third-party validation through an auditing firm. We confirmed it with the finance minister, the president of the treasury, and we all agreed. For the first time ever, we all agreed that it was a \$15-billion disaster that the previous government left us, on the backs of the people of Ontario and on the backs of the businesses.

We've turned the corner here in Ontario. We're paying down our deficit. We're creating jobs the likes of which this province has never, ever seen—272,400 jobs. We have many more coming in to this province.

Mr. Speaker, we're on the right road to prosperity, to growth, in this great province.

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

Mr. John Fraser: I'd like to thank the Premier for his answer, but I would like to remind him that the FAO said the deficit was never \$15 billion. Public accounts said—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I apologize to the member for Ottawa South. The government side has to come to order now.

Member for Ottawa Centre.

Mr. John Fraser: The public accounts of this province said it was \$7.4 billion. So we know—we know—that that number was never real. The reason that the Premier and his colleagues did this was to create a context for cuts—cuts that hurt families in Ontario. We are spending less per student than we were before. We're going to spend less in post-secondary education and on community and children's services in real dollars. An increase in health care of 2.3% does not even meet the standard.

Speaker, through you: Why does the Premier continue to use a number—an inflated number—that he knows is not right?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): You have to withdraw again.

Mr. John Fraser: I withdraw.

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

Hon. Doug Ford: To the great Minister of Finance.

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, let's talk about the record. Let's talk about taking over a government after 15 years where the Auditor General had refused to sign off on the books of the province of Ontario. Let's talk about the off-book accounting for hydro costs.

Of course, we brought in an independent financial commission. That commission found that the deficit was \$15 billion. The member mentions the FAO; with the hard work of this government, the FAO confirmed in May 2019 an \$11.7-billion deficit. That's because of the hard work of this government.

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Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was very proud, on behalf of this government and this Premier, to say that we are beating the target that we set in the last budget. The \$10.3-billion deficit that we had last year is now going to be \$9 billion—a \$1.3-billion reduction.

FISCAL AND ECONOMIC POLICY

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: My question is for the Minister of Finance. Yesterday, we were thrilled to join the minister and the Premier of Ontario in this House for the 2019 fall economic statement.

Our government for the people was elected with a mandate to restore confidence in Ontario's finances and put more money back in people's pockets. The minister's statement made one thing very clear: Our plan is working. We are bringing relief to families and businesses in my riding of Carleton and across Ontario.

Through you, Mr. Speaker: Could the minister please elaborate on yesterday's exciting announcement and inform the House on our government's plan to finally bring our budget to balance?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Thank you to the member from Carleton. I know that she does great work for her constituents.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was pleased to announce our plan to build Ontario together and to speak to this House and to the people of Ontario about the progress that this government is making. We were able to announce that we have made progress on the deficit that we inherited, that we have moved the deficit from \$10.3 billion to \$9 billion next year.

We were also able to announce that we are making \$1.3 billion more—a very important critical investment in the key services that our province requires.

Our government is focused on making sure that we balance the budget by 2023, that we also invest in key services, that we make a difference for the people of

Ontario and that this province is the kind of home of prosperity that we know it should be.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question?

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Thank you to the minister for his response. It's great to see that our government is continuing on our prudent and balanced plan to build Ontario together. I can see that the vision put forward by our Premier when we were elected 16 months ago is becoming a reality.

Thanks to our responsible fiscal management and our government's focus on making positive change for the people of Carleton and Ontario, we are seeing results. Could the minister please explain the approach our government is taking to solve the challenges we inherited due to 15 years of Liberal waste, mismanagement and neglect?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Thank you to the member. We are taking a balanced and prudent approach. We are balancing three sets of priorities: We committed to put money back into people's pockets, and we have put \$3 billion back into the pockets of Ontarians.

We promised that we would put Ontario on a sound footing, and we have reduced the deficit down to \$9 billion—towards balancing that budget in 2023.

We promised we would invest in critical public services like health care, education and children, and we increased that investment yesterday by \$1.3 billion.

This is the balanced, prudent approach we are taking. This is the approach that Ontarians expect.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Marit Stiles: My question is to the Premier. They may be working hard to hide it, but under this government's watch, things keep going from bad to worse. No one knows that fact better than parents, teachers and students across this province.

There is lead in the water and our schools are crumbling, and this government thinks the answer is cramming more kids in classrooms, firing teachers and gutting school budgets.

My question is simple: Does the Premier still think that balancing the budget on the backs of our students, staff and families is a good idea?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Education.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Indeed, it is this government that is investing over \$13 billion over the next decade to improve schools and improve facilities in every region of Ontario.

We're also investing, in this year alone, an over half-a-billion-dollar allocation to improve the state of schools inherited from the former Liberal government after 15 years of dereliction of duty.

In addition, we are meeting the Auditor General's recommendation of a 2.5% allocation to improve schools.

Mr. Speaker, what is also important is an acceptance. It is an acceptance that intergenerational debt is morally wrong. The transfer of debt from one generation onto the next is not an acceptable proposition for the very parents we suggest we represent.

Families in this province want us to invest in the front lines, keep taxes low and grow the economy while doing what we do best, which is creating the conditions for young people to achieve their full potential in Ontario.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Mr. Speaker, you can put a new spin on these things, but it's the same old story. Seven schools in my community alone have been found to have unsafe levels of lead in the water, and there are thousands more across the province.

Let's do the math, shall we? Fifteen years of Liberal inaction resulted in a \$15.9-billion school repair backlog. Now, in just over a year, the government has grown that backlog to over \$16.3 billion. That's about a half a billion dollars. And that doesn't even include the cost to remove the lead from our schools.

Given that the fiscal update yesterday did nothing to fix the damage that this government has done in the year they've been in power, when is the government going to do the right thing, reverse the cuts, and stop hurting our families?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: It is under the Minister of Finance's leadership—yesterday, he confirmed that we are, in fact, on track to spend \$1.2 billion more than we did last year.

Mr. Speaker, we announced in our last budget a \$550-million investment to improve schools and \$80 million to improve child care facilities, because we accept that after 15 years of the former Liberal government there is so much more to do to support our kids in schools with better facilities.

But, Mr. Speaker, what I said earlier—\$1 billion a month on interest—spending money that we do not have is not in the interests of the next generation. They want government to live within their means. They want government to set them up for economic success. That's why we're growing the economy so that we're able to invest more.

As the Minister of Finance confirmed just yesterday, more money than ever before in the history of this province—for health care and education and the social services that every family deserves.

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Michael Parsa: My question is also for the great Minister of Finance. As many of us in this House know, small businesses play an important role in our local communities. Small business owners are the people who make investments and create jobs right here in Ontario.

For too long, these innovators and entrepreneurs were not set up for success by the previous government. With our plan to build Ontario together, and by creating a more competitive business environment, those days are over, Speaker.

We also have a plan to develop a small business success strategy, consulting with industry and business leaders to identify the needs of their businesses.

Would the minister please inform the House about the steps our fall economic statement took to create a more competitive business environment?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member from Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill, thank you for the question. He is correct. Small businesses are the backbone of Ontario's economy. They employ one third of private sector employees. Almost two million Ontarians derive their livelihood from small businesses.

They also play a large part in our economy, making us more productive and more effective. That's why we have proposed, as the member mentioned, the small business success strategy.

We have also, yesterday, committed to following through on one of our important commitments. Yesterday we committed that we will be cutting the small business tax rate by 8.7% in this legislation to be tabled. This is a promise made and a promise kept by this government.

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

Mr. Michael Parsa: Thank you to the minister for his response. It's reassuring to know that, if passed, the fall economic statement introduced yesterday will bring much-needed and much-deserved relief to small business owners. In fact, small business owners in the ridings represented by every member in this House would stand to benefit.

In addition to the action our government has already taken, could the minister please explain the great impact our proposed small business tax cut would have for small business owners?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Thank you to the member. Should the bill pass, this small business tax cut will represent up to \$1,500 of relief annually for small businesses. This is in addition to the benefits that small businesses are already receiving from accelerated writeoffs, from reduced WSIB premiums and from the elimination of the cap-and-trade carbon tax.

Mr. Speaker, taken together, these tax measures will deliver over \$255 million of Ontario income tax relief to small businesses in 2020. This is what small businesses need. This is what they deserve. They are our partners in prosperity and we will support them on this side of the House.

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TREATIES RECOGNITION

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Yesterday I rose in the House to ask the Premier what this government was doing to honour its treaty obligations. But then, I got my answer with the government's latest budget. There was hardly any mention of specific commitments to First Nations or Indigenous peoples in Ontario. Instead, there was over \$2 million less in base funding for Indigenous affairs.

Premier, this government has already cut the budget for Indigenous affairs in half. Now another \$2 million is being cut. Why is true and meaningful reconciliation not a priority for this government?

Hon. Doug Ford: Associate Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bill Walker: Thank you to the member for the question. Our government is working for all people in Ontario, including Indigenous communities. An important

part of that is ensuring that the next generation of young people know the shared history, the culture and the diversity of language that exist within First Nations communities of this province.

Our government has expanded and enhanced education and learning of First Nations history from grades 1 to 8. That's why we've added 10 additional courses for secondary school students so that they know more about the incredible contributions of First Nations. We share a passion for the opportunities of renewed economic prosperity with Indigenous peoples in Ontario. We believe there's tremendous economic opportunity and potential within our First Nations community, a fast-growing community in this province. We're going to continue to work with them in good faith to ensure they're able to reach their full potential, get economic opportunity and realize their dreams. This country should be able to provide for the First Peoples of our community.

Mr. Speaker, we've engaged with community leaders from across the province and look forward to strengthening those relationships as we move forward with the—

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

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: This government has an obligation to the First Peoples of this land, but there are First Nations that have gone decades without clean, reliable drinking water. Clean drinking water is a basic human right.

These communities call on you to be a better treaty partner. Yesterday, Matawa First Nations called on you to honour the treaties that govern their territories with respect to Bill 132. Speaker, reconciliation requires real resources and real effort. Will the Premier restore the base funding for Indigenous affairs that he has cut since forming government? Yes or no?

Hon. Bill Walker: Again to the member, thank you. This is a very important issue. We inherited yet another issue from the Liberals. They had 15 years to have taken action so you wouldn't have to stand here today. It's sad that they actually built our debt; we spend \$13 billion a year on interest payments. That money could have gone to programs, services and, yes, clean water.

The Minister of Indigenous Affairs, the great member from Kenora–Rainy River, has a great relationship with many of the First Nations chiefs across our great province and he's working hard to address these problems that we've inherited. He actually appointed Mr. Clifford Bull to ensure there is an opportunity for him to be a special adviser on Indigenous affairs. Mr. Bull has travelled throughout northern Ontario and visited several communities to meet with Indigenous leaders and hear about the unique issues affecting Indigenous communities.

We, as the government of Ontario, are committed to working in partnership with Indigenous communities to promote economic opportunities, improve quality of life and meet Ontario's legal obligations. The funding that was there was one-time funding. We continue the base funding that is there. I know Minister Rickford is going to do everything he can to work with members like Mr.

Mamakwa to make sure our Indigenous communities have the opportunities that we all have—

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

The next question, the member for Northumberland–Peterborough South.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. David Piccini: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Ontarians know about the dire fiscal situation we inherited from the previous government. It has been famously said, “Show me your budget, and I’ll show you my values.” Sadly, under the previous government, those values were deeply misaligned as interest on the debt rose to the fourth-largest line item.

Yesterday in the fall economic statement, the Minister of Finance outlined a number of important investments our government is making in health care, in education, in social services and in children.

Minister, could you please outline some of those important investments and touch on some important investments we’re making in health care?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Thank you to the member from Northumberland–Peterborough South.

Mr. Speaker, as has been said in this House—\$1.9 billion in additional spending.

The member is a great advocate for Northumberland Hills Hospital and the constituents there, who I know are proud that he fights for them.

Working alongside the Ontario Hospital Association, the Ministry of Health was able to identify some long-standing funding issues for small and medium-sized communities. That’s why our government has invested an additional \$68 million to support small and medium-sized hospitals. That’s in addition to the \$384 million that hospitals received in our budget.

Our government is taking the steps to create healthy communities, cut hospital wait times and end hallway health care, and we’re doing it for small and medium communities throughout Ontario.

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

Mr. David Piccini: Thank you, Minister, for your answer, and thank you for touching on important health care funding, an area important to the people of my riding.

Mr. Speaker, I was delighted to hear about the \$68 million our government allocated to small and medium-sized hospitals, \$3.8 million of which went to Northumberland Hills Hospital in my riding. In addition, we committed to fixing the funding formula for medium-sized hospitals, which has, for decades, led to decreased funding in many medium-sized hospitals across rural Ontario. This funding announcement has breathed new life into medium-sized hospitals across Ontario, new life into Northumberland Hills Hospital, and in the words of Dr. Andrew Stratford, one of my local surgeons, it has given them hope.

Could the minister please outline more information on that important investment we made to fixing the medium-sized hospital funding formula?

Hon. Rod Phillips: The Minister of Health.

Hon. Christine Elliott: Thank you very much to the member for the question.

In addition to our government’s additional investment of \$348 million for hospitals and the \$68 million to support small and medium-sized hospitals, we have developed a comprehensive, four-pillar plan to address hallway health care.

First, through health promotion, we want to keep Ontarians healthy and out of hospitals.

Secondly, hospitals aren’t always the best place for a person to receive care. We will ensure that Ontarians receive the right care in the right place.

Third, we are better integrating care to improve patient flow and ensure that patients who are ready to leave the hospital can do so with the care and support they need.

Finally, by investing \$27 billion over the next 10 years in hospital infrastructure projects, we will build capacity throughout the system, including in our hospitals and other community-based facilities.

Speaker, we made a commitment to the people to end hallway health care, and we are well on our way in that plan.

VETERANS

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: To the Premier: Ontario’s Soldiers’ Aid Commission provides grants to veterans facing emergencies, such as rent payments. However, most of the money under this program is never spent. This is because Ontario refuses to extend the program to veterans who served after the Korean War.

Will the Premier stop treating most of today’s veterans as second class and extend this program to all who have served?

Hon. Doug Ford: Government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: At the outset, let me just thank the honourable member not only for the question, but for her words before question period—and to let her know that, of course, we’re all thinking of her son and the great work that he does.

The member is absolutely right: It is incumbent on this government and all legislators to make sure that we do everything we can to live up to the spirit that we all talked about before question period—that we value the hard work of our veterans, that we value those who serve us each and every day—and this government will remain committed to doing that, not only by providing funds and resources, but making sure that each and every day we always take a moment to remember those who have sacrificed so much. I know that one of the things the Premier talked about almost immediately after the election was a new memorial to those who fought for us in Afghanistan, Mr. Speaker, so we will continue to do that, and I thank the honourable member for that question.

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The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question?

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: It’s wonderful about a memorial wall, but we have homeless veterans that need

the Ontario Soldiers' Aid Commission. It is outrageous that 60% of the money allocated to help veterans facing emergencies is never spent. This is because the provincial government treats some veterans as second-class citizens. There is nothing second-class about the service these brave men and women have provided for our country.

Will the Premier end this second-class treatment and extend the Soldiers' Aid Commission program to all veterans in Ontario?

Hon. Paul Calandra: To the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Todd Smith: Actually, the Soldiers' Aid Commission falls within my Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. It actually sat idle for 15 years—basically idle—under the previous Liberal government. I can tell you that we're taking this very seriously and modernizing how we're delivering the services out of the Soldiers' Aid Commission because we realize that this wasn't doing enough to help families in need. That's why, over the last year, we've seen some substantial gains in the services that we're providing to current military families.

Just last year about this time, the Premier and myself and the minister sitting right behind me made an announcement about the military hotline that's now available for military family resource centres across the province and for those families who are moving in and out of province to get the services that they need. We're modernizing the way we deliver the Soldiers' Aid Commission. We're going to have some very exciting announcements in the very near future.

No one in this party treats our military members as second-class citizens. They're our heroes, Mr. Speaker, and we stand up for them every time.

HELLENIC CANADIAN AND EGYPTIAN CANADIAN COMMUNITIES

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: My question is for the Minister of Finance. I was so pleased to be in the House yesterday and hear the minister deliver our fall economic statement for this year. It is clear that our government has a plan for the people of Ontario and for the future of our province, and that plan is working.

I was particularly gratified to see the contributions of Canada's more than 270,000 people of Hellenic descent be recognized through the inclusion of Hellenic Heritage Month in the Plan to Build Ontario Together Act. Could the minister please share with the House the details of this schedule of the proposed bill?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Thank you to the member from Oakville North–Burlington. If passed, the bill would declare March of every year Hellenic Heritage Month in Ontario. It would be an opportunity to recognize how Ontarians of Hellenic descent have contributed to every field of life in our province, have enriched our culture and have strengthened our economy. As the member for Oakville North–Burlington has advocated in this House before, Hellenic Canadians have made contributions to many fields, including education, law, science, entrepreneurship, business and sport.

Mr. Speaker, should the bill pass, I look forward, as I know all of the members of our caucus look forward, to celebrating Hellenic Heritage Month with all of the members of the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary question? The member for Mississauga–Erin Mills.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister for his answer to my colleague's question. As the first member of provincial Parliament of Egyptian origin in the country's history, I am so proud of our government, our Premier and our Minister of Finance for recognizing the contributions of Canadian Egyptians throughout yesterday's fall economic statement. I'm looking forward to celebrating our culture and our contributions with all the members of this Legislature should our bill pass. The passage of Egyptian Heritage Month would give us all the opportunity to recognize the significant contributions that Egyptian Ontarians have made right across our province.

Could the minister please share with the House the details of the proposed schedule in this bill?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Thank you to the member from Mississauga–Erin Mills. If passed, the Plan to Build Ontario Together Act would proclaim July as Egyptian Heritage Month in Ontario. It would give the members of this House and people right across Ontario the opportunity to recognize the valuable contributions Egyptian Canadians have made and are making to our province—contributions like the ones made by the member from Mississauga–Erin Mills himself, who continues to give back to his community and future generations as a member of the Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that all members of this House will join the government in supporting this important recognition of Egyptian Canadians in Ontario's prosperity, culture and our future success.

RETIREMENT HOMES

Ms. Jessica Bell: My question is to the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility. Davenhill is a retirement home in University–Rosedale. In July, Davenhill abruptly said it was closing. The land was sold for millions to a numbered company, and over 150 vulnerable seniors were told they had to leave and find more expensive homes. Some of these people are here today, like Anne Washington and Betty Robinson.

Betty is 97 years old and lives at Davenhill. She doesn't want to leave, and she's fighting this forced removal as best she can. But Davenhill is calling her incessantly, asking her when she's going to leave. They're closing entire floors, they're threatening to cancel meal programs and they're even selling the furniture, even though Betty has never been served with an official eviction notice.

Speaker, how can the minister allow seniors to be treated like this in Ontario?

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Thank you for raising that important question. As the Minister for Seniors, first

of all, I'd like to express that I'm sorry for the residents there, for such inconvenience.

I got the report from the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority. They told me that the home actually didn't provide a safe and secure environment for the seniors. That's why the home is closed. Now, the municipality and all of the community agencies are working very hard to make sure that the residents in that home will be properly placed. They've been working very, very hard.

Thank you for the question. I'll answer more in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question?

Ms. Jessica Bell: Back to the minister: This summer, I wrote to the minister asking for a review of the Retirement Homes Act to better protect seniors like those in Davenport. A retirement home is currently allowed to stop providing basic services to seniors, like meals and nursing, whenever they want, or increase the prices when they feel like it.

I believe that seniors, like Betty and Anne, deserve better. When they move into a retirement home, they should have more rights when it comes to the care services they're paying for and better protections from eviction. The minister responded by saying the act is just fine as it is.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is how can the minister think that the Retirement Homes Act is working when it means that vulnerable seniors are cut off from basic services at any time and forced to leave their homes?

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Thank you for the question, again. It's a very important question. Our ministry works very hard to make sure that residents staying in retirement homes get safe and proper treatment from the home. That's why the retirement homes authority sends inspectors regularly and they make sure that the retirement homes do a proper job, as the Retirement Homes Act made clear.

If there are any special concerns, you could always call me, and I will directly contact the retirement authority to make sure that seniors in retirement homes live in a safe and proper environment. They can always participate through their board. If they have any concerns, they can express that. I'll make sure I work very hard for all of the seniors in Ontario, especially in retirement homes.

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WASTE REDUCTION

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: My question is for the minister who is helping protect what matters most for future generations, the Minister of Finance.

Yesterday, this minister released our government's plan to build Ontario together in his fall economic statement. I was pleased to see the investments he is making in with health care, education and social services—all of these core social pillars that cannot be maintained without sound fiscal stewardship.

In protecting what Ontarians value most, it's important to listen. It's important to understand that we need to empower Ontarians to take more action, both for their economy and for their environment. We are listening. We're listening when they talk to us about preserving and protecting their environment for today and for future generations. We're taking positive steps—positive steps like making sure polluters pay, but we're not going to be making sure that small businesses are paying the brunt of it or that families are gouged at the pumps.

I wanted to talk about earlier this year, and how I tabled a private member's bill on combatting litter, encouraging all communities to come together. I wanted the minister to elaborate on how our fall economic statement is making this happen.

Hon. Rod Phillips: Thank you to the member from Barrie–Innisfil for that question.

Ontario does need to divert more waste from landfills. I referenced in my comments yesterday the great work being done by our Minister of the Environment in terms of the first producer-pay system for this province, long avoided by the previous government, but which is going to make a big difference.

We need to do everything we can to divert from landfills. We need to do everything we can to educate everyone about the importance of that. That's why I'm so pleased to share with this House that, should it be passed, this initiative of Ontario's first day of action on litter, which was put forward by the member from Barrie–Innisfil, will help to educate our young people—help to educate all of us—about the importance of this, and that the first annual day of action on litter will be May 12, 2020.

We look forward to working with all of our partners on both sides of the House to make this day an incredible success.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I want to thank the minister for his response and for making it a key priority to unite all communities to make sure that we're taking action on litter all across this province, through public education and awareness of the significant environmental challenges that are a key component to building confidence in our environment and confidence in our communities. By taking action together and taking action on litter, we can unite communities, kids and education systems to take real, strong leadership on the environment, including the economic side, which is the circular economy element of ensuring that our waste is cleaned up.

I want to ask the minister to elaborate a little more on the circular economy and how this private member's bill is going to be helping the environment, the economy and our future generations.

Hon. Rod Phillips: Thank you again to the MPP from Barrie–Innisfil for this question and for her leadership on this issue.

Our government has been clear—and the Minister of the Environment said it in this House today—that we need to balance a healthy economy and a healthy environment. Our Blue Box Program, and the producer-pay program

that the Minister of the Environment has introduced, will significantly increase the recycling rates in Ontario. It will keep plastic out of our lakes and our rivers and streams, and it will save taxpayers money.

The litter day of action, which we are proud to have in this bill, will make all Ontarians aware of the importance of collecting litter in our community. Environmentalism begins at home, it begins in our communities, and the annual day of action on litter will make that very clear across our province.

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question is to the Premier. This week is skilled trades week in Ontario. It's very concerning that this Conservative government continues to reduce the safety of skilled-trade workers in our province. Companies try to lower costs by cutting corners on safety, like not ensuring that employees on work sites have the proper training and certification.

This summer, we saw the tragic consequence of unsafe workplaces. An 18-year-old, Vadim Buzcel, an unregistered electrician with only three months of college training, employed by Nord Electric, was electrocuted to death on the job site. He was left alone to die, assigned to do work he wasn't certified to do. This should never have happened.

Vadim's family is devastated by this tragedy. Vadim's mother was hugging his teddy bear as he died at the hospital.

Is this the type of work environment the Premier wants in Ontario for our skilled trades workers and our young people who enter the trades?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Ross Romano: Thank you for the question. Our condolences go out to the family of the individual who lost his life.

We take safety in the workplace so incredibly seriously, Mr. Speaker. It is so critically important, and we are working very diligently as a government to ensure that we are putting every measure in place. In fact, I can tell you personally, from my own perspective, that I've addressed this issue in my own family. I had a family member who lost his life in the line of work, working for the city of Sault Ste. Marie on April 16, 2009.

This is an incredibly serious matter to us all. It matters greatly to us. We are going to work hand in hand to ensure that we can do everything in our power to promote safety in the workplace. We want to get more people coming into the trades, but we want to make sure that when they come in they have a safe place to work—that we are going to ensure that they're going to go home to their families at the end of every night. That matters to us as much as it matters to everyone here.

Again, to the family, our condolences. We are working diligently with our Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development, as well as with our Premier and every

member of our caucus. We're going to work hand in hand with every person in Ontario to make sure that we get our people and workers safely home every night.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Toronto—St. Paul's has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Attorney General concerning victim compensation services. This matter will be debated Tuesday, November 19, at 6 p.m.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I understand that the Minister of Government and Consumer Services has a point of order.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Yesterday, in my response to the member from Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, I stated that we're acting on 27 recommendations from Justice Cunningham. I would like to correct my record because, in fact, we're actually acting on 32 out of the 37.

MEMBER'S BIRTHDAY

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Milton informed me that he has a point of order.

Mr. Parm Gill: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm rising on a point of order to recognize an important milestone in the life of one of our colleagues, the hard-working Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. I want to wish him a happy 21st birthday.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We're not permitting the introduction of guests after question period, but we are permitting recognition of people's birthdays, it seems. Happy birthday.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to now ask our pages to assemble.

This has been a great group of pages. They've only been here two weeks, but they've done a superb job. They are smart, trustworthy and hard-working. They are indispensable to the effective functioning of the chamber. They cheerfully and efficiently deliver notes, run errands, transport important documents throughout the precinct, and make sure that 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, no doubt, will contribute to their communities, their province and their country in important ways. We expect great things from all of them. Maybe some of them someday will take their seats in this House as members or work here as staff, and we wish them all well.

Please join me in showing our appreciation to our legislative pages.
Applause.

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 the deficit. This matter will be debated Tuesday, November 19, 2019, at 6 p.m.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We have a deferred vote on government notice of motion 69, relating to the allocation of time on Bill 132, An Act to reduce burdens on people and businesses by enacting, amending and repealing various Acts and revoking various Regulations.

Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1200 to 1205.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members will please take their seats.

On November 6, 2019, Mr. Fedeli moved government notice of motion 69, relating to allocation of time on Bill 132. All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Harris, Mike	Piccini, David
Baber, Roman	Hogarth, Christine	Rasheed, Kaleed
Babikian, Aris	Jones, Sylvia	Roberts, Jeremy
Bailey, Robert	Kanapathi, Logan	Romano, Ross
Barrett, Toby	Karahalios, Belinda C.	Sabawy, Sheref
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Ke, Vincent	Sandhu, Amarjot
Bouma, Will	Khanjin, Andrea	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Calandra, Paul	Kramp, Daryl	Scott, Laurie
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Kusendova, Natalia	Smith, Dave
Cho, Stan	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Todd
Clark, Steve	Martin, Robin	Surma, Kinga
Coe, Lorne	Martow, Gila	Tangri, Nina
Crawford, Stephen	McDonell, Jim	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Cuzzetto, Rudy	McKenna, Jane	Thompson, Lisa M.
Downey, Doug	Miller, Norman	Tibollo, Michael A.
Dunlop, Jill	Nicholls, Rick	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Elliott, Christine	Oosterhoff, Sam	Wai, Daisy
Ford, Doug	Pang, Billy	Walker, Bill
Fullerton, Merrilee	Park, Lindsey	Yakabuski, John
Ghamari, Goldie	Parsa, Michael	Yurek, Jeff
Gill, Parm	Pettapiece, Randy	
Hardeman, Ernie	Phillips, Rod	

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Andrew, Jill	Glover, Chris	Sattler, Peggy
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gretzky, Lisa	Schreiner, Mike
Begum, Doly	Harden, Joel	Shaw, Sandy
Bell, Jessica	Hassan, Faisal	Simard, Amanda

Berns-McGown, Rima	Hatfield, Percy	Singh, Gurratan
Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	Singh, Sara
Bourgouin, Guy	Kernaghan, Terence	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Burch, Jeff	Mamakwa, Sol	Stiles, Marit
Coteau, Michael	Mantha, Michael	Tabuns, Peter
Fife, Catherine	Miller, Paul	Taylor, Monique
Fraser, John	Monteith-Farrell, Judith	Vanthof, John
French, Jennifer K.	Morrison, Suze	West, Jamie
Gates, Wayne	Natyshak, Taras	Yarde, Kevin
Gélinas, France	Rakocevic, Tom	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 64; the nays are 41.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): This House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1209 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: I'd like to introduce my hard-working executive assistant, Stephen Chartrand, who's in the gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Nina Tangri: I do have quite a list. They are making their way in, but I would like to—in order of time.

I have here with us today Dr. Katherine Allan from CARE; Tiffany Jenkins from CARE; Roberta Scott from CARE; Paul Snobelen from CARE; Heather Cartwright, also from CARE; Paula Iantomasi from CARE; Alan Corrance from CARE; Debbie Corrance from CARE; Paule Corneil and Glenn Corneil, both from CARE; and Brian Cole from St. John Council for Ontario—St. John Ambulance—all of whom are here to hear my private member's motion today. I'd like to thank them all for coming.

I also have my constituency staff here: Saroj Gandhi and Keith Fleming.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ARKA CHAKRABORTY

Ms. Jill Andrew: I would like to introduce Durba Mukherjee to the House. Durba, thank you for being here today. I deeply wish your first visit to these chambers was under different circumstances.

Durba is one of my constituents. She's the mother of Arka, a 12-year-old boy who was also one of our constituents. Arka was a student at Hodgson Middle School, just outside of my riding. He was a permanent resident of Canada, having moved here from India with his single parent mom, Durba, on March 8, 2018—International Women's Day, a day when we ironically acknowledge the strength and courage of women.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot think of a stronger, more courageous woman than Durba. She has borne the unthinkable. Arka isn't with us today because he reportedly committed

suicide on Friday, June 21, 2019. In the words of Arka's mother, Durba, "Arka in the last year of his life was bullied over and over again in school because of his circumstances and his background. I came here for my son to have a chance to grow up in a more open and tolerant society."

Mr. Speaker, as one who was bullied mercilessly in school, I still have the privilege of standing here. Arka never will. Arka was a young boy who thrived at literature—"lit whiz"—a program in his school. He wanted to be like his favourite teacher, Mr. H. He'll never get that chance.

Durba is determined to ensure an end to bullying for all students on and off of school property. I stand with her unapologetically.

As legislators, we must ensure that our schools and our school communities have every single equitable resource and dollar they need to ensure our children are safe, supported and well in our schools.

Ms. Mukherjee, Arka will never be forgotten. None of us here will ever be forgotten, and we will work hard to instill his legacy.

EVENTS IN MISSISSAUGA–LAKESHORE

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I rise here today to thank all the organizers, sponsors and especially the amazing volunteers who work together so we can all enjoy our local parades, festivals and celebrations all summer long in Mississauga–Lakeshore.

On June 14, we kicked off the season at the 23rd annual Mississauga Waterfront Festival, which included live music and entertainment for the whole family.

The Canada Day parade in Port Credit was a fantastic success as thousands gathered along Lakeshore for the annual Paint the Town Red parade, Johnny Bozzo's street-sized cake, and the beautiful fireworks display.

On July 13, thousands more gathered along the shores of the Credit River for Mississauga's Ribfest.

On July 21, my team hosted our first annual barbecue at Port Credit Memorial Park. Hundreds came out to enjoy that evening.

On August 16, the Port Credit BIA hosted Buskerfest, with performers and circus acts from all around the world.

The lakefront festival season ended on September 8, with the Southside Shuffle blues and jazz festival. I was proud to announce over \$100,000 in grants to support this festival.

At each event I was reminded how lucky I am to live in an amazing community, with thousands of hard-working and dedicated volunteers. We had a tremendous summer in Mississauga–Lakeshore and they made it all possible.

Once again, I would like to thank everybody.

SIKH GENOCIDE

Mr. Kevin Yarde: This November marks 35 years since the 1984 Sikh genocide, when the government in India launched a horrendous campaign that initiated systemic and cruel human rights abuses against Sikhs in

Delhi and throughout India. This heinous act aimed to eliminate an entire population of Sikh people.

Genocide has touched the lives of many communities and families, including survivors and descendants of this genocide now living in Canada. They are an important part of our community, not only in Brampton, but across the entire province.

November is also a time of deep reflection for Sikhs around the world. We mark this solemn occasion, when so many were unjustly killed just for practising their faith.

In 2017, in an amazing act of unity, all parties came together in this assembly to recognize the horrific acts of 1984 as a genocide.

A moment of silence was held yesterday here at Queen's Park, as well as a candlelight vigil to remember the thousands of lives lost. I was proud to stand in solidarity with my fellow Brampton NDP MPPs and the entire Sikh community.

We remember the suffering of the Sikh people in hopes that it will help provide a way for them to find healing and closure.

Despite the trauma they experienced, the Sikh community continues to demonstrate its resilience all across the world. They have turned the injustices they faced into advocacy for peace and social justice.

HELLENIC HOME FOR THE AGED

Miss Christina Maria Mitas: I'm so pleased to rise and recognize the 21st anniversary of the Hellenic Home for the Aged, a long-term-care home in my riding of Scarborough Centre. The Hellenic Home is a not-for-profit organization that is dedicated to providing exceptional quality care and services to seniors in the Scarborough community that enhance their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health. By staying at the forefront of the community's ever-changing needs, their service is second to none. Seniors at the Hellenic Home live in a nurturing environment that respects, enhances and promotes their dignity, independence and happiness.

The home also offers a unique cultural setting, one that is proud to recognize the customs and traditions of residents who are of a predominantly Greek ethnic background, but with a long-standing commitment to provide for the needs of individuals from diverse backgrounds.

The work that the Hellenic Home does to provide a strong sense of community and family cannot be praised enough.

Thankfully, earlier this year, the Ministry of Long-Term Care announced that the home was approved for 128 new long-term-care beds. When speaking with staff and residents alike, I have heard first-hand how exciting this news is for the home. To them, it means that their family can grow, and this is a beautiful thing.

I look forward to continuing to help the Hellenic Home and their residents grow and thrive, and I really look forward to celebrating 21 years of community, safety and respect with all of the residents and staff this Saturday evening at their celebration gala.

LAURENTIAN UNIVERSITY

Mr. Jamie West: It's a pleasure to rise in the House to brag about the riding of Sudbury. Today I'm going to brag about Laurentian University, my alma mater, because this spring Laurentian University became the first university in Ontario—the first—to reinstate full-tuition exemption for students who were in the extended care of the children's aid societies of Ontario. Many people would know that as foster care.

As you know, Speaker, the Conservative government's deep cuts to OSAP last year ripped away support for students, and without those grants and the financial assistance, the already difficult prospect of pursuing post-secondary education becomes even more difficult for former youth-in-care Ontarians.

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However, last year I met with Jane Kovarikova at Queen's Park. Jane is someone who was a former youth-in-care Ontarian, someone who graduated from Laurentian University, someone who is currently pursuing her doctorate, but somebody who remembers her education struggles as a former youth in care—and Jane is someone who believed that it didn't have to be that way. So Jane founded the Child Welfare Political Action Committee. She spoke about the untapped potential and how important education is to financial success, and about how their success becomes Ontario's success. This resonated with me, so I invited Jane to Sudbury, and I facilitated meetings between Jane and Laurentian University.

I am thrilled to share that this summer my university, Laurentian University, announced they would be waiving tuition to 10 former youth-in-care Ontarians—no age restrictions, no course restrictions. I am so proud to have been part of this process.

I want to thank Jane for knowing it didn't have to be that way and for finding the courage to change it.

I'm especially proud of Sudbury's Laurentian University for leading the way and for being Ontario's first university to reinstate full-tuition exemptions for students from the extended care of the children's aid societies of Ontario.

CLASS SIZE

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I just want to say that class size ratios matter, and I'd like to share the story of a young leader from my riding that highlights why.

When Ben was 16, he was struggling in school, showing up late and barely passing. His home situation was difficult and he lacked parental support. He wanted to go to university, but he never felt it was an option for him, until a teacher invited Ben to join a green industries tech class sponsored by the charity Youth Fusion and facilitated by University of Guelph students. The class project was to use environmental design to improve the school grounds. With the support of teachers and community mentors and Youth Fusion, Ben began to believe in his ability to succeed. He made the honour roll,

graduated as an Ontario scholar, and is currently a second-year student at the University of Guelph. Today, Ben works for Youth Fusion, facilitating classes at his old high school.

Ben's story illustrates the importance of specialized education programs and the great work that Youth Fusion does for at-risk students. It also highlights why lower class size ratios make a difference in students' lives.

I want to thank you, Ben, and I want to thank you, Youth Fusion, for the great work you do in our community.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: On November 4, I hosted a round table on mental health and addictions with wonderful Associate Minister Tibollo in my riding of Markham–Thornhill.

Mental health and addictions issues are on the rise. It is becoming an epidemic. That is why we need to reduce the barriers affecting people's ability to seek and receive help.

Supporting front-line professionals who work incredibly hard to help those in need must be a priority. Let's find ways to reduce the red tape and help them do their job more effectively.

We were fortunate to hear from local organizations such as JVS, SSN, Yellow Brick House, Vitanova Foundation and 360 Kids. Each provided a unique perspective.

One stakeholder told us how it took her six years to receive a proper diagnosis. Another one told us how her son, who is suffering from a serious mental illness, has to wait months to see his psychiatrist. This is but a small example of the thousands of people struggling every day in Ontario.

We must also recognize the unique challenges that stigma, cultural and language barriers pose to diverse communities like my riding of Markham–Thornhill. We cannot have a one-size-fits-all solution.

Mr. Speaker, we must work with our community partners and those who are on the front lines to create a better quality of life for Ontarians suffering with mental health and addictions issues.

EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANTS

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, last month I was contacted by an educational assistant in my riding of London–Fanshawe. She told me about how things have changed, that work is more difficult and dangerous—unfair compensation and lack of support for her and her colleagues.

Educational workers are an integral part of our education system. Thousands of children rely on their EAs to attend school. School boards rely on EAs' expertise in behaviour management systems to keep our students safe. EAs are on the front lines ensuring our kids have the opportunity to learn, and supporting the success of high-needs students. These front-line workers deserve our

respect, and they deserve compensation relative to the contributions they provide.

Bill 124 sends a message that these contributions don't matter and that these workers who provide the best service they can to our community don't deserve fair treatment.

This educational assistant and hundreds of thousands of other public service workers deserve a government that supports the hard work they do every day to ensure that our children receive a safe and great education, that patients get great care, and that Ontarians have a public sector that they can rely on.

We know that wage restraint legislation doesn't work. My constituent knows that her wages do not reflect the level of responsibility and the importance of her work. And now, through Bill 124, the Premier is trying to squeeze more from workers who have already given so much.

We need to show our public workers that we value them. The Ford government needs to scrap Bill 124, invest in our public sector, and invest in the people who work so hard to serve Ontarians.

WOMAN ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

Mr. Deepak Anand: Mr. Speaker, can you imagine, around half of all women in Canada have experienced an incident of physical or sexual violence since the age of 16—that's one in every two women in Canada over the age of 16. It is very unfortunate that woman abuse is an issue that still exists in our society.

The month of November is Woman Abuse Prevention Month. Every woman should be free from the threat of violence and live with peace of mind. While there has been progress, more needs to be done.

We have recently seen the Duchess of Sussex, Meghan Markle, being criticized for making choices not in line with royal protocol and public perception. Prince Harry stepped up to defend his wife and even considered leaving the royal family status to support his wife. This is a great example of a husband, a man, standing up to defend his wife for something she did not deserve. We all need to do our part.

Mr. Speaker, in my riding of Mississauga–Malton, a non-profit organization, Malton Women Council, is working with a vision of “Empowered Women, Empowered Communities.” I'd like to recognize this organization for providing opportunities and resources for motivating, mentoring and mobilizing women, families and communities. I'd like to congratulate founders Aaloka Mehndiratta, Anu Randhawa, Gulnaz Rehan, Samina Khan, Hafsa Taqdees, Parminder Randhawa, Mehwish Javed and Mohini Khosla for completing 10 years of community service.

Finally, I'm hoping for the day when November will be designated not as the month for woman abuse awareness, but as the month for celebrating no woman abuse and a celebration of equality among all.

CANADIAN CANCER SURVIVOR NETWORK

Mr. Lorne Coe: I stand today to speak about the great work being done by the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network. The network provides those faced with a cancer diagnosis, and to their family members and friends, educational tools and a place to have their voices heard in planning and implementing treatment. It's a collaborative effort involving a range of community partners, all working together to promote the very best standard of care and support.

This morning, I had the honour of sponsoring the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network at its breakfast reception here at Queen's Park. I spoke about the cancer treatment centre at Lakeridge Health in Oshawa, one of the very best in Ontario, and I spoke about the support given by Hearth Place in Oshawa to me and to so many others like me who are faced with a cancer diagnosis. I'm a cancer survivor, Speaker, and as reluctant as I was—and am—to speak about it, I did so today to emphasize the importance of the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network to the lives of so many thousands of people across Ontario.

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INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SPECIAL ABILITY RIDING INSTITUTE ACT (TAX RELIEF), 2019

Mr. Pettapiece moved first reading of the following bill: Bill Pr14, An Act respecting the Special Ability Riding Institute.

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): Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

PETITIONS

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Speaker, good afternoon to you. I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired; and

“Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

“Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

“Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by” next year; and

“Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

“Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

“Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

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

“To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research.”

Speaker, I fully agree and will put my name to this and give it to Nathan to bring to the table.

VETERANS MEMORIAL

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: A petition entitled “Petition in Support of Constructing a Memorial to Honour Our Heroes.

“Whereas over 40,000 Canadian Armed Forces members served in the war in Afghanistan including the 159 Canadians who made the ultimate sacrifice; and

“Whereas the Premier made a commitment to the people of Ontario to build a memorial to honour the bravery and sacrifice of our armed forces; and

“Whereas, by remembering their service and sacrifice, we recognize the values and freedoms these men and women fought to preserve; and

“Whereas the memorial will show our gratitude to our veterans, their families and to their descendants; and

“Whereas the memorial will be a place of remembrance, a form of tribute, and an important reminder to future generations of the contributions and sacrifices that have helped shape our country;

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

“That the government of Ontario immediately construct the memorial to honour the heroes of the war in Afghanistan.”

I will support this petition and I will sign it.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Ms. Sara Singh: I’m proud to present this petition, and I’d like to thank a constituent of mine, Evan Cameron, and the Brampton Centre Youth Council for collecting all these signatures.

“Fund Our Schools.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas too many children are going to school in buildings without proper heating or cooling, with leaky roofs or stairways overdue for repair;

“Whereas after years of Conservative and Liberal governments neglecting schools, the backlog of needed repairs has reached \$16 billion;

“Whereas during the 2018 election, numerous members of the Conservative Party, including the current Minister of Education, pledged to provide adequate, stable funding for Ontario’s schools;

“Whereas less than three weeks into the legislative session,” the Premier “and the Conservative government have already cut \$100 million in much-needed school repairs, leaving our children and educators to suffer in classrooms that are unsafe and unhealthy;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Minister of Education to immediately reverse the decision to cut \$100 million in school repair funding, and invest the \$16 billion needed to tackle the repair backlog in Ontario’s schools.”

I’m proud to sign my name and send this off with page Neil.

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

Mr. Stan Cho: I present a petition in support of mandatory implementation of amber lights as part of an eight-lamp warning system on school buses.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the current law in the province of Ontario does not require amber warning lights on school buses as part of an eight-lamp system, despite every other province in Canada requiring their use by law;

“Whereas motorists are educated and experienced with the use of amber lights meaning ‘caution’ and red lights meaning ‘stop’;

“Whereas the current law makes the use of buses from Ontario less safe when travelling out of province or into the United States since motorists in those areas are familiar with amber warning lights;

“Whereas all buses manufactured since 1 January 2005 are equipped with an eight-lamp system which can transition to amber lenses with very little cost;

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

“That the Highway Traffic Act, section 175 and regulation 612, be amended to require the use of amber lights as part of an amber and red eight-lamp system in school buses in the province of Ontario and that amber lenses must be installed in all school buses as soon as practical after coming into law.”

I support this petition. I affix my name to it and I hand it to page Kiran.

TEACHERS’ PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Miss Monique Taylor: I’d like to thank Christina Bortolussi, one of my constituents, who is an inspiring teacher and whom this petition affects directly.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ministry of Education introduced a mandatory math proficiency test for student teachers wishing to teach in Ontario’s elementary and secondary schools;

“Whereas teacher education students graduating in the current academic year have been provided no opportunity to prepare for this test, nor any indication of what will be included on this test;

“Whereas the research conducted by the Education Quality and Accountability Office has found that math proficiency tests do not lead to improved student performance, contrary to this government’s stated goals;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Ministry of Education to eliminate the math proficiency test.”

I fully support this petition, Mr. Speaker. I’m going to give it to page Alisha to bring to the Clerk.

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

Mr. Mike Harris: This is a petition that’s near and dear to my heart for obvious reasons. It’s a petition in support of mandatory implementation of amber lights as part of an eight-lamp warning system on school buses.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the current law in the province of Ontario does not require amber warning lights on school buses as part of an eight-lamp system, despite every other province in Canada requiring their use by law;

“Whereas motorists are educated and experienced with the use of amber lights meaning ‘caution’ and red lights meaning ‘stop’;

“Whereas the current law makes the use of buses from Ontario less safe when travelling out of province or into the United States since motorists in those areas are familiar with amber warning lights;

“Whereas all buses manufactured since 1 January 2005 are equipped with an eight-lamp system which can transition to amber lenses with very little cost;

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

“That the Highway Traffic Act, section 175 and regulation 612, be amended to require the use of amber lights as part of an amber and red eight-lamp system in school buses in the province of Ontario and that the amber lenses must be installed in all school buses as soon as practical after coming into law.”

I’ve already affixed my signature to this. I wholeheartedly support this petition. I’ll pass it to page Olivia to bring to the table.

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LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Kevin Yarde: This petition is named “Time to Care.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas quality care for the 78,000 residents of (LTC) homes is a priority for many Ontario families; and

“Whereas the provincial government does not provide adequate funding to ensure care and staffing levels in LTC homes to keep pace with residents’ increasing acuity and the growing number of residents with complex behaviours; and

“Whereas several Ontario coroner’s inquests into LTC homes deaths have recommended an increase in direct hands-on care for residents and staffing levels and the most reputable studies on this topic recommends 4.1 hours of direct care per day;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the LTC Homes Act (2007) for a legislated minimum care standard to provide an average of four hours per resident per day, adjusted for acuity level and case mix.”

I completely, wholeheartedly, agree with this petition. I will affix my name to it—once I find a pen—and give it to page Jack.

VETERANS MEMORIAL

Ms. Christine Hogarth: It is my pleasure to read out this petition from the two Legions in my riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

“Petition in Support of Constructing a Memorial to Honour Our Heroes.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas over 40,000 Canadian Armed Forces members served in the war in Afghanistan including the 159 Canadians who made the ultimate sacrifice; and

“Whereas the Premier made a commitment to the people of Ontario to build a memorial to honour the bravery and sacrifice of our armed forces; and

“Whereas, by remembering their service and sacrifice, we recognize the values and freedoms these men and women fought to preserve; and

“Whereas the memorial will show our gratitude to our veterans, their families and to their descendants; and

“Whereas the memorial will be a place of remembrance, a form of tribute, and an important reminder to future generations of the contributions and sacrifices that have helped shape our” amazing “country;

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

“That the government of Ontario immediately construct the memorial to honour the heroes of the war in Afghanistan.”

I will affix my signature to this and hand it to page Elizabeth.

PUBLIC SECTOR COMPENSATION

Mr. Jamie West: I want to thank Joey Ladouceur and Dave Levesque from CUPE Local 4705 for collecting these petitions.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ford Conservatives’ cuts represent an all-out attack on municipalities, health care, schools, universities and social services; and

“Whereas the Ford Conservatives’ cuts are harming families, children and the most vulnerable across Ontario, making the services we all rely on less accessible and accountable; and

“Whereas Bill 124 will strip workers of their charter-protected right to free collective bargaining; and

“Whereas Bill 124 will force front-line public sector workers to accept contracts below inflation, compounding cuts that make the delivery of services more difficult;

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

“That the government of Ontario stop dismantling our social infrastructure, properly fund our public services, withdraw Bill 124”—there’s still time—“and support communities, not cuts.”

I wholeheartedly endorse this. I will sign it and give it to page Zakiyya.

VETERANS MEMORIAL

Mrs. Belinda C. Karahalios: This is a petition entitled “Petition in Support of Constructing a Memorial to Honour Our Heroes.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas over 40,000 Canadian Armed Forces members served in the war in Afghanistan including the 159 Canadians who made the ultimate sacrifice; and

“Whereas the Premier made a commitment to the people of Ontario to build a memorial to honour the bravery and sacrifice of our armed forces; and

“Whereas, by remembering their service and sacrifice, we recognize the values and freedoms these men and women fought to preserve...; and

“Whereas the memorial will be a place of remembrance, a form of tribute, and an important reminder to future generations of the contributions and sacrifices that have helped shape our country;

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

“That the government of Ontario immediately construct the memorial to honour the heroes of the war in Afghanistan.”

I very much support this petition. I affix my name to it and give it to page Bernat.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, I’m getting petitions from all over Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas quality care for the 78,000 residents of (LTC) homes is a priority for many Ontario families; and

“Whereas the provincial government does not provide adequate funding to ensure care and staffing levels in LTC homes to keep pace with residents’ increasing acuity and

the growing number of residents with complex behaviours; and

“Whereas several Ontario coroner’s inquests into LTC homes deaths have recommended an increase in direct hands-on care for residents and staffing levels, and the most reputable studies on this topic recommend 4.1 hours of direct care per day;

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

“To amend the LTC Homes Act (2007) for a legislated minimum care standard of four hours per resident per day, adjusted for acuity level and case mix.”

I fully support this petition, sign it and give it to page Olivia to deliver to the table.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

MAKING NORTHERN ONTARIO HIGHWAYS SAFER ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 VISANT À ACCROÎTRE LA SÉCURITÉ DES VOIES PUBLIQUES DANS LE NORD DE L’ONTARIO

Mr. Bourgouin moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 125, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act to make Northern Ontario Highways Safer / Projet de loi 125, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l’aménagement des voies publiques et des transports en commun pour accroître la sécurité des voies publiques dans le nord de l’Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

M. Guy Bourgouin: Merci, madame la Présidente.

C’est avec beaucoup d’émotion et beaucoup de fierté que je prends la parole aujourd’hui à l’Assemblée législative.

Before I begin, I want to thank all of those who have showed their support for this life-saving project: Sue Dery from Grant’s Transport and her daughter Alisha, from New Liskeard; Mario Villeneuve de Villeneuve Construction à Hearst; Mark Andrews, former OPP north east region traffic and marine unit commander, from North Bay; et les conseils municipaux suivants : Kapuskasing, Hearst, Mattice-Val Côté, Fauquier-Strickland, Magnetawan, Bonfield, Evanturel, Cochrane, Wawa, Burk’s Falls, Thessalon, Kerns, and Fort Frances. Thank you to all the other municipalities that have acknowledged this project and committed their endorsement.

Je veux remercier aussi l’Association française des municipalités de l’Ontario and the northwestern municipalities’ association for having endorsed this private member’s bill in one way or another.

Un grand merci à tous les Ontariens et Ontariennes qui ont signé la pétition pour demander que les routes de nos régions soient plus sécuritaires.

Let me begin by saying that Bill 125, the Making Northern Ontario Highways Safer Act, is nothing but common sense.

Les routes 11 et 17 forment un lien vital et une plateforme économique pour de nombreuses collectivités qui fournissent d'importantes ressources naturelles à l'Ontario et au Canada. These highways cross the region and connect eastern Canada and southern Ontario to Manitoba and the west. According to the Ministry of Transportation's Northern Ontario Commercial Vehicle Travel Profile, 54,000 truck trips per week travel along the northern Ontario highway network. These trucks carry more than half a million tonnes of commodities, with an estimated total value of \$1.24 billion.

De plus, vu que les villes et les villages forment un corridor tout le long de ces deux routes, les vies des gens se passent sur la 11 et la 17 : les autobus qui amènent les enfants à l'école, les gens qui voyagent pour aller aux rendez-vous médicaux ou les gens qui veulent simplement se rendre au travail. Mais les risques de collisions et d'accidents mortels sur ces deux autoroutes du Nord sont particulièrement élevés.

1340

Les données du Rapport annuel sur la sécurité routière en Ontario démontrent l'ampleur du contraste entre les régions du Nord et du Sud au regard du nombre de mortalités. En moyenne, les accidents mortels sont nettement plus nombreux dans les régions desservies par les routes du corridor transcanadien.

For example, drivers with motor vehicles registered in the Cochrane region are twice as likely to be killed in a highway accident as those whose vehicle is registered in the Halton region. When it comes to motor vehicles registered in the Timiskaming region, the chances of a fatal collision are almost four times higher than in the Toronto region. And if we compare the regions of Timiskaming, Cochrane and Kenora to those of Durham, Halton and Toronto, drivers are three times more likely to engage in a fatal accident in the north. No one—absolutely no one—could be pleased to hear that our families, our children and our loved ones are more likely to be killed in a car accident because our roads are not kept passable.

Il faut avouer que les routes du nord de la province ont toujours été plus dangereuses que celles du sud. But since the Liberal government privatized the winter maintenance and endorsed performance-based area maintenance contracts in 2009, things have gone from bad to worse. Speaker, this is basically what every single Liberal government has done to Ontario's essential services. They gave away Hydro One, and now we have some of the highest electricity rates in Canada.

Again, the Auditor General report on winter road maintenance is crystal clear on this issue. It says, "Our audit found that because of significant changes to the winter highway maintenance program since 2009, winter roads have not been maintained as effectively as they were prior to this date."

This cannot be any more evident: The privatization and the deregulation of winter highway maintenance has had a negative impact on the condition of our roads. It has cost money and, above all, it has cost many lives.

Ce gouvernement conservateur a traîné les pieds. Ils n'ont rien fait pour assurer que nos enfants rentrent à la maison en toute sécurité.

Speaker, this bill can help save lives. It can lower the risk of fatal collisions in northern Ontario.

Présentement, les normes de dégagement de la chaussée du ministère des Transports s'appuient sur les moyennes de débit de circulation et les catégories de voies publiques. Briefly, the current standards imply that the more traffic, the faster the highway surface is restored to bare pavement conditions. This means that standards are purely grounded on traffic volume, overlooking critical vehicle differences.

D'autres juridictions, comme les États du Maine et du Michigan aux États-Unis, établissent leurs services selon des facteurs divers, comme la circulation moyenne quotidienne, mais aussi la circulation des véhicules commerciaux. Vu que 54 000 véhicules commerciaux circulent dans le réseau routier nord-ontarien, par exemple, il fait du sens d'y penser.

In light of this, the Making Northern Ontario Highways Safer Act, 2019, seeks to reduce the number of winter closures and collisions:

- by amending the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act, 1990;

- by setting out a classification system for Ontario highways consisting of five classes of highways;

- en considérant les routes 11 et 17 comme égales aux autoroutes 400 et à l'autoroute Queen Elizabeth; et

- en exigeant que l'intégralité des chaussées soit dégagée de toute neige dans les huit heures suivant la fin d'une chute de neige.

Also important to note: It doesn't apply, however, to O. Reg. 340/94, on drivers' licences, under the Highway Traffic Act, which is the regulation that specifies highways and drivers' licences. In other words, a change in winter road maintenance has no impact—and I repeat, no impact—on the drivers' licences regulation.

Speaker, regardless of how we look at this, it just makes sense. From Kenora to North Bay, winter closures kill people and are economically harmful to the region.

Ce gouvernement se dit être ouvert aux affaires. Si c'est vraiment le cas, il devrait donc appuyer ce projet de loi et ainsi éviter les fermetures des routes, les accidents et les morts sur les routes 11 et 17.

Madame la Présidente, l'hiver n'a même pas commencé, puis déjà l'autoroute a été fermée deux fois. Elle a été fermée de Cobalt à Sudbury. J'ai une commettante de Timiskaming qui m'a contacté pour nous dire qu'hier soir elle a été obligée de rester à North Bay parce que l'autoroute était encore fermée. C'est une réalité du Nord.

On parle de l'économie. Ce gouvernement se dit ouvert aux entreprises, ouvert à l'économie de la province. Mais je peux vous dire que dans mon comté de Mushkegowuk—Baie James, les camionneurs, que ce soit de la forêt ou des

mines, ne sont payés qu'une fois que leur voyage est à destination, ou qu'il a été « scalé », comme ils disent, ou pesé. Quand un camionneur de bois rond doit délivrer son voyage puis qu'il n'est pas capable de se rendre, c'est une journée perdue complètement. Ces travailleurs-là ont le droit de gagner leur vie. Ils ont le droit d'avoir les routes ouvertes, au moins dans les 12 heures, ou en moins de 16 heures, pour qu'ils soient capables d'aller délivrer leur chargement pour qu'ils puissent faire une journée de travail payé.

Ça, c'est la réalité du Nord. Pourquoi, dans ma région, est-on obligé d'attendre 16 heures avant qu'on nettoie les autoroutes? Ce n'est pas que ma région; c'est Sault-Sainte-Marie, Kenora et la liste continue. Les routes 11 et 17 devraient être sous le même règlement que les autoroutes 400 et Queen Elizabeth. Seize heures pour vous, peut-être, dans le Sud : « Oh, bien, ce n'est pas si pire; on est dans le Nord. » Mais pour nous qui vivons sur la 11, qui vivons sur la 17, c'est très important. Ça fait toute la différence pour l'économie d'une région et pour les personnes qui se rendent au travail, ou bien donc qui ont été obligées de prendre—on attend des mois pour des rendez-vous médicaux pour aller voir des spécialistes. Puis qu'on soit obligé de les remettre puis d'attendre encore plus longtemps? Je pense que c'est irresponsable d'un gouvernement si on ne prend pas le temps de considérer ces points-là.

De ma part, je vous remercie, madame la Présidente, et j'ai hâte de voir les débats.

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

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: It is my pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill 125, the Making Northern Ontario Highways Safer Act, introduced by the member from Mushkegowuk—James Bay. I want to begin by noting that road user safety on all of Ontario's highways is a top priority for our government, and I know it's a priority that every member of this House shares. Everyone expects a safe commute, regardless of weather conditions. We all want to ensure that ourselves, our families, our loved ones and fellow community members make it home safely and without incident, no matter where in the province we live.

In northern Ontario, as with the rest of the province, our highways play a wider role for many commuters in getting to and from work, visiting our friends and loved ones, and doing the daily tasks of life, like picking up groceries or hot meals for your family.

1350

During the winter, those simple journeys can be more challenging, as we experience snow, sleet and other adverse weather conditions common in many months of Ontario's seasonal cycle. Thus, winter road maintenance plays an important role in ensuring that we can go about our everyday tasks in a timely fashion with confidence, knowing that commutes will be safe.

The importance that this province places on this is highlighted by the fact that Ontario has some of the highest winter maintenance standards in North America. For our provincial roads, there are five classifications, each with a matching service level that the province is obliged to

uphold. These are determined through a variety of factors focusing on the role, function and traffic volumes of a highway, but also taking into account secondary considerations such as international gateways, hospitals, schools, route alternatives and winter tourism. The standard for class 1 highways to regain bare pavement after a snowstorm is eight hours, while for class 2 the standard is 16 hours.

This bill proposes to designate Highways 11 and 17 as class 1 highways, meaning that snow would be required to be cleared within eight hours after a storm. Currently for these two northern highways, over the course of a typical winter, on average bare pavement is regained within seven hours. Thus, the reality is that these highways are cleared much sooner than is mandated by the class 2 designation, and even exceed in many cases the requirements of being a class 1 highway.

Madam Speaker, the designations for highways are consistently and equally applied by the Ministry of Transportation throughout the province. This ensures that drivers know what level of service to expect while travelling throughout the province and avoids the associated potential liability issues the province could face if deviating from their set standards and, as mentioned, the designations are developed taking into account numerous factors. Nonetheless, the Ministry of Transportation puts safety first. The ministry will continue to review the factors used to determine service levels for all types of highways in northern Ontario and will develop a report on the impacts of potential changes.

Easing commutes but keeping the province's road users safe regardless of season or region is of utmost importance. In fact, the ministry has already been taking steps to help with winter maintenance in northern Ontario. Over the past few years, the Minister of Transportation has worked to strengthen the oversight of private contractors that handle snow removal on provincial highways. At the same time, the ministry has worked with the contractors to ensure that they have the right equipment to clear truck climbing and passing lanes, freeway ramps and shoulders in a timely manner.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for bringing this proposed legislation to the House, but I think I have clearly outlined my position on this bill. The levels of service being requested by the change of classification are mostly already being met, and additionally I believe we need to be consistent in our application of standards throughout the province. Furthermore, the Ministry of Transportation has taken measures and invested in northern highways to improve winter maintenance and to safely ease the flow of traffic in all seasons.

With that being said, the ministry is continuing to review the factors used in determining the classification and, as mentioned earlier, will be preparing a report for the Minister of Transportation. Thus, at this point, it would be premature to pass this bill while the ministry is examining this very issue to ensure safe and efficient travel on all highways, in all seasons, throughout the province.

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

Mr. Michael Mantha: Speaker, it just burns me when I hear comments like that coming from the member from Scarborough–Rouge Park in regard to being premature in pushing this bill from the member from Mushkegowuk–James Bay.

I would challenge you. Next week, we're on consti week. Come and take a ride with me. Come and travel on my roads. Come and tell me that it's premature. Tell the family in Chapleau, the Tessiers, who lost their family that it's premature to do the changes. Tell the fireman in Wawa that it's premature to do some of these changes. Tell the community of Killarney, which is dodging potholes after potholes and snowbanks to get through their community or to a doctor's appointment. Tell the people on St. Joseph Island the same thing, that it's premature for them to complain. Tell the people in Iron Bridge or in Hilton or in Manitouwadge.

Or here: Tell Mrs. Christine Mick. She's from Gore Bay. I met up with her just a few weeks ago. As a matter of fact, when the good member put up this bill, she decided to send me this message. She said:

“Michael Mantha:

“I have video footage of those conditions from last winter if you need evidence. It is horrendous. I cringe every time I have to leave.

“The main reason for the conditions of that stretch was due to not maintaining it immediately with all the snow dumps we got last winter. It was one after another after another, and when you allow it to accumulate and you don't add salt, huge ongoing ruts are created, and washboard conditions.

“If I could have stayed at home, I would have stayed at home, but it is ridiculous to think we won't go out all winter because of the conditions between Gore Bay and Meldrum Bay. We have no choice but to drive on the road. It is so unfair: third-class roads with the same tax dollar on the same island.

“A lot of seniors on fixed incomes live out here. Some need to travel for health reasons in all weather. I guess we'll have to go through a repeat this winter, as it's now November and there are still no changes.”

Tell a guy like John Leadsom, a proud snowplow driver—and let me be clear: We don't have any problems with the men and women who get behind the wheel of a snowplow or jump into a sander at all times of the night in order to keep our roads and everybody in our community safe. That's not our problem. Our problem is with how this government has regulated. Our problem is with how this has become the privatization that has hurt everybody in this—cool down. Cool down. Sorry, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Through the Chair.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Speaker, this is not premature, and I want to commend the member for bringing this bill forward. It is about time that we get something done.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate? I remind all members to direct their remarks to and through the Chair.

I recognize the member for Scarborough–Agincourt.

Mr. Aris Babikian: Madam Speaker, before speaking this afternoon, I would like to thank the member for Mushkegowuk–James Bay for introducing this private member's bill. I know from personal experience that putting forward an idea and ushering it through this House is a deeply personal matter.

On the topic of Bill 125, I know that Highways 11 and 17 are two major highways that keep some of northern Ontario's largest communities connected to the rest of the province. As such, our government understands the importance of these major routes. As a result, we have been working with local communities and various stakeholders to ensure that these highways continue to be in a state of good repair and safe for drivers to use them during the winter months. The current winter service levels of Highways 11 and 17 were established based on the Trans-Canada designation, traffic volumes and some multi-lane sections near population centres. This is extremely important, as the professionals have assessed the needs of the population and have recommended these levels of service to the Ministry of Transportation.

Madam Speaker, as I have stated earlier, this government understands the importance of these highways to the people of northern Ontario. As such, over the course of a typical winter, on average, bare pavement is regained on Highways 11 and 17 within seven hours after the end of the storm, much sooner than the standard time frame of 16 hours for major highways with class 2 designation elsewhere in Ontario under the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act.

1400

In addition, there are some sections of Highways 11 and 17 in larger population centres that are treated as freeway/urban highways with class 1 designation for winter maintenance because of traffic volumes or multi-lane sections. The bare pavement regain standard is eight hours.

Having said that, our government believes in ensuring tax dollars are spent wisely. We believe in measures that ensure the maximum benefit for the people of Ontario. Unfortunately, this bill, if passed, would cost the taxpayers a great deal of money, without substantial benefits. The cost to convert all of Highways 11 and 17 to freeway/urban highway level of service class 1 designation would be substantial, including an annual cost and a one-time cost for new maintenance facilities and equipment.

Madam Speaker, spending money without a substantial benefit would be a disservice to the people of Ontario. As a result, the Minister of Transport is currently exploring a new approach for determining winter maintenance service levels for northern Ontario. The new approach will consider the redundancy and the connectivity, and safety and economic functionality of the highway section, in addition to traffic volumes, to provide a better determination for winter maintenance service levels.

I encourage the member opposite to work with this government to ensure that the people of northern Ontario are served properly and that their tax dollars are spent wisely.

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

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch, Madam Speaker. I don't know if I'm hearing right but to talk about financial costs versus the cost of people's lives is not even a discussion. It's very real that the northern Ontario Highways 17 and 11 are the most deadly highways provincially. Again, we know that drivers in the region are two times as likely to die in a crash as anywhere else in the province.

Being a northerner, northern communities deserve to be safe and have access to well-maintained roadways. Bill 125 seeks that. It would save lives by enhancing safety through the classification upgrading of the highways to class 1. Safer, well-maintained highways mean that drivers, families, students, patients and tourists can all arrive alive at their destination and to and from the north. Faster snow removal in the winter means an enhanced traffic flow that ensures the economies of smaller towns can thrive in spite of the inclement weather. When we do it right, we save more lives, communities, and economies. We can make real change. Meegwetch.

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

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I am pleased to rise today to add my voice to the debate on Bill 125. I thank the member for bringing this forward. As many in the House know, I grew up in northern Ontario. I have driven both Highways 17 and 11 numerous times back and forth in the winter from Thunder Bay to Sault Ste. Marie, where I lived, and then later on when I moved to Sudbury. I have to say I will always remember the MPP from Nickel Belt on TV saying to the government of the day, "You've got to fix these roads." I remember you outside in a snowstorm.

It is true. Those roads are tough in the wintertime. I've driven them. They are tough. Northerners deserve to be safe. They deserve to be safe on the highways and we can all appreciate that no one, because of where they live, should not have the safety of service on those roads. The service level, as we said, is established based on designation and traffic volumes and sometimes multi-lane sections near population centres. But that doesn't mean people shouldn't be safe where they live because they don't have the population base. I can understand that, being from northern Ontario myself.

Over the years, our Ministry of Transportation has worked to try to enhance the quality of these roads and the winter maintenance across this province—not just here in the south, but in the north and rural areas—and we need to continue to do that and continue to work to make sure these roads are safe.

I look forward to continuing to work with the Minister of Transportation to ensure that all our roads are safe in the future. We should not be depending on population. It should be about safety for all.

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

Ms. Sara Singh: It's an honour to rise here and contribute to the debate and speak in support of our private member's bill here by the member from James Bay. Thank you for the work that you're doing.

I'm just going to lend my voice and provide the perspective of the trucking and commercial vehicle industry. Many of them actually reside in the riding of Brampton Centre and in the community of Brampton. Continuously I hear from those members that they are driving through a death trap when they are moving goods and products across our province on Highway 11 or Highway 17. I personally have driven on that highway, so I'm aware of the need to expand the highway, make sure that it's safe so that people can move our products across this province safely and make sure that we are getting those goods and services moving the way that we need to.

Again, I'm here to support and just lend that perspective of the trucking industry—again, many of those folks reside in that riding, and they use that to move the goods across our province.

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

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: I want to thank the member from Mushkegowuk—James Bay for bringing forward this bill to address the serious inequity of road maintenance in northern Ontario. We need to make our roads safer.

In my riding, Highways 11 and 17 are major corridors. They are the only access routes to many areas for east-to-west and west-to-east traffic, and they are supply lines of the industries that make the north work. More importantly, it is the highways that have school buses, ambulances—and all people need to use them to get where they're going. There are no trains. And despite what some folks may think, dog sleds aren't that common.

The highways close several times per year. Every year there are serious injuries and fatalities, and people lose loved ones. This is not acceptable. If members of this government are serious about developing northern Ontario, they will equalize the conditions. Highways 11 and 17 should be treated the same as the 400-series highways and the QEW. Stop treating northerners like second-class Ontarians, and pass this law.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: I'd like to speak in support of this bill to raise the winter road standards on Highways 11 and 17, the Trans-Canada Highway. One statistic I'd like to bring back to the floor: If your car is registered in the district of Timiskaming and it is involved in an accident on a provincial highway, it is four times as likely that it will be fatal. There are not very many fender-benders in Timiskaming, because we all know that Highway 11—"Oh, we don't have to have it clean for seven hours." It's seven hours of hell.

It's not the contractors; it's not the people on the plows. It's the fact that successive governments haven't been willing to spend the money to keep northerners safe. When the Conservatives were in the opposition, they were solidly on the side of doing this, and from what I hear, northerners are once again expendable. This has to stop.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: When we talk about northern road maintenance, the system is rigged against us. They will talk about classification, they will talk about designations and they will talk about criteria—but it's rigged against us. All of those criteria were developed by southern Ontario for southern Ontario. Once you apply them to northern Ontario, it puts our lives at risk. Not a winter goes by that people in my riding don't die on the road because there has been a snowstorm. You have to travel for many reasons—a medical appointment or whatever; you had to go—the road is not clear, and people die every single year.

1410

We have it within our power to change this, to save lives. All we have to do is change how long it takes to finally get a snowplow out after a snowstorm. This is a regulation that we've made right here in this House. We can change it right here in this House and save lives. Why would you say no? Because the system that exists cannot be changed? I can't support this. I can't buy this. Those are rules that were made in southern Ontario for southern Ontario and put northerners at risk.

I'm a northerner. I don't want to die on the road. I don't want my family to die on the roads. But I have to drive. Those roads need to be clear. Voting for this bill will save lives, will keep me safer and will keep my family safer. It has to happen. Never mind the rules; we have it within our power to save lives.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I want to add my voice and the voice of many northerners who have had to suffer the reality of driving in northern Ontario, be it Highway 11 or be it Highway 17. I think it needs to be pointed out—and maybe people don't realize this—that this is the Trans-Canada Highway. This is not a road that connects community A to community B; this connects our nation, from the Quebec border to the Manitoba border. The amount of traffic that goes through there, when it comes to the shipment of goods and services and everything else that travels on that highway, is enormous. You have a lot of transport trucks, you have lot of cars and trucks that are local, and you have other people driving across Canada who are having to go on either Highway 11 or 17—normally 11 in the winter and 17 in the summer because of the condition of the roads and how they're built.

To hear the government say to us, "We've got to do a cost analysis in order to determine that we're getting a good bang for our buck when it comes to spending money on highways"—these are lives. We all know, in our families—if not in our families, our friends—people who have been in serious accidents, who have been injured and, yes, have died as a result of the road conditions in northern Ontario.

Kathleen Wynne was wrong as the Minister of Transportation and then as Premier to have privatized not only the plowing that the Tories started to privatize when Harris was in government, but she was wrong to put in place a system where we took the patrols and we transferred them

to the private sector. They changed the circuit times, yes. They're listing it as a class 2 highway, but the circuit times on the highway are longer than they used to be.

So we need to support this motion. Why? Because at the end of the day, this is about safety for people who use these highways. This is about commerce across this country, from coast to coast, that has to come through Ontario on either Highway 11 or 17. To do the right thing, it's not a question of cost; it's a question of safety and a question of common sense.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The member from Mushkegowuk–James Bay has two minutes for his reply.

M. Guy Bourgoin: J'aimerais remercier tous les députés qui ont parlé, puis je voulais remercier aussi les députés du Sud, du bord du gouvernement, qui ont parlé sur un projet de loi qui adresse les routes du Nord.

Speaker, I said it before: This bill is all about common sense. This bill is not a premature bill or a disservice to the people of Ontario. If there's one thing that I'm absolutely sure that all members agree on, it is that we all want our families, our children and our loved ones to be safe. My children drive on Highway 11. I drive on Highway 11 all the time. Ce n'est pas un problème d'entretien ou un problème de contracteurs; c'est un problème de politique publique et de législation. Et nous pouvons aujourd'hui faire un changement.

Last night, I received a message from a Nipissing constituent. She said, "I wanted to thank you for the highway bill. I am writing from a hotel room in Sudbury because I couldn't safely drive home to North Bay tonight. The cost will take most of the money I made driving here for a contract. Also, it really scares me because I have kids." Speaker, this story is but one of thousands and thousands that go unnoticed.

I thus hope that all the representatives from northern Ontario—especially the members from Kenora–Rainy River, Sault Ste. Marie, Nipissing and Thunder Bay–Superior North—will support this bill. This is the right thing to do for northern Ontario.

LUPUS AWARENESS DAY ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 SUR LA JOURNÉE DE SENSIBILISATION AU LUPUS

Mr. Pang moved second reading of the following bill:
Bill 112, An Act to proclaim Lupus Awareness Day /
Projet de loi 112, Loi proclamant la Journée de sensibilisation au lupus.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Billy Pang: Years ago, one of my classmates in university passed away from lupus-related complications. At the time, there was no cure for this disease. Those with this disease had few advocates and even fewer treatment options.

Fortunately, in the years since, things have progressed significantly. New treatment options and treatment plans

have been developed. But despite this, most people are unaware of what lupus is, and there is still no cure.

Tanya was diagnosed with lupus at 19, after experiencing severe joint pain, fatigue, fevers, night sweats and hair loss. She was often unable to dress herself, walk, or get out of bed. She lost most of her hair and 30 pounds in three weeks. People she thought were friends began to disappear.

A few years later, she had another flare-up and was hospitalized with protein in the blood. It appeared that the muscles were breaking down. The doctors couldn't explain why.

She was put on a drug called Imuran, which weakens your immune system but may lessen the aggressiveness of the lupus. After 10 years, she stopped taking Imuran when she read that the side-effects of the drug increased the risk of lymphoma and brain infection.

In 2013, she had another flare-up, and this time, her heart had been compromised by lupus. She developed a complication that impairs the lungs' lubrication function and causes pain when breathing, as well as inflammation of the lining around the heart, which causes chest pain and fluid buildup around the heart. These were treated with intermittent doses of a powerful steroid.

Tanya was told that her condition would worsen throughout her life until her heart became too weak to continue beating.

Tanya became so sick in 2013 that she could no longer work. Her immune system had completely shut down. She was confined to her apartment, where a nurse came to give her a daily IV, so that she would not catch an infection at the hospital.

Tanya has lost so many things to lupus—hair, memory, half the capacity of her left lung, the full function of the heart—with many other complications. Her self-esteem has suffered, and she feels she has lost a great deal of compassion for herself. Tanya shouldn't have to lose anything else, should she?

And there is one thing that we haven't mentioned yet: Tanya is only 34 years old.

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Although lupus can take many different forms, lupus flare-ups can be deadly and the complications surrounding such flare-ups can be fatal on their own. For example, inflammation of the kidneys can affect the body's ability to filter waste from the blood. It can be so damaging that dialysis or a kidney transplant may be needed.

Inflammation of the nervous system and brain can cause memory problems, confusion, headaches and strokes. Inflammation in the brain's blood vessels can cause high fevers, seizures and behavioural changes, hardening of the arteries, and coronary artery disease. The build-up of deposits on coronary artery walls can lead to a heart attack.

Last year, a UCLA research team did a study which recognized lupus as a leading and unrecognized cause of death in young women in the United States. Statistics Canada has reported that those of Asian, African or First Nations heritage are most at risk, and women between the

age of 15 and 45 are 10 times more likely to experience the symptoms of lupus.

The current statistics indicate that lupus disproportionately affects women, First Nations and other minority communities, but lupus can affect anyone, which is why lupus affects everyone.

Over the past decade, we have seen the importance of raising awareness, and bringing lupus into the public light is an important part of combatting this condition. It is important that all Ontarians are made more aware of lupus and how it affects people. If this bill passes, it will provide a platform to educate more Ontarians, reduce the stigma around lupus and be a great encouragement to the individuals who suffer from this illness.

So often the first response to lupus is to say that they haven't heard about it, and this needs to change. Just like when people asked me, "Hey, Billy, what's your PMB?" I said, "Lupus." "What's that?"

For those who are not aware, lupus is an autoimmune disease which is typically characterized by inflammation in one or more parts of the body. It belongs to the same family of diseases as rheumatoid arthritis, MS, juvenile diabetes etc. This disease affects one in every 1,000 Canadian men, women and children. However, as mentioned, women are 10 times more likely to contract this disease, particularly women between the ages of 15 and 44.

Although the cause of this autoimmune disease still remains largely unknown, there are things that we can do now. Lupus attacks the organs in one's body because the immune system is unable to differentiate between intruders and healthy tissues. As a result, vital organs are damaged, causing pain and organ dysfunction.

They call this the disease of 1,000 faces because it affects every person differently. It is unique and it can mimic the symptoms of many other illnesses. It has been called the "great imitator" because its various symptoms can mimic those of other well-known conditions. What might be treated as a simple rash could actually be a far more complex and potentially deadly disease that goes unnoticed.

Increasing awareness about lupus would be a great help for those who have undiagnosed symptoms. Because of its nature, many people with lupus often see several different specialists before they are eventually diagnosed with lupus. Having a better understanding of lupus will help to streamline the diagnosis process and eliminate the need to see specialists who are not able to treat the individual's conditions. At the same time, by diagnosing an individual with lupus more quickly and accurately, wait times will be reduced for those individuals and the appropriate treatments may begin sooner, improving the lives of many Ontarians who struggle with this disease.

We want to get individuals on treatment plans as quickly as possible. We also want to see people treated as quickly as possible and to ease the intense personal and social burdens of managing the illness. By passing this bill, Ontarians who struggle with lupus will begin to get the support and recognition they both need and deserve.

Despite the lack of understanding of this disease's course, we know that many cases of lupus are treatable and can be controlled. They may come and go in cycles or disappear altogether. Diagnosis and treatment for this disease have tremendously improved to the point that individuals with lupus can live healthy, active and productive lives. However, despite this, stigma will continue to be a problem until awareness and education increase.

A better understanding of this disease and its symptoms is critical to better addressing this illness, so a day of awareness will serve the purpose of inspiring, informing and supporting individuals with lupus and others. Establishing a day of awareness for lupus will help us all better understand this poorly defined disease. Awareness promotes engagement, discussion and education of those who are informed of this disease.

As charities and other organizations do their part, it's time for this government to also do its part and join our partners at Lupus Canada and Lupus Ontario by officially recognizing May 10 as Lupus Awareness Day. Ontario would be following other jurisdictions around the world in acknowledging that no disease should be ignored. By officially recognizing Lupus Awareness Day, this government would make a statement that it is unwilling to ignore the suffering of any group, whether big or small.

It is easy for problems that are misunderstood to be brushed under the carpet. It is easy for us to stay ignorant and to do nothing about problems that only we can manage, but it is not our job to do what is easy. It is our job to do what is right, and what is right starts with recognizing that lupus matters. It starts by standing with lupus organizations in this country and around the world. It starts with this bill. More than anything else, I believe that this is an important step for this province to recognize this day.

Canadian lupus organizations have been leaders in the fight against lupus globally, and it's time for the province to join their side and make another stride towards together greater understanding, and the cure that is so important. I'm honoured to stand alongside lupus victims and allies, and I hope that the members here will join me in supporting this bill.

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

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: It's a real privilege to be able to participate in the debate today. I want to thank the member for Markham–Unionville for raising this issue. It's a really important issue.

I'm actually thrilled that the Solicitor General and her parliamentary secretary are both in the House to listen to this debate today, because there are some significant equity considerations that the member touched on, but that I think we need to expand on here. What's important to understand is that lupus is indeed an autoimmune disease that can affect everybody. It generally affects more women than men, generally young women, and presents in a multiple of ways, but it is two to three times more likely to affect women of colour than white women.

The important point here is that the initial onset, as well as the follow-up flare-ups, can be triggered by stress. This

is where I think it's really important to recognize that it doesn't make a lot of sense to have a Lupus Awareness Day if you're not also going to think about the ways that systemic racism affects issues like poverty for racialized people and the way that that causes stress, which then can exacerbate diseases like this.

I'm going to take some time to read some statistics. Colour of Poverty says that racialized people—it's a not-for-profit group; you should look it up. It has some really interesting fact sheets that the government might find useful: 20.8% of people of colour live in poverty compared with 12.2% of non-racialized people; 41% of chronically poor immigrants have post-secondary degrees; 52% of Canada's racialized people live in Ontario; and 62% of people living in poverty in Toronto belong to racialized groups.

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I want to take a minute to talk about systemic racism, as they define it. Systemic racism is often characterized by hidden institutional biases and policies, practices and processes that privilege or disadvantage certain groups of people. It can be the result of doing things the way they have always been done without considering how they affect particular groups of people.

Poverty is more than food banks and homeless shelters. Poverty means that certain people, and particularly people living within it, have more trouble accessing health care—directly relevant to this issue. People in poverty have significantly lower life expectancies. Men, for instance, in wealthy neighbourhoods have a tendency to have a life expectancy of about 70; whereas men in areas that are afflicted by poverty have a life expectancy of about 50—a huge difference.

You've heard in this House—we've mentioned it a number of times—the recent study done by FoodShare and the University of Toronto that shows that black families are twice as likely to experience food insecurity as white ones, and the reason that racialized people are more likely to be unemployed and more likely to live in housing that is inadequate.

All of these issues amount to significant stresses. Stress, again, is more likely to trigger incidents of lupus, which racialized people are more likely to experience than white people. So I think, if you're going to take a look at lupus awareness, you also have to take a serious look at how institutional, racialized poverty works and how you can alleviate those stresses.

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

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: I'm proud to rise this afternoon to speak on this bill, which is being brought forward by my colleague the member from Markham–Unionville.

I have a particular interest in this because, as the first Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and as MPP for Vaughan–Woodbridge, I've had the opportunity to speak to many individuals who have either lived with lupus or know a family member, friend or loved one who has been affected by lupus. In fact, a year ago, we had a situation where we thought there was a chance that my

daughter had lupus. I did not have a clue what lupus was, so I started the research. The more you look into it, the more you realize that it's a complicated autoimmune deficiency disease, but it's really hard to understand what exactly it is because it affects the person in so many different ways.

As I researched this, I found that it's 1 in 1,000 Canadians who are affected by this chronic disease. It's estimated that around the world there are five million people. I couldn't understand why I had never heard of it or had never seen it anywhere until it came into the house.

And then I see that it affects women. The majority of people that it affects—nine out of 10—90% of the people who live with lupus are women.

There have been incredible advances that have been made. People were dying in the past from lupus, and now it's manageable. But still, one of the things that we know is that very few people know about lupus, as was mentioned by my colleague. Some of our other colleagues didn't know what lupus was until he brought it forward and explained what it was. This is something that we have to take into account.

The discussion earlier about mental health and systemic issues are things that, as we develop a mental health and addictions plan for the province, we're looking at, because we realize that mental health is health and you can't have health without mental health. If there are stressors, whether they be housing issues, whether they be the community supports that are necessary, whether they be things that we need to do in education—I think these are things that we are going to address as we go forward and develop this plan. But passing legislation like this today, or bringing it forward, is important because what it does is it gives us the awareness to understand what these issues are, and how these issues impact on all our lives.

I can't forget when I say this the stress, anxiety, and depression that it brings to the loved ones around the individual who is suffering with lupus. I met a young woman—a beautiful woman—with young children who was living with lupus, and she explained to me some of the things that she was going through. Another woman came forward and she spoke—this was at a gala I attended in support of lupus once I found out what lupus was. This woman actually had attempted suicide.

Now, these are members of our community. These are members of our society. What we need to do is we need to make sure that we do everything we can to bring awareness to the issue, to ensure that we help people with diseases who are in our community. The only way we can do that is by starting to understand what those diseases are and making sure that we all appreciate what it's like to live with a disease like that and the impact that it has on the family around them.

I support this bill. I hope all the members will support it as well. The more knowledge, the more information we bring forward, the more we show the doctors, the more we show the people who have lupus that we care, that we're interested, the more funds will be raised, and hopefully one day we'll find a cure. So I support my colleague.

Thank you for bringing this forward on behalf of all the people and all the families who have to live with lupus or live with someone who's suffering from it.

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

Mr. Joel Harden: I want to thank personally Mr. Pang, the MPP for Markham–Unionville, for bringing this forward. Sir, thank you very much for doing that. I note the purple you're wearing today, as well as my colleague from Beaches–East York. That's because we want to visibly show as elected legislators that, as the associate minister just mentioned, we are mindful that living with lupus is hard. Living with lupus is very hard.

Back home in Ottawa Centre, I have a number of friends who live with lupus, and they tell me stories like, "Joel, when I wake up in the morning, I don't know what I'm going to get. I could have a great day or I could have an awful day." Lupus advocates that I've met have talked about the 1,000 faces of lupus, and it's rather like the thing I've heard from autism advocates when they say, "If you've met one autistic person, you've met one autistic person." That's what I've heard from people who live with lupus as well.

But what also comes to mind from stories they've told me and lived experiences brought to my attention now, given my current role as critic for people with disabilities, is that we absolutely should pursue more awareness, which is what I love about this bill, but we need to pursue more proactive accommodations, too, because lupus falls under a category of episodic disabilities. Episodic disabilities are poorly understood and not very well accommodated, even at big employers across the province of Ontario. I talked to people at Ryerson University, for example—fantastic institution; it does a lot of great work—who had to fight tooth and nail to get accommodations for their episodic disabilities when they missed tests, when they couldn't show up for work and teach a course. There was an assumption that there was a problem with people because they weren't completing their assignments, because they weren't showing up to work.

The next step after this bill is asking employers to be more proactive in accommodations to workers who live with episodic disabilities like lupus. The way I would invite the government to encourage employers to take that path is to say that if you accommodate workers with episodic disabilities, if you accommodate people with episodic disabilities, you do two things. First of all, you acknowledge their daily reality in their life. You do what is essentially ethical and moral, which is to acknowledge the lot that people have and help them be their fullest selves. But there is another dimension to this, because people who live with lupus have told me that what happens to them often is that they are foreclosed of opportunities because of their lupus. They don't take work; they have to change their lives; they run up significant debt because of their condition. That's a loss not just to that person. That's a loss to our economy; it's a loss to our society. If we enable people with this episodic disability, we do the reverse: We create an enabling society, not a disabling society.

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What I want to say to all of the people who live with lupus is that every legislator in this House wants to help you today, because this bill will pass. But we need, as a province, to move to the next level so that what you live every day in your life is known to your employer and it's known to your community. We will proactively help you to be the amazing, magnificent person you are.

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

Mr. Will Bouma: It's an honour to rise and speak in the House today to my colleague from Markham–Unionville's bill. I asked him specifically for that, because this is a very important issue for the people of Ontario and for the people who suffer with lupus.

I will keep my remarks short, because I know that there are other members who wish to speak to this too.

To witness, as an optometrist, and see my patients going through a situation where their bodies are literally turning against themselves is devastating, especially when you build a relationship with someone and you see them going through this, and you see them going through the difficulties with being able to go to work and do the activities of daily life. It's devastating.

I have a good friend who was diagnosed in high school. She had to give up on her dream of going to pharmacy school. Instead, when she went into remission, she became a pharmacy technician.

I have a friend who is a contractor. He's doing okay, but at the same time, he has missed so many days of work because of this.

Does raising awareness about a day add to the treatment? No, but it gives us the opportunity to put something in front of people's minds.

Lupus is a diagnosis of exclusion. It's very difficult to discover. It's usually when they've tried every other test. There can be problems with treatment, which is why we see patients who are taking medications that can cause damage to their eyes.

I would just say that to raise awareness is a good thing.

I would like to conclude by saying that I'm completely in support of this bill, and I thank the member for Markham–Unionville for bringing it forward.

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

Ms. Sara Singh: It's an honour to rise here today and contribute to the debate here. I'd like to thank the member for bringing forward this private member's bill to have a day of awareness raised around lupus.

I am very proud to be speaking to this. I actually have a cousin who has battled lupus her entire life, so I understand the importance for us to raise awareness about what lupus is and how it impacts individuals living in our community.

Growing up, oftentimes we heard from my cousin Roma that she couldn't come out to play with us, or that she couldn't participate in some of the activities that all of her cousins were engaging in. We didn't quite understand why. We didn't understand what lupus meant. We didn't

understand how that was impacting her body, and what it was doing to her, even as a young person.

Roma is now in her very early forties. She has a young son. She has demonstrated to us that with the right medication, with the right treatment and with the right support, that she's able to fight the thousand faces of what lupus presents to her every single morning.

Growing up, we watched her take steroid after steroid in order to determine what the right medication was going to be for her body to fight the ongoing infections that she faced. If we had understood a little bit more about what she was going through, we maybe wouldn't have picked on her for not being able to play with us. We just simply didn't understand.

So, I think that having a day where people get to learn about lupus, and they get to engage with the lupus community, is a very important one.

I want to pick up on some notes that my colleagues made. While I commend the member for putting this motion forward, there's so much more work that we still need to do.

As was very aptly pointed out, lupus impacts women of colour, particularly. It's two to three times more likely for women of colour, regardless of what race or ethnicity they may be from, to be more impacted. I think there should be some additional focus placed on those marginalized groups that, often, because of the socio-economic position they may be in in our communities, are not able to access the life-saving nutrition they need, the medication they need or, because they're inflicted with poverty, aren't able to live their best lives as some other people in our communities may be able to do.

As our colleague pointed out, it's also important that we have a broader conversation about what this disease does to people, these episodic disabilities, and how this impacts our ability to go to work, go to school or be contributing members of our society. While we raise awareness about the disease, I think it's important that we look at how this impacts how those people engage with society, and also that we take it one step further to ensure that safeguards are put in place to protect those individuals when they do become ill and need that time off work or that time out of school in order to heal and become healthy again.

I think it's important that we understand, again, that some communities are not involved in this conversation, and there's an equity lens that needs to be applied to the day you're creating. I would just offer that as an additional suggestion to you as you put this motion forward to keep that equity lens at the front of the work you're doing because, as you have very clearly stated, this obviously does impact the racialized community more.

I'm really proud to support your bill and the work you're doing. Again, I think there's so much more that we need to do to ensure that people will get the adequate medication they need. As we know, there's a lot of inequality in how we access that medication as well.

I just encourage us to use this day to push the envelope a little further. While we raise awareness about the disease, let's raise awareness about how it's impacting those

people, how it's impacting their ability to engage in our communities, and do what we can to ensure they can live their best lives.

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

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I'm proud to rise here this afternoon to speak in support of Bill 112, the Lupus Awareness Day Act, introduced by my friend and now my seatmate, the great member from Markham–Unionville.

I would also like to thank my friend and now constituent who is here today from Port Credit, Diana Bozzo, past director of the Lupus Flare Foundation, for all her great work raising awareness about lupus ever since her own diagnosis. Her efforts—and this bill today—are so important because, as the preamble puts it, better understanding of this disease can help to improve diagnosis and treatment.

Madam Speaker, lupus is notoriously difficult to diagnose. As an autoimmune disease, it makes the immune system attack healthy tissues. It can seriously damage the heart, the brain, the kidneys, the lungs, the blood vessels, the joints and the skin and, of course, cause pain, inflammation and seizures.

Since it affects people in so many different ways, lupus mimics the symptoms of many other diseases. In turn, other diseases are often mistakenly diagnosed as lupus, including on almost every episode of *House*, created by the great Ontario producer, David Shore. Almost every time, Greg House says, "It's not lupus; it's never lupus."

But unfortunately, lupus does affect about one in 1,000 Canadians. That's about 14,000 people in Ontario. As others have noted, young women between the ages of 15 and 45 are about eight times more likely to have lupus.

One of my constituents recently lost her life to lupus. Only 17 years old, she was looking forward to starting grade 12, and just two weeks after, she passed away. Her sister is now my constituency associate, and she's here with us today.

While the treatments are important, sometimes lupus just can't be controlled. In these cases, family members caring for loved ones with lupus are often emotionally and financially exhausted.

Recognizing Lupus Awareness Day every May 10 will help to inspire, inform and support all Ontarians, particularly our caregivers, including family members caring for loved ones with lupus.

In closing, once again, I would like to thank the member from Markham–Unionville, my friend Diana Bozzo, Lupus Canada and Lupus Ontario for all their hard work on this bill and on raising awareness about lupus across Ontario and Canada. I ask all members to join me today in supporting this important bill.

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

Mrs. Robin Martin: I'm also pleased to rise today to speak in favour of Bill 112, the Lupus Awareness Day Act, introduced by my colleague the member from Markham–Unionville. I want to thank and commend him for bringing forward this legislation, for sharing the story of his friend

Tanya, and for the opportunity to speak in favour of this bill today.

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This legislation, if passed, as we've said, would establish May 10 each year as Lupus Awareness Day in the province of Ontario, a date which we know is already recognized in other jurisdictions, and I'm sure by some Ontarians as well, as World Lupus Day. Lupus Canada and Lupus Ontario are working hard to raise awareness about lupus here, so this is an opportunity for us, even having this discussion today, to add to that and amplify the information that they are trying to get out there in the community.

As we've said, lupus is a chronic and complex autoimmune disease characterized by inflammation in one or more parts of the body, and it affects one in every 1,000 Canadians. I think the nature of the disease as something which is chronic—and I think the member from Brampton Centre said "episodic" or "recurrent"—and the fact that it is so variable in how it presents are issues that are peculiar to this particular disease, which makes it very hard, probably, to raise awareness because it doesn't look the same whenever it hits people. And sometimes it's not there because some people are lucky enough to have a moment when they have a remission, and they're fine for a while, and then they're not fine again quite suddenly. I think that makes it very challenging to raise that awareness. Apparently, it can target any tissue or organ of the body, including the skin, muscles, joints, blood, lungs, heart, kidney and brain, so it's very challenging.

Speaker, I think awareness of the disease is very important. Because of this, I think this day will help us bring that awareness to everybody. At this point, although there is no cure, there are, as we've said, some treatments available to control or ease symptoms. We're working with the Minister of Health to create a connected and comprehensive health care system to better serve Ontarians. One of my greatest hopes in this new model of health care we're trying to deliver is that chronic diseases will actually be treated better than they have been historically because we'll be looking at care centred around the patients. I hope that lupus will be one of those diseases and that this day will help us to build awareness.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The member for Markham–Unionville has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Billy Pang: Madam Speaker, it's not always easy to find a worthy cause to champion. I'm so grateful to have the members from both sides—the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and the members for Brantford–Brant, Mississauga–Lakeshore, Eglinton–Lawrence, Beaches–East York, Ottawa Centre and Brampton Centre—speaking on this bill today.

My colleagues and I today have spoken from the depths of our hearts for those who continue to struggle with lupus every day. We are now speaking on behalf of the many infants who are in ICU and for those adults who are struggling to work and raise their families. We are speaking for those people like Tanya and people like Natalie

who, despite her lengthy hospital visits and miraculous recoveries, still remains a vocal champion for all victims. I'm so proud to stand alongside her and those like her.

Lupus is a very important and under-publicized cause that we all recognize should be discussed in this House and I am honoured to put forward this bill for the victims, families, allies, medical professionals and advocates. Standing here on their behalf alongside my colleagues to make Lupus Awareness Day a reality is humbling, but in my heart I believe that this bill cuts to the heart of public service. In raising awareness of lupus, we are giving voice to the voiceless, shining a light on the unrecognized victims of this disease. For far too long, the past government ignored those people and this is the first step for better victim support and recognition. I look forward to continuing alongside lupus advocates in the future to improve the quality of their mental and physical health whenever I can. They call lupus the disease of a thousand faces, but what could a thousand voices do to make a difference?

CARDIOPULMONARY RESUSCITATION TRAINING

Mrs. Nina Tangri: I'd like to move the following motion before the House, motion 83: That, in the opinion of this House, it is crucial to educate Ontario secondary school students in the areas of life-saving CPR techniques and the use of automated external defibrillators (AEDs), in an effort to increase public awareness and improve the rates of bystander intervention in medical emergencies.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mrs. Tangri has moved private member's notice of motion 83. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Mrs. Nina Tangri: It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today and introduce, as well as speak to, my first piece of private member's business as a member of provincial Parliament.

Before I begin, I'd like to once again recognize some special guests with us here today in the Legislature. From Cardiac Arrest Response and Education, CARE: Dr. Katherine Allan, Tiffany Jefkins, Roberta Scott, Paul Snobelen, Heather Cartwright, Paula Iantomasi, Alan Corrance, Debbie Corrance, Paule Corneil and Glenn Corneil, and also Brian Cole from St. John Ambulance for Ontario. Welcome to the Legislature. Thank you very much for your support.

I stand here today advocating on behalf of an important issue that affects the lives of tens of thousands of Canadians and their families every year. It's an issue that affects people young or old, healthy or sick, regardless of their level of fitness. It can come with warning or appear suddenly and silently. It's the leading cause of sudden unexpected death.

The exact number is, of course, unclear, but it's estimated that 50,000 Canadians suffer from a cardiac arrest each year. And while we all know that Ontario has some of the best paramedics, doctors, nurses and medical staff

in the world, victims of cardiac arrest often don't make it to see them alive.

Of the 50,000 cardiac arrests that occur in Canada each year, 80%, or 40,000, occur outside of medical settings, either at home or in the community. On average, only 10%, about 4,000, survive; 90% do not. You could be walking down the street, you could be brushing your teeth before bed, you could be driving home from work and then you could suddenly be in cardiac arrest.

While we can't escape the fates of ourselves or others, we can take steps to improve the chances of survival for cardiac arrests, the vast majority of which, as I stated already, take place outside of medical settings.

There are three simple steps you should take if you witness the signs of a cardiac arrest: Obviously, call 911; direct another bystander to find and bring an automated external defibrillator to shock the heart into normal rhythm; and begin CPR by providing chest compressions—about 100 per minute—and follow the directions provided by the AED until first responders arrive.

Defibrillators now actually talk to you and guide you through how to perform CPR and what you should do. You push the "on" button and it tells you the rest. They are simple steps, but not everybody knows what to do or is comfortable doing so.

Heaven forbid that something happens to anyone in this building. But how many of us know the signs of a cardiac arrest? How many of us know where the nearest AEDs are? How many of us know how to perform CPR? Luckily for us MPPs, we have our Sergeant-at-Arms and the Legislative Protective Service here to provide medical responses in the case of an emergency. But people across the province and across the country are not as lucky as we are.

By the way, Speaker, there's an AED in the east wing of the basement; one at the base of the grand staircase on the first floor; one directly outside the main door in these chambers; one on the fourth floor in the corridor; and one on the fourth floor in the north wing.

Therein lies the problem. It has been scientifically proven that intervention, and early intervention specifically, is the only way to improve survival rates of cardiac arrests. Providing CPR through chest compressions can make a victim up to three times more likely to survive. Providing CPR as well as delivering a shock via an AED to return the heart to a normal rhythm is the best way to increase one's odds of survival. Every minute that a victim goes without an AED decreases their chances of survival by 10%.

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The general public isn't comfortable with intervening in these medical emergencies because they feel that they don't know enough or fear that they will make things worse. But you can't. The damage you could potentially cause will not be worse than what is sure to happen should intervention not occur. Education and awareness are the only way we can encourage the public to take action in these situations and provide life-saving intervention.

Currently, bystander intervention rates in Ontario vary between 30% and 40%. The education and awareness needed to increase this rate won't come from medical dramas on primetime TV; it needs to happen in real life.

The other part of education that we need to focus on is dispelling the myth that sudden cardiac arrest only affects those that are older. Sudden cardiac arrests can and do occur in youth and children, in schools, at sports games and during youth group activities. This is why the suggestion that I'm raising today addresses both of these components. By educating secondary school students in the areas of CPR and AED use and techniques, not only do we have the opportunity to teach them that cardiac arrest can, in fact, suddenly happen to young people, but we can also help them learn how to identify the warning signs and symptoms that can occur before a sudden cardiac arrest in young people, such as dizziness, weakness and syncope.

The other part, of course, is making sure they know what to do about it. As members of this House, we need to make sure not only that everyone is comfortable in knowing what to do in a cardiac arrest, but that they are comfortable actually doing it. In emergency situations, we panic, and when we panic, we revert to what we know. What we as parliamentarians need to do is to ensure that, through awareness and education, Ontarians know what to do so that when the time comes, they are able to do it and save someone's life.

While you can, and many people do, spend hours on proper certification, it isn't necessary for everyone—just to actually expose someone to how to use CPR and how it's actually performed, and how an AED is used, enough to make them comfortable with the idea and the concept, should the need ever arise. Giving students this knowledge and background not only allows them to act in situations at school, sports, youth groups or home, but it will lay the foundation for them to be prepared to act not just in school but for the rest of their lives.

Perhaps after learning about CPR and the use of AEDs, students will pursue further first aid training. Perhaps they will volunteer at school or through an organization such as St. John Ambulance to be a first aider. Perhaps they will become interested in medicine and pursue a career as a doctor, nurse or paramedic, and what a wonderful thing that would be, Madam Speaker.

But what we know for sure will happen is that lives will be saved. While we will be trailblazers in Canada, we are following in the footsteps of other nations. Dr. Allan and her team have done research on this topic for some time now and gratefully shared some statistics with me from other countries. I'm going to use Denmark as an example. Over a 10-year period, from 2001 to 2010, Denmark implemented national initiatives to educate the public and increase familiarity with CPR. Over that 10-year period, bystander CPR rates increased from 21% to 45%. In the same 10-year period, there was a threefold change in the rate of survival to discharge from a hospital, from 10.5% to 32%.

What we are accomplishing today is a first step to start a conversation, to see how we can do better, because doing

better is what our jobs are all about. I look forward to hearing thoughts on this important topic from members on all sides of this House, and I really do look forward to continuing this conversation in the House and in my community to raise awareness.

Speaker, if our actions in this House and the awareness we bring can save just one person's life, I believe that we have done our jobs well.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: I want to thank the member from Mississauga–Streetsville for bringing forward this important motion, which I think comes from a really good place, and it's certainly a statement that I believe we can all agree with. She has already stated many of the reasons why this is so incredibly important, and why we need to increase training and education in the use of CPR and AEDs, automated external defibrillators.

I have some stories myself about these issues. As I was thinking about the use of CPR and AEDs, I was reminded, though, that there are just so many areas we need to work on, and I want to mention them. The AED registry that currently exists is not publicly accessible, and it's not accessible as well—this is important—to 911 operators. There are thousands of AEDs out there that are unregistered, and their functionality and their maintenance is also unknown. In fact, the Heart and Stroke Foundation is calling for the AED registry to be updated, expanded and made available to the public and to 911 operators. That was something that I know our party committed to in the last provincial election.

It's a matter dear to my heart, and I won't go into the details. I have quite a story I could tell, but I won't go into all the details now; there is no time to share it. But suffice it to say that I found myself once in a situation where I'm on a call with a 911 operator, I'm trying to help somebody, with the 911 operator not knowing that an AED was in a nearby building. I wonder to this day whether that would have made a difference to that person surviving or not.

I want to say as well that although I really do appreciate this motion, it needs to be accompanied by a spending commitment. The government is talking about losing 10,000 teaching positions. So who is going to carry out the important work that needs to take place, and how are we going to afford to do that in our schools? I really support this, but I think we need to make the necessary financial commitment to it as well.

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

Mr. John Fraser: It's my pleasure to speak to this motion, and I want to thank the member for bringing it forward. It's a very, very important motion and one that's actually close to me and a lot of work I've been fortunate to be able to do with people over the last 20 years.

Making sure that youth have the skill to save people's lives has an added benefit of opening other doors for them in their education and realizing that they can work in health care. I know this because I've done a lot of work with the ACT Foundation, and I haven't had a chance to

talk to the member opposite about it. That was a foundation that came out to provide—well, it came out of Action Paramedic in the 1990s, because the government of the day did not want to have paramedics anywhere except for Toronto. They didn't want them in Hamilton or Ottawa. There was a big, big fight over that, and out of that came the ACT Foundation. Their mission became to make sure that people got trained, especially students.

My predecessor, whom I worked for, Dalton McGuinty—his dad died of a heart attack. That was part of his motivation, and he became involved.

The ACT Foundation actually provides support to schools, and in 2004, the government gave, I think, \$650,000, to be matched by private organizations, to train the trainer. Then in 1999, it became part of the grade 9 curriculum. It is part of the curriculum. The challenge—I want to work with the member on this, because I encourage the government to do it—is that not every school provides hands-on training; they just show a video. You need to have hands-on training. We need to change the language in the curriculum. I think that's really quite doable and something that the government can change very quickly.

1510

A lot of schools, through the ACT Foundation, have been donated mannequins and AED training materials. One of the challenges is that they're in the schools, and you need to know how to use them, and people get a little afraid.

I have an AED in my office. I made a commitment to buy one. We've got a challenge with knowing where AEDs are. I suggest that all members get an AED. I think, as a Legislature, we should do that through the Board of Internal Economy. We're not there, but it might be something, to anybody on the Board of Internal Economy, that you might want to think about. Where defibrillators are, people's lives get saved. It's really quite incredible.

I commend the member for bringing this forward, because we need to keep talking about it.

There are some other things that we have to do around knowing where defibrillators are and ensuring that defibrillators are working, because it's not good to arrive and have a defibrillator there and nobody has checked the battery. We check fire extinguishers, but we don't check defibrillators.

Bringing this motion to the Legislature today has enabled us to start a conversation about that, and to improve on teaching our young people in high school how to save lives, to have that hands-on ability, to understand defibrillators and, perhaps, through learning that and seeing what they can do, to take up a career in health care.

I know, from working with the ACT Foundation, that they have so many stories, not just of people who saved other people's lives, but "I took this course and I became a registered nurse," or "I decided I wanted to work in health care in some way."

It's a very valuable motion. I really want to thank the member again for bringing it forward, and I fully support it.

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

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: I rise today to support this motion introduced by my friend the member from Mississauga–Streetsville. She's a tireless champion for her community and her riding. This is an area that she's very passionate about and has been working on for quite some time now.

Every year, far too many Ontarians prematurely face death because of the lack of knowledge that the public has on providing CPR treatment, and their inability to operate automated external defibrillators.

This lack of preparedness has become a serious health risk that ought to be rectified. That is why it is in the public interest of the province for us to focus on these crucial and life-saving first aid practices, and that starts with educating our children.

It is of paramount importance that the youth, from early on, are educated on the vital importance of CPR techniques so that if, God forbid, someone is experiencing a heart-related medical emergency, they would have the skills immediately to know what to do and how to treat those in need, so that, hopefully, they may live to see another day. When only seconds count, you often cannot afford to wait for an ambulance to arrive.

I also believe that the public must be educated on the use of AEDs. Heart problems and cardiac arrests are some of the leading causes of death in the province, and many of those medical emergencies could have been treated with skilled AED intervention by bystanders.

Knowledge of CPR and AEDs are lifelong skills that stay with the individual long after being initially acquired. This is a worthy investment in our children that will bring immeasurable benefit and utility to the public at large.

Madam Speaker, neither do these skills take too long to learn. Automated external defibrillators require only minimal training to use. CPR techniques can also be gained in only a matter of hours or with a few lessons.

Because of this, I strongly urge my friends from both sides of the House to join me in supporting this common-sense motion that helps to bring public awareness to these life-saving skills so that if an emergency strikes, the public would have the know-how to save that life.

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

Mr. Chris Glover: I want to say that we on this side of the House absolutely support this motion, but it just doesn't go far enough. We need to go further with this.

I can speak to the importance of this motion. I became a school board trustee in 2010. A year after that, in 2011, a student in a gym class at Silverthorn Collegiate had a cardiac arrest. Fortunately, in the other side of that gym class, teachers were actually teaching how to use an AED. So they brought the AED over to the student, and five of the educators on that school board—I'll read their names into the record: Sean King, Sharon McConnell, Linda Armstrong, Sam Iskandar and Tim Brethour—were all recognized for saving this student's life. So having an AED in schools is absolutely essential, and having everybody trained on it is essential.

After that happened, I brought forward a motion at the Toronto District School Board to have every student

taught first aid, to get their first aid and their CPR certificate. The response that I got from the staff at that time was that they just didn't have the resources, because from 1997, when the province took control of education funding from the local municipalities, the Toronto District School Board, for the next 22 years, had a shortfall in funding every year, including a \$70-million shortfall last year. So every year, the only decision the trustees have made is where to cut.

This is absolutely essential. There's a potential for this motion to save lives, but it needs to come with funding and with resources so that the training actually happens.

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

Mrs. Robin Martin: I'm pleased to rise today to speak in favour of this motion introduced by my colleague the member from Mississauga—Streetsville. I want to thank her and commend her for bringing this motion forward and for the opportunity to speak in favour of it today.

Automated external defibrillators save lives. In Toronto alone, where my riding of Eglinton—Lawrence is located, there are 500 or more sudden cardiac arrests—stoppage of the heart due to an abnormal heart rhythm—per year in public places. The only treatment, really, is a life-saving electrical shock from a defibrillator.

As we heard, when 911 is called and the paramedics arrive, the survival rate is usually around 10%. By the time the paramedics arrive—which, to my understanding, in Toronto usually takes around eight minutes—it's often too late either to ensure survival or a good outcome for the patient. But if a bystander applies an AED—an automated external defibrillator—within a few minutes, because they're on the scene, perhaps guided by 911 dispatch, if need be, or by the defibrillator itself—as we have learned, they talk to you—it can save a person more than 50% of the time and also ensure better outcomes for those people. Unfortunately, defibrillators are currently only used in about 3% of cases, so we need to do better than that. I think this is an important initiative.

On a personal note, I had first aid training when I was in high school. I think one of the important parts of this initiative is to empower youth to understand that they can intercede and be helpful, and to raise awareness with them and their family members.

I was on a train with a friend. We were both studying our first aid—it was a train across Canada—and when we came out of our door to go for dinner one night, the porter was having an epileptic seizure in the hallway. Because we had read our first aid materials just recently, we actually felt like we could do something—well, at least one of us did. My friend, who was much more level-headed, bent down to help the person and make sure he wasn't going to swallow his tongue, and told him that we were getting help. I careened through the car, maybe not quite as calmly, trying to find someone to come to our aid. But it was good, because it made us feel like we weren't helpless; we could do something. I think that's a really important initiative with this motion, because it will empower youth.

We should mention that there is no liability, because there is an act, the Chase MacEachern Act, which says that anybody trying to help in this situation could not be found liable.

It's just a good initiative, I think. I fully support it and hope everybody else will as well.

1520

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

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: First, as Remembrance Day is this upcoming Monday, I would like to express my profound respect and gratitude to our veterans and to those who are serving both here and abroad.

I rise today to highlight the massive importance of practical education within our school curriculum. Schools are at the heart of our neighbourhoods, and we must give our students the tools and experiences so they can reach their full potential and build a better future for all of us.

In my previous work with our local city councillor, I helped organize, with our school communities, yearly community park cleanups to teach students the importance of having pride in where we live. We planted trees throughout our community to teach students the importance of protecting our natural environment, letting them know that they, too, can have a hand in fighting climate change.

But today I'm proud to support an initiative to ensure all secondary students learn the life-saving technique of CPR and the use of automated external defibrillators, or AEDs. Nine out of 10 people who experience cardiac arrest can have it result in their death. The sooner that the heart is restarted, the better the chance of survival.

By teaching CPR and the use of AEDs to our students, we are also teaching them the responsibility we owe each other as human beings. We are teaching them to help someone in need, and that it is within their power to save a life. Helping those in need is truly our greatest calling.

Growing up with a sick father—first responders were no strangers to my home. I grew up seeing them as the heroes they are. Thank you to the first responders that are here today.

The NDP have long pushed for the accessibility of AEDs in public spaces such as large businesses, apartment buildings, arenas and community centres. It is important to teach the public how to use AEDs, but knowledge alone won't create them out of thin air when they are needed. So let's fund this and let's get them where they are needed.

Finally, a fulsome education system requires investment, not cuts. After all, it will be educators who will teach those life-saving techniques to our students. While I support the motion, I am calling on this government to roll back their education cuts, fix our crumbling schools and to fund our schools based on needs. Our children are our future.

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

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): And I would remind all members of the House that the people

who are standing and have the floor should also have the courtesy of a quiet room.

I recognize the member from Mississauga Centre.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: I rise today in support of my colleague the member from Mississauga–Streetsville’s motion on CPR and AED awareness in our schools.

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation, or CPR, is a life-saving technique that should be known more widely. It can be useful in a variety of emergencies, such as drowning or a heart attack.

CPR is not complicated. It is just a matter of learning the technique and practising it, and it saves lives. Madam Speaker, it is estimated that the prompt delivery of CPR can double or even triple the odds of survival for an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest. Think about that: Just by being trained and ready to deliver CPR, you can double or even triple the odds that a neighbour, friend or co-worker survives.

Many workplaces and public institutions provide CPR certification and training to their staff and volunteers, and these topics are being covered in our high school curricula in grades 9 through 12. This motion is another effort to increase public awareness and improve the rates of successful bystander intervention.

Madam Speaker, I remember I first learned CPR and first aid when I was 12 years old, as part of the program delivered by ZHR Polish Scouts of Canada. This knowledge and skill became very useful to me.

I will never forget the first time I performed CPR, not on a dummy but on a patient who came into the emergency room, vital signs absent. I was a nursing student, and under the watchful eye of my preceptor, I performed chest compressions about two inches deep at a rate of 100 to 120 compressions per minute. I distinctly remember feeling the cold, clammy body through my gloves and the Rice-Krispies-like crunch of ribs underneath the weight of my body, and looking into the rolled-back whites of the eyes of the patient. I completely tuned out the rest of the room, the busy hustle and bustle of nurses and doctors running code blue. I was focused and determined on saving this person’s life.

In this case, the resuscitation was successful and the patient survived. I will never forget that moment and what it felt like to be able to contribute to the saving of the life of another human being, and I wish that many more Ontarians, especially students, had the knowledge and tools needed to save lives.

Madame la Présidente, ce projet de loi met aussi l’accent sur le défibrillateur externe automatique—AED in English. Les Ontariennes et Ontariens ont peut-être remarqué que ces appareils apparaissent plus souvent dans les complexes sportifs et dans les centres commerciaux. Ainsi, les DEA sont des appareils qui deviennent de plus en plus courants dans nos communautés. Certains peuvent se demander ce que font ces appareils. Quand quelqu’un est terrassé par une crise cardiaque, le DEA se fixe sur la poitrine du patient et détermine si un choc électrique est nécessaire pour rendre au cœur son rythme normal.

As we have seen, CPR and AEDs can be essential in saving a life. So what can we do?

First, everyone should seek out and receive training on how to deliver CPR and utilize an AED. By supporting this instruction in our schools, we are teaching the next generation how to save their friends and loved ones.

Let me be clear: Knowledge on how to deliver CPR and how to use an AED can save lives. We should spread this knowledge and awareness to as many Ontarians as possible. Recognizing the importance of continuing to teach CPR and AED use to our high school students is a great first step. I commend my colleague from Mississauga–Streetsville for bringing this motion forward.

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

Ms. Suze Morrison: It’s a pleasure to rise in the House today to speak on the importance of providing CPR training to youth in this province.

I’ve spoken a number of times in this Legislature about my own experience performing CPR. It’s a skill I was thankful to have in an emergency situation, but of course one that I hope to never need again. In the summer of 2017, my husband, Trevor, and I were the first on-scene after a drive-by shooting in our neighbourhood, and we performed CPR on a wounded victim, who died later that night in hospital.

I believe that CPR is a skill that every single one of us should have, especially our youth. Widespread CPR training is an opportunity to improve safety in emergency interventions in our communities, but also to empower youth to seek better job opportunities, which is exactly why my community in Regent Park came together in 2017 and organized free CPR training for youth, with the help of a grant from the city of Toronto. CPR is a skill that allows young people to compete for jobs that they otherwise wouldn’t have access to. It opens up jobs for them in health care, in child care, and in other sectors working with vulnerable populations.

The reality is that CPR training can be costly. If the government truly believes that providing CPR training to students is a priority, then they need to provide schools with proper funding and resources so they can actually deliver this training. It’s absolutely regrettable that the member opposite has tabled a motion today with absolutely no resources attached to actually implementing this training—training that I know costs about \$40 a student to provide. This is a serious issue of great concern to my community, and I find this motion to be virtue-signalling at best.

Let me be perfectly clear: Without attached funding, this motion will not lead to increased access to CPR training. I appreciate the motion that has been brought forward because I do believe that students should have CPR training, but unless this government makes the commitment to actually fund that training, this motion will do absolutely nothing to change the lives of youth in this province.

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

Mrs. Belinda C. Karahalios: I’m quite happy to speak today to the private member’s motion put forward by my colleague the member from Mississauga–Streetsville.

Basic CPR knowledge is simple to learn and can mean the difference between life and death. CPR can be used in many different types of emergencies. Injuries due to drowning, drug overdose, smoke inhalation and electrocution can all be aided by CPR. CPR effectively keeps blood flowing and provides oxygen to the brain and other vital organs, giving the victim a better chance at a full recovery.

AED, or automated external defibrillator, is a lesser-known acronym but can have huge implications for those suffering from sudden cardiac arrest. AEDs are small, light—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Stop the clock. I apologize to the member. I am unable to hear the member from Cambridge, who does indeed have the floor. I would ask all members to just let her have this time. Thank you. Order.

I apologize to the member.

Mrs. Belinda C. Karahalios: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

AEDs are small, lightweight and portable electronic devices that deliver an electric shock through the chest wall of a person whose heart has stopped beating. Unlike the defibrillators we see on medical TV shows, AEDs are small and lightweight and quite easy to operate. They're about the size of a lunch box and have adhesive electrode pads that rescuers attach to the person's chest. They are proven to be one of the most important tools in saving the life of someone who has suffered from sudden cardiac arrest. It's simple to use but houses the same sophisticated defibrillation technology relied on by emergency medical service personnel and physicians. Most have a voice-guided system, as the member from Mississauga–Streetsville mentioned, that can take the user through a number of easy-to-follow steps, supported by pictures. Some also provide instructions as well.

Defibrillation is most effective immediately following a cardiac arrest episode.

1530

Approximately 40,000 cardiac arrests occur in Canada every year, 80% outside of a hospital setting, and only one in 10 survive cardiac arrests that happen at home or in public places. Only about one quarter of people who suffer out-of-hospital cardiac arrest receive CPR by a bystander.

Based on my time, I'll cut this down quite a bit and just say that the long-term health and prosperity of our province benefits from making this knowledge standard practice. I fully support this member's motion.

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

Ms. Jessica Bell: It has been very interesting hearing what people from both sides of the House have been saying on this important measure. I also believe that it is vital that we educate Ontario students in CPR techniques and the use of automated external defibrillators, or AEDs, because there's no question that CPR saves lives.

It certainly saved the life of University–Rosedale resident Heather Cartwright, who is here today in the

House. Heather was an elite rower at Western University when she collapsed and nearly died following a race, at age 20. She survived because a responder knew CPR. Heather is also the chair of an organization called CARE—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Stop the clock. I apologize to the member. I am unable to hear the member because of the full-volume conversations happening in the House at the same time. There are three minutes remaining on the clock and then we will continue with proceedings. I would ask people to remain respectful while the member finishes her remarks.

I apologize to the member.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you, Speaker.

Heather is also chair of an organization called CARE, which stands for Cardiac Arrest Response and Education, and which is made up of patients, survivors, paramedics and researchers. A number of CARE members are here today. Thank you for your advocacy and being here in the House and pushing this issue forward. Thank you for meeting with me, as well; I learned a lot from my meeting with you.

Their work is important because only 10% of cardiac arrest victims survive outside the hospital. This motion will move forward in helping us increase the number of people who survive cardiac arrest, but I do also encourage this government to go further to make sure that this motion is implemented in the best way that it can be. I say this because the Ontario curriculum does already include information about CPR techniques, but most students currently aren't being trained.

In a survey of Ontario school districts, CARE found that only 13% are training students on how to perform CPR and use AEDs, so we've got a lot of work to do. Unfortunately, the main reason that the school boards said that they aren't providing this training is a lack of resources and funding. We know that the Ford government's cuts to education are putting a squeeze on school board budgets, and that this government is cutting 10,000 teaching positions over the next three years. Educating Ontario's students in life-saving techniques requires actual educators in the classroom and it requires board budgets that are flexible enough to provide critical, life-saving education like the one that CARE is advocating for today.

I support Heather's and CARE's mission to make sure that all students and staff in Ontario schools are trained to recognize the warning signs of cardiac arrest and provide effective treatment. But I urge you to take this motion further so that we can make the goal of saving lives a reality.

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

The member for Mississauga–Streetsville has two minutes to reply.

Mrs. Nina Tangri: I'd really like to thank all of the members from Davenport, Scarborough–Rouge Park, Ottawa South, Spadina–Fort York, Eglinton–Lawrence, Humber River–Black Creek, Mississauga Centre, Toronto

Centre, Cambridge and University–Rosedale for their insights and comments. I really do appreciate them.

But we all do agree that we should recognize and be confident to act on witnessing a cardiac arrest. By educating students and the general public on CPR and AED use, perhaps one or more of us here today could save a life, or even be saved. We all know someone who may have suffered a cardiac arrest, and some may not have survived. Most disturbing is that sudden cardiac arrest can happen to children, too.

Thank you for the awareness CARE has provided, and please note that on December 9 this year they will be here at Queen's Park to demonstrate how to perform CPR, and AED use. I thank all of you and ask you for your support of this motion.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

MAKING NORTHERN ONTARIO
HIGHWAYS SAFER ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 VISANT À ACCROÎTRE
LA SÉCURITÉ DES VOIES PUBLIQUES
DANS LE NORD DE L'ONTARIO

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): We will deal first with ballot item number 82, standing in the name of Mr. Bourgouin.

Mr. Bourgouin has moved second reading of Bill 125, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act to make Northern Ontario Highways Safer. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

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

In my opinion, the nays have it.

We will deal with this vote after we have finished other business.

LUPUS AWARENESS DAY ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 SUR LA JOURNÉE
DE SENSIBILISATION AU LUPUS

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mr. Pang has moved second reading of Bill 112, An Act to proclaim Lupus Awareness Day. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Which committee?

Mr. Billy Pang: General government.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Is the majority in favour of the bill being referred to the Standing Committee on General Government? Agreed.

CARDIOPULMONARY RESUSCITATION
TRAINING

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mrs. Tangri has moved private member's notice of motion number 83. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

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

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1536 to 1541.

MAKING NORTHERN ONTARIO
HIGHWAYS SAFER ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 VISANT À ACCROÎTRE
LA SÉCURITÉ DES VOIES PUBLIQUES
DANS LE NORD DE L'ONTARIO

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Members will please take their seats.

Mr. Bourgouin has moved second reading of Bill 125, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act to make northern Ontario Highways Safer.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Andrew, Jill	Harden, Joel	Schreiner, Mike
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Hassan, Faisal	Shaw, Sandy
Begum, Doly	Hatfield, Percy	Simard, Amanda
Bell, Jessica	Horwath, Andrea	Singh, Gurratan
Berns-McGown, Rima	Kernaghan, Terence	Singh, Sara
Bisson, Gilles	Mamakwa, Sol	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Bourgouin, Guy	Mantha, Michael	Stiles, Marit
Burch, Jeff	Miller, Paul	Tabuns, Peter
Coteau, Michael	Monteith-Farrell, Judith	Taylor, Monique
Fife, Catherine	Morrison, Suze	Vanhof, John
Fraser, John	Natyshak, Taras	West, Jamie
Gélinas, France	Rakocevic, Tom	Yarde, Kevin
Glover, Chris	Sattler, Peggy	

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Anand, Deepak	Jones, Sylvia	Phillips, Rod
Baber, Roman	Kanapathi, Logan	Piccini, David
Babikian, Aris	Karahalios, Belinda C.	Rasheed, Kaleed
Bailey, Robert	Ke, Vincent	Roberts, Jeremy
Barrett, Toby	Khanjin, Andrea	Sabawy, Sheref
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Kramp, Daryl	Sandhu, Amarjot
Bouma, Will	Kusendova, Natalia	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Calandra, Paul	Lecce, Stephen	Scott, Laurie
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Martin, Robin	Skelly, Donna
Cho, Stan	Martow, Gila	Smith, Dave
Coe, Lorne	McDonnell, Jim	Smith, Todd
Crawford, Stephen	McKenna, Jane	Surma, Kinga
Cuzzetto, Rudy	McNaughton, Monte	Tangri, Nina
Downey, Doug	Miller, Norman	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Elliott, Christine	Mitas, Christina Maria	Tibollo, Michael A.

Fullerton, Merrilee
Ghamari, Goldie
Gill, Parm
Hardeman, Ernie
Hogarth, Christine

Oosterhoff, Sam
Pang, Billy
Park, Lindsey
Parsa, Michael
Pettapiece, Randy

Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Wai, Daisy
Walker, Bill
Yakabuski, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 38; the nays are 59.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I declare the motion lost.

Second reading negatived.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): We'll now allow the doors to be open for 30 seconds.

CARDIOPULMONARY RESUSCITATION TRAINING

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mrs. Tangri has moved private member's notice of motion number 83. All those in favour, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Anand, Deepak
Andrew, Jill
Armstrong, Teresa J.
Baber, Roman
Babikian, Aris
Bailey, Robert
Barrett, Toby
Begum, Doly
Bell, Jessica
Berns-McGown, Rima
Bethlenfalvy, Peter
Bisson, Gilles
Bouma, Will
Bourgouin, Guy
Burch, Jeff
Calandra, Paul
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon
Cho, Stan
Coe, Lorne
Coteau, Michael
Crawford, Stephen
Cuzzetto, Rudy
Downey, Doug
Elliott, Christine
Fife, Catherine
Fraser, John
Fullerton, Merrilee
Gélinas, France
Ghamari, Goldie
Gill, Parm
Glover, Chris
Hardeman, Ernie
Harden, Joel

Harris, Mike
Hassan, Faisal
Hatfield, Percy
Hogarth, Christine
Horwath, Andrea
Jones, Sylvia
Kanapathi, Logan
Karahalios, Belinda C.
Ke, Vincent
Kernaghan, Terence
Khanjin, Andrea
Kramp, Daryl
Kusendova, Natalia
Lecce, Stephen
Mamakwa, Sol
Mantha, Michael
Martin, Robin
Martow, Gila
McDonell, Jim
McKenna, Jane
McNaughton, Monte
Miller, Norman
Miller, Paul
Mitas, Christina Maria
Monteith-Farrell, Judith
Morrison, Suze
Natyshak, Taras
Oosterhoff, Sam
Pang, Billy
Park, Lindsey
Parsa, Michael
Pettapiece, Randy
Phillips, Rod

Piccini, David
Rakocevic, Tom
Rasheed, Kaleed
Roberts, Jeremy
Sabawy, Sheref
Sandhu, Amarjot
Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Sattler, Peggy
Schreiner, Mike
Scott, Laurie
Shaw, Sandy
Simard, Amanda
Singh, Gurratan
Singh, Sara
Skelly, Donna
Smith, Dave
Smith, Todd
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Stiles, Marit
Surma, Kinga
Tabuns, Peter
Tangri, Nina
Taylor, Monique
Thanigasalam, Vijay
Tibollo, Michael A.
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Vanthof, John
Wai, Daisy
Walker, Bill
West, Jamie
Yakabuski, John
Yarde, Kevin

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Mr. Michael Coteau: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the member from Don Valley East on a point of order.

Mr. Michael Coteau: Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding religious freedoms.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The member from Don Valley East is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we have unanimous consent? Okay.

The member from Don Valley East.

Mr. Michael Coteau: I move that, in the opinion of this House, Ontario and its government shall oppose any law that would seek to restrict or limit the religious freedoms of our citizens; and, that Ontario's Legislature should affirm that we value our diversity and assert that we shall promote and protect free expression and the rights of religious minorities, consistent with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mr. Coteau has moved that, in the opinion of this House, Ontario and its government shall oppose any law that would seek to restrict or limit the religious freedoms of our citizens; and, that Ontario's Legislature should affirm that we value our diversity and assert that we shall promote and protect free expression and the rights of religious minorities, consistent with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BETTER FOR PEOPLE, SMARTER FOR BUSINESS ACT, 2019 LOI DE 2019 POUR MIEUX SERVIR LA POPULATION ET FACILITER LES AFFAIRES

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 5, 2019, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 132, An Act to reduce burdens on people and businesses by enacting, amending and repealing various Acts and revoking various Regulations / Projet de loi 132, Loi visant à alléger le fardeau administratif qui pèse sur la population et les entreprises en édictant, modifiant ou abrogeant diverses lois et en abrogeant divers règlements.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to the order of the House carried earlier today, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Sarkaria has moved second reading of Bill 132, An Act to reduce burdens on people and businesses by enacting, amending and repealing various Acts and revoking various Regulations. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 98; the nays are 0.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”
All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”
In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.
The division bells rang from 1552 to 1553.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): All members will please take their seats.

Mr. Sarkaria has moved second reading of Bill 132, An Act to reduce burdens on people and businesses by enacting, amending and repealing various Acts and revoking various Regulations. All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Jones, Sylvia	Phillips, Rod
Baber, Roman	Kanapathi, Logan	Piccini, David
Babikian, Aris	Karahalios, Belinda C.	Rasheed, Kaleed
Bailey, Robert	Ke, Vincent	Roberts, Jeremy
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Khanjin, Andrea	Sabawy, Sheref
Bouma, Will	Kramp, Daryl	Sandhu, Amarjot
Calandra, Paul	Kusendova, Natalia	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Lece, Stephen	Scott, Laurie
Cho, Stan	Martin, Robin	Skelly, Donna
Coe, Lorne	Martow, Gila	Smith, Dave
Crawford, Stephen	McDonell, Jim	Smith, Todd
Cuzzetto, Rudy	McKenna, Jane	Surma, Kinga
Downey, Doug	Miller, Norman	Tangri, Nina
Elliott, Christine	Mitas, Christina Maria	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Fullerton, Merrilee	Oosterhoff, Sam	Tibollo, Michael A.
Ghamari, Goldie	Pang, Billy	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Gill, Parm	Park, Lindsey	Wai, Daisy
Harris, Mike	Parsa, Michael	Walker, Bill
Hogarth, Christine	Pettapiece, Randy	

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Nays

Andrew, Jill	Harden, Joel	Sattler, Peggy
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Hassan, Faisal	Schreiner, Mike
Begum, Doly	Hatfield, Percy	Shaw, Sandy
Bell, Jessica	Horwath, Andrea	Simard, Amanda
Berns-McGown, Rima	Hunter, Mitzie	Singh, Guratan
Bisson, Gilles	Kernaghan, Terence	Singh, Sara
Bourgouin, Guy	Mamakwa, Sol	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Burch, Jeff	Mantha, Michael	Stiles, Marit
Côteau, Michael	Miller, Paul	Tabuns, Peter
Fife, Catherine	Monteith-Farrell, Judith	Taylor, Monique
Fraser, John	Morrison, Suze	Vanthof, John
Gélinas, France	Natyshak, Taras	West, Jamie
Glover, Chris	Rakocevic, Tom	Yarde, Kevin

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 56; the nays are 39.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to the order of the House carried earlier today, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

PROTECTING A SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC SECTOR FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 VISANT À PRÉSERVER LA VIABILITÉ DU SECTEUR PUBLIC POUR LES GÉNÉRATIONS FUTURES

Mr. Bethlenfalvy moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 124, An Act to implement moderation measures in respect of compensation in Ontario’s public sector / Projet de loi 124, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre des mesures de modération concernant la rémunération dans le secteur public de l’Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Good afternoon to everyone. It’s a pleasure to rise in the House again to begin third reading of the proposed Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act, 2019. The proposed legislation—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I’m sorry to interrupt the minister. Stop the clock. I’ll give everyone a chance to come and go as they need to, but quietly so that I may hear the person who has the floor.

I return to the minister.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I’ll start again.

Good afternoon. It’s a pleasure to rise in the House to begin third reading of the proposed Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act, 2019. The proposed legislation has been through a rigorous second reading and committee process, reflecting the importance and the weight that it carries.

I’d like to start my remarks by reminding my fellow members about how we got to where we are today and why we must take action. Then I will talk about where we have gone with the proposed legislation and how we have listened, and the amendments we have made.

We’ve been open and transparent about the hard facts that have guided our decisions. We inherited a serious fiscal problem from the previous government, one that, left unchecked, puts core services at risk for future generations. Solving this mess is about more than fulfilling a commitment to a balance sheet; it requires that we spend smarter and do government differently. To give you an example of the weight of the issue, currently Ontario owes \$1.5 million in interest on its debt every hour. That means we are paying \$36 million a day, every single day, on our interest.

In total, public sector compensation represents roughly half of all government expenditures, totalling over \$72 billion annually. These facts are why we first proposed this legislation on June 5 of this year, and these facts are why we are here today. We are ready to address this challenge.

To do so, we have proposed legislation, the Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act, 2019, that would enable the government to manage public sector compensation growth in a fair, reasonable and

sustainable way. It would support our ongoing efforts to restore the province to a position of fiscal health and sustainability and demonstrate respect for taxpayer dollars. It would support our ongoing efforts to support the people of Ontario.

1600

We have made a clear case for change. We have been clear that we saw an immediate need to act upon entering office. That is why our responsibility, first, was to understand the actual state of the province's deficit and secondly, to chart a path forward and have a plan.

When our government took office, we knew the previous government was at odds with the independent Auditor General about the state of the province's deficit. In her view of the pre-election report on Ontario's finances, she concluded that the province's numbers were not a reasonable presentation of Ontario's finances. She followed up by saying, "In essence, the government is making up its own accounting rules." So we struck the Independent Financial Commission of Inquiry. We did this in order to understand the previous government's accounting methods and advise us on the actual state of the province's deficit.

What we all know now is the situation was somber. Thanks to the commission's diligent work, we had a clear picture of the province's fiscal landscape. The commission found that we had, in fact, a significant deficit. What the lay of the land illustrated was that we needed to act to reign in expenses wherever possible and work together to spend taxpayers' dollars smarter.

Madam Speaker, we took immediate action. We began by having a frank conversation about what was actually fuelling Ontario's deficit and understanding where Ontario's dollars were being spent and how. This is why we charted a path forward. We began by announcing that EY Canada would conduct a detailed independent analysis of government spending and that we were taking the time to consult with the public through the Planning for Prosperity consultation, receiving more than 26,000 ideas for action. Our goal was to identify where government could spend smarter and more efficiently. This is a province-building moment that, if done right, will see a more sustainable Ontario for this generation and for generations to come.

Interjection.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you, Robin.

To respect taxpayer dollars and transform programs and services to work smarter for the people of Ontario, in September 2018 we announced the results of EY's line-by-line review, which meticulously analyzed spending between 2002 and 2018. It found that the province's total operating expenditures had increased by \$46.4 billion in real terms, an increase of an incredible \$2,226 per person in our province.

Both the Independent Financial Commission of Inquiry and the EY line-by-line review were important exercises we needed to undertake in order to move forward with a responsible fiscal plan for our province.

Madam Speaker, we have heard the opposition question why we are so focused on restoring the health of this

province. This, as I've said numerous times before, is not just a fiscal imperative; it's a moral imperative that we must act now. We must act to ensure fiscal sustainability in our province to ensure our loved ones aren't treated in hallways in hospitals, to ensure that our schools and neighbourhoods are safe and maintained, and to ensure that our public services are funded for today and for future generations, because without that fiscal sustainability, we will continue to pay billions of dollars in interest per year. And that is money that is not going towards the things that I just mentioned.

We have also heard that because we have already made strides in strengthening the fiscal health of the province that we should effectively call it a day. Let me be clear: We are not yet at the finish line. There is much work to be done.

In September, along with the Minister of Finance, we tabled the 2018-19 public accounts of Ontario. The public accounts show that the 2018-19 deficit has fallen from a projected high, identified by the Independent Financial Commission of Inquiry, to \$7.4 billion as of March 31, 2019.

Madam Speaker, our approach is working, but we are far from finished. The government still has a significant deficit and an enormous amount of debt. Like a household budget, we all know that only paying half of your credit card payment does not mean you're doing well financially. We are being honest with Ontarians. We have begun to put our financial house in order, but we have much more to do to stay on course, because if we don't balance our budget, if we don't get our spending in order and reduce our debt, the long-term stability of our province and the services that people depend on every single day will be put at risk. Our debt burden leaves us no fiscal room to respond in the event of a downturn in the economy.

As I stated when I began my remarks, Ontario owes \$1.5 million in interest every hour. That's \$36 million a day. That's \$36 million that we could be investing directly back into improving lives across our province. It's money that we could be using to build stronger education programs or to update our aging infrastructure. That is why we must act now to rebuild our province, to allow the people of Ontario to flourish. Transforming the culture of government will allow us to do that.

That is what the proposed Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act, 2019, would do. The proposed legislation takes a fair and reasonable approach to managing compensation in the public sector. It includes requirements that would allow for up to a 1% increase in salary and—

Interruption.

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

All those in the gallery are not able to participate in any of the proceedings here in the Legislature. Any further outbursts—people will be asked to leave if they cannot follow the rules of the Legislature.

I return to the President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As I was saying, it—

Interruption.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Stop the clock. Clear the galleries. All those in the galleries have been told the rules of the Legislature, and I have asked the Sergeant-at-Arms to clear the galleries.

Start the clock. The President of the Treasury Board has the floor.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As I was saying, it includes requirements that would allow for a 1% increase in salary and overall compensation for unionized and non-unionized employees in the Ontario public sector. The proposed legislation would apply to the Ontario Public Service and provincial authorities, boards, commissions, corporations, offices or organizations in which the majority of directors, members or officers are appointed or chosen by the province, including Ontario Power Generation, the Independent Electricity System Operator and Ornge. It would also apply to school boards, colleges and universities, hospitals, not-for-profit long-term-care homes and non-profit transfer payment recipients who received more than \$1 million in annual funding in 2018.

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As you will recall, I stated a fact at the beginning of my remarks. The province of Ontario currently spends over \$72 billion annually on public sector compensation. This is an area that we cannot ignore in our financial path to fiscal sustainability. But we are committed, Madam Speaker, to taking a reasonable approach, working with our stakeholders and our partners in order to protect the vital services Ontario relies on. I think it's important at this time to reiterate what this approach actually means, what the bill does and does not do.

Let's start by talking about what the bill would do; namely, employees would still be able to negotiate important terms and conditions of employment. The proposed legislation, if passed, sets out requirements that would allow for an up to 1% increase to salary rates and overall compensation for unionized and non-unionized employees in Ontario's public sector. It would apply for a period of three years upon the expiry of existing collective agreements. Additionally, Ontario's public sector employees would still be able to receive salary increases for seniority, performance or increased qualifications, as they do currently.

Madam Speaker, just as importantly, there are a number of things the proposed legislation would not do. The legislation, if passed, would not impact existing collective agreements. It would not impede the collective bargaining process or the right to strike. It would not impose a wage freeze or wage rollback. It would not impose job losses.

We believe the legislation represents a fair and time-limited approach that applies across the provincial public sector. We have been clear that our path to a fiscally sustainable province has been deliberate and thoughtful. The steps we took to get here included listening at every turn and incorporating that feedback into our overall

approach, looking at public sector compensation with a plan to consult and to listen.

I know my colleagues have discussed these steps. However, I'd like to reiterate how we consulted, listened and incorporated feedback along the way. On April 4, 2019, I announced that the government would commence a series of consultations with public sector employees, employers and bargaining agents. The goal of these consultations was to engage in a conversation about how compensation growth could be managed in a way that results in reasonable, fair and sustainable public sector wages. We put a number of ideas on the table for feedback. These ideas included a voluntary agreement to wage outcomes that were lower than the current trends; trade-offs that would lead to reductions in compensation costs; and consideration of legislative measures.

We asked participants to share their ideas for approaches and tools for managing compensation costs. We held these consultations with our public sector stakeholders from April 5 to May 24, 2019. During that time, 23 in-person sessions took place. These sessions were attended by 68 employer organizations and sectors covering more than 2,500 collective agreements, and 57 bargaining agents who collectively represent over 780,000 workers across all sectors of Ontario's public service. In short, all major bargaining agents attended and participated. Employer participants included colleges, universities, school board trustee associations, the Ontario Hospital Association and agencies. Bargaining agent participants included the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, the Canadian Union of Public Employees, the Service Employees International Union, the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation.

In addition, the government received 47 written responses. These included responses from the health care sector namely, Health Shared Services Ontario on behalf of the 14 local health integrated networks, the Ontario Nurses' Association and SEIU Healthcare.

The education and post-secondary education sector also wrote to us, including the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, the Ontario Council of Educational Workers, the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, the Coalition of Post-Secondary Workers of Ontario and the University of Toronto Faculty Association. In total, we heard from employers and bargaining agents representing over one million employees across the provincial public sector.

It was with this information in hand that we decided to consider legislative measures while, in tandem, further exploring some of the ideas that were put forward during the consultation period.

Ontario deserves a better, brighter future. That's what we're building without apology and with tremendous care. To that end, on June 5, we introduced the proposed Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act.

We also announced that we would continue to receive feedback on the proposed legislation and did so throughout the summer. The additional feedback we received

included questions, comments, ideas and proposals, and in that review we saw a few things start to emerge.

For instance, there were questions about who was exempt from the legislation. We saw both questions and comments about the impact of the proposed legislation on interest arbitration. This feedback gave the government the opportunity to respond to those questions and concerns. As well, it allowed us to continue to maintain an important dialogue on what the proposed legislation would and would not mean, and where appropriate, this feedback also allowed us to further assess ideas or proposals relating to the legislation for policy and legislative impact.

As we worked through the feedback, we asked ourselves: What is a policy issue? Does this issue require amendments to the legislation? If so, what section of the legislation is impacted? What are other impacts or considerations? Can the issue be dealt with without legislative change, and, if so, what other policy levers could be used to address the problem?

I want to stress that we consulted in good faith. Not only did we ask participants for their ideas and suggest approaches for the feedback, but we considered all issues and proposals that participants provided us. We followed up. We assessed, and we reassessed at every step.

Even after Bill 124 was introduced on June 5, we continued to assess any feedback received, and this continued feedback directly informed decisions we made on amendments we put forward. These amendments are now included in the proposed legislation:

- amendments that included clearly exempting Indigenous communities and certain Indigenous community-run organizations from application of the proposed legislation;

- allowing exceptions for employees moving to joint pension plans and regulatory power to add exceptions in other specified circumstances;

- clarifying that agreements signed in good faith before June 5, 2019, would not be reopened by the proposed legislation; and

- more clearly defining how agreements reached between June 5 and the passage of the legislation would be treated.

These amendments would clarify the intent of the legislation and also ensure that the legislation is consistently and equitably applied to public sector workers in both the Ontario public service and the broader public sector.

Madam Speaker, these are important amendments, and I would like to thank everyone who sent their feedback to the government and made their voices heard by their representatives because we have listened.

We continued to discuss amendments during the Standing Committee on General Government, where we participated in a robust debate on ways we could further strengthen the bill. We are a government that listens, and we have heard from those across the province that we need to act.

Madam Speaker, I've said a number of times that we are a government that listens, and throughout the

consultation process we made sure to incorporate what we heard into the amendments that we put forward, but we did not stop there.

During our consultations on the Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act, 2019, both employers and bargaining agents expressed an interest in exploring a centralized benefits pooling model.

By way of background, generally, employers provide group life, health, dental and disability insurance coverage to employees and eligible dependants as part of a total compensation package. Insurance pooling is effectively a practice where a group of employers join together to secure better insurance rates and coverage terms by virtue of their increased buying power as a block. Currently, public sector group benefits administration is largely decentralized, so when we heard feedback that there was a desire to scope this out further, we listened.

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By exploring a single policyholder model, we found that we could leverage the existing government program framework as a template; participants could access economies-of-scale benefits; inclusion in a larger pool could insulate individual employers from the adverse rate fluctuations; and we could provide flexibility for employers. Participants could elect to harmonize to a common plan design or maintain autonomy over their own benefit plan design. Enabling such pooling with voluntary entry terms could enable participants to access economies-of-scale advantages, cost savings and administrative efficiencies, along with enhanced modernized plan design and benefits coverage terms for employees.

Because we are committed to working collaboratively with employers and bargaining agents to protect front-line services, public sector jobs and to make Ontario fiscally sustainable, we decided this was an idea with merit that we should pursue. On October 9, we announced our intention to do just that. We will be consulting on this idea to explore stakeholder needs, find common objectives, define participant parameters and develop a viable governance framework and strategy for implementation. Through a benefits-pooling model, we see the potential to spend smarter, address inefficiencies and duplication, and make it easier to leverage group buying power.

When we set out our intention to consult on the proposed Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act, we were clear that we were consulting with the broader public sector in good faith and would consider all ideas that were put on the table.

Madam Speaker, prior to entering public life, I spent my entire career evaluating financial risk. Some have asked me if what I see on Ontario's balance sheet keeps me up at night, and I say, "No. I sleep like a baby"—I think you've heard this very often—"I wake up every hour and I cry." But thanks to our team's hard work, I'm able to sleep through the night.

Since taking office we've worked diligently and carefully to chart a path forward, a path that would enable us to protect the vital programs and services that the people of Ontario rely on, like health care and education. We

began by gathering the evidence, looking at the hard facts, and then we quickly got to work. Our goal has been clear: to restore sustainability to our province's finances, build an Ontario that works for everyone and to build Ontario together. The proposed Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act, 2019, does just that. It sets out a fair, reasonable and sustainable approach to managing compensation growth in our province.

We owe it to ourselves, to our children and to our grandchildren, who will live with the consequences of the decisions we make today. That is why we are here today: to make smart decisions that protect the vital services and programs Ontarians rely on.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, for allowing me the time to outline our plan, because we have a plan, we have chosen our path and we are delivering on our promises.

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

Ms. Sandy Shaw: As we've heard in this House today, you should be ashamed. You should be ashamed of this legislation. You have shown the people of Ontario what the tyranny of the majority looks like. You have shown the people of Ontario what the heavy hand of government looks like, but you're going to see soon enough that you have overplayed that hand here in Ontario.

It's shameful that it's a laughing matter on the side of the government. Jokes are not appropriate right now when we're talking about people who are earning possibly below the poverty rate. We heard someone in this House say that the early childhood educator workers in the province of Ontario earn, on average, \$38,000 a year. We've also heard that people who work as personal support workers in our long-term-care homes, looking after our elderly loved ones, can earn, if they earn minimum wage, as little as \$28,000 a year. This is the bill that has targeted them, attacking the rights of these workers for no particular reason.

It has been said over and over and over again that this bill is unconstitutional. It violates the Charter of Rights and Freedoms for workers all across this province and sets the stage for violations of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms across Canada. When a poll was taken from Canadians to say what it is you're most proud of, it was two things: They are most proud of their universal health care and their Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

So we're here to say to the government, and particularly to the Premier, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in Canada is still a thing. It's not a nuisance that you need to get around; it's still something that is important. This will undoubtedly end in court, costing millions of wasted taxpayer dollars. You've shown that you don't respect the charter, you've shown that you do not respect the workers in the province of Ontario, and you're clearly showing that you do not respect democracy. We have spent more time in this House discussing time allocation motions that limit debate and shut down debate than we've probably spent discussing the very legislation you're putting forward.

You talk about your consultations. Your consultations are a farce. But prove me wrong and make them public, because—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Stop the clock. Sorry to interrupt the member. I will remind the member to direct all remarks to and through the Chair, please.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: As I was saying, their consultation is a farce. Government members did not show up to the consultations. We have not heard the results of the consultations. Like everything they do, they've kept that secret.

I would like to make perfectly clear that when they time-allocated Bill 124, they gave the people of Ontario less than 24 hours to be notified that they could come to speak to committee, and when that committee was convened, they gave the people of Ontario six hours to speak to the government on a bill that impacts them so directly. This is a government that is not accountable and doesn't want to hear from the people of Ontario. It's sheer cowardice.

Je vais simplement dire que ce projet de loi est inconstitutionnel. De plus, il aura un impact vraiment négatif sur les droits des travailleurs. Malheureusement, leurs vies seront encore plus difficiles et bouleversées.

This minister of the Treasury Board and the Premier and the finance minister throw numbers around a lot. They don't talk about people's lived lives; they don't talk about the suffering that they're causing. They like to throw numbers around to the point where people are not listening to these numbers, because it's not quite clear whether the people of Ontario have confidence in the numbers that they are putting forward.

The President of the Treasury Board says that we now understand the size of the deficit. And I would like to say, "Do we? Do we really understand the size of the deficit?" Because my experience, sitting on the Independent Commission of Financial Inquiry, is that this was nothing more than a public relations tool, an excuse that they are currently using as a tool to cut the benefits and the pay of workers in the province of Ontario.

But their claims of a \$15-billion deficit have had to be corrected by none other than the Auditor General. We heard the Premier this morning claiming they inherited a \$15-billion deficit from the previous government, while the Auditor General—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I remind all members that they may not refer to electronic devices during their debates.

Please continue.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: The Auditor General issued a statement to clarify and to correct the record, saying that, in fact, the public statements questioning Ontario's deficit figures—that the audit of the province of Ontario concluded that the \$7.4-billion deficit was fairly represented, not the \$15 billion that this government is discussing. And so, in fact, this is the reason why the people of Ontario have no confidence in what you're saying in terms of the budget and the deficit.

I would also like to say that the President of the Treasury Board said, "We're being honest with Ontarians." But I would ask the President of the Treasury Board:

Are you? Because these numbers change from day to day, and the people of Ontario do not feel that you are accurately representing the dollar figures, the deficit, that you are using to impact their lives so dramatically.

But as I said, the government didn't take the opportunity to allow people to come to committee. They didn't want to have to hear from the people of Ontario. I would have asked the President of the Treasury Board: Did he attend any of the consultations that he talked about? Because at committee, we heard time and time again that people were there, but there was no one there from the government. Nobody was there. No MPPs showed up. In fact, they didn't even answer their questions. They felt that this was nothing but a tick-the-box sham experience.

1630

If the government would like to correct me on this and show me that it was a meaningful consultation, why will they not release some of the letters they said they received? I'd be kind of curious to read some of those letters. I imagine that they're less than flattering, because as you have heard here in this chamber, the people of Ontario are not going to take this well.

You have made a significant error. You've overestimated the support that you have in the province, and you've underestimated workers and how workers feel when their charter rights and freedoms are violated and how they feel when they're being penalized. How can you, as a government, say that the deficit of the province of Ontario—whatever that deficit may be at any given moment, depending on what works best for the government—is the fault of workers in the province of Ontario? How can you legitimately stand up there and say that this is the case?

As I said, because you've limited debate and you didn't want to hear from the people of Ontario, what I will do now is read some letters that we received at committee from the people of Ontario you are so magnanimously saying you're trying to help by cutting their wages.

I have a letter here from the Ontario Nonprofit Network. The Ontario Nonprofit Network is the independent not-for-profit network for the 58,000 not-for-profits in Ontario.

Let's be perfectly clear: This is a bill that caps the wages and benefits of people who work in charities and non-profits. We all have non-profit organizations in our communities. We had the Cancer Care Ontario network this morning. Those are not-for-profit charities. This bill will ensure that their wages are capped.

The Ontario Nonprofit Network has a summary of recommendations. One of the recommendations that I think is important for the government to hear: "ONN recommends that the Ontario government manage any budget restrictions via overall funding envelopes, rather than through wage controls, as they negatively affect non-profits' ability to recruit and retain key staff. Bill 124 should exempt community-governed non-profits that provide services on behalf of government, in the same way that it exempts for-profit corporations." So we have exemptions for for-profit corporations, but we are going to

penalize the people who work in our not-for-profit charities in the province of Ontario.

I have another letter, from the YMCA. I think people will be surprised to hear that this is not a bill that caps the wages of the people who are on the sunshine list; this is a bill that caps the wages of people who work in organizations that do nothing but try to improve the lives of people in our communities. So the YMCA, who were not able to come to committee because they didn't have enough time, because the government only allowed six hours of people to testify, had to write a letter. Here's what the YMCA has said: "For more than 160 years, YMCAs have been at the centre of communities across Ontario—helping people to reach their full potential and making life easier for hard-working families.

"Today, 17 YMCA associations serve 1.2 million people across 125 Ontario communities. Our programs are tailored to meet the needs of Ontarians in cities big and small and in suburban and rural areas."

In response to Bill 124, they write, "We have concerns about the application of this legislation within the charitable sector and respectfully request that the terms of the legislation be re-evaluated to ensure they do not create an unnecessary burden on charitable organizations like the YMCA."

I have a letter from a citizen who, in fact, is a constituent of the member for Kanata–Carleton. The constituent was unable to contact their MPP directly or was unable to depute at the committee. This is what they have written: "I am writing to send comments regarding Bill 124, which is being referred to the standing committee of general government. As a constituent of Merrilee Fullerton's riding and a concerned resident of Ontario, I am confident that my MPP will strongly be against Bill 124." We'll see—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I'm sorry to interrupt the member. Sorry, stop the clock. Just a reminder to all members that you cannot refer to members by their names, only by their ridings.

Please continue.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you. I apologize, Madam Chair.

"This legislation will greatly hurt thousands of residents of Ontario and the workers who make our province work—like nurses, teachers and child care workers. Many residents of Kanata–Carleton fall into this category and will be hurt by this legislation, including myself and my wife."

They go on to write, "Stop giving yourselves raises and focus on the people.

"My comments, again, for the committee, is that this legislation needs to be stopped. It will only hurt the hard-working people that keep this province moving."

That's from Corey Grist in the riding of Kanata–Carleton.

I have a letter here from Jess Taylor, writing in opposition to Bill 124: "As someone who has worked in public services my whole life ... I know that people work in public services because they want to make a difference in their

communities and give back to other people. To have these good-hearted, hard-working Ontarians need to struggle even more in an ... expensive housing market and a province with a huge cost of living is unfair and does a disservice to everyone who needs access to these services.

“When workers’ conditions worsen, the service also worsens. In addition to quality of service, what type of life do we want to give to our citizens? What type of life do we feel is acceptable to give to people who are working continuously ... A 1% wage and benefits cap is effectively a pay and/or benefits cut for workers, as inflation continues to stay between 2% to 3%.

“Yours truly,
“Jess Taylor.”

I would like to add that Jess Taylor seems to have a better handle on the impact of inflation than does the President of the Treasury Board, who keeps announcing increases that are below inflation and doesn’t seem to understand the impact on the buying power of hard-working, low-wage citizens in the province of Ontario.

I have a letter from David Curran, who’s a research fellow at the Hospital for Sick Children: “This email is in regards to the proposed Bill 124 that would place a cap of a 1% increase in compensation to any public sector worker. As an employee of the Hospital for Sick Children, living in Toronto, this would effectively mean taking a yearly pay cut compared to the level of inflation that occurs in the city and many other municipalities in Ontario. As many of us are struggling just to make ends meet, this puts an undue hardship on many public sector workers, myself included....

“I implore the current government to rethink this policy in order to retain employees in both Ontario and in the public sector.”

And finally, I have a letter from Willie Costello, who says, “I am an immigrant to Canada. This past weekend I proudly received my permanent residency. I have loved living in Canada, and have been honoured to work in jobs with real union protections and benefits. I have always felt that my rights as an employee have been recognized and respected by my employers and by the Canadian government. But Bill 124 constitutes a betrayal of that recognition and respect....

“I have intimate knowledge of how Bill 124 will hurt me and the hundreds of other” people “I work with. We are hard workers and highly educated people who are helping to produce the landmark research that U of T and Canada are known for. Yet we barely make enough money to cover our rent and living expenses, much less the costs of child care and other ‘extras’....

“Bill 124 is a loss for Ontarians and loss for Ontario. I want to live and work in a province that I can be proud to call my home. Please do not let Bill 124 become law.”

That would be our position as well, that this bill needs to be withdrawn, particularly because the President of the Treasury Board said that this bill is an intent to deal with the fiscal reality of the province of Ontario. But it’s quite clear from the remarks made on that side of the House, from the numbers that keep shifting and changing, that we

are not sure. No one understands what the fiscal reality of this province is. But if it is, in fact, as the minister said, that they have managed to significantly reduce the deficit, then withdraw this bill because it will do nothing—nothing—to reduce the deficit. All it will do is hurt hard-working people in the province of Ontario. You are going to hear loud and clear from people all across Ontario that you have made a huge mistake.

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I rise to speak on a bill that deeply troubles me, Bill 124. The reason I’m so concerned about this bill is because it infringes upon people’s constitutional rights to collective bargaining, shuts down good-faith negotiations at the bargaining table and forces public sector workers to pay the price for poor financial decisions made by this and previous governments.

1640

Bill 124 effectively suspends the collective bargaining rights of public sector workers. This unconstitutional move exposes the province to significant financial risk. It will result in more costly legal battles for the province. I opposed the McGuinty government’s Bill 115, similar legislation which was struck down by the courts in 2016, costing the government well over \$100 million. Bill 124 exposes the Ford government—and more importantly, frankly, the people of Ontario—to the same financial risk. Millions of dollars that could be invested in bettering the lives of the people of Ontario and reducing the deficit will likely be wasted on fighting court battles over this legislation.

Bill 124 also sabotages the bargaining process, suggesting that this government is not committed nor interested in bargaining in good faith. I believe in free and fair collective bargaining. History has shown that there are opportunities at the bargaining table to identify cost savings and efficiencies that can be negotiated by all parties. When you take away the opportunity for this kind of negotiation to happen in good faith, it poisons the well. It restricts the ability of the parties at the table to find efficiencies and cost savings that are beneficial for everyone. It restricts the ability to negotiate around ways that organizations, such as non-profit organizations, can have the salary structure to attract high-quality employees.

The Minister of Education recently reached a deal with CUPE education workers. So I ask the government, why not trust other negotiating teams within the government to reach similar deals, instead of doing a pre-emptive strike on the bargaining process?

The province’s financial challenges are real, and I’m committed to working with the government to solve them. However, attempting to correct for poor choices made by this and previous governments by penalizing front-line public sector workers is wrong. What message does it send some of the lowest-paid workers, who provide some of the most essential services for the people of this province, caring for our children and our grandparents? The deputy ministers recently received a 14% pay increase with their already six-figure salaries, while front-line workers will have below-inflation wage increases.

Ontario has the lowest per-capita spending and tax revenue of any jurisdiction in Canada. This fiscal reality has real impacts on the services people receive and impacts on the people who deliver those services. We can balance our budget without doing it on the backs of front-line workers or the most vulnerable in our province.

We can look at doing things such as reversing the tax cut that the wealthiest received in last year's fall economic statement. If we would reverse that, that's \$271 million or more that could be added to Ontario's books to pay for essential services or reduce the deficit—likewise if the government would cancel the previous government's unfair hydro plan, or at the very least means-test it. Some \$4.2 billion of the \$7.4-billion deficit—over half—is just due to subsidized electricity prices that disproportionately benefit the wealthy in this province. So at the very least, means-test this subsidy, because I think the wealthy in our province can afford to pay their electricity bills.

I want to close by saying that we can balance our books without cutting services for the most vulnerable or attacking front-line workers. I will be voting against Bill 124, and I encourage all members to do so as well.

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

Mr. John Fraser: I have the pleasure—well, I don't know if it's a pleasure to speak to Bill 124. I won't be supporting it. It's an infringement on people's charter rights and their rights to collective bargaining. As my colleague the leader of the Green Party said earlier, when you do this kind of legislation, it doesn't work out well, even if it's—

Interjections.

Mr. John Fraser: I say that from experience. I'm just giving you some friendly advice. It's not going to turn out the way that you think it's going to. All kidding aside, you've got to be straight about it. These are the people on the front lines here. These are some of the lowest-paid people in Ontario. This is not a measure of last resort, like we're having night sittings and we've got to avoid the OPG strike because the minister was asleep at the switch. This is something that's being used as a tool in a bargaining process, and it's simply wrong. If you were on the other side of it you'd go, "Yeah, it's wrong." You don't need to use this tool. Just bargain in good faith. You did it with CUPE. Why can't you do it here?

You're not going to win in court. I can tell you that from experience. You won't win. You'll get challenged and it will cost you more money. It's a pretty expensive way to try to get what you think is a political win. I don't know how that could be a political win if you're saying to front-line workers, "Here's all you're going to get. But this is what the deputies are going to get in our government: 14% more. And you know what? We've got the greatest government of all time and that's why I've expanded my cabinet by 10." That's what your Premier did. And then he's saying to workers, "You can only get 1%. But my folks, they can get a 20% or 30% pay raise. We'll have more of us, not less of us."

It just doesn't jive. Your talk, your words and your deeds don't jive. They're not coming together.

A bit of friendly advice: This is going to cost you way more money than you think. Just withdraw the bill. Bargain in good faith. Just use your ability as a government, as you did with CUPE, to bargain. There's a process there. It ensures fairness.

I can't say that I'm surprised. I have to say I was kind of disappointed, after you'd come to an agreement with CUPE, that all of a sudden you're pulling this out. You're in the middle of some other negotiations which are much larger. This has an impact on nurses, PSWs, bus drivers, social workers—people who are helping people. The message that you're giving to them is, "Here's what you're going to get and here's what our folks are going to get." That's not a good message. You might think it's good to say to people, "Well, we're a tough government. We're saving money." And you're not.

I have to say this, because I've got one minute left and I'm the last speaker of the day before we vote on this. How did you get to this point where you said we need to do—

Interjections.

Mr. John Fraser: Oh, is there one more? I'm sorry. Darn. I thought I had the last word. I'm so disappointed.

How did we get to this point? You created a context for these cuts. You created a context for this pressure by inflating the size of the deficit. And I'll repeat that again: inflating the size of the deficit. I'm not telling you. Actually, the Auditor General today had to correct the Premier; I saw an article that actually said "chided the Premier" and said, "We never said that. It was actually \$7.4 billion."

I just wanted to get that in there because I think it's important to remind people at home, if anybody is listening, that that's the context that you're using to do this kind of thing you're doing right now. And that's not right.

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

Mr. Jamie West: It's normally a pleasure to rise here—I know I'm fortunate to speak on behalf of the workers of Ontario—but not so much today. Once again, Speaker, we have a Conservative government that's convinced that Ontario's workers have it too good.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Order, please.

1650

Mr. Jamie West: Conservatives are not just attacking a few workers. The Ontario Federation of Labour expects that over one million workers in Ontario will be affected directly by this legislation.

The Conservatives are picking a fight with the people who make our province work: the people who keep our roads safe, the people who care for our loved ones, the people who teach and care for our children every day. These are the workers who make Ontario a great place to live. They provide the essential services that families count on.

Conservatives are attacking our EAs and our support staff, our school bus drives, our teachers, our nurses, our children's mental health workers, developmental service workers, child care workers and the personal support workers who care for the elderly in long-term-care homes.

During deputations, we heard that those workers' average wages—average, Speaker—are less than \$40,000 a year. I want to contrast that because during the spring budget the Conservative finance minister said, “The fiscal hole is deep ... Everyone across the province will be required to make sacrifices, without exception”—except, Speaker, in September we learned that the true number was actually less deep than they said. It was \$7.6 billion less deep—not even half.

Today, Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk clarified that the audit of the province's budget concluded \$7.4 billion, and had to clarify for the Premier who misspoke again. I checked Hansard, and there were 71 separate days—I didn't look at every single time—and multiple times on those days when the government pounded the table and said “\$15 billion.” So “\$15 billion” was the magical Conservative catchphrase that allowed them to cut \$2.4 billion from public services. Attacking public sector workers is exactly the kind of behaviour we've come to expect from this government and, quite frankly, from the Liberal government before them: “Liberal, Tory, same old story.”

Liberals and Conservatives love attacking public sector workers. They love weakening our public services so they can provide big tax cuts to their wealthy, well-connected friends.

Speaker, I'm going to remind you again that during the spring budget the Conservative finance minister said, “Everyone across the province will be required to make sacrifices, without exception”—except for Conservatives and their wealthy, well-connected friends. For those lucky few there have been many exceptions, because for the Premier's insiders, money is no object. There's no such thing as government too big.

Fifteen days after we recessed for five months of a summer recess, the Conservative cabinet was increased. They increased the number of parliamentary assistants from 18 to 31, and each one of those parliamentary assistants will receive 13.7% more than a regular MPP. That's \$16,300 more. They added five associate ministers. Associate ministers will receive 19.2% more than an average MPP. That's \$22,368.

They've now appointed more cabinet ministers than any other province in the country. We're winning in cabinet ministers in Ontario. They have 21 ministers. Each minister receives 42% more than the MPPs—\$49,000 more. The average wage is, again, \$30,000 or less.

During the spring budget, again, the Conservative finance minister said, “Everyone across the province will be required to make sacrifices, without exception”—except, Speaker, this summer we had the ongoing Conservative patronage scandals, appointments to gifted insiders like Dean French's niece and to a lacrosse player connected to Dean French, but that was just the tip of the iceberg.

During question period this week, we learned that the former PC Party president was handed a lucrative job in Dallas. The former campaign tour director for the PC Party was handed a lucrative job in Washington. The former chief of staff of the Premier's brother was handed a lucrative job in Chicago. The Premier's family lawyer was given a part-time government appointment—part-time—making \$166,000 a year. The cupboards are never bare for the Premier's friends.

Again, during the spring budget the Conservative finance minister said, “Everyone across the province will be required to make sacrifices, without exception”—except, Speaker, we learned that all 28 of the province's deputy ministers will receive significant wage hikes. Their new minimum salary went from \$205,000 to \$234,080.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Disparaging the OPS.

Mr. Jamie West: The truth hurts.

This is a government that won't hesitate to give nearly \$30,000 to an executive making over \$200,000 while insisting that workers who make \$30,000 should be capped at 1%. Speaker, 1% of \$30,000 is \$300. How is it that the Conservative government can't find 300 bucks for a personal support worker but they can always, always find tens of thousands of dollars—and in some cases, hundreds of thousands of dollars—for their wealthy and well-connected friends?

Bill 124 unilaterally legislates the cap on salary and compensation for public sector workers. The majority of these workers, Speaker, I want to remind the government, are female. One per cent is well below the cost-of-living increase. Families will have to pay for things like food and housing, that climb every year, for the next three years.

One per cent a year is less than inflation—and you can check it on the consumer price index. That's what I did. I did the math on the CPI over the past decade. The 10-year average for the consumer price index is 1.8%. That's looking backwards. Economists are predicting higher. Even if you take a 3% total cap for any three given years, it was 3.85% at best and 6.97% at worst, meaning that any way you look at it, these workers' wages will not keep pace with the cost of living, and meaning that any way you look at this, 1% is not an increase. No matter how many ways they try to frame it, it's a cut.

Worse than that that, that 1% is the ceiling. When you have a ceiling, you bargain down from there. But frankly, with the government's thumb on the scale, even though it's below the cost of inflation, even though 1% is the best-case scenario, workers in Ontario, we believe, don't have it too good.

On June 5, 2019, the government introduced Bill 124, the bill we're debating right now. Nearly five months later—four months and 24 days—we started the debate. And then two days later this Conservative government decided that they had to time-allocate this harmful bill. They've got to rush it through. That meant minimal debate. That meant minimal deputation.

On Monday, we completed the entire provincial consultation for something that will affect about a million workers in Ontario. We did that in six hours. Continually,

through Monday's six hours of deputations, the Conservative parliamentary secretary asked, "What's a reasonable time frame? This was tabled more than five months ago." I want to remind my Conservative colleagues—all of them—that we debated this for a total of eight sitting days, not eight hours every day but eight sitting days. And that's not reasonable.

I want to remind my Conservative colleagues that each time I asked the people speaking at deputations, "How were the consultations?" Each and every time, they replied, "They were a sham"; "They ignored all of our suggestions"; "They predetermined the outcome before the consultations"; and, "None of our feedback from the consultations is in this bill." Most tellingly, they replied that this government only held these as an attempt to shelter themselves from legal challenges, because in Canada, the right to collective bargaining is a constitutional right.

This bill so clearly infringes on collective bargaining rights that, without a doubt, it will be subject to a charter challenge that will cost Ontarians and not help us save money. We've seen this before. The Harper Conservatives pushed wage restraint legislation in 2009, and they went through years of costly legal challenges.

The provincial Liberals tried to impose contract cuts on public sector workers. They lost, and they cost Ontarians tens of millions of dollars in settlement fees and penalties, not including court costs.

Perhaps Conservatives like wasting the taxpayers' money on losing climate change court challenges—\$30 million and counting—and cancelling a legal signed contract with the Beer Store, which is going to risk hundreds of millions of dollars. But that's not fiscally responsible, and neither is this bill.

We know there's a deficit in Ontario, but this will not solve the province's revenue troubles. These tactics will not help Ontario save; it will cost Ontarians. It will leave families feeling more squeezed.

It's time to listen to people smarter than the Premier. In 2012, the Drummond report found that wage restraint is an ineffective mechanism to manage spending over the long term. It's something the government should avoid. Instead, we should be investing in workers, ensuring that they have more in their pockets to spend in their communities and local businesses, creating new jobs. We should be asking those who can afford it to pay their fair share of taxes.

Workers in our province deserve a great place to live. They deserve better. They deserve respect. They deserve compensation. And frankly, workers in this province are tired of Ontario's Conservative parties thinking they have it too good.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to the order of the House dated October 31, 2019, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Bethlenfalvy has moved third reading of Bill 124, An Act to implement moderation measures in respect of compensation in Ontario's public sector.

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

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."
All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."
In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 20-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1700 to 1720.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): All members please take their seats.

Mr. Bethlenfalvy has moved third reading of Bill 124, An Act to implement moderation measures in respect of compensation in Ontario's public sector.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Hogarth, Christine	Piccini, David
Baber, Roman	Jones, Sylvia	Rasheed, Kaleed
Babikian, Aris	Kanapathi, Logan	Roberts, Jeremy
Bailey, Robert	Karahalios, Belinda C.	Romano, Ross
Barrett, Toby	Ke, Vincent	Sabawy, Sheref
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Khanjin, Andrea	Sandhu, Amarjot
Bouma, Will	Kramp, Daryl	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Calandra, Paul	Lecce, Stephen	Scott, Laurie
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Martin, Robin	Skelly, Donna
Cho, Stan	Martow, Gila	Smith, Dave
Coe, Lorne	McDonell, Jim	Smith, Todd
Crawford, Stephen	McKenna, Jane	Surma, Kinga
Cuzzetto, Rudy	McNaughton, Monte	Tangri, Nina
Downey, Doug	Miller, Norman	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Elliott, Christine	Mitas, Christina Maria	Thompson, Lisa M.
Ford, Doug	Oosterhoff, Sam	Tibollo, Michael A.
Fullerton, Merrilee	Pang, Billy	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Ghamari, Goldie	Park, Lindsey	Wai, Daisy
Gill, Parm	Parsa, Michael	Walker, Bill
Hardeman, Ernie	Pettapiece, Randy	Yakabuski, John
Harris, Mike	Phillips, Rod	Yurek, Jeff

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Nays

Andrew, Jill	Harden, Joel	Sattler, Peggy
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Hassan, Faisal	Schreiner, Mike
Begum, Doly	Hatfield, Percy	Shaw, Sandy
Bell, Jessica	Horwath, Andrea	Simard, Amanda
Berns-McGown, Rima	Hunter, Mitzie	Singh, Gurratan
Bisson, Gilles	Karpoche, Bhutla	Singh, Sara
Bourgouin, Guy	Kernaghan, Terence	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Burch, Jeff	Mamakwa, Sol	Stiles, Marit
Fife, Catherine	Mantha, Michael	Tabuns, Peter
Fraser, John	Miller, Paul	Taylor, Monique
Gates, Wayne	Monteith-Farrell, Judith	Vanthof, John
Gélinas, France	Morrison, Suze	West, Jamie
Glover, Chris	Natyshak, Taras	Yarde, Kevin
Gretzky, Lisa	Rakocevic, Tom	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 63; the nays are 41.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I declare the motion carried. Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Orders of the day.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility.

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Yes. Today, during question period, I responded to a question asked that related to Davenhill Senior Living. I'd like to correct my response and let the member from University–Rosedale know that I was speaking about the Sunnyview retirement home. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): All members have the opportunity to correct their record. Orders of the day.

Hon. Paul Calandra: No further business.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mr. Calandra has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until 10:30 a.m. on Monday, November 18, 2019.

The House adjourned at 1725.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergente d'armes: Jacquelyn Gordon

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Arthur, Ian (NDP)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Baber, Roman (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Berns-McGown, Rima (NDP)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Stan (PC)	Willowdale	
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues / Ministre associée déléguée au dossier de l'Enfance et à la Condition féminine Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Elliott, Hon. / L'hon. Christine (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fee, Amy (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	

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

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

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Yakabuski, Hon. / L'hon. John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
Yurek, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
Vacant	Orléans	
Vacant	Ottawa—Vanier	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Wayne Gates
Stan Cho, Wayne Gates
Randy Hillier, Andrea Khanjin
Jane McKenna, Judith Monteith-Farrell
Lindsey Park, Michael Parsa
Randy Pettapiece, Peter Tabuns
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Julia Douglas

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

Chair / Président: Amarjot Sandhu
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeremy Roberts
Ian Arthur, Sol Mamakwa
David Piccini, Kaleed Rasheed
Jeremy Roberts, Amarjot Sandhu
Sandy Shaw, Donna Skelly
Dave Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Julia Douglas

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

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

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
Will Bouma, Lorne Coe
Rudy Cuzzetto, Parm Gill
Taras Natyshak, Rick Nicholls
Marit Stiles, Vijay Thanigasalam
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley

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Roman Baber, Will Bouma
Lorne Coe, Parm Gill
Natalia Kusendova, Suze Morrison
Gurratan Singh, Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Kevin Yarde
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Michael Coteau, Faisal Hassan
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Sam Oosterhoff, Kaleed Rasheed
Sara Singh, Donna Skelly
Vijay Thanigasalam
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

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des comptes publics**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: France Gélinas
Jill Andrew, Toby Barrett
Stan Cho, Stephen Crawford
Catherine Fife, John Fraser
Goldie Ghamari, France Gélinas
Norman Miller, Michael Parsa
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Deepak Anand, Toby Barrett
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Billy Pang, Dave Smith
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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Aris Babikian
Aris Babikian, Jeff Burch
Amy Fee, Michael Gravelle
Joel Harden, Mike Harris
Christine Hogarth, Belinda C. Karahalios
Terence Kernaghan, Natalia Kusendova
Robin Martin
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie