

Legislative  
Assembly  
of Ontario



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(Hansard)**

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(Hansard)**

N° 11A

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42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament

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27 October 2021

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42<sup>e</sup> législature

Mercredi  
27 octobre 2021

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Speaker: Honourable Ted Arnott  
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott  
Greffier : Todd Decker

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111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 27 October 2021

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 27 octobre 2021

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Good morning. Let us pray.

*Prayers.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

#### DÉBAT SUR LE DISCOURS DU TRÔNE

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 20, 2021, on the motion for an address in reply to the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** When we last debated government order number 1, the member for Kitchener–Conestoga had the floor, with time on the clock. I recognize him again to resume his speech.

**Mr. Mike Harris:** It's good to be back talking about the throne speech. I think when we left off, we were giving some glowing reviews to the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade for the fantastic job that he's done—and, quite frankly, everybody in this House—to kick-start the economy, get things back and moving.

There are a few more points I wanted to highlight about Unleashing Ontario, Mr. Speaker, and that just so happens to be the name of the new tool that has been launched to spread the word about the benefits of doing business here in Ontario. Because unlike the province that was bogged down by failed Liberal policies and a government unwilling to change, we are now moving towards an Ontario of innovation and growth. We are bringing back industries that had left our province and opening doors to new sectors like fintech, artificial intelligence and research.

Mr. Speaker, Unleashing Ontario also lists out the 10 reasons why businesses should consider our province—the 10 reasons to think Ontario. Up first is that Ontario is that the second-largest automotive manufacturer in North America. I know we have heard disappointing news from Stellantis over the last few weeks, but I'll repeat again what our Premier and government have said for the last few days: We will stand with the workers in Windsor who are impacted by this shift cut and do everything we can to support them and their families, Mr. Speaker, which we've been doing. That starts with plans like Unleashing Ontario and Driving Prosperity, which will enable a strong recovery and more jobs in the auto sector.

The second reason to think Ontario is that it is the second-largest IT cluster in North America. It also comes

in second in financial services and food processing. I don't need to look any further than my own backyard in Kitchener–Conestoga, where IT and food processing are major economic drivers, to see the jobs and prosperity that these can sectors bring.

Ontario also has free trade agreements with 51 countries—51 countries, Mr. Speaker. That gives us access to over 1.5 billion consumers.

Some 70% of adults in our province have a post-secondary education, and every year we turn out more than 55,000 STEM grads who are job-market ready.

Employer health care contributions are a third of what they are in the US. And with our government's expansion of employer health tax exemptions, we've also saved businesses \$360 million that can be reinvested into the economy.

Our cities consistently rank among the best places to live and work in North America.

These are all reasons why Ontario should be a top choice for investment. But those 10 reasons don't really tell the entire story. There are seven billion reasons why now is the time to invest in Ontario, and that is the \$7 billion—billion—that our government has saved businesses annually across this province. I'll repeat that for any of my friends on the other side of the House who maybe didn't hear me: \$7 billion this government has saved businesses annually here in the province. Some \$2.2 billion has been saved by lowering Workplace Safety and Insurance Board premiums; \$1 billion from the capital cost allowance; regulatory reductions are saving businesses over \$300 million a year; and with the biannual red tape packages, more work is being done to make the province work better for people and smarter for businesses. While the previous government increased hydro rates, we are reducing the commercial and industrial rates by 14% and 16%. I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the measure saving businesses just in my riding alone \$37 million a year, and that is the standardization of the business education tax, which across the province will save nearly \$450 million. Along with the other tax reductions, the math adds up to \$7 billion.

We've launched a new era in our province driven by economic growth, investment and prosperity.

Like I said earlier, 300,000 new jobs were created between June 2018 and February 2020, and we've reached that threshold again, just 18 months after the world did a complete 180. But this government never quit. The Premier never stopped. And I'll commend every member of this House for working through one of the longest sessions in this Parliament's history. While other Parliaments were shut down, we were here.

What this government has been able to accomplish is truly remarkable. We've passed 94 bills, including nearly 30 private members' bills. I think that's unprecedented. Included in that number is my bill, the Safer School Buses Act, and I can't stress enough how grateful I am to all members of this House for supporting it.

The speech delivered by Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor outlines what the priorities of Ontario will be heading into the spring, when we return to our ridings to seek the will of our constituents again.

When I'm out there on the doorsteps in Kitchener–Conestoga, I'll be proud to tell my constituents about all the great things our government has accomplished to build the best province in Canada to live, work and play; about how, in the face of a global pandemic, we still created new jobs, we still made the education of children a priority, with new record spending and updated curriculums that reflect the 21st century; and about how Waterloo region is receiving nearly 600 new and upgraded long-term-care beds, almost as many as the previous government built in an entire decade. But importantly, I'll be able to tell them about how we never wavered from our promise to stop at nothing to protect the health and safety of their families while also pulling out all the stops to protect the livelihoods that they depend on.

As we head into the thick of the second session of this Parliament, I want to close off by emphasizing what a distinct honour it is to be a member in this House. Very few people get the privilege to serve here, and it is never lost on me that my ability to do so comes directly from the people of Kitchener–Conestoga. I ended my address on the first throne speech by thanking them, and I want to reiterate that again today—a humble thank you to everyone back home who continues to have me here. I'm here for all of you, and I will never forget that.

A personal thing here, Mr. Speaker: When you walk down the hallway towards the Premier's office and you see my father's portrait hanging on the wall, it really brings things home. I know that he served the people of Nipissing from 1981 to 2002 with distinction. Those are big shoes to fill, and I work every day to be able to do that.

I know we've only got a couple of minutes left on the clock, but I'll get off script for the rest of it. I know the member from Algoma–Manitoulin is looking forward to hearing me free-wheel it here for the next couple of minutes.

It's really neat, this place. You build a lot of relationships, and I know we talk a lot about how there's so much partisanship that comes across on debate days, but you really do make lasting friendships here, not only with people from your own party or your own government, but also with people sitting in the opposition benches as well. It really, truly has been an honour to be here for the last three-plus years now.

**0910**

We're coming into an election, obviously, in June, and I'm really looking forward to getting back into the riding over the next little while, knocking on more doors, just seeing what the priorities of people are in Kitchener–

Conestoga and reiterating to them that I am here for them and I'm here to do the good work of the people.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I think we'll wrap it up and we'll move into questions and comments. Thank you so much.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Time for questions and responses.

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** My regards to the member opposite. Certainly, his father must be very proud of him.

I'd like to change the channel and talk about something I've mentioned many times and asked a question about, which is insurance in Ontario. Since we are talking about the response to the throne speech and all of their priorities, why isn't insurance a priority for this government? We've seen commercial business rates doubling and tripling when businesses were closed. We've seen auto insurance going up across the province when cars were parked. I've said it many times: On the Allen Expressway in Toronto, you could play street hockey in the middle of the street during this pandemic, at times.

I know that driving is coming back up again, but these insurance companies are reaping in tons and tons of profits on the back of Ontarians. Why is it not a priority for this government in this pandemic and recovery response?

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Thank you to the member from Humber River–Black Creek. I think it's an important question to ask. We've seen this government, in my estimation, do quite a bit to try and lower insurance rates. We've brought forward a bill that intends to do that and make things more fair for people across the province. I know, personally, my insurance rates did go down during the pandemic, so great to see that.

But there's more work to do. I've talked to a lot of businesses, especially restaurants, over the last little while, that are having trouble getting commercial insurance now, and those rates have gone up by 100%, 200%, sometimes 300%. Is that necessarily fair to the consumer? Obviously not, and I think that's something that we need to look forward to and address a little bit more fulsomely as we move forward into the second session.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** The member from Ottawa Centre.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** I always enjoy hearing the member hold forth and talk about—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Pardon me.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** My apologies. I'm out of order. The member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Eglinton–Lawrence.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Eglinton–Lawrence. My apologies.

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Thank you, Speaker. It's okay, they both begin with E and L. It's very confusing. I always confuse them.

I wanted to ask my friend, the member from Kitchener–Conestoga—he mentioned the \$7 billion that we've managed to take off expenses for businesses in this province. It's an annual \$7 billion on what they would

have otherwise had to pay. Because the pandemic has been so hard on small businesses and we're all very concerned about how small businesses are managing, I wanted to ask the member how that \$7 billion has made a difference for businesses in his riding, and if he wanted to also talk more about what the \$7-billion savings are.

**Mr. Mike Harris:** That's a really important question and it really impacts my riding very greatly. Waterloo region was disproportionately—we'll just say—over-charged in the amount of the education tax credit. I think we were on average somewhere between 20% and 30% higher than the rest of the province. So the savings that we see in that \$7 billion, if you break it out, part of that specifically for my riding equates to \$37 million for businesses, and that's businesses of all scales, right from mom-and-pop shops up to some of the larger job creators, not only in Kitchener–Conestoga but in Waterloo region. It's great to see our government realizing that and actually doing something about it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** And now the member from Ottawa Centre. My apologies.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Apologies to the member from Eglinton–Lawrence for jumping too quickly. That's just how excited I get sometimes when I hear the member holding forth.

I want to follow up on my friend's question earlier and give you the prime opportunity for yourself to get a fantastic clip to bring back to your community on insurance. The targets that my friend has set—we called for a 50% reduction across the board for commercial insurance and for automobile insurance. I can tell you there's a business back home that needs that help: just informed, prior to opening up, Red Bird Live, working with public health in Ottawa, that there's a 200% increase in that business's insurance rates.

I don't think it's fair. There's a billion-dollar industry here, I think, capitalizing on an opportunity. Public health should be setting the rules. Sound business practices should be setting the rules. Will the member stand up for a 50% reduction in insurance premiums and dictate to this very greedy industry that they've got to share the pain?

**Mr. Mike Harris:** I don't think we're going to get into talking about dictating.

We don't always see eye to eye, the member from Ottawa Centre and I, but he is right in some aspects here. Whether it means 50% or whatever that number would be, I think that is something that needs to be sussed out. The insurance industry is regulated by the government, but we don't have the day-to-day impact on it. We've talked to them and certainly had a lot of conversations about where this could go, and I think it's something that we're definitely going to have to explore.

Like I said, there are lots of businesses back home in Waterloo region that are having the same issues. It's something that's definitely bubbling up to the surface that we do have to take a very serious look at it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Further questions and responses?

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** I wanted to ask my great colleague there—he talks to a lot of small businesses, talks

to a lot of community members. As much as we've been focused on the pandemic and helping people throughout the pandemic, we have to focus on recovery.

As progressives, we think to the future. We always build momentum and don't really dwell on the past, but look to brighter pastures in the future. As progressives, can you tell us about some of the things that were mentioned in the throne speech in terms of things to look forward to to get the economy roaring again on all cylinders and really reignite this province?

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Yes, that's a great question. I highlighted a few of those things during debate last week and then again today. I've had a lot of opportunities to work with the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. He's been down in my riding, making some fantastic announcements, looking at ways that we can partner with the private sector, looking at ways that we can bring more investment into this province.

I know that we lost, under the Liberal government—and listen, if they want to refute anything I say, they're more than welcome to stand up and ask a question here in questions and comments, but we lost over 12,000 manufacturing jobs in Waterloo region during their tenure. I'm happy to say that those jobs are back. A lot of that has to do with the fact that we've been out there, we've been getting those businesses back from the US and overseas. It's fantastic to see those jobs return to Kitchener–Conestoga.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I recognize the member for Niagara Centre.

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** Thank you to my friend from Kitchener–Conestoga for his presentation.

Last night, we unanimously supported a private member's bill from the member from Richmond Hill for a not-for-profit sector appreciation week. I'd like to ask—and it bears repeating: 2.6% of Ontario's GDP is from this sector, \$50 billion in economic impact, one million employees across the province. Does the member feel that this red tape cutting bill does anything for the not-for-profit sector? Even the chamber of commerce says that more needs to be done. Why is more not being done for the not-for-profit sector?

**Mr. Mike Harris:** I think there is more to be done for all sectors. It's not just not-for-profits. I know that in previous red tape bills, there have been a lot of things that we've done very specifically for the not-for-profit sector in regard to bookkeeping, housekeeping items, different things as far as reporting—kind of cleaning things up for them so they're not needing to report in to multiple different ministries. There have been some things done for this sector in regard to how they're able to fundraise, giving them some new tools to be able to do that.

I think that we need to have a very strong and vibrant not-for-profit sector here in Ontario. I know that the member from Richmond Hill's bill is bringing a little bit more notoriety to that and looking to celebrate them and all the good work that they do in our communities.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Further questions? The member from Whitby.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Thank you, Speaker, and good morning. You'll know that the government is investing \$2.68 billion to build 30,000 new long-term-care beds in a decade. Thousands more are going to be upgraded as well. Could my colleague speak to the effect of that level of investment in his riding and what it means to the hard-working families there?

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Yes, that's a great question. This has been something that I've been quite passionate about, really since starting my tenure as the MPP for Kitchener-Conestoga. As I mentioned earlier, there were, I think, 611 net new long-term-care beds that were created in the province over the last—pretty close to a decade—10 years under the Liberal government, which is pretty dismal.

**0920**

I'm really excited to see over 600 new long-term-care beds and revitalized long-term-care beds coming to Waterloo region alone. It's fantastic news. We have some of the longest wait-lists in all of Ontario in Waterloo region. I think one of the biggest benefits to this is that we're actually seeing some beds being built in our rural communities, which is fantastic. It's a way of life that a lot of people want to celebrate. They don't necessarily want to have to move into the city to get the care that they need. It's really great news for the people of Kitchener-Conestoga and Waterloo region that we're going to see beds being built in our rural centres as well.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Further debate?

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** It is an honour to rise today to participate in the debate on the government's throne speech on behalf of the people of my riding of Davenport.

After a very lengthy summer recess, my constituents, I have to say, were surprised by the Premier's decision to extend that by an additional three weeks by proroguing the Legislature. They were already questioning why we were thrown into an early federal election at a time when the pandemic was still very much, and continues to be, impacting our lives, our work and our economy. So the extended break that the government gave themselves just added to the sense that those in charge were out of touch with the realities facing everyday people. People like the parents who were worried about a rocky return to school with rising COVID cases, or the small business owners watching emergency supports expire with no replacement in sight, or the workers who have been asked to go back to riskier settings without adequate paid sick days and the families of our seniors who are still facing the cruelty of a broken long-term-care system that puts profit ahead of care—those folks weren't looking for the government to take an extended break. They wanted their MPPs back in this place, working for them.

Now, I know we are all out there working in our constituencies and in our ridings, but there is business that needs to be dealt with in this Legislature. I think the people of Ontario, seeing the MPPs take that extra time away from the Legislature, were wondering why and who was going to see them through this fragile recovery phase and take real action to deliver help.

People were also really frustrated that the government seemed to be operating without the checks and balances that define our system of government. Too often, governments get comfortable—we've seen this again and again—in their own power. They tend to see those checks and balances as a bit of a nuisance. They start to dread answering questions in question period or appearing at committees. It's just a hassle for them. We saw what happened with the last government that got too comfortable in their own power, surrounded by insiders and losing touch with the people they were meant to be working for.

So with this in mind, I have to say, I was looking forward to hearing the throne speech, expecting that, at the very least, the government would use this important tradition to outline a vision for our province in the months ahead and the next year. And, I have to say, I also hoped that, against all odds, it would mark a change of course for this province, because we desperately need one here in Ontario.

Our health care heroes—the folks that the government members opposite refer to as heroes every day—our front-line health care heroes are burning out. Hospitals and long-term-care homes are understaffed, more than ever. The wait for backlogged surgeries among my constituents and folks all across the province is long and it is painful and it is dangerous. Our kids' classrooms are jam-packed, leaving kids without the one-on-one attention they need after such a truly difficult year and a half—and COVID cases are indeed rising in schools. Small businesses are trying to rebuild and are taking on new responsibilities but without extra resources, without any support from this government.

Changing course would mean making significant investments in health care, in our schools, instead of making deeper cuts. It would mean standing up for local business over big box stores. And it would mean offering meaningful protection for workers, not simply prioritizing the needs of friends and insiders like this government has done repeatedly.

As we know now, sadly, that throne speech did not outline a bold new direction for this government. It actually contained very little of substance. That was one lightweight throne speech, I've got to say, leaving a lot of Ontarians across this province, like us, feeling abandoned and asking themselves what was the point of that.

I've got to say, the press was even less enthused, and I do want to share some of the headlines going back a couple weeks now to the throne speech. The Waterloo Record: "Better Luck Next Throne Speech, Ontario." They went on to say that whoever wrote the speech "took 2,325 words to say almost nothing," and they mentioned that that the Premier had "squandered that opportunity and in the process let down the people of this province."

Indeed, the speech was more notable for what it didn't include. The day of the speech, there were outbreaks declared in three more schools here in Toronto. Cumulatively, there were 17 schools in the city that had outbreaks. Parents, students and education workers had already been back to in-person learning for weeks, and the

COVID cases reported in schools were increasing to the point where nearly a third of all new infections in the province were related to schools. How seriously did this government take this threat? Not very seriously, if you consider that the throne speech, which was supposed to be an outline of their agenda and their priorities, didn't mention schools once.

I want to read an email, a letter that I received from a mom in my riding. Her name is Laura. I'm just going to read this whole thing out, because I thought it was so well put together.

She says: "Despite the availability of tests and vaccines, it seems that nothing has changed for the schools since March 2020.

"In 18 months, from the age of 3 to 4.5, our daughter has only spent seven months in child care/school. She has been deprived of contact with kids her age and a proper education. We had to work and care for her at the same time. Toddlers can't use a computer or be left alone for a minute.

"A lot of families are at the wits' end and/or dire financial circumstances. The policies to protect children should take into account the essential role in-person schools has in their and their family's well-being."

Maddie, a teacher from Davenport, wrote to the education minister and copied me. Here's something that she said: "My school currently has four primary classes, all above the cap of 20 at 25, 25, 26 and 24"—four primary classes. "We had a primary class cut at the beginning of the week which increased our class totals by about five each. Our rooms are small, our desks are 1.5 feet apart, our windows open about 12 inches from the bottom.

"During a regular year this would be unimaginable, but this year it is enraging and scary.

"Please, come and help us," She said. "Join us in our packed rooms, join us for maskless lunches, join us for the tears, the confidence crisis, the six-year-old feelings of anxiety, fear and doubt, the upset scared parents. All of it that the Ministry of Education clearly has never experienced or thought about. Please do something. Do better." Those are the words of Maddie, a teacher, who wrote to me and to the Minister of Education.

Speaker, these are just a few of the—and I mean really, honestly—countless messages that I receive from my community, and from all over the province as the opposition education critic.

I have to say, Speaker, school boards were scrambling to implement new vaccine disclosure rules and keep track of testing requirements, and they continue to. They have been forced to combine and reorganize classes to meet ministry funding requirements, causing more disruption, more risk for students. They need a commitment of more funding to keep class sizes low, and many of our school boards across the province have actually passed motions calling for just that. As I raised in the House just yesterday, many boards are pleading with the government to take action to keep schools and students safe by making those vaccines mandatory, something the government has steadfastly refused to do, just as they've done in health care.

Speaker, no unvaccinated staff should be working with vulnerable people in hospitals, in long-term-care homes or in classrooms. This throne speech could have—should have—outlined a safe schools plan and immediate funding for smaller class sizes and the hiring of more teachers and more education workers for those kids who have been put so far behind, who've seen their learning disrupted for more weeks and more months than any other schools in this country and pretty much in North America and the world.

**0930**

But we didn't see a penny for that; we saw nothing. We didn't even see the mention of the word "schools." The government couldn't even be bothered to give these issues a passing mention in a speech that is meant to outline their priorities. Well, that's a real shame and it says a lot to the people of this province.

Speaker, I want to talk about an issue that did garner a few words in the throne speech, and that's long-term care. I want to say that this government, in the throne speech, reiterated some of the promises that we already heard from the government while steadfastly refusing to take any responsibility for the devastation and the death we witnessed in long-term care during this pandemic. Those horrors aren't something that happened in the past; it was just months ago. I have to say, it sometimes feels like an eternity, but it was just months ago that those lives were lost, families across this province were devastated, and for some seniors it persists.

The throne speech celebrated a mandatory vaccination requirement in long-term care that I've got to say came painfully late. A long-term-care home in Toronto was under lockdown around this same time after an unvaccinated staff member brought COVID back into the home. Vaccination of residents helped a lot, but the impact of isolation and the fear of infection continues to impact residents and separates them from their loved ones.

Government members didn't need to look to the throne speech for inspiration on long-term care because that very day on the lawn, family members, support workers and advocates were gathering to demand action and justice for our seniors. They were holding placards with images of their loved ones lost far too soon. They were very clear in their demands. They wanted accountability from the private, for-profit care homes whose profits grew while residents suffered. They were calling on the government to act using legislation and powers that already exist to withhold licences, to levy fines against those companies that have acted like the law just doesn't apply to them.

I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, it was an honour to join my NDP colleagues outside that day to hear from those folks. Many of them, I want to say, I had not met in person until that day. People who have been in touch with my office—because of the pandemic we couldn't see each other, and it was very moving to actually meet some of those family members in person. Their tireless advocacy was really a poignant contrast to the uninspired, narrow speech that we heard in the House that morning. I wish that some of the members opposite could have had the

courage to join us out there on the front lawn that day. I really do. I was surprised they didn't actually, if for nothing else than just to listen to those people and use their power as government members to actually deliver for seniors.

Another key word in the throne speech—or term, I guess—that I was really surprised was completely missing was climate change. I don't think I need to tell anybody here we're in a climate crisis. We urgently need the province to step up. This government has repeatedly shown its willingness to prioritize demands of big developers over protecting the environment. We've seen it again and again.

I want to say that in my community among the issues that people prioritize over everything else is climate change, and I think that's true with just about everybody in this province pretty much—every corner. There's nothing that is a greater threat to humanity right now than climate change. There's the need for urgent climate action, and to have that missing from the throne speech so completely was baffling actually. I really can't understand it.

We've seen how this government has used their powers to gut conservation authorities. We've seen how they've continued to ignore the Environmental Bill of Rights—by the way, the Environmental Bill of Rights introduced by an NDP government, something we continue to be very proud of.

The government's so-called Made-in-Ontario Environment Plan has promised a \$400-million carbon trust which has yet to be delivered or funded. It's really just making an inadequate plan even more inadequate. It's just words. It's just words on paper right now, Mr. Speaker.

We need to recognize that the climate crisis is a threat to our health, our economy and our way of life. We need to bring that same whole-of-government approach, which was justified for COVID-19, to bear on what is an existential threat. This government just doesn't seem to get that. This throne speech made that very clear. It showed how far behind Ontarians—how far removed this government is from Ontarians. Whether you're talking about the folks who are out there on the lawn at Queen's Park after the throne speech talking about what needs to happen in long-term care, how we get that profit out of long-term care, how we put people before profit—whether you're talking about that, or you're talking about the kids, the young people who continue in various ways during the COVID pandemic to try to raise their voices in Fridays for Future across this province and around the world. This government, these members, don't listen. They don't even pretend to. They don't even go out there and just listen to those families.

I've only got a few minutes left here, Mr. Speaker, but I just want to say that I've been thinking a lot as we head into this last few months, really, of our term—we're into an election in June 2022—and I've been reflecting a little bit on what I've learned as an MPP. What were my lessons? Because now I've been elected for a little over three years as a member of provincial Parliament. I try to think about what I've learned and the positive things I can take from this experience, and I would say one of the

things that I have learned is the importance of listening. It's actually listening. There's action; you listen and then you take action. Hopefully you take action. But there's also a piece of this that's just actually listening to people, and understanding.

I think it's been one of the most valuable things, that I've actually experienced, of being an elected MPP: that opportunity to hear from people with lots of different experiences, and learn so much. It's really a privilege, Speaker. It's an incredible privilege, and it doesn't mean just listening to the people who you know agree with you. It means listening to the people who don't agree with you. That's absolutely crucial, in fact, if we're going to have a balanced approach to governing. Unfortunately, I feel like that's been missing.

I want to also mention a few other things where I think this government—the issues that were missing quite considerably from this throne speech, while I have a few more minutes. I was really astonished not to see talk—real talk—about economic recovery and real action to address, in particular, the loss of women from the workforce through the COVID-19 pandemic, and the need for what some have called the she-covery; the fact that this government has not grabbed onto that offer by the federal government—something that New Democrats have fought for generations—of \$10-a-day child care in this province that would transform life for so many people in our communities, and for so many women in particular.

I meet women all the time on the doorsteps now who gave up, who had to walk away from careers to take care of their children—single parents sometimes, sometimes not—because there just isn't child care. There wasn't child care, there wasn't school, and they had to stay home and take care of them if they were in school. These women—this isn't just a loss for them personally; it's a loss for all of us. Our economy will not recover, and so it's more essential than ever in this moment. It's just, by the way, the right thing to do.

Other things that were missing: any conversation about Indigenous and treaty relations, truth and reconciliation. The only new point of reference seems to be, "Ontario and Canada observed the inaugural National Day for Truth and Reconciliation." Wow. No policy commitments. And, by the way, let's not forget that this is a government that has not moved on even making that National Day for Truth and Reconciliation a statutory holiday. Not even that. Nothing.

Nothing for rural Ontario, for rural Ontarians who continue to this day to be neglected without proper investments in infrastructure, in agriculture, in schools, in hospitals, housing—housing, Mr. Speaker. The Premier promised that nobody was going to be evicted who couldn't pay their rent due to the pandemic, but this government has not continued that, and this government's main idea for housing has been to scrap environmental protections and use MZOs that seem to be more about helping their friends than making homes more affordable.

**0940**

What was noticeable about this throne speech was what was missing, and there was a lot. I think this government

has truly failed in charting a plan and a path forward for recovery for this province, which they've had an opportunity to do. And, by gosh, I really hope that over the next few months, they see some sense and they make some change, because the people of this province and in my riding of Davenport sure deserve that.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Time for questions and responses.

**Mr. Mike Harris:** I find it really concerning when I hear some of the comments from the member across the way. She's talking about all these people that she hears from, from teachers to parents. I am a parent. I'm a parent of five children, and they're all in the public education system in Waterloo region. I hear from their teachers and the parents at their school as well, and they're happy to have their kids back. I know, from a parental standpoint, I'm happy to have my kids back as well.

They talk about standing up for jobs and all this stuff, and then they want to fire 50,000 teachers when they're talking about mandatory vaccinations at schools. I don't understand, Mr. Speaker. Maybe she can try and help clear it up.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** I would be very pleased to do that. I have to say, when I asked the Minister of Education that question yesterday about why they weren't bringing in mandatory vaccination, and he threw this 50,000 number out—I've got to tell you, I was speaking to reporters all day in the media who were just like, "Where does this come from?" It's complete fiction. That's the answer, Mr. Speaker. For one thing, it presumes that everybody who hasn't even just shared their status yet—which, by the way, has been a challenge—that all of those people would just never get vaccinated.

The point of mandatory vaccination, I want to point out, is that it's a tool in the tool box that we have. It's one of the most effective tools we have in encouraging people to get vaccinated. You're not going to lose 50,000 workers. That's baloney. That's complete hogwash. We are actually talking about—let's keep those kids safe in our schools, let's keep those education workers safe in our schools. What this government is doing is pandering to those folks who are anti-vaccine, and they should be upfront and honest about what they're trying to do.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I recognize the member for Toronto Centre.

**Ms. Suze Morrison:** I specifically want to comment on the member from Davenport's remarks on long-term care. As she was speaking about the devastation in our long-term-care homes this past year, I was reminded when the member opposite, just half an hour ago, was up on his feet and talking about the legacy of his father. Of course, he was talking about former Premier Mike Harris.

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Suze Morrison:** No, excuse me, the former Premier's legacy in this House is the devastating privatization of our long-term-care sector. And where was former Premier Mike Harris during COVID-19, while more than 4,000 seniors and people with disabilities died in our long-

term-care homes? He was sitting as the chair of Chartwell, raking in record profits this year.

My question to the member is: Can you share your concerns with why this PC government has consistently ignored calls from the NDP to end the privatization of long-term care in this province that was spearheaded by former Premier Mike Harris?

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** I want to thank the member from Toronto Centre for that question and the passion as well around this issue.

I've got to say, yes, absolutely, I remember in the days of that Conservative government being out there myself, protesting the move to privatization of long-term care.

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Were you at my house? I remember seeing you there.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** I bet you did see me there.

I was going to say, at the time, I was actually doing research. I was working on policy, particularly around health care and long-term care, and it was immediately clear what was going to happen and what would continue to happen under government after government, which is that funds that should be going to patient care would be diverted into profit. It's a fundamental principle. It makes complete sense to just about everybody except the people who want to profit from it and their friends and donors, and that's this government across the way.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Further questions and responses?

**Mr. John Fraser:** We heard the member opposite give a number of 50,000 education workers lost because of mandatory vaccinations. I don't know where the minister pulled that out of, but to be polite I'll say he probably pulled it out of his hat.

It's perfectly reasonable for parents to expect that the person who is helping their child at school or in child care has been vaccinated. I'm sure the members across agree as well. School boards in Ottawa—93% and 94% mandatory vaccinations. They did the work. Obviously, the Minister of Education doesn't want to do the work.

Can the member please further discuss the importance of mandatory vaccinations in our schools and our child care centres?

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** I would thank the member for that question. As I mentioned earlier, mandatory vaccination is a tool that we have. It's one of the most effective tools we have, I would argue, in encouraging people to get vaccinated. We've seen this happen. We've seen vaccination rates increase as we put in place more restrictions and more requirements that people have vaccinations. It's obvious. Because sometimes, let's be honest, some of this is just a little hesitancy; some of it is that people just need that extra push. This is a tool that will help us to ensure more people are vaccinated.

But at the end of the day the most important thing is that we will have that comfort, and parents will have the comfort—and I am a parent, too, by the way—of knowing that their child will be in a classroom with somebody who has been vaccinated. And the teachers who work there and the other education workers will also have the comfort of

knowing that they are working alongside people who are vaccinated. That is absolutely critical, and this government is avoiding it because they're pandering to their base and to those who are anti-vax.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I recognize the member from Kitchener–Conestoga.

**Mr. Mike Harris:** I'd just like to point out I am vaccinated. The members here are vaccinated. My children are vaccinated. My wife is vaccinated. Are we pandering to the anti-vax movement? Absolutely not.

Let's talk a little bit more about this. Whether the number is 50,000, whether it's 30,000, whether it's 4,000 or 5,000, she stands up here and talks about class sizes being too big, but then she says she's in favour of teachers losing their jobs. How are we going to have lower class sizes if we're losing even as many as only a few thousand teachers here in the province? She wants them to be vaccinated. That means they're going to lose their jobs if they don't want to have that choice.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Do you know how we are going to get smaller class sizes? Do you know how we are going to get mandatory vaccination? We're going to change government. That's what we're going to do in this province. Because you know what? At the end of the day, the member opposite needs to acknowledge that numbers do matter. Facts matter. Throwing numbers like 50,000 out there yesterday was absolutely outrageous and irresponsible, I would argue.

Just like this government floats all these timelines and everything, giving people a sense of "You know what? You've only got a few more weeks left; you don't have to really go and get vaccinated now." This government is doing that. They're playing games with the lives of people in this province. Numbers matter. That 50,000 is not a real number. It's a made-up number that came out of somebody's hat, as the member said.

This government wonders how we make classrooms smaller? I'll tell you how we make classrooms smaller: We invest in education. We don't cut \$800 million from it. We invest in education.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I recognize the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

**Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell:** Thank you, Speaker, and good morning. I really want to say to my colleague, the member for Davenport, thank you for her impassioned and excellent analysis of the throne speech.

I too was struck by the lack of depth in the commitment to long-term care, announcing billions of dollars for beds and for a privatized system, with none of the listening that we did and hearing seniors wanting home care, that they want to stay in their homes longer. We want regulations that will ensure safety and care for our seniors.

I ask the member, what would she want to see in a full home care and long-term-care and senior care and disability care plan?

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** I want to thank the member for that very thoughtful comment. I think in many respects we've already started to chart out, we've laid out the plan for

what needs to happen, in a lot of bills and a lot of motions that we've brought forward in this Legislature.

**0950**

I think, ultimately, there are a few really clear things that have been missing in what this government has done, but, at the end of the day, one of the things that I think is the most egregious is the lack of accountability and consequences for what were really horrible conditions and neglect in long-term care, and not just during the pandemic. I think the pandemic shone a light in a really horrible way, and, of course, we lost 4,000 people, so that was not a small matter. But we have seen, I think, what many in long-term care have been saying now for decades, which is that this neglect existed and that these conditions would result in more deaths—and it just shone a light on that.

The fact that after all of that we haven't seen this government truly address that and address the issue of profit in care is really unfortunate, and I hope that the government will listen and change tack.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Further debate?

**Mme Lucille Collard:** Just at the outset, I'll indicate that I'll be sharing my time with the member for Scarborough–Guildwood and the member for Ottawa South.

I'm pleased to rise today on behalf of the residents of Ottawa–Vanier, who I've been representing for more than a year and a half now, and talk about the throne speech. The content was a surprise to a lot of people. Throne speeches traditionally are always moments of expectation for people, for the public who are anxious to find out what the government's plan is to solve the challenges of the moment. I think that they were disappointing on that front.

I want to talk about the positive news that the government said that they didn't have the intention of pursuing further cuts to public services and spending. That's good news, because, over the last three years, we've seen the devastating effect that cuts to services can have for families in Ontario. Bold actions are still necessary to recover from the negative impacts that have made the lives of so many vulnerable people so much more challenging with the pandemic as well.

Many also appreciated the fact that the throne speech made a recognition that Ontario is located on the traditional lands of various Indigenous nations, but I think that much more needs to be done on that front as well.

Unfortunately, not everything about the throne speech was praiseworthy. Important issues Ontarians were awaiting to hear from were not even mentioned in the throne speech, such as education. Ontario's public school system is facing an urgent lack of investment. Many schools are overcrowded, with classrooms having 40 students or more. Too many portables are taking the space in the schoolyard. Students are having to eat their lunch sitting in the corridors of their school because all the space has been taken up for classrooms, because the investment has not been made. These conditions are not only a sanitary risk, but they are also the reflection of the weak priority that we attribute to our education system.

La francophonie a également été mal servie par ce discours du trône qui n'a d'aucune façon reconnue la place des Franco-Ontariens dans les priorités du gouvernement. Ceci a été mis en évidence par le fait même qu'aucun mot en français n'a été prononcé dans le discours.

There was also no mention of the greatest challenge facing humanity. The scientific community is saying that we must act aggressively and immediately to curb greenhouse gas emissions. It is disappointing that the government's position on the climate crisis is that it does not even merit a mention in the throne speech. The millions spent fighting the federal government's climate measures in court would have been better invested in green energy and the transformation of our transportation systems.

People in Ottawa–Vanier were also disappointed that child care and paid sick days are not prioritized to send the economy on the recovery path by enabling women and families to integrate or reintegrate into the workforce and to be protected if they get sick.

The housing crisis is making life unaffordable for working-class people in Ottawa–Vanier, and too many homeless people on the wait-list are desperate for a place to call home. Despite this crisis, there was no mention of housing in the speech from the throne. It really feels like we are not putting up a fight against homelessness, and the negative impacts on our society will be lasting and expensive. Action is needed and it is needed now.

The pandemic shed light on our collective moral failing on long-term-care-home conditions. While the speech did mention long-term care and promises the admirable actions of spending more on long-term-care homes, increasing surveillance and mandating vaccines for employees, it could have gone further. It could have committed to implementing stricter and more consistent regulations on long-term care and put forward a plan to give more seniors the choice to receive care in their own home, which is what most people want.

There is a lot missing from the throne speech, and it left people wondering about the intentions of the government towards their well-being. While I'm thankful that the government intends to take the pandemic seriously, there are other crises going on that should receive more of the government's attention. I hope the government won't let Ontarians down on these priorities.

I look forward to working productively with all members of this House to make Ontario better for everyone.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I recognize the member from Ottawa South.

**Mr. John Fraser:** The throne speech fell flat. It felt like it felt when I got here this morning. Overall, it was vague. It lacked detail. It missed the mark. It read more like a cut-and-paste from government news releases over the past year or maybe two years. It's not the reset that the government claimed it was going to be; it was just more of the same.

The speech let down Ontarians. A lot of Ontarians are saying, "This is what we waited for?" Worst of all, it let down our children. There was not one mention of the word

"education," despite our children having two very, very difficult years at school—no provisions to help students catch up on what they missed, no new provisions to support learning or to make class sizes smaller. If the government really valued public education, they would have at least said the words in the speech.

There was no mention of creating a mandatory vaccination policy for front-line workers in health care and education, although we know it's perfectly reasonable for families to expect that the person caring for their loved one at home or in a hospital has been vaccinated, or the person teaching their child at school or caring for their child at a child care centre has been vaccinated too.

There was no mention of safe zones around our hospitals or schools, although we saw those protests over the summer and early this fall that were concerning; no mention of the federal government and \$10-a-day child care, getting to that agreement, although we know that's really important for our economy, to get women back into the workforce—mostly women. Greater participation means our economy will be stronger.

There's no mention of the environment and climate change—none—the greatest challenge facing our children. This speech really let down children: no education, no climate change. It's quite surprising.

Et il n'y avait pas une seule phrase significative pour répondre aux besoins de la communauté franco-ontarienne.

C'est intéressant : j'ai entendu une réponse du gouvernement pendant la période de questions. La réponse était : « Nous vous avons donné le drapeau dans la Chambre et de l'argent pour le festival du fromage à St. Albert. » Cela en dit long sur la compréhension de ce gouvernement des besoins des Franco-Ontariens, réduisant leurs besoins à des drapeaux et des « curds ».

Speaker, the throne speech let down our future. It let down our children. It didn't talk about education, didn't talk about the environment and climate change. It wouldn't have taken much, but the government couldn't even utter those words.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I now recognize the member from Scarborough–Guildwood.

**Ms. Mitzie Hunter:** Mr. Speaker, I am always honoured to rise on behalf of my constituents of Scarborough–Guildwood. There is no more critical an opportunity than the throne speech for the government to set out its vision for the people of this province. As my colleagues have already said, this government has fallen way short.

It is heartbreaking that the PCs have squandered this opportunity and could not bring themselves to do the necessary work to really define what the vision is under their government for the people of Ontario.

The reconciliation was mentioned with Indigenous peoples of this land, but what was missing is the action. We just recognized the first national day of reconciliation in Canada, and this government, under this Premier, refuses to make that a holiday in Ontario, and so commitment needs action.

1000

It's time for the Premier and for his Conservative government to do their part and to put Ontarians first—not your re-election plans and your campaigning and your pre-victory laps before we're even through the pandemic. Deliver on things like lower class sizes so that students in my constituency of Scarborough–Guildwood, like at Cedarbrae Collegiate and St. Ursula, are not disrupted because of outbreaks in their schools.

Deliver for children with autism and their families so that 50,000 children are not waiting on those wait-lists, which have doubled under your watch despite funding. You have the funding, but you have not spent it.

Deliver on mandatory vaccinations in our health care system, in our education system, so we keep those most vulnerable things. Deliver on a plan to vaccinate children under 12, between five and 11, as soon as that vaccine is approved as safe by Health Canada.

Deliver on \$10-a-day child care. Sign the federal agreement. Why are you holding out—one of the last provinces. If you care about women and their economic recovery—which was not mentioned in the throne speech at all, despite women seeing the most challenging effects from this pandemic.

Deliver on justice for those taken from us far too soon and the elderly in long-term care and in our communities, who have bore the brunt of this pandemic.

Deliver on a third round of funding for small businesses in this province, who also were ignored in this throne speech. You're relying on tax deferrals instead of offering real help and real support.

The people of Ontario deserve better from this government right now. They cannot wait, because they are struggling each and every day to make ends meet and they need a government that actually demonstrates and takes the action needed to show that they care.

Unfortunately, this throne speech did not deliver for the people of Ontario. It did not put the priorities and the needs in health care—you're still underfunding, despite the fact that we're in a health crisis. It did not deliver on education. It did not deliver for the women of the province—who were not even mentioned—for the environment and climate change, or for education and for the future of this province. It's time that you get to work.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I look to the member from Flamborough–Glanbrook.

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's nice to see you in the chair.

My question is for the member from Ottawa South. The member has been in this House since 2013, and during the period that his party formed government, 600 long-term-care beds were built in this province. Our government is spending close to \$3 billion to create 30,000 long-term-care beds. We're spending close to \$5 billion to hire almost 27,000 more long-term-care staff to help our seniors, our most vulnerable population.

We've spoken about that horrifying statistic for so long—600 beds. We didn't create the crisis; the Liberal

government created a crisis. We inherited it, and we're doing our part to address that. Can the member please explain why long-term care was not a priority and only 600 beds were built during his tenure?

**Mr. John Fraser:** That was 600 net new beds. But she didn't talk about the beds that we rebuilt that were already there—30,000 over 15 years, new, and beds that were redeveloped.

But here's my question: You've just made vaccinations mandatory in long-term care, after months of people calling for it, and you did that because that's important to protect people there. Also, the minister said, "You know what? The staffing isn't a problem because being not vaccinated is more of a risk to staffing"—more of a risk. Now this government refuses to do it anywhere else—refuses to do it in schools, refuses to do it in child care, refuses to do it in hospitals. And your excuses are lame. CHEO, 99%; Queensway Carleton, 98%; UHN, 97%—if you actually set the policy and did the work to answer people's questions and get them vaccinated, we would be so much further ahead.

Thanks for the question.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I recognize the member from Niagara Centre.

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** It's good to see the juices start to flow this morning.

My question is for the member from Scarborough–Guildwood. She mentioned \$10-a-day child care. It amazed me that the government—it was such an easy win. Seven provinces have already signed on to the deal. I think the Liberals promised it 11 elections in a row, and the NDP finally made it happen. I'm wondering if she could tell us how important that program is to the people in her riding.

**Ms. Mitzie Hunter:** I really thank the member for the question.

We're talking about a throne speech, and this government didn't even mention the children of this province and their futures and what they plan for the children of the province.

The federal government has delivered a comprehensive program on child care. Seven provinces have already signed that agreement, and Ontario still has not signed.

The people in my community, in Scarborough–Guildwood, really need lower costs for child care, in terms of the \$10-a-day, which would save their family a great deal on child care, but they also need access to the more spaces that that would provide, as well as the quality training in terms of early childhood educators and having more of those capacity. It's desperately needed.

This government needs to sign that agreement today.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I recognize the member from Haldimand–Norfolk.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** My question is to any of the three Liberal members opposite, with respect to long-term care.

I've spent 15 years in opposition, under Premier McGuinty and Premier Wynne, and my riding had zero development of long-term-care beds. Previous to that, I was an elected member under Premier Harris and Premier

Eves, and we had long-term-care new builds: brand new facilities at Parkview Meadows in Townsend, two facilities in Dunnville—Edgewater Gardens and Grandview—and a brand new facility at Norview. Then, 15 years of Liberals—no build at all. Now, under Premier Ford, I have four major projects in the works.

What's your vision for long-term care?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I recognize the member from Ottawa South.

**Mr. John Fraser:** I love this place and all of you, too.

So, 30,000 new beds, rebuilt beds, over 15 years—but the vision for seniors is not just building more long-term care, because we know that we have to do that; it's actually, are you investing in home care? Take a look at what's happening in home care right now. Home care is asking you for \$600 million. Try to get a nurse in home care; try to get a PSW.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Fraser:** Well, no, what's happening is, you're driving them all towards long-term care.

People want to stay at home. People want care, to be able to live in their own homes. That's why we have to invest in long-term care.

What's this government doing for not-for-profit long-term care? Nothing. Zero. Squat. What's the government doing to support communities to build their own long-term care? Nothing. Zero. Squat. They're leaning in hard to for-profit care. Why? Because they got lobbied.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I recognize the member from Ottawa Centre.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** My question is for my neighbour in Ottawa-Vanier. I just want to bring up something a nurse said in the Ottawa Citizen today for your reaction, given what you mentioned. Kate Magladry is an RN, and her experience during the pandemic—she was that person in the hospital holding up the iPad to the sick patient with COVID-19, who was unconscious, because that was the only way her family could contact that patient. She had to be there. In the Ottawa Citizen, she said she cried every time she saw that. But what she says about the latest rhetoric of heroes, when people call her a hero—this is what Kate said, and I'd love the member's reaction. When she hears the word "hero," she thinks the word is forever tarnished. Now, it sets off alarm bells, and she begins to think, "Oh, they're calling us heroes. That's their licence to underprotect and undervalue our work." I think Bill 124 does that.

You can't call someone a hero and prevent the growth of their wages. You can't call someone a hero and not staff up in nursing care.

What do you think, member: Is this something that we should be telling the government to put in its next throne speech as a priority?

1010

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** Thank you for the important questions. The member is a neighbour in Ottawa.

We all know that we need to take care of the people who take care of us, and that means really recognizing the

value of their work and paying them decently so that we can attract more people in the profession and have more people look after us. I think that increases of wages that are temporary cannot do the job, and not giving the nurses the working conditions that they need to be able to thrive and have a balance in their life with their work and their family is wrong. I think we need to recognize them. We need not only to put them on a pedestal, but give them the means to do their job properly and to thrive as human beings.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I recognize the member from Kitchener-Conestoga.

**Mr. Mike Harris:** You know what? It's a great Wednesday morning here in the Ontario Legislature. I'm actually quite happy to see a little bit of liveliness coming back to this place after, I'd say, a quiet start to the second session.

My question is the member from Scarborough-Guildwood. She talked a little bit about truth and reconciliation and the new National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, but the Prime Minister, who is the leader of the federal Liberal Party, which of course I'm sure she supports, was surfing in Tofino during that day. He ignored a few requests from some local chiefs to come and get together. I'd like to hear her comments on what she thinks about that. If we're talking about things that were missing from the throne speech, why don't we talk about our Prime Minister who was completely missing in action on a day that he brought forward?

**Ms. Mitzie Hunter:** I believe that we have to be real when we really think about the effects of colonialism in this province, of what has happened to Indigenous peoples. That was a day that really was devoted to that. It was a day of reflection. For me, I visited Tabor Hill Ossuary in my riding in Scarborough, and I cried.

I recognize that more needs to be done. This government, one of your first acts as a PC government was to cancel the curriculum-writing that was ready. It was already done. It was actually led by Indigenous people. And you cancelled that. You cut arts funding for Indigenous communities through the Ontario Arts Council. You've actually done more to prevent the advancement of truth and reconciliation and its actions.

Let's focus on what we can do here in this House so that true reconciliation is possible.

*Debate deemed adjourned.*

#### REQUEST TO THE INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table a request by the member for London West to the Honourable J. David Wake, Integrity Commissioner, for an opinion pursuant to section 30 of the Members' Integrity Act, 1994, on whether the member for Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston, Randy Hillier, has contravened the act or Ontario parliamentary convention.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

## EVENTS IN LONDON–FANSHAWE

BILL PAUL

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** This past summer and fall, like so many of us, I had the pleasure of reconnecting with my community. Even through our masks and distance, I could feel how glad and relieved everyone was, finally able to get together. Thank you for all the invitations, whether it was to walk with you at the Parkinson's walk, or the N' Amerind Friendship Centre for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, checking in with local businesses or celebrating local organizations, attending summer festivals or a tree-planting, it was a delight to see you all again. We've made it through this hard part, so let's keep going.

I also want to take a moment to honour someone special: Bill Paul, London's unofficial town crier. He passed away earlier this month. Bill always had a smile and good cheer for everyone he came across. Bill will be missed. We'll miss your booming voice and your calling out "Oyez, oyez" to start our events. It always felt like a special occasion when you were there to celebrate with all of us. We will miss you, Bill Paul.

## REMEMBRANCE DAY

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** I want to thank the brave men and women who sacrificed their lives for the freedoms and unity that we commemorate on Remembrance Day this year and every year.

During World War II, 7,400 Indigenous people volunteered for Canadian military service and approximately 300 lost their lives. Known as one of the greatest Canadian soldiers, Company Sergeant Major Francis Pegahmagabow was honoured with a building that was dedicated in his name at CFB Borden. He is known as the most skilled sniper of the First World War, with more than 375 kills. He is one of 38 Canadians to earn the Military Medal with two bars, each in recognition of his acts of bravery.

In Barrie, Speaker, we have a rich history of recognizing our veterans. This year, as you drive around Simcoe county and Barrie–Innisfil, take time to commemorate the streets that are named after our veterans: for example, Brown Street, which is named after George Roy Brown and Harold Brown, who both fought in the First World War. We also have Spiers Road, which is named after Thomas Robert Speers, and just next door in Newmarket is a street named after Reginald Harrison, who is the grandfather of Emma Notman, who works with my team. He served in Europe.

So as you drive around this year and commemorate our veterans who fought for our freedom, don't forget to think about the local history in our own areas.

## VOLUNTEERS

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** I'm pleased to rise to speak about a great initiative in Welland. Next month, Jim Butts is joining other Wellanders to offer breakfast to those facing homelessness in the city.

For the last nine years, Butts and a team of volunteers, including my friend Mary Ellen DuPon, have been operating a food bank and serving hot meals once a month at the Holy Trinity Anglican Church. These good Samaritans are now partnering with Beyond the Streets, a local volunteer-led organization providing services to those at risk of or experiencing homelessness in Welland. The group has counted at least 40 people who are homeless in downtown Welland alone. Shelter beds offered by the Hope Centre are constantly full, and local not-for-profits report that more and more people are struggling to find a place to live.

Groups like Beyond the Streets and the organizers out of Holy Trinity Anglican Church are hoping to fill some of the gaps and ensure that those facing homelessness can get a hot meal at the start of their day. The program is starting with a soft launch on November 6, where I will be joining them in handing out food, and I encourage others to join, as more help is needed. Anyone interested in volunteering can contact my office, where we will connect you with the organizers.

## LONG-TERM CARE

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** I'm proud to rise and say that after decades of neglect by previous governments, our government is taking action to fix Ontario's long-term-care sector. We want to ensure Ontario seniors get the quality of care that they need and deserve, both now and in the future.

The Minister of Long-Term Care is committed to an open dialogue on how best to move Ontario's long-term-care system forward, and in that spirit I held a consultation on October 12 with the Minister of Long-Term Care and the MPP for Willowdale, the Associate Minister of Transportation. The consultation included input from relevant stakeholders such as long-term-care providers and family groups from the riding of Willowdale and my riding of Eglinton–Lawrence, including representatives from Villa Colombo Toronto and the Jewish Home for the Aged.

I'm proud that in addition to these consultations, our government is already taking concrete steps to improve long-term care across the province, funding more care with a \$270-million investment this year. As a result, in my riding of Eglinton–Lawrence, to increase the direct care every resident receives this year, Villa Colombo Toronto residential long-term care will be receiving \$1.4 million more than last year, and the Jewish Home for the Aged \$1.7 million more than last year. To meet our promise of an average of four hours of care per resident in 2024-25, Villa Colombo will be receiving \$8.5 million more annually than their current funding by that year, and

the Jewish Home for the Aged \$10 million more annually than their current funding.

Mr. Speaker, strengthening long-term care is a commitment our government takes seriously. Through consultations with our partners in the sector and our direct investments, our government is fixing long-term care, now and for the future, and making a difference for Eglinton–Lawrence.

#### BLAINE CAMERON

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Nine years ago, an organizer for Ottawa ACORN knocked on Blaine Cameron's door. Blaine lived with Becker muscular dystrophy in a used power wheelchair, and he'd been trapped in his apartment for months, struggling with a pest problem and a lack of access to the outside, given Ottawa's winter conditions. This is the case for thousands of people with disabilities every year.

1020

The organizer told Blaine, though, that he didn't have to put up with it. Blaine was invited to join Ottawa ACORN to help people organize for justice, and from that day onward, Blaine was a leader in our city, because someone knocked on his door.

In time, Blaine became the chair of ACORN's central Ottawa chapter. He helped win \$250,000 in rent rebates in that building. He helped win increases to the asset limits for ODSP recipients. He fought for hikes in Ottawa's affordable housing spending, and he helped win a national program, the Connecting Families program, which offers low-income families \$10-a-month Internet. That has reached 200,000 families across Canada. In 2018, Blaine was also a major part of our win in Ottawa Centre.

But we lost him two weeks ago, Speaker. His heart couldn't sustain his life any longer, and his friends and family today are heartbroken too. So this Saturday, we are going to celebrate Blaine's life, and we're going to do it by hosting a community canvass for rent control, because that's what Blaine would have wanted.

Blaine, rest in power, my friend. We're thinking of you, and we're never going to stop organizing for justice. Bless you.

#### AMÉLIORATION DES ROUTES

**M<sup>lle</sup> Amanda Simard:** Depuis des décennies, les résidents de ma circonscription qui voyagent sur l'autoroute 174/17 font face aux embouteillages, aux accidents et à tout ce qui fait des trajets quotidiens du matin un cauchemar. Plus de 20 000 personnes empruntent quotidiennement cette autoroute dans ma région. Le statu quo n'est pas acceptable.

Pour résoudre ce problème, cette autoroute doit être élargie et, comme je l'ai déjà préconisé auprès du gouvernement, pour que cela se produise, il est essentiel que le gouvernement de l'Ontario reprenne cette autoroute sous sa juridiction.

Je sais que ce gouvernement, par l'intermédiaire de leur ministre des Transports, a déclaré qu'il ne reprendrait pas l'autoroute 174/17. Cette position est profondément décevante, car cette reprise est le seul moyen d'avancer le projet d'élargissement à ce point-ci.

J'exhorte encore une fois ce premier ministre et ce gouvernement à changer leur position sur cette question importante et à reprendre cette autoroute—pour la sécurité, pour l'efficacité, pour l'économie.

#### ANTI-RACISM ACTIVITIES

**Mr. Aris Babikian:** Racism and hate are the scourge of any society. It is a destructive phenomenon. It destroys the cohesion of any society or country. I am proud of the government initiative to launch a \$1.6-million program to protect communities against racism and hate. I'm confident that the Stronger Together coalition will benefit from this program.

The Stronger Together coalition was launched during the COVID-19 pandemic by the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto. Its mandate is to combat racism and hate, especially against Asian communities.

For the record, I would like to pay tribute to the coalition members: Alpha Education, Association of Chinese Canadian Entrepreneurs, Canadian Aboriginal and Minority Supplier Council, Canadian Multicultural Council – Asians in Ontario, Canadian Tamil Congress, Chinese Professionals Association of Canada, Filipino Centre Toronto, Hong Fook Mental Health Association, Korean Canadian Cultural Association, Malaysian Association of Canada, South Asian Culture and Health Association, the Cross-Cultural Community Services Association, Toronto Hakka Heritage Alliance, Toronto Police Service and the United Way of Greater Toronto.

During the Lantern Festival celebration, the coalition organized a powerful and meaningful tribute to the victims of the residential schools. Mr. Speaker, I was honoured to participate in this tribute. I am also privileged to have participated in the founding meeting of the coalition.

#### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** My community of Davenport is going through some extraordinary change. We have some of the most intensive development happening anywhere in the city, and as I meet with neighbours on the doorstep there is one issue that continues to be raised again and again and again: They want development that doesn't just spew out more high-priced condos. They want housing that is deeply and permanently affordable, with real rent control. They want the developers who profit from these projects to contribute to the building and maintenance of local schools, to playgrounds, to transit and to parks.

They also want transparency around the ownership of real estate and developers in our community, like the disclosure laws that the BC government has brought in. And while the city of Toronto considers inclusionary zoning, they are asking for the support of this government,

the provincial government, to stand up to developers who don't build with our communities in mind.

I want to thank organizations in my community like South Junction Triangle Grows and the Junction Triangle Community Action Network for the work that they're doing to ensure there's a cohesive community voice and focus in negotiation with developers. I especially want to mention the amazing community members of Build a Better Bloor Dufferin, who have successfully worked to negotiate significant benefits and affordable units in developments in the Bloor-Dufferin area. We need more support from this government now.

### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** It's an honour to rise today to announce another critical investment in Sarnia-Lambton by the government of Ontario. I'm pleased to share the good news that the Ontario government is investing nearly \$1.35 million this year to support critical health care infrastructure upgrades in Sarnia-Lambton at Bluewater Health's beloved Charlotte Eleanor Englehart Hospital in Petrolia.

This is a very important investment and part of the government's larger investment of \$182 million, provided through the Health Infrastructure Renewal Fund and the Community Infrastructure Renewal Fund. This year's investment by the government in the Bluewater Health CEEH campus also builds on our investments of \$1.3 million in 2019 and over \$1.2 million in 2020.

Our government continues to make record investments to support world-class hospitals across the province and ensure the health care system is prepared to respond to any scenario. Upgrading and maintaining hospitals and community health infrastructure is one of the more important ways our government is ensuring Ontarians receive exceptional care when they need it and closer to home.

### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'm very pleased to inform the House that page Lamees Elbayoumi, from the riding of Mississauga-Malton, is one of today's page captains, and we have with us today at Queen's Park her father, Usama Elbayoumi.

Yamama Dahdal, from the riding of Toronto Centre, is also one of today's page captains and we are joined today by her mother, Faten Dahdal. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. We are delighted to have you here.

### QUESTION PERIOD

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Ms. Sara Singh:** My question is to the Premier. Throughout this pandemic, the Conservative government could have applied penalties and fines to long-term-care

operators where inspections clearly revealed that they had broken the rules. We know that in 2018, the Liberals brought in penalties, but never got around to actually proclaiming them into law. To make matters worse, this government, after more than three years, still hasn't proclaimed those penalties into law either.

After nearly 4,000 deaths in long-term care, why won't this government proclaim the laws that are already on the books and hold these for-profit homes accountable?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** To reply on behalf of the government, the government House leader.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** I think the member will know that yesterday we announced a significant increase in inspections across the province of Ontario for the long-term-care sector.

The member is quite correct that over 15 years, the Liberals certainly did not do the work that was needed to ensure that we had a strong long-term-care sector, and we saw some of the results and the impacts of that in the early stages of the pandemic. Honestly, that's why we moved so quickly to ensure that we increased the amount of beds, increasing it by 30,000 over the next number of years. That's why we are significantly increasing the amount of inspectors. That's why we are moving to the highest standard of care in North America, with four hours of daily care. That's why we are hiring 27,000 additional PSWs, paying for the education of PSWs and hiring thousands of new nurses.

**1030**

The member is correct: The Liberals did let us down in that regard, but we are moving very quickly to ensure that we have a stable, strong long-term-care system for the future.

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

**Ms. Sara Singh:** The government House leader is correct: The Liberals certainly did let us down. But this government had three years to act, and they did nothing. They could have proclaimed these laws on day one, but they chose not to.

In her April 2020 report on long-term care, the Auditor General said that she was not impressed by this government's lack of action to move forward with penalties that are already on the books. The Auditor General said this government "decided to not implement any fines or penalties" and they raised serious concerns about significant delays in this government's action and the government's decision to take a very supportive role in supporting these bad actors.

The Premier has no issue using extraordinary powers to serve his own political purposes, but when it comes to protecting seniors, they did nothing. They could have proclaimed these laws, but they chose not to.

Why is this government rewarding the for-profit operators with new beds and 30-year contracts instead of enforcing penalties that are already on the books?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** To reply, the Minister of Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Rod Phillips:** I thank the member for the question. This government, from day one, started to address the problems left by the previous government by committing to build new beds. From day one, this government took a proactive approach to addressing the issues in long-term care.

But very specifically to the member's question: We've acknowledged and identified, listening to the long-term-care commission, listening to the Auditor General, listening to front-line workers and listening to the residents and families of long-term-care homes, that there need to be changes in the long-term-care act. That's why, tomorrow, we'll be introducing new legislation. We look forward to the feedback from the member when we look at introducing more transparency, when we look at introducing more accountability.

But, yesterday, we announced the doubling of the number of inspectors. So I'd ask the member, are you in favour of more enforcement? Are you in favour of the increased powers for inspectors? We know what you're against, but clearly, you must think that increasing the number of inspectors and doubling those inspectors is a good thing, so, Mr. Speaker—

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

The final supplementary?

**Ms. Sara Singh:** Speaker, with all due respect to the minister—I know he's still relatively new to the role—there are inspection reports that clearly outline that there are bad actors. What this government is doing is actually rewarding those bad actors with more contracts and public taxpayers' dollars.

The Liberals didn't proclaim these laws and penalties and they didn't build enough beds either, causing the problems that we have in long-term care. But the horrors in long-term care were exacerbated by this government's inaction.

As the Financial Accountability Office's report in May of this year indicates, this government isn't even going to meet their own targets for new beds. Even when they hand out contract after contract and billions of public taxpayers' dollars to the for-profit sector, they are going to miss their own target by nearly 7,000 beds.

Is the government's plan to provide zero accountability for bad actors, and accountability and transparency to Ontarians, and then hand these contracts over to these for-profit providers?

Speaker, my question, again to the Premier, is: Why is this government never willing to do the right thing to protect seniors, and why are they constantly rewarding their friends and insiders?

**Hon. Rod Phillips:** Mr. Speaker, the member chose not to talk about the doubling of inspectors. Smokey Thomas, the head of OPSEU, yesterday said this is a government that's listening; Doris Grinspun from the RAO said this is a government that's listening.

But on the topic of beds: We understand this is why there is an opposition, different sides of the aisle. The opposition, the NDP, have an ideological aversion to the 140 construction projects that are going on right now,

including, in Oakville, the building of 340 beds, including those beds that will be culturally specific to the Sikh and Hindu communities. They would rather see that project stop right now. Mr. Speaker, we don't want to see that project stop; we want to see those 140 beds built.

We don't want to spend billions of dollars expropriating the assets of private companies, which is what the NDP would do. We want to spend billions of dollars building new beds—\$3 billion. We want to spend \$4.9 billion adding four hours of staffing—something they've talked about over there but we're doing. We're going to spend the money protecting seniors, building beds and making sure accountability—

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

The next question.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Ms. Sara Singh:** My next question is also to the Premier. The same companies running for-profit homes, where some of the worst outbreaks and deaths were found, are actually getting more rewards from this government.

At Sienna Senior Living, for example, which operates the Woodbridge Vista care facility and the Altamont care home, 84 seniors passed away in the pandemic. The government didn't issue any penalties to those homes. In fact, the government is giving Sienna millions in taxpayer dollars as a reward.

Speaker, why would the government reward Sienna with millions in lucrative contracts when that company hasn't been able to even safely operate the homes they already have contracts for?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Minister of Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Rod Phillips:** Mr. Speaker, the tragedy of what happened with COVID-19 is something that we all witnessed. We understand the challenges that happened not just in long-term-care homes here in Ontario but across Canada and around the world. That is why we appointed a commission, and that commission looked very specifically at issues across the long-term-care sector. They have provided recommendations—recommendations like increasing the number of inspectors; recommendations like making sure those inspectors have more authority; recommendations that related to accountability, transparency and the importance of making sure that enforcement is in place.

That commission, led by a former judge, also talked about the need for more and new beds. The previous government, at one point supported in its minority by the opposition, allowed only 611 beds to be built over a period of seven years.

Mr. Speaker, we are fixing long-term care. That does involve building new beds. That does involve putting more accountability in place. And that does involve a plan that's working.

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

**Ms. Sara Singh:** Speaker, the government knows just how badly Sienna operated their own homes. Professionals from the William Osler Health System had to actually step in to help manage the Woodbridge Vista home. At the Altamont home, the Canadian Armed Forces were required to step up. What they found was a home in disrepair, dirty and damaged walls, overworked staff and a huge maintenance backlog. But instead of issuing a single penalty to Sienna, this Premier brought out the chequebook and offered new, lucrative contracts to this for-profit provider.

Sienna wasn't capable of managing the homes that they already had licences for. So why would the Premier reward Sienna with new contracts when they weren't even able to properly manage the long-term-care homes that they already had?

**Hon. Rod Phillips:** Mr. Speaker, under the previous government—again, at times supported by this opposition—of the 611 beds built, none were built, for example, in Brampton. This government is committed to 680 new beds and 120 upgraded beds just in the community of Brampton.

The shareholders of the company that the member is talking about are probably rooting her on, because they know that what the NDP wants to do is make sure that billions of taxpayers' dollars go to pay them for their company. We are not in the business of expropriating companies. We're not in the business of putting billions of dollars just to take ownership away from those operators. We're in the business of putting billions of dollars to work, and that's what we're doing—providing more care, four hours of care; providing 27,000 new staff; providing 30,000 more beds. That's how we will spend the taxpayers' money. That's how we will protect seniors. And that's how we will fix long-term care.

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

**Ms. Sara Singh:** Speaker, this could have been an opportunity for this province to do better. This could have been an opportunity to move away from for-profit long-term-care system that the Liberals and the Conservatives both prefer. We could have homes where seniors live and die in dignity.

Instead, we have licences going to an operator where inspectors found a resident not drinking enough fluids, and instead of being offered a glass of water, the senior was given medication that caused further dehydration. That resident later died. Inspectors found that Sienna lacked a staffing plan. And instead of a penalty, this government offered Sienna new contracts to make even more money. When asked yesterday by the media what the minister's possible justification would be, he refused to answer.

So I'll ask again: Why won't the government do the right thing, stop rewarding their buddies and the private shareholders in for-profit long-term care with lucrative contracts and start protecting seniors and people with disabilities in long-term care?

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**Hon. Rod Phillips:** This government is the first government in decades to take the actions necessary to

protect seniors. It comes in three parts: building more beds—30,000 beds, and 20,000 of them are already under way. That's 220 construction projects, 140 of which the member would have us stop today; \$4.9 billion for four hours of care—27,000 new staff; I was with the Minister of Colleges and Universities offering another \$100 million to bridge RPNs and PSWs into nursing jobs—\$100 million today for 2,000 new nurses—surely you support that; and, Mr. Speaker, more accountability, more enforcement, doubling the number of inspectors. The member likes to talk about inspectors. Would she not think it would be better if there would be more of them? Could she say that? No.

Ideologically driven, they want to put billions of dollars through expropriation in the hands of the very private companies they don't like. We're going to put those billions of dollars to work to support seniors. We're going to fix long-term care in this province.

#### COVID-19 IMMUNIZATION

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** This question is for the Premier. Yesterday, the Ontario science table released a new report on strategies for increasing COVID-19 vaccine uptake for children and youth. Among other strategies, the research is very clear that school-based vaccination strategies are key, and they call them—and I want to quote—"a high-impact and effective approach for increasing uptake that address many practical issues" including "reach, convenience, feasibility, accessibility, equity."

Parents want kids vaccinated as quickly and as efficiently as possible. School boards are already running school-based vaccination clinics for other childhood vaccines, they're just waiting for direction from this government. Approval from Health Canada could come at any moment. Why are we still waiting for a clear vaccination plan from this government for our five-to-11-year-olds?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** To reply, the Deputy Premier and Minister of Health.

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Thank you to the member for the question. We have been working on a vaccination plan for children aged five to 11 for months now. We recognize that Health Canada approval may be forthcoming very quickly. We have been in contact with our 34 public health units. They have submitted their plans. We are finalizing them with the public health units. Many of those vaccination programs will be carried out in schools—perhaps not during school hours, but after hours and on weekends.

So, given the fact that we've already had tremendous success with our adult vaccination campaign, we reached 88% of people aged 12 and older having received their first dose. This is a significant achievement, and based on the achievement of our adult program, we are going to replicate that success with our children's program for children aged five to 11.

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

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Back to the Premier: The science table report is crystal clear. It says that boosting the uptake of vaccination among children and youth is going to depend on building and leveraging trust, especially by those in positions of authority. But, yesterday, the Premier himself sowed more doubts about vaccines for kids. I'm going to quote him. He said, "I also understand if parents don't want to get their five-year-old or six-year-old vaccinated."

Speaker, our younger children are the last segment of our population waiting to be vaccinated. When is this Premier going to stop pandering and start planning to get our kids the protection they need?

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Our government has said since the very beginning when vaccines became available that anyone who was able to receive the vaccine should get the vaccine. The vast majority of people have, with 88% of people aged 12 and over already vaccinated with their first dose and over 84% having received the second dose as well.

This will apply to children as well. There may be some children who might not be able to for medical reasons. However, we are encouraging all parents to have their children aged five to 11 vaccinated as soon as it becomes available by Health Canada's approval. We will be able to supply those vaccines. We have the orders in. We have the capability to do it, and we are ready to deliver. Just as we've successfully done with adults, we will successfully do with children as well.

#### FLU IMMUNIZATION

**Mr. Aris Babikian:** With this year's flu season approaching, I know many in Scarborough–Agincourt have questions surrounding how and where they can get a flu shot. Here in Ontario the flu shot is provided free of charge to everyone, six months of age and older, who lives, works or attends school. As we continue to live with COVID-19, it is more important than ever to get the vaccine when it is your turn. I have heard from constituents who are eager to get their flu shots as soon as possible.

Speaker, through you: Could the Minister of Health tell us how our government is planning to roll out the flu vaccine this year?

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Thank you to the member from Scarborough–Agincourt for the question and for your superb work on behalf of all of your constituents.

Our government is proud to say that this year will mark the largest seasonal flu shot program in Ontario's history. Building on last year's success, Ontario is investing over \$89 million to purchase over 7.6 million flu shots this year, which is 1.4 million more than last year. This includes a total of 1.8 million high-dose vaccines specifically for seniors.

Over five million doses of the 7.6 million doses ordered have already arrived in Ontario and are being distributed around the province. To protect the most vulnerable, Ontario's initial supply of flu vaccine was prioritized for

long-term-care-home residents and hospital patients beginning in September, and flu shots are now available for seniors and others most at risk for complications from the flu.

Flu shots for all Ontarians will be available starting next week through doctor and nurse practitioner offices, at participating pharmacies and public health units.

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

**Mr. Aris Babikian:** Thank you to the minister for that response. It is great to hear that we are preparing for a strong demand for flu shots this year, and that we have focused on prioritizing the initial supply for the most vulnerable. I personally look forward to booking my flu shot at any local pharmacy when they become available starting next week.

Last year we saw some delays in distribution due to the significant turnout at flu vaccine clinics. Speaker, to the minister through you: With such high demand this year, what is the minister doing to ensure there is more than enough supply available in Ontario?

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** I'm very pleased to report that there are no delays in vaccine shipments by manufacturers. We ordered more doses this year, as a result of the increased uptake last season and in recognition of the importance of the flu shot in ending hallway health care and protecting hospital capacity as the province continues to respond to COVID-19. We are being clear that there will be a sufficient supply of flu shots for any Ontarian who wants one.

As the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Moore, has said, "The annual flu shot is the best defence against the flu this season.... As we head into the fall and begin gathering indoors more often with family and friends, it is even more important to get your flu shot, in addition to following public health measures, to protect yourself and those around you."

Speaker, I encourage everyone to get their flu shot as soon as they can, and I'd like to remind all Ontarians that it is safe to receive the COVID-19 vaccine and the flu shot at the same time. So if you're receiving your flu shot and have yet to receive a first or second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, please do so as soon as you can.

#### CHILD CARE

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** My question is to the Premier. The Centre for Future Work has shown that a universal early learning and child care program, phased in over 10 years, would facilitate increased labour force participation and employment of up to 725,000 Canadian women in prime parenting years, create over 200,000 jobs in child care centres, increase the Canadian GDP by between \$64 billion and \$107 billion, and add \$17 billion to \$29 billion to provincial and federal revenues, more than covering the cost of the program.

Ontario's astronomical child care costs are the highest in Canada, yet this government continues to drag its feet and squabble with the federal government. Will this

government stop their theatrics and bring in universal, high-quality, public, not-for-profit, \$10-a-day child care for the people of Ontario? Yes or no?

1050

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** To reply, the Minister of Education.

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** I want to thank the member opposite for the question. We agree child care is too expensive. It was an inherited legacy out of the former Liberal government, where child care rose by 40%. With that said, the province in the nation that, regrettably, has the worst metric when it comes to pricing is the New Democratic province of BC. We believe as Progressive Conservatives we can make child care affordable and accessible through a better deal with the federal government.

The member opposite uses the word “theatrics.” We’re negotiating for a better deal when we’re talking about potentially leaving as much as \$3 billion on the table. Thank goodness the New Democrats or the Liberals are not in the driver’s seat in this negotiation. They would have caved to the federal Liberals immediately.

We’re extracting the best deal, the longest and more sustainable deal, to ensure those fees are reduced—not just in year 1 but over the course of our mandate—to ensure the program is there for moms and dads when they need it so they can afford child care in this province for good.

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

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** Seven provinces and one territory have signed the deal to provide \$10-per-day child care. As the Ford government drags its feet on the child care deal, municipalities are stepping up to fill the gap. Last week, Niagara Regional Council passed a motion asking staff to investigate the potential for them to enter into a direct agreement with the federal government to participate in the national child care strategy.

Niagara is prepared to treat the child care crisis with the urgency it requires. Municipalities know we need to start building a universal, affordable, quality child care system right away. Will the Premier stop his ideological dithering and say yes to child care?

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** It’s this Premier who is investing \$2 billion this year alone to build a more accessible child care system, investing \$1 billion specifically to build 30,000 spaces, which the former government couldn’t get done.

We’ve introduced a tax credit to reduce child care costs, given that they rose by 40%. I agree with the member: It’s absolutely unacceptable, by any standard. What did the Premier do in his first year? He introduced a tax cut, which was then enriched, providing roughly \$1,500 per child in savings.

It will help make a difference, but we recognize there’s more we can do, which is why we’re at the table with the federal government. We’re standing up to this federal Liberal government to get a better deal for the people we represent in this province. I would expect the New Democrats, at the least, perhaps not the Liberals, to cave to Justin Trudeau—to demand that this province gets the

best possible deal: long-term sustainable funding the moms and dads in this province deserve.

## HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT AMÉLIORATION DES ROUTES

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** My question is for the Premier. For almost 25 years, the residents of Orléans and Ottawa have been stuck with the cash cow that is Highway 174. Highways 174 and 17 function as an enormous regional highway that sees tens of thousands of commuters each and every day.

As we know, Mr. Speaker, previous Conservative governments downloaded Highway 174 on to the backs of Ottawa property taxpayers and never looked back. This decision has sucked tens of millions of dollars out of local road maintenance, out of winter snow clearing, out of repairing potholes and better sidewalks and better cycling infrastructure.

Earlier this week, I introduced Bill 26, the Uploading Highways 174 and 17 Act. You can’t watch a sporting event without seeing the Premier say that he wants to say yes. Saying yes to Bill 26 will help commuters in Orléans and across eastern Ontario. Will the Premier say yes? Will this government support Bill 26 and upload Highways 174 and 17?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Associate Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Stan Cho:** Just when you think you’ve heard it all from the Liberals—this is incredible. What an ironic question.

First of all, the Liberals had 15 years to do something about this and they did nothing at all. But it doesn’t stop there. In 2016, the then transportation minister, Steven Del Duca, announced plans to widen parts of Highway 17 but said no when it came to widening Highway 174 in Ottawa. In fact, it was the member from Orléans—an Ottawa city councillor at the time—who told the CBC, “What’s going to happen is you’re going to have a four-lane road in Rockland, cramped down to a two-lane road through Cumberland, and back up to a four-lane road in Orléans.... Maybe that’s what Rockland residents want but somehow I doubt it.”

The Liberals are hot then cold, yes then no, and while they’re busy making up their minds we’re going to invest in transit and transportation across this entire province.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Stop the clock. Order.

Restart the clock. The supplementary question?

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** While I appreciate the answer from the junior member from Willowdale, my question was for the Premier.

For nearly 25 years, the Conservatives have kept Highways 174 and 17 with municipal taxpayers in eastern Ontario. Ever since, those highways have been sucking tens of millions of property tax dollars out of road maintenance, out of winter snow clearing, out of better

cycling facilities and pedestrian facilities for residents in Ottawa and the counties.

Conservatives used to understand the error of their ways. In 2014, the leader of the Ontario Conservatives promised to upload Highway 174 in a letter to Mayor Watson. Let me quote the letter: “In our first 100 days in office ... we will begin negotiations to upload Highway 174, thereby removing the cost of this route from the city and integrating it into the province’s highway planning.”

It has been 1,216 days since this government took office—1,216 days—and there has been no action.

The Premier likes to say yes—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Stop the clock.

The government House leader will come to order. The Minister of Economic Development will come to order. The Solicitor General will come to order. The member for Kitchener–Conestoga will come to order.

Restart the clock. Please conclude your question.

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier likes to say yes, so I would like to hear a yes from the Premier.

Le premier ministre va-t-il enfin dire oui aux habitants de Hawkesbury? Va-t-il enfin dire oui aux habitants d’Alfred? Will he finally say yes to the residents of Wendover, to the residents of Rockland, to the residents of Ottawa? Will the Premier finally say yes to the residents of Orléans and approve Bill 26 and upload Highways 174 and 17?

**Hon. Stan Cho:** So the member wants to talk about history. Let’s talk about history: In fact, these challenges for the great people Ottawa are not new. In 2007, the Liberal government under Dalton McGuinty and Conservative government under Stephen Harper made the first commitment to fund \$40 million toward the widening of Highway 174 and county road 17. But guess what? The city of Ottawa—

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** It’s a \$500-million project.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Orléans, come to order. Allow the minister to answer the question.

The associate minister.

**Hon. Stan Cho:** Speaker, the city of Ottawa said no to that plan, but almost a full decade later, the plan was revived by the then Liberal transportation minister, Steven Del Duca. But as a councillor, the member for Orléans said no. This is incredible: The member for Orléans tried to get the last Liberal government to upload the highway, but they said no to him too. The Liberal government can’t seem to decide which is yes, which is no or whether they agree with their own members or not. So this government will not take lessons from them but continue expanding transit and transportation across the entire province, including in the great city of Ottawa.

#### CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** My question is to the Associate Minister of Children and Women’s Issues. Every October,

children’s aid societies across Ontario raise awareness about the role we must all play in supporting vulnerable children, youth and families in our province, and this is done through our Dress Purple Day campaign.

Families today are dealing with a multitude of challenges, including the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which continues to create additional stresses for some families. For vulnerable children and youth, these times have posed increased risk for their well-being and safety.

Can the minister please tell this House how we are helping to raise awareness for vulnerable children, youth and their families on Dress Purple Day?

**Hon. Jane McKenna:** I’d like to thank the member from Eglinton–Lawrence for this important question. Keeping children and youth safe is a responsibility that our government takes very seriously, along with our children’s aid societies. In fact, everyone in Ontario has a role to play in the well-being of children, youth and families.

Through Dress Purple Day, we remind Ontarians that, together with other social service providers, children’s aid societies are there to help children youth and families who may be facing challenges. Dress Purple Day is an opportunity to raise awareness for all of us, including among children and youth, about their right to safety and well-being in all spaces.

On Dress Purple Day, we celebrate communities and families and remind them that help is available and no one is alone.

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

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Back to the minister: As you can see, members on all sides of this House are dressed in purple to show their support for vulnerable children, youth and families. While dressing in purple demonstrates our support for this important campaign and helps to raise awareness of everyone’s role in supporting children, there’s more that can be done to help address some of the challenges vulnerable children and youth are facing.

**1100**

In addition to the partnership with service providers and the Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies’ Dress Purple Day campaign, could the minister please advise this House about some of the actions taken by this government to not only protect vulnerable children, but to also ensure that they feel supported?

**Hon. Jane McKenna:** Speaker, the member is quite right. Our focus is not only on protection, we are also working to change the culture of the child welfare system to one that focuses on prevention and early intervention. At the core of our plan to redesign the child welfare system is our goal to strengthen families and communities. We’re working to make children and family services safe, culturally appropriate and responsive to the needs of children, youth and families.

I’d also like to recognize the efforts of those who work at children’s aid societies. We all faced many challenges and pressures we couldn’t have imagined 18 months ago. I want to take a moment to thank those who are dedicating their lives to support children and youth in our province.

Every child in Ontario should feel empowered and supported, because when they feel safe and supported, we all benefit.

#### GOVERNMENT INVESTMENTS

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** My question to the Premier. The investment by this Premier and his minister to their buddies at Facedrive just stinks. The products the Premier and his minister proclaimed would help Ontarians aren't even in use anymore, and no one can find any actual jobs created by the millions in grants. Some have said that the millions the company received may have contributed to helping the company drive up its stock, only to see it come crashing down while company executives sold off shares for millions of dollars. But that's not all. Facedrive's executive vice-president kicked thousands of dollars into the PC coffers last year just after the government gave the company millions in public dollars.

To the Premier: What jobs in Ontario did this multi-million investment create, and how many of the Facedrive products were actually made in Ontario to date?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade.

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** In the depths of the pandemic, when Ontario had almost no PPE capacity, our government launched the \$50-million Ontario Together Fund. This helped local companies retool their operations to produce PPE, critical supplies and develop technology-driven solutions and services.

Like all submissions to the Ontario Together Fund, this proposal was assessed by ministry officials using internal experts as well as external, independent and third-party institutions. Additionally, in this case, this also included two university professors who provided their expertise.

In order to ensure value for money, the ministry has safeguards against a company's performance, and that includes a holdback of funding, covenants around project completion and a requirement to have an independent auditor confirm that the investment was made in accordance with the funding agreement. If the company falls short, the ministry can take appropriate action.

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

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Again to the Premier: It's not just us raising concerns about this investment, Speaker. On the government's promo video for Facedrive, which the company posted on social media, the Ottawa Centre Progressive Conservatives weighed in. They wrote on February 24 of this year, "What is supposed to be the return on the government's 'investment'?" Investment is in air quotes because no one believes that this was a good investment to create jobs and keep Ontarians safe, and even the government's own party members are wondering what return on investment taxpayers got for the millions that the Premier dumped into their coffers.

So what did Ontarians get out of this cash to the Premier's corporate buddies, besides a bunch of trackers,

no longer in use, that the company bought off the shelf in China?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** From day one, our government has been focused on keeping the people of Ontario safe. That's why we introduced programs like the Ontario Together Fund. The intention is to lower the hurdle for domestic companies to begin to support Ontario's ongoing response to the pandemic.

The program supported 45 projects and leveraged more than \$187 million in private sector investments. That has allowed us to reduce our dependence on unreliable supply chains. In fact, before the pandemic, very little PPE was made here in the province of Ontario, and as of today, 74% of our PPE is purchased domestically and most of it here in the province of Ontario.

Now, it's unfortunate that the member and his party voted against the second round of \$50 million for essential goods that are made in Kanata. They said no to supporting critical manufacturers in places like Hamilton and Scarborough. It's only our government—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Orléans will come to order. The member for Davenport, come to order.

The next question.

#### COVID-19 IMMUNIZATION

**Mr. John Fraser:** My question is for the Premier. Good morning, Premier. Speaker, it's perfectly reasonable for families to expect that the person who is caring for a loved one at their bedside, in a hospital or in home care, that that person has been vaccinated. It's a perfectly reasonable expectation. Does the Premier agree? Yes or no?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** To reply, the Deputy Premier and Minister of Health.

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** What people should expect is that they will be protected against COVID-19. We have said that from the beginning, that the health and welfare of all Ontarians is our primary goal.

We've had a very successful vaccination campaign. As I indicated earlier, 88% of people aged 12 and older in Ontario have received at least a first dose, and 84% have received a second dose.

We expect, and we are asking everyone in Ontario who is able to receive the vaccine to do so, and as indicated, the vast majority of people have, as have the vast majority of people in health care.

However, as the member knows, there are other concerns that we have to be thinking about as we make this decision with respect to mandatory vaccination or not. That is with respect to the number of people who are not being vaccinated. Though they still have to be tested on a regular basis before they go into work to make sure everyone is safe and healthy, we still need to be concerned about the number of people who would leave if we brought forward a mandatory vaccination program. That is why the Premier has written to hospitals, has written to health care

organizations to understand the ramifications of such a decision.

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

**Mr. John Fraser:** I'd appreciate a yes or no from somebody on that side if the Premier is unwilling to answer that question.

Speaker, what's unreasonable is the delay this government has taken. The argument the minister is making—their Minister of Long-Term Care says that we need mandatory vaccinations to prevent outbreaks so we won't have staff shortages, and that far outweighs losing any staff. That same principle applies in hospitals, in home care, in schools. It's not any different. So the position that the government is taking and the Premier has taken is unreasonable—unreasonable.

The delay is incredible. Of those organizations that have adopted mandatory—hospitals have adopted mandatory vaccinations in my riding: CHEO, 99%; Queensway Carleton, 97%; here, where we are: UHN, 97%. You know why it works? Because they took action early on, and they did the work they needed to, to get there. But this government can't figure that out. You haven't been able to figure it out through the whole pandemic.

I just need an answer to the question, Premier. Yes or no: Is it reasonable for families to expect that?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'll remind the members to make their comments through the Chair.

Minister of Health.

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** We have taken every step possible during the course of this pandemic to protect the health and welfare of all Ontarians.

The member is correct that there have been some—particularly pediatric—hospitals where they have required vaccinations because of the fact that children cannot be vaccinated right now. The vast majority of their patients are not vaccinated. The situation is different in hospitals, plus the fact that anybody who is working in a hospital, who is not vaccinated, also has to be tested very regularly.

But still, the principle remains the same: We need to understand and look at the evidence, look at what's happening in all of the hospitals, in all of the health care organizations across Ontario to make a proper decision to ensure that we will have sufficient numbers of health care professionals who would stay on if a mandatory vaccination program were brought in, to make sure that we can continue to care for the people who already need care in our hospitals and in home care. We need to look at the—

*Interjection.*

1110

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Ottawa South, come to order.

The next question, the member for Sarnia–Lambton.

#### COVID-19 IMMUNIZATION

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Thank you, Speaker. To you and through you, to the Solicitor General: It's great to be back

at Queen's Park after spending a productive legislative recess in my community of Sarnia–Lambton to hear from my constituents and share how our government is working for the people of the riding.

As our government continues this last mile of our vaccination strategy, we know there are more steps that we can take to reach the unvaccinated in communities across Ontario. But we're going to need to be even more creative and strategic in offering Ontarians the most convenient experience when receiving their shot.

To the Solicitor General: How is our government going to innovate how we vaccinate?

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** Thank you to the member from Sarnia–Lambton.

We have been very innovative. I'm very pleased, as the Minister of Health has said a number of times today, that we have achieved 88% first-dose vaccines for 12 and above, and 84% double vaxxed, fully vaccinated. That amounts to 21 million doses given out in the province of Ontario.

It's an incredible achievement that we have been able to do with partners like the GO-VAXX bus, which is one of the last-mile innovations. It's a Metrolinx partnership. They have retrofitted the buses. We are now visiting smaller communities that have not had the opportunity to have those larger mass immunization clinics, and we're getting the job done. Over 10,000 people have been vaccinated—first and second dose—through the GO-VAXX bus system.

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

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Thank you, Speaker. Through you and to you, again, to the Solicitor General: Thank you for that response.

I know that we all agree about the importance of getting vaccinated to protect Ontarians, especially our most vulnerable.

My community of Sarnia–Lambton looks forward to the opportunity to take advantage of this community-focused vaccination rollout.

Can the Solicitor General please share when my local community of Sarnia–Lambton might expect a visit from the GO-VAXX bus?

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** Absolutely. We've actually just begun a southwestern tour with the GO-VAXX bus.

Specifically, in Sarnia–Lambton, on October 29, the GO-VAXX bus will be at Lambton Mall. On October 30, it will be at Food Basics on Indian Road. On October 31, it will be at the Mooretown complex in Mooretown. Finally, on November 1, you can visit the GO-VAXX bus at the Petrolia Farmers' Market pavilion.

I know the member from Sarnia–Lambton has been a critically important leader in his community, encouraging people to go out and get those vaccines, and now you have another opportunity with the GO-VAXX system. Thank you very much.

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** My question is to the Premier, and it is about Thien. Thien lives in a rental home in Clarington, Ontario. He has lived in his rental home for only a year and a half, but he now faces a rent increase of \$1,100 starting January 1. He's facing that rent increase of 57% because this government cut rent control on buildings built after 2018.

It has been three years since this government has been in power, and housing affordability during this time has gone from bad to worse. Nearly half of Ontarians pay rent they cannot afford. Renters like Thien don't know what to do. They can't afford to lose their rental homes, but they also can't afford to stay.

So this is my question to the Premier: What is your plan to make homes more affordable for renters now?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Government House leader.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned yesterday, of course, we started on this path the moment we were elected into government, because we knew how expensive it was for renters. We knew that we had to unleash opportunity in more areas of the province to bring new supply onto the market. Ultimately, by adding more supply and by more opportunities, we will find that rents will continue to go down. That was another one of these consistent failures that we had from the previous Liberal government. There was just no supply that was brought online, Speaker, and that has caused rents to go up.

Now, of course rent controls are still in place. Of course, during the pandemic we stayed evictions, and I think that was very important. But we understand how important it is to continue down this path of making life more affordable for the people of the province of Ontario. I think that tenants and the people of the province of Ontario understand that it is this side of the House that will work on making life more affordable for them, and certainly not that side of the House.

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

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** My question is back to the Premier. A new report recently came out revealing that multiple-property owners make up the largest segment of homebuyers in today's utterly unaffordable housing market.

This report came out on the back of recent controversy about Core Development Group. This company is buying up \$1 billion worth of single-family homes, only to rent them out to the very same segment of people who would prefer to own them. People want to pay off their own mortgage. They don't want to pay off someone else's mortgage. Our housing sector very clearly is now catering to investors intent on profit over first-time homebuyers who have scrimped and saved for years for a down payment, only to find that their down payment in this market is never big enough.

This really gets to that question of supply, because we can't build new homes without addressing the issue of who

is buying the homes that we build. This is my question to the Premier: What is your plan to clamp down on investor-led housing speculation, so first-time homebuyers have a shot?

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Again, Mr. Speaker, to get to the heart of the matter, whether it's long-term care; whether it's housing; whether it's investments for our small, medium and large job creators, what you hear is that the NDP are against any type of investment. Anybody who wants to make an investment to help our economy grow, to help people get ahead, the NDP will be against that investment.

I'm not against people who want to invest in the province of Ontario, who want to bring on new housing supply. I'm not against them; I want to encourage them. I want to encourage them to build in Ontario, because if we bring more supply online, housing will be less expensive. There will be more opportunities for people to rent. Ultimately, the people that I know that rent want to one day own their own home, and they have to be able to do that here in the province of Ontario. That is why we have been working since day one to ensure that happens.

Transit-oriented communities, in particular, are a way of doing this. They, of course, voted against that, but as I said the other day, we are going to soldier on. We're going to continue to invest in things like transit-oriented communities so we can bring more supply online and so that renter can one day be a homeowner.

## PROGRÈS DU GOUVERNEMENT

## GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

**Mlle Amanda Simard:** Trois ans passé, aussitôt arrivé en poste, le premier ministre conservateur a coupé, coupé, coupé. J'ai même un collant ici qui dit : « The Premier of Ontario, the anti-Marie Kondo: Does it spark joy? Cut it. »

Le commissaire à l'environnement, l'intervenant provincial en faveur des enfants et des jeunes, le commissaire aux services en français : dérange pas, on coupe—sans explications, sans justification. Encore aujourd'hui, trois ans plus tard, on n'a aucune idée combien le gouvernement a épargné.

Pourquoi ce gouvernement prend-il tellement plaisir à couper tout ce qui est bon pour l'environnement, pour les francophones, pour les jeunes? Combien a-t-il effectivement épargné avec ces coupures de commissaires idéologiques?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** And to reply on behalf of the government, the government House leader.

**L'hon. Paul Calandra:** Comme j'ai dit plusieurs fois dans la Chambre, c'est un gouvernement qui a fait beaucoup d'investissements pour la communauté francophone. Comme j'ai dit la semaine dernière, ce n'est pas seulement un rapport dans la Chambre, c'est des investissements. La ministre des Affaires francophones a commencé une initiative importante pour les petites entreprises francophones dans la province.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's about making investments that are important in the community. As I've said on a number of occasions, the issues that face the francophone community are the same issues that face all Ontarians: jobs, economic growth. And on every measure that matters not only to the francophone community but to all Ontarians, we are making progress.

I appreciate the member's question. Later on today, there will be another opportunity to support the francophone community, and I hope the members opposite will vote in favour of that motion.

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

**M<sup>lle</sup> Amanda Simard:** Franchement, on va quand même pas faire semblant que le gouvernement a fait du progrès dans ces secteurs.

Une autre affaire qui ne fait aucun sens : le gouvernement n'a toujours pas signé d'entente avec le fédéral pour les services de garde d'enfants à 10 \$ par jour.

1120

Child care is not a luxury, Mr. Speaker. It's a necessity. Why is the government still refusing to sign a deal with the federal government? Why does this Conservative government insist on keeping women at home, pushing their ideology to the detriment of women all across Ontario and the economy?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Minister of Education.

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** What is abundantly clear is that the provincial Liberal government would have caved to a deal that is not in keeping with the best interests of families. It's quite obvious you would have not stood up to Justin Trudeau. You would have taken the first deal available for the province, and this Premier and government are standing up for the people we represent to get a better deal, a larger investment over a longer period of time, that families in this province deserve.

#### PROTECTION FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

**Mr. Joel Harden:** My question is for the Premier. It's been exactly 1,000 days since the government received the report on the third review of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, written by the Honourable David Onley. The Onley report is scathing in its indictment of Ontario's glacial progress on accessibility. Onley writes in the introduction that "Ontario is full of 'soul-crushing barriers' 2.6 million Ontarians with disabilities confront every day."

But instead of treating the Onley report like the wake-up call it is, the government has let this report collect dust on the shelf. They haven't released a plan to implement its recommendations, including building accessibility standards, accessibility training for design professionals and making sure that public money is never again used to create barriers for people with disabilities.

But most insultingly, Speaker, when I tabled a May 2019 motion to create an action plan, this government's members called that plan red tape. People with disabilities

remain insulted by the lack of momentum on this report. Can we expect an imminent and urgent plan to implement the Honourable David Onley's recommendations?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Government House leader.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** I appreciate the question from the honourable member. It's an important question. It is something that I know the minister has been seized with since day one. It again highlights, as so many of the questions today have done, the ineptitude of 15 years of Liberal government that preceded this government and the amount of hard work that has to be done to bring Ontario back to a place where we can all be proud of what we've accomplished.

I agree with the honourable member. David Onley, in particular, was a Lieutenant Governor who broke boundaries in this province. The report is a very important one. We all want to ensure that we do better for those persons with disabilities. As I said, I know the minister has been working very closely with the community. I know he values the advice of the honourable member opposite. My understanding is that he has reached out to him often.

Again, it's not really a partisan issue. I know the member would agree with that. It's something we have to work on together as a Legislature, and it has to involve partnerships with our friends at the municipal level, as well as the federal level.

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

**Mr. Joel Harden:** I appreciate that response, but the government has an opportunity today to clear up a glaring problem, and that is the last time we had a fulsome debate on this in this House, in May 2019, members of this government called a task plan, a plan of action, red tape.

I invite the government today to clarify that that was a mistake, to clarify that having an action plan on the Honourable David Onley's recommendations is essential, and to make sure that it's important to say yes to people with disabilities—not no in making people on ODSP continue to live in poverty; not no for refusing to mandate accessible housing in our marketplace, not no in telling people with disabilities they have to shelter in their homes because their apartments and their living conditions are not accessible.

We need a yes for people with disabilities. Can I please have a clear, certain and absolute answer from this government that people with disabilities and their needs are not red tape?

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** My question is for the Premier. The costs of the climate crisis are escalating. The tornado that hit Barrie this summer caused \$75 million worth of damages; a rainstorm of three hours in the city of Toronto in 2018, \$80 million. Six First Nations communities were evacuated this summer due to forest fires. Poor air quality across the province threatened people's health, yet climate pollution is going up, not down in Ontario.

Pivotal climate negotiations begin next week, and it's vital that Canada's largest province show leadership. Will the Premier commit to sending his minister to COP26 to commit Ontario to cutting the climate pollution in half by 2030 and being net zero by 2045 so we can meet our current obligations and attract investment and jobs in the green economy?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The parliamentary assistant, the member for Barrie–Innisfil.

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** Thank you, Speaker. There's a lot in that question, but, more importantly, I wanted to talk about his question about the tornado that hit Barrie, which is, of course, the community that I'm very humbled and honoured to represent. My heart goes out to all those families that were affected. This government worked day in and day out to help those residents. I was on the ground doing multiple cleanups; we had the Premier come in. Thank you to the Solicitor General and our Attorney General who came to the forefront as well to help those families.

That is why, at the very beginning, we talked about the need for a climate impact assessment, because every community is very different. We know that Barrie is prone to tornadoes, and that shows the importance of the climate impact assessment, which was the first of its kind in the province of Ontario. We're working with all municipalities in order to get that climate impact assessment up and going, because we understand in this government that we need to be investing in our future. It's going to be things like the climate impact assessment and resilient infrastructure—we have \$3.7 billion to put in green bonds to help with such infrastructure. Unfortunately, the member voted against that type of investment.

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

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Of course we need to study the impact of the climate crisis. Of course our hearts go out to the people in Barrie, the people in northern Ontario, the people who have been affected by flooding. Of course our hearts go out to all those people. But we have an obligation to make the necessary investments in reducing climate pollution so we avoid the climate impacts the government wants to assess. Instead, this government has ripped up charging stations, they're ramping up gas plants and climate pollution, and they're super charging sprawl with Highway 413.

I'm going to ask the government to make a commitment, on the eve of pivotal international negotiations, to say no to Highway 413 and yes to reducing climate pollution.

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** We have said yes every step of the way to reducing our greenhouse gas emissions, which is why we're building transit, getting transit-oriented communities, getting more people on transit, and creating different opportunities for the way transit works, whether someone wants to take a GO train or they want to charge their EV. We have our Minister of Economic Development who's working on incredible strategies using natural resources we have in this province. Whether

it's Timiskaming that's going to be building a culvert or whether it's going to be Red Lake that has lithium, we have both an economic strategy and environment strategy on this side of the House.

But time and time again when we're trying to get things like more cars off the road, the member opposite opposes it. We know that 80% of greenhouse gas emissions come from the transit sector alone and we know how much idling contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, which is why we know the very importance of investing in clean infrastructure as well as supporting our Highway of Heroes, where, of course, many ministers attend and they do a lot of tree planting along that highway.

We're balancing the economy and the environment.

## ELECTRIC VEHICLES

**Mr. Chris Glover:** My question is for the Premier. Jack Nigro recently moved into a condo in my riding of Spadina–Fort York, and he's doing his part for the environment. He owns an electric vehicle, but he has found the cost of installing an electric vehicle charging station into his condo parking spot prohibitively expensive. The Ontario NDP has committed to providing households with \$600 to install a charging station at home, we've committed to mandating vehicle charging capacity in new homes, and we've committed to building charging stations at GO stations and along roadways in this province.

Since this Conservative government was elected, they have cancelled the electric car rebate, they have ripped electric vehicle charging stations from GO stations and they have passed legislation that outlaws most e-bikes currently on the road in Ontario. Their policies have led to a 50% decline in the sales of electric vehicles in this province, and the loss of solar businesses like Ubiquity Solar.

Does the Premier realize that his anti-environmental policies are not only making it difficult for residents to convert to electric vehicles, they are also harming our environment, and costing Ontarians thousands of jobs and a chance to be a global leader in the green economy?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Minister of Economic Development to respond.

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** I just want to be able to use this opportunity to talk about the exciting investments that we are making here in Ontario, not only in the critical minerals sector, which is going to be producing the cobalt, the lithium and all of the elements—including nickel from Sudbury, in manufacturing.

Our dream will be, of course, Premier, to manufacture electric vehicle batteries here in the province of Ontario. We've made a \$295-million investment into Ford, into their electric vehicles. You know that General Motors has made announcements of their electric vehicle program in Ingersoll. Stellantis has made a \$1.5-billion investment announcement that they've just reaffirmed in Windsor. We are going to be the electric vehicle hub right across North America.

## CORRECTION OF RECORD

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

**Mr. John Fraser:** I'd like to correct my record. I meant to mention this morning in my question that the province of Quebec has made vaccinations mandatory for all education workers.

## NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Pursuant to standing order 36(a), the member for Ottawa Centre has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the government House leader concerning the Onley report. This matter will be debated today following private members' public business.

There being no further business at this time, this House stands in recess until 3 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1131 to 1500.*

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

NEW EDINBURGH PROPERTY  
MANAGEMENT SERVICE LTD.  
ACT, 2021

Madame Collard moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr55, An Act to revive New Edinburgh Property Management Service Ltd.

**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 89, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

ANTI-ASIAN RACISM EDUCATION  
MONTH ACT, 2021LOI DE 2021 SUR LE MOIS  
DE SENSIBILISATION AU RACISME  
ANTI-ASIATIQUE

Mr. Ke moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 34, An Act to proclaim May as Anti-Asian Racism Education Month / Projet de loi 34, Loi proclamant le mois de mai Mois de sensibilisation au racisme anti-asiatique.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Would the member for Don Valley North care to briefly explain his bill?

**Mr. Vincent Ke:** People of Asian heritage have experienced a heightened rate of race-related incidents during the COVID-19 pandemic. Asian Canadians are visible minorities. They have long been viewed as foreigners and outsiders, and are easy targets for someone

to direct their frustration and anger. Education is the key to combatting racism. Education can play an important role in addressing and eliminating racism and discrimination. With education, we have the opportunity to change the way the public views and treats Asian Canadians. They should be viewed and treated as vital contributors to our Canadian multicultural society. Their contributions to this country are historic.

By proclaiming May as Anti-Asian Racism Education Month, the province of Ontario honours the proud contributions, storied history and sacrifices made by Canadians of Asian heritage in building this country. It also helps to combat and eliminate anti-Asian racism in our schools, our community and our province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I appreciate that, but I feel obliged to remind members that the explanations of their bill, when they're introduced at first reading, need to be as brief as possible, ideally reading the explanatory note that accompanies the bill.

EQUITY EDUCATION FOR YOUNG  
ONTARIANS ACT, 2021LOI DE 2021 SUR L'ÉDUCATION  
EN ÉQUITÉ POUR LES JEUNES  
DE L'ONTARIO

Madame Collard moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 35, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to equity education and the Education Equity Secretariat Initiatives Branch / Projet de loi 35, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation en ce qui concerne l'éducation en équité et la Direction des initiatives du Secrétariat de l'équité en matière d'éducation.

**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):** I'll invite the member to briefly explain her bill, if she wishes to do so.

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** Mr. Speaker, the bill amends the Education Act. It requires the Minister of Education to ensure that information on a number of topics is included in the curriculum for junior kindergarten, kindergarten and each grade, from grade 1 through grade 12, in an age-appropriate manner. These topics include the history of colonization and its impacts on the rights of Indigenous and racialized people, the ongoing racial and social inequities in Ontario, and how pupils can contribute to building an inclusive and equitable Ontario.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY  
AND RESPONSES

## DRESS PURPLE DAY

## JOURNÉE PASSEZ AU MAUVE

**Hon. Jane McKenna:** Speaker, I rise today to recognize October 27 as Dress Purple Day in Ontario. I

would like to thank the members of the House who join me in supporting this important cause by wearing purple today.

Every October, children's aid societies across Ontario work diligently to raise awareness about the critical role that individuals and communities can play in supporting vulnerable children, youth and families, through Dress Purple Day. Today, all across the province, communities are going purple to help share the message that children and youth have the right to safety and well-being and that help is available. Students at schools across Ontario are also dressing in purple to speak up and share the message that child abuse and neglect can be prevented. The ongoing pandemic makes it even more important this year, as many families face more stress and the risk to vulnerable children and youth increases.

Each year, children's aid societies, governments and other community partners encourage all Ontarians to learn more about the prevention of child abuse and neglect and the supports that are available to families. This includes situations where children and youth are potentially abused or neglected in their own homes. I experienced this myself, as a child.

Children are our most vulnerable members of society. We have a collective responsibility to keep children and youth safe, and to show vulnerable children, youth and families that we are all here to help.

Everyone in Ontario, including all members of the public and professionals who work with children and youth, like police officers, social workers, nurses and teachers, is required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect.

Child abuse takes many forms. It can be physical abuse, sexual abuse or emotional abuse. It can also take the form of neglect, such as failing to provide a child or youth with basic needs like safety and shelter, food and medical treatment.

Speaker, I call on all Ontarians, even during these uncertain times, to reach out and extend a hand to children, youth and families who are facing challenges.

If you have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child or youth is or may be in need of protection, you must report it to your local children's aid society.

Keeping children and youth safe is a responsibility that our government and Ontario's children's aid societies take very, very seriously. Our focus is not only on protection; we are also working to change the culture of child welfare to a system that focuses on prevention and early intervention.

#### 1510

At the core of our plan to redesign the child welfare system is to strengthen families and communities. We are modernizing child and family services. We're working to make child and family services safe, culturally appropriate and responsive to the needs of children, youth and families. Every child and youth in Ontario should feel empowered and supported. When they feel safe and supported, we all benefit.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to directly recognize the efforts of those who work at children's aid societies. They have faced many challenges over the last 19 months. They are dedicating their lives to supporting children and youth, and I applaud them for it.

Thank you so much, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Responses?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Thank you to the minister for her speech today on Dress Purple Day.

As we know, today is Dress Purple Day, and it's a day that we remind every child in Ontario that they have a right to physical, emotional and mental safety. We remind them that they have a right to thrive and that their well-being is important. We remind them that it is our responsibility as adults to create and maintain spaces for them to grow that respect their identities, regardless of race, culture, creed, gender, sexual orientation or ability. We remind them that, as elected representatives, we have a duty to bolster and build community around them.

Dress Purple Day is a time for us to remember that it takes a village to raise a baby, and it's our job to make sure that the village stays together. It's our job to make sure that help is available and children, youth and families know that they are not alone.

There are so many first-voice advocates who are doing amazing work for their brothers and sisters currently in care. I wanted to highlight the work of folks like Cheyanne Ratnam, of the Ontario Children's Advancement Coalition. She is working on pushing for a readiness-based system in Ontario to replace the current aging-out system for youth in care. For her, the goal is to keep families together and to provide support, and at the same time, when at times children come into care. When they do come into care, we need to make sure we support young people to thrive so that they can live their best lives, present and future, transitioning to thriving adults who can live out their full potential. This is important work that needs to continue.

Five/Fourteen is a local foster agency. It's also the only foster agency dedicated solely to providing services and supports to lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, two-spirited and otherwise gender-independent children and youth in foster care. They requested that I use this opportunity to express the need for folks to come forward to become foster parents and families. They said: "Every CAS is always looking for new foster families, and we know that family-model care provides the best support system for youth in care, compared to group and institutional care.

"Most people are unaware of the need, but it's ever-present, and it has grown during COVID, while folks shied away from having new people come into their homes."

They wanted me to send a message to all Ontarians to consider stepping up and opening their homes to a youth who needs one.

Finally, to end, if you need help or you know someone who does, please reach out to the services available in your community. Contact your local children's aid society or

your local MPP, and we'd be happy to connect you to local resources. We're here to support you.

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** Aucun enfant ne devrait avoir à vivre dans des conditions dangereuses. Dress Purple Day sert à reconnaître le rôle important que jouent les organismes communautaires et les personnes qui y consacrent leur temps dans la protection du bien-être des enfants de l'Ontario.

Je veux attirer l'attention sur le fait que cette année, les organisateurs de Dress Purple Day se sont interrogés pour améliorer leur propre approche. En renommant cette journée, de Journée de prévention des mauvais traitements infligés aux enfants à Journée Passez au mauve, les sociétés d'aide à l'enfance de l'Ontario espèrent empêcher la surveillance accrue des familles racialisées qui résulte souvent d'initiatives comme celle-ci.

L'organisme reconnaît l'impact que le racisme systémique et le colonialisme ont eu sur les pratiques des sociétés d'aide à l'enfance. Le retrait d'enfants de leur foyer a été un outil de racisme systémique qui a déstabilisé les familles et les communautés. Les enfants noirs et autochtones sont extrêmement surreprésentés dans les systèmes d'aide à l'enfance de l'Ontario.

Il est encourageant de constater que les sociétés d'aide à l'enfance de l'Ontario adoptent une approche intersectionnelle de la protection de l'enfance qui reconnaît les inégalités structurelles auxquelles font face les personnes racialisées en Ontario. Cette Journée Passez au mauve est également particulièrement importante, car la pandémie a été une période pénible pour de nombreuses familles. Certains enfants ont vu leurs conditions de vie se détériorer à cause de cela. Le rôle des sociétés d'aide à l'enfance est donc plus important que jamais.

C'est un plaisir de voir aujourd'hui autant de collègues de la Chambre porter du mauve pour reconnaître ceux qui aident à protéger ces droits.

## PETITIONS

### ADDICTION SERVICES

**Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell:** I'd like to present this petition on behalf of the constituents of Thunder Bay–Atikokan. The petition is titled, “Prevent Overdoses in the North.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario: ...

“Whereas northern Ontario has some of the highest rates of opioid-related deaths in the province and this number continues to grow; and

“Whereas we need urgent action from the provincial government to save lives in the north;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to declare the opioid overdose crisis in northern Ontario a public health emergency, and commit funding for comprehensive, evidence-based local health and community initiatives such as harm reduction

strategies, awareness programs, anti-stigma training, residential treatment, and overdose prevention services.”

I'm sad that I have to sign this petition, but I will sign it and send it with Graden to the Clerk.

### ADDICTION SERVICES

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** I would like to also read this petition in support of the people in northern Ontario, as well as my colleague the member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan. It's entitled, “Prevent Overdoses in the North.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario: ...

“Whereas northern Ontario has some of the highest rates of opioid-related deaths in the province and this number continues to grow; and

“Whereas we need urgent action from the provincial government to save lives in the north;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to declare the opioid overdose crisis in northern Ontario a public health emergency, and commit funding for comprehensive, evidence-based local health and community initiatives such as harm reduction strategies, awareness programs, anti-stigma training, residential treatment, and overdose prevention services.”

I certainly support this petition, will be affixing my signature, and giving it to page Tanvi.

### OPTOMETRY SERVICES

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** This is a petition to save eye care in Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government has underfunded optometric eye care for 30 years; and

“Whereas the government only pays on average \$44.65 for an OHIP-insured visit—the lowest rate in Canada; and

...

“Whereas optometrists have never been given a formal negotiation process with the government; ...

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

“To instruct the Ontario government to immediately commit to legally binding, formal negotiations to ensure any future OHIP-insured optometry services are, at a minimum, funded at the cost of delivery.”

I fully support this petition. I'll be affixing my signature to it and giving it to page Zada.

### AUTISM TREATMENT

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I am pleased to stand in this House and present a petition on behalf of families across Ontario entitled, “Support Ontario Families with Autism.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas every child with autism deserves access to sufficient treatment and support so that they can live to their fullest potential;

“Whereas the Ontario Autism Program was badly broken under the Liberals, and the changes introduced by the Conservatives have made it worse;

**1520**

“Whereas the new funding caps are based on age and income, and not the clinical needs of the child;

“Whereas Ontario needs a true investment in evidence-based autism services that meets the needs of autistic children and their families;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services to invest in equitable, needs-based autism services for all children who need them.”

Of course, I fully support this petition, affix my signature, and will send it to the table with Emily.

### OPTOMETRY SERVICES

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I have a petition on a matter that is an urgent priority to the people I represent in London West. It is a “Petition to Save Eye Care in Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government has underfunded optometric eye care for 30 years; and

“Whereas the government only pays on average \$44.65 for an OHIP-insured visit—the lowest rate in Canada; and

“Whereas optometrists are being forced to pay substantially out of their own pocket to provide over four million services each year to Ontarians under OHIP; and

“Whereas optometrists have never been given a formal negotiation process with the government; and

“Whereas the government’s continued neglect resulted in 96% of Ontario optometrists voting to withdraw OHIP services beginning September 1, 2021;

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

“To instruct the Ontario government to immediately commit to legally binding, formal negotiations to ensure any future OHIP-insured optometry services are, at a minimum, funded at the cost of delivery.”

I support this petition, affix my signature and will give it to page Fraser to take to the table.

### ADDICTION SERVICES

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I have several petitions to present to the House. It’s entitled “Prevent Overdoses in the North.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario: ...

“Whereas northern Ontario has some of the highest rates of opioid-related deaths in the province and this number continues to grow; and

“Whereas we need urgent action from the provincial government to save lives in the north;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to declare the opioid overdose crisis in northern Ontario a public health emergency, and commit funding for comprehensive, evidence-based local health and community initiatives such as harm reduction

strategies, awareness programs, anti-stigma training, residential treatment, and overdose prevention services.”

I completely agree with this petition. It pains me that we have to present these petitions, but I affix my signature and present it to page Sujay to bring to the Clerks’ table.

### OPTOMETRY SERVICES

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I have a second petition: to save eye care in Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government has underfunded optometric eye care for 30 years; and

“Whereas the government only pays on average \$44.65 for an OHIP-insured visit—the lowest rate in Canada; and

“Whereas optometrists are being forced to pay substantially out of their own pocket to provide over four million services each year to Ontarians under OHIP; and

“Whereas optometrists have never been given a formal negotiation process with the government; and

“Whereas the government’s continued neglect resulted in 96% of Ontario optometrists voting to withdraw OHIP services beginning September 1, 2021;

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

“To instruct the Ontario government to immediately commit to legally binding, formal negotiations to ensure any future OHIP-insured optometry services are, at a minimum, funded at the cost of delivery.”

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition and present it to the page to bring it down to the Clerks’ table.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### SUPPORTING PEOPLE AND BUSINESSES ACT, 2021

#### LOI DE 2021 VISANT À SOUTENIR LA POPULATION ET LES ENTREPRISES

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 26, 2021, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 13, An Act to amend various Acts / Projet de loi 13, Loi modifiant diverses lois.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Resuming the debate, I recognize the member from Ottawa Centre.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** It’s a pleasure to rise today to speak to this legislation, which is talking about supporting people and businesses. The contribution I’d like to make this afternoon is to speak particularly about the contributions our government here in Ontario can make for complex-care-needs people in the province of Ontario. These are a very unique set of folks, whose disability conditions often put them in a palliative condition or in a significantly high-needs intensive care condition.

Before getting into the substance of it, I want to welcome Nicole and Alexa, who are tuning in from Etobicoke.

Hi, Nicole. Hi, Alexa. This is what I look like without the mask on. I want to thank you very much, both of you—Dave, too; Alyssa, too—for having me to your home. I was there yesterday, Speaker. We corresponded over email. That's my segue to talking about why I was there and what it tells us about complex-care-needs folks with disabilities.

One of the great privileges that I've been able to have and that our whole office team has been able to have with this provincial critic responsibility is to be able to meet incredible people like the folks I just mentioned, but so many more. We're talking about people full of passion, determination and love, despite encountering obstacle after obstacle every single day. The persistence in families like this is truly hard to describe, but I'm going to try this afternoon.

As I mentioned, yesterday I was in the great riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore, just west of where we are here, which is represented by MPP Hogarth, who I know has been in touch with this family and helped this family, and I appreciate that. I met Nicole, the mom of this family, because I took part in an online Zoom call with Sherry Caldwell's Ontario Disability Coalition. A lot of us probably know Sherry. She's an incredible advocate for families in situations like this. It's often the case—and I'm sure this is what we all do here—that when we take part in these Zoom consultations and families in duress or families facing big challenges offer us their stories, our automatic response as politicians is to say, “Well, how could I help you get your story out? This is such a profound and important story. It needs to change Ontario public policy. What can we do? Do I have your consent to talk about your story in the Legislature?” It's often one of my first responses—to listen and listen and listen, and then to make that offer to people, wherever they live in the province of Ontario. And so I did that with Nicole. It was interesting; immediately, Nicole said, “It's not good enough. No. This has happened to me before. Politicians have come to my house before. They've listened to my story before. I want to know where this is going. I want to know what you can do.”

In fact—just to step back there a moment—she was even talking about being in Zoom meetings with politicians like me who've listened to her story, been moved by her story and said, “I'd love to speak about you. I'm doing an event. Can I mention this about you? Can I put you in my newsletter?” Nicole told me, “Joel, it's not good enough that you'll talk about my story. Come to my home.” So I said, “Fine, let's make it happen.” I talked to the team. I asked Nicole what the obligations were for me. Her daughter is in very medically fragile condition; I'll describe it in a moment. She said, “Bring an N95 mask. Keep your distance. Do as you're told”—that sounds a lot like home for me—“and you'll be okay.” Nicole's message was, “Show up. Walk a moment in my shoes. Feel what living in my home is like.”

So yesterday I jumped in my vehicle and headed out to Etobicoke–Lakeshore. It was quite an experience. You walk into Nicole and her husband Dave's home, you walk in to the ground floor, and immediately you're met with

Nicole, with this incredible energy, this infectious energy. You can just sense the advocacy in the tenor of her voice. You walk through the door, and she takes you to a main floor and what would probably otherwise be an entertainment room or mud room or extended room. It has been converted, essentially, to a hospital room. That's where Alexa is. That's where Alexa's main life is—it's a bed there. Why is she in that bed? What's the nature of her disability? Well, the condition is called intermediate Salla disease. It's extremely rare. There are about 150 cases like this—people, not cases, pardon me; I take that back—people with this condition in the world. Most of them, as I understand it, are in Finland and Sweden for some reason, but Alexa is actually the most acute case known to researchers on the planet. What it is, essentially, is a degenerative and developmental disability that gets detected very young in a child's life but progresses rapidly. It was such that when Nicole and Dave kicked into action, as any parent would do when you found out the diagnosis and what you've got to do to give your child some help, they were immediately told, “Your child's in a palliative situation. We don't know how long Alexa has, but our prediction,” the experts told Nicole, was two years.

I want to tell you, Speaker, that on the 2nd of this month, Alexa turned 10 years old. And do you know why she turned 10 years old? As I learned on a Zoom call, as I learned in person going to this home, it's because of the amazing abilities that are offered to people with disabilities and their families through community care—care in the home, 24/7 care. Frankly, with all the love we all have for our friends who work in the big tertiary institutions, the hospitals, there is no way you can provide care like this in a hospital setting, given the urgencies, given the things that are going on. We're talking about parents and community care nurses who are by Alexa's bedside, because that is where she is pretty much all the time. If she's not in one of her chairs, she is in that bed. And part of her condition is such that she will often need to be suctioned for breathing, with spit building up in the mouth.

As I was there, that's the first thing you notice: You can hear the whir of the machines. You can hear the whir of the ventilator, you can hear the whir of the suctioning, you can hear and see the tubes that Alexa requires to live, to feed, to survive. And you realize, “My goodness, I'm in the re-creation of a hospital room”—but as I have seen happen in so many hospices, in so many palliative care situations, regardless of the age—in this case, a child—it is with love.

The walls are decorated with art. A big part of Alexa's joy comes with music, and dad Dave—I think he's at work right now, but in case you are here, hi, Dave—is an axeman, Speaker. He loves to play guitar, has a few guitars. We share a love for guitar. I'm not an axeman; Dave is. But he loves to play. I have a picture I want to share with you after this afternoon, Speaker, of Dave playing guitar for Alexa. The way daughter's and father's eyes meet, you can just see how powerful that connection is. And researchers—because researchers globally are

studying Alexa—are asking themselves, “How has this child lived to 10 years old?” It’s evident; it’s palpable in this picture. It’s palpable in another picture the family shared with me where there is this beautiful cake. I’m sorry, Nicole, I can’t remember where the cake was procured from—apparently a really great place in Etobicoke. It’s got the Frozen logo on it and it’s right in front of Alexa, and you can just see the smile on her face.

Alexa can’t communicate with language that you and I use, but she communicates, believe me. I saw it while I was there. And this beautiful, beautiful girl is in a situation where, like other families like it, in complex care situations, the child needs 24/7 care, and mom and dad cannot be there for every moment of the day. For a long time, particularly mom—and dad—was part of that 24/7 rotation, even while mom was at work. If you can imagine putting in a full day and then coming home and you’ve got to be on. You might have to suction at the moment of a particular need, and if you don’t, you can cause a seizure in the child. So you can imagine the pressure, the responsibility. These are medical-grade skills that we’re asking a mom, a dad, a parent, a guardian to do. So what we need in this home, what we have needed in this home, are community care nurses.

I met one. I’m not going to say the name of the person, Speaker. I’m going to protect the person’s identity. But I met one, and you could see how busy this person was. You could see how active she was. You could see the trust in the relationship that was built. I could see how fulfilled this community nurse was by that relationship with Alexa. They knew each other. They trusted each other, doing some of the most intimate things. This is the case for folks who work with our seniors, other people with disabilities.

But what I heard as I was in the home was mom Nicole telling me, “Joel, in order for me to figure out a way to get 24/7 care, I employ not one, not two, not three, but four different agencies of home care”—four. She cobbles together funding for these nurses from five sources: the Ministry of Education; the Ministry of Health; the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services; an adjunct of that ministry; and private insurance that Nicole is lucky to have by virtue of her work with the federal government. But she has been on stress leave from that job since—I think it was March 2019. Nicole will correct the record later. Text me, Nicole; I can see it.

In 2019, this mom had been going lights out for this child and needed to take stress leave from work. Thankfully, her employer has accommodated that request. My question to us, Speaker, when we think about how we’re going to support people, particularly people in situations like this, is, what are we going to do for complex care patients like Alexa to make sure that parents don’t burn out, marriages don’t fall apart and we can get those community nurses into these homes?

You guys know where I’m going with this. We have an acute nursing shortage in the province of Ontario. We have been trying to do everything we can—and we fight over it all the time in here, I know—to help people who want to stay in the nursing profession. We know nurses are

burning out. We know how hard people have worked through this pandemic. But the knock-on problem we have had in community care nursing is that it’s the poor cousin of nursing professions. They tend not to be as well paid, hours don’t tend to be as regular, so it’s not surprising, when we want that important thing that the research talks about, the continuity of care, the relationship between the community nurse and the patient—that’s really hard when people are getting drawn into long-term-care homes, drawn into our hospitals. Nicole has to start all over again, Dave has to start all over again, Alexa has to start all over again, in a situation where the child is in a very medically fragile situation.

Again, I invite people to look at our social media streams. I’ll be sharing these photos, with the family’s permission. I was allowed to take photos of these four agencies, trying to figure out what a month would look like, to map in the 24/7 care, map every 30-minute increment of the day—and how common it was, because of the nature of the nursing shortage, for people to either not show up or to cancel shifts. I’m not blaming the workers, but you know who I do have an axe to grind with, Speaker? The private, for-profit home care agencies. I’ve got a beef there—I’ve got a big beef there—because we have a situation now where companies like Bayshore maintain two intake lines. One intake line is with the LHIN funding, the local health integration network funding, the publicly funded funding. Families line up for that. You may get a little bit; you may not. It may be cancelled; it may be on. It leads to the chaos that Nicole was describing to me.

But then Bayshore also has another number you can call: “Hey, if you can pay, if your insurance covers it, no problem.” Unreconstructed socialists like me think about how we got medicare in the first place. The farmers of Saskatchewan who got it started for us, that battle we thought we won, about taking ability to pay out of the public health conversation? Spending an hour or two in Nicole and Dave’s home reminds me that no, no, no, there are a lot of families who are suffering because they don’t have, frankly, the benefits, the social capital that Nicole and Dave have: the private insurance coverage, the ability to pay, the ability to run up incredible debt.

To benefit from philanthropic help, that’s great. But why doesn’t our medical care system support these families? Why can’t we, in this sitting of the Legislature, say, “Let’s open up the spigot and let’s open up the resources so these families and every family with a complex care situation—a palliative care situation, my God—can actually have those moments, those months, those weeks, those years, let’s hope, as memories of dignity, not memories of stress, not memories of burnout, not memories of marriage problems or family problems”?

I had occasion to speak to Alyssa too, Alexa’s older sister, about to go to university. I wanted to speak to Alyssa. It’s always on my mind when I encounter families with complex care needs: How does the other sibling feel? What tends to happen is that there’s this heroic mentality of that child saying, “No, no, Joel. It’s ‘team’ here. It’s a team. We’re team Alexa.” But you know at one level that

that child has got to be having a really tough time too, particularly in a pandemic when we are all locked in homes together.

1540

This is my second axe to grind, Speaker. When I have friends—and some are parliamentary neighbours near to me—talk about the horrors of lockdowns, I want those people—please don't go visit their home, particularly if you are not vaccinated—to think about what life was like for this family in this pandemic, that older sister, that kid requiring nursing care. I think most people in Ontario, frankly, have no idea of what an actual lockdown is like. But that's this family's life. That's what a complex care patient's life is, a surrender of liberty. Mom and Dad haven't had a break for years—for years.

But we as a province could give them that break. As I said earlier, there are other provinces in the country that show us ways to help complex care patients where we can give respite to parents like Dave, like Nicole. We can give dignity to people like Alexa and support to sisters like Alyssa.

The other thing I want to mention—because Nicole will be frustrated with me if I forget, Speaker—is the Assistive Devices Program. There is something that has happened during the sitting of this Parliament that is really frustrating this family. It is the fact that the ADP—the Assistive Devices Program, which functions under the Ministry of Health—is where you go to get the assistive devices you need to live your life as a person with a disability or as a caregiver for someone with a disability. It used to be you'd pay for something from a vendor of the program and you paid 25% of the cost.

But something has happened in the last few years, according to Nicole and so many other families and people I've met, where that's not the case anymore. People are paying 100% of the cost up front and sometimes waiting as long as eight to 10 to 12 to 14 weeks for reimbursement. A family like this has some social capital and can maybe run up a debt, as stressful as that is, but can you think of all of the other families that may not be in that situation, may not be able to afford it? What kind of choices are we asking them to make?

I've got some problems with the way the ADP is run. I've got some problems with the way families are put at the mercy of vendors—vendors who don't always behave, as the Auditor General told us in 2016, in a very honest and forthright manner; vendors who charge a lot for the same product that somebody else in a very close market-place doesn't.

I also want to say, on a positive note, that the Toronto health community has been there for this family. I mentioned MPP Hogarth has helped this family with their SSH funding—I hope I got that right, Nicole. That's great. I'm glad. I hope that continues. I'm mindful that some of the leaders of our hospital sector have been there for this family when they presented to hospital when Alexa has been in a significant crisis.

We have—and it is something we should cherish—an incredible public health care system, built up over generations. But as we've been debating in this House, it's

fraying at the edges. It needs substantial investment. What I want to emphasize is, if members listening to me are hearing anything as a theme, if we can help complex care patients in their own homes with robust community care, we are taking an enormous strain off our hospitals. I'm not talking about Alexa as a burden, no, no, no, but about giving Alexa the dignity and the opportunity to interact with those she loves, those she trusts, those she has a relationship with in their own home. It's affordable, it's effective and it has dignity, which sounds like my kind of Ontario, quite frankly.

But when I see for-profit home care companies lining up at the trough for public funding and siphoning so much of our public funding away for dividends to shareholders or management compensation or whatever that private, for-profit company does, while Alexa is getting short-changed, that makes me angry.

When I meet the community nurse that is helping Alexa at the bedside, doing amazing work, and that person tells me, "It's hard for me to get more than 21 or 22 bucks an hour," it's not surprising that a lot of people I know will go on to work for five or six bucks more than that. But we can make different decisions. We could make different decisions and we could make sure that those folks are paid really, really well. I'm talking lawyer well. I'm talking professional. Because is there a more skilled profession in our economy than a care worker who knows how to connect to a patient in their time of need? I don't think there is. These people, as far as I'm concerned, are some of the most skilled in the province.

I hope what I've been able to convey here through the Stanleys' experience is the profound way in which Ontario is putting families like this in crisis. We can decide, because it's on us as a Legislature, to take the pressure off of them. We can give respect to Nicole, to Alexa, to Dave, to Alyssa and every other person like them, and we should do it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Questions and responses?

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Thank you to the member from Ottawa Centre for sharing that story with us. I'm glad to hear that my colleague MPP Hogarth was able to assist the family. It sounds like a very complex situation. I've certainly talked to many constituents in my riding in similar situations. I know they're watching. Hello, Nicole, Alexa, Dave, I think you mentioned. I hope things go well for you and you get the services and care you need. Certainly, that's why we have changed the home and connected care act to integrate home care more and make sure that we get better home care. That's definitely a priority for our health ministry in government.

But I do want to take it back to public health, which you mentioned as well, and the importance of public health. In the bill we're discussing today, we have a provision to fix the Public Health Ontario appointment of the Chief Medical Officer of Health etc. I wanted to know if you agreed with the proposed changes that we're making to make sure that Public Health Ontario is well positioned to support our continuing evolution in public health and broader health care in the province.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** I certainly can speak in favour of any measures we use to utilize public health well. The reason I was diving down into this family's story is because I think sometimes you get a lot of richness out of the local.

Also, I forgot to mention that the minister for whom I'm the critic, the Honourable Raymond Cho; Minister Christine Elliott; the Premier, all are welcome in this family's home, for the record. They desperately want people masked, people being safe, but they want people to appreciate what they're going through. And this is a family tied into a network of families. MPP Hogarth has been in this home, but the family urgently wants politicians to identify what they're going through, because they think that's going to motivate some speed in allocating the resources they require.

Yes, we need to work on making sure public health is effective, but I want a debate about complex care family needs as part of this legislation. I'm hoping to have that this afternoon.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Further questions and concerns?

**M. Guy Bourgouin:** Ça me fait toujours plaisir d'écouter mon collègue d'Ottawa-Centre. Moi, j'ai eu la chance d'avoir deux bons enfants en santé, et je ne peux pas m'imaginer ce que la famille peut passer à travers, comment la famille—que tu parlais de la soeur ou d'autres enfants, puis dans la crise de pandémie.

Je veux te donner l'opportunité—20 minutes pour un sujet comme tu viens de toucher, tu n'auras jamais assez de temps. C'est pour ça que je veux te donner l'opportunité d'en parler encore plus. Qu'est-ce que le gouvernement devrait faire de plus pour cette famille-là en particulier?

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Merci, mon ami. Franchement, la chance pour le gouvernement en ce moment avec cette lutte-là c'est pour clarifier les fonds, augmenter les fonds, augmenter les salaires des infirmières qui travaillent avec cette famille-là et partout dans la province de l'Ontario. On peut changer notre système de soins avec les infirmières qui travaillent dans les maisons comme ça, parce qu'on a beaucoup d'entreprises qui enlèvent les fonds pour le profit, pour les gestionnaires.

Pour moi, ce n'est pas assez. C'est le Canada ici. On doit chercher beaucoup de fonds pour les familles, pour les patients, pas pour les gestionnaires des entreprises privées. C'est une valeur tellement importante pour moi dans mon coeur, et c'est important pour cette famille aussi. Merci, mon ami.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Further questions and concerns?

**Mr. Mike Harris:** A very passionate speech from the member from Ottawa Centre. You know what? He and I don't always agree, but I do agree with him today, which is something unusual, and everyone's going to take a little gasp here for a second.

When we look at what this bill is about and reducing regulatory burden and red tape, I'd be really interested to hear, outside of just pay increases, what are some of the other things that, maybe in talking with this family and

some of the other folks you've had an opportunity to engage with—I know that I was on the phone yesterday with Cathy Harrington, who is the executive director of Community Care Concepts in my riding, which provides home care often more towards seniors, but still the same kind of thing, a lot of complex care needs that can arise there.

**1550**

What do you think are some things that we could do from a regulatory standpoint to help better community care in our ridings?

**Mr. Joel Harden:** I'm always happy to help the member's slippery slide to socialism any day—a little bit of joking to add some levity to the afternoon.

The fact of the matter is, all joking aside, the very simple thing the government could do is clarify the funding sources. I mentioned five sources of funding, including private insurance. That makes absolutely no sense. There needs to be less time doing paperwork for this family and more time making sure the people who arrive there are well compensated, it's the same people, that mom and dad get a break and that Alexa gets the best care possible.

We have far too many intermediaries, creaming far too much money out of the pot too. I think left or right should care about that. That makes no sense to me at all. The people of Ontario give us their tax money to make sure it goes into care and services, not to put BMWs and Mercedes in the driveways of executives of home care agencies.

My point is this: I think we can all agree that families like this deserve as much support as we can muster, and if we can make their life easier from a regulation standpoint, let's do that.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I recognize the member from Oshawa.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I appreciate not just the passion but the commitment to caring from the member from Ottawa Centre. It really is a privilege, the role that we have, but a privilege to be invited into the homes of many of our constituents and Ontarians. I'm glad that you chose to take that opportunity and to share it with us.

I have met with a number of families and learned from a number of families who do not have such complex care needs, but whether it is palliative care that they are seeking, home care, seniors care, just having that care in the home and stressed and challenged to cobble together that plan—to use your words from earlier—to have that continuity of care, to have schedules that work with the family, whether it's respite, whether it's, as I said, palliative care. I've heard awful stories.

Are you hearing much of that as well? Is this only a conversation on complex care needs or are you hearing it more broadly?

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Thank you, friend from Oshawa. Yes, absolutely. This is something I've heard from all kinds of folks with disabilities, all kinds of caregivers, all kinds of community agencies, nursing homes and assisted

living facilities—yes. We need to simplify the way in which care gets done.

You know what was beautiful and great about this example? It's the pinnacle of community care. This is a community care strategy in this home that is second to none. Again, I hope members of the government do as MPP Hogarth, I understand, has done: Pay a visit to this home to see it first-hand. We could have this kind of amazing community care all over Ontario, but it needs to be funded. It doesn't just happen by accident and we can't just ask moms and dads to make it happen with whatever they have laying around. That's not fair. We can do a lot better than that.

You're right: This community care model offers dignity, it offers support, but it's also extremely efficient, and we could do a lot more if we just empowered people to do it all across the province.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Further questions and concerns?

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** I appreciate the member opposite's support for what's in this red tape bill, which is of course working with our public health units and constantly improving their role and improving the role of community care.

This is not something new to this Legislature. I know when we first got elected as a government, we knew that the family care model was going to be so important. One of the first bills we introduced via the health care minister and her great PA, who's in the Legislature today, is to introduce those family health teams, and part of the family health teams is all about community care. Now we're building that with paramedic medicine and building onto that with all the stuff in long-term care.

I know every step of the way we haven't had too much support for those particular improvements in those bills, so I'm wondering if now we finally see eye to eye. With this need to improve community care, will you be able to support this red tape reduction bill?

**Mr. Joel Harden:** I appreciate the question. They're always direct from the member from Barrie—Innisfil. I appreciate that.

Look, where we're going to disagree, and probably we're going to continue to disagree, is on who plays a role in the community care. I can't speak for colleagues in other caucuses, but in this party, we really believe in non-profit and public provision. It is essential for us.

When I look at this family's story and how much of a shortage they have and how much stress they are under because the private, for-profit home companies, they can't deliver—but they might deliver if you call their special line, right? We are maintaining that system, unfortunately, with this legislation. I'm not saying it's what the member wants to do or the government necessarily wants to do, but this is where I'm asking, persuading, attempting to encourage the government to go.

If we show ParaMed the door, if we show our CarePartners the door, if we show Bayshore the door and we say, "You want to participate in home care in Ontario? It's got to be in a non-profit and public basis; you've got

to pay people decent wages; you've got to give them decent hours; you've got to offer continuity of care of patients," it's going to be cheaper, it's going to be more affordable and it's going to be a better health care system. And it's going to work.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Further debate?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** It's a true honour to be able to rise in the Legislature today and talk about the Supporting People and Businesses Act, 2021.

It's really interesting, Speaker, when you think about where we were, where we've come to and how we got there. I'm going to talk a lot about one of the bill's highlights—actually, two of the bill's highlights: the auto tech stakeholders and the critical minerals, because to me, they are going to be tied hand in hand.

But there is a reason why we're able to do this today. When you consider only a few short years ago, in Windsor, the former chair and CEO of Fiat Chrysler at the time told the former Premier—and I'm paraphrasing, but he said to her on a stage, basically, "You've made Ontario the most expensive cost jurisdiction in the world." They were talking about whether any of the auto companies were going to stay or expand in Ontario, and they all talked about the cost of doing business in Ontario.

When we got elected, the first thing Premier Ford said to all of us, not only in cabinet, in caucus, but all of us in Ontario, was, "We are going to lower the cost of doing business in Ontario." And he kept his word.

Today, three years later, we have lowered the cost of doing business in Ontario by \$7 billion every year for the businesses in Ontario—\$7 billion. Now, today, it's \$2.4 billion lower in the cost of WSIB premiums. The benefits remain untouched; it's the premiums that have been lowered. Some \$2.4 billion to the auto companies, to the parts manufacturers, to the tool-and-die makers, to these large employers—this is huge money to each and every company that they have used to reinvest: \$2.4 billion.

We put in something—technically, it's called an accelerated capital cost allowance. What that means is that these companies can buy a piece of equipment and write it off in the same year. That saves these companies \$1 billion a year every year going forward.

There are a whole bunch of other things that we did in the middle. Primarily, it was not going ahead with the Liberal government's huge tax increases that were to take place in January 2019, these massive tax increases that would have just put a real stranglehold on business. We did not go ahead with those hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars of tax increases.

And then most recently, in the last budget, we saw that the industrial and commercial hydro rates are reduced by 14% and 16%, respectively. That is massive. It's a billion three. We also saw the provincial share of local property taxes, the education portion, be reduced by \$450 million every year.

Add it all up, and it's \$7 billion in savings that these companies have now put back in their businesses. They've been on a hiring spree.

What that allowed Ford, General Motors and Fiat Chrysler, now called Stellantis, to do is say, “Ontario, you’re open for business. We acknowledge that. We recognize that you’re open for business today, and here’s the kind of business we want to do. What do you think of this?”

It began with Ford asking us about their involvement in the electric vehicle business. We ended up, along with the federal government, I will say—\$295 million each into this new multi-billion-dollar facility for Ford; very shortly followed by Stellantis, a billion and a half; very shortly followed by General Motors, first going back to Oshawa, and in the next few weeks, they will have completed their hiring of 1,700 or 1,800 new employees. Then they announced their play in the electric vehicle sector, with BrightDrop. It is a designed-in-Ontario—in Markham, Ontario, at the General Motors facility, with about 700 people for connected and autonomous vehicles. They’ve designed a delivery vehicle, the first of its kind, and it will be made in Ingersoll, at the CAMI plant.

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These are all because of Premier Ford’s shoe leather, as I like to call it, the sweat equity in getting down to each and every one of these plants, visiting Toyota in Texas, visiting with Ford in Washington—all of these meetings that we had, to be able to tell our story.

That brings us to the fact that all of those announcements have been made and they’re going to need other things along the way. So, in this bill, we will consult the auto tech stakeholders on potential industry advancements.

If you think about what all this means, it includes an automated vehicle pilot and manufacturer plate, an AV and an M-Plate program—and all that is the acronyms to make Ontario a global leader in the connected and autonomous sector.

When we think about all of the pieces that are needed for that, it’s our expertise in artificial intelligence, connectivity, cyber security, quantum computing—there are 250 companies in Ontario that are involved in that side of the business, including General Motors, their organization in Markham, that designed their BrightDrop vehicle. Ford in Ottawa has about 400 employees. BlackBerry QNX, who we visited with in Ottawa yesterday, and Renesas—these are the kinds of companies that have invested over \$1 billion into the connected and autonomous sector in Ontario.

A couple of the things that we’ve done in this bill that are going to help the auto tech side of it all—think about it, Speaker. We are the number two automaker in all of North America, just behind Detroit, but we’re also the number two tech cluster in all of North America, just behind Silicon Valley. You put those two together, the manufacturing might that we have and the tech might that we have—we’re the only place in North America that has both of these, which is why we’re seeing those 250 companies come here and invest.

But there’s the other side of it, as well. When you think about the programs that we’ve announced in the last

budget—OVIN is one, the Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network. That, in the last budget, put \$56.4 million into the autonomous and connected vehicle sector. This is money that is available to these companies to help them design the vehicles of the future, the electric batteries of the future, all of the integrated mobility tools of the future. They’re being designed here in Ontario, and we’ve got our OVIN program that these companies are drawing on to help them.

We have another program called O-AMP, the Ontario Automotive Modernization Program. There are more than 100 companies in Ontario that have taken advantage of that. We have 700 companies that are parts makers in Ontario, around 500 tool-and-die and mould makers in Ontario, and 100 of those companies have taken advantage of this O-AMP program. It’s up to \$100,000 in matching money—there’s employment criteria and that type of thing that are involved as well—to assist these small and medium enterprises in the creation, the design, the production and the adoption of new ideas in the auto sector, and it’s to help them remove their outdated equipment and replace it with new tools and technologies to innovate.

In this bill, OVIN and O-AMP are important to us because of the consulting that we will be doing with the auto and the tech sector. It’s going to be an exciting matchup of the two and a continuation of the success of all of these companies who have done so much in Ontario.

You can see, Speaker, that we’ve got the five—six if you include Hino truck manufacturing in Woodstock—automotive companies. There are the three I mentioned, and Toyota—Toyota is the number-one J.D. Power-rated plant in the world. They committed \$1.4 billion to expand the RAV4 and bring their Lexus line here to Ontario. That’s a major coup for the province of Ontario. And, of course, we have Honda, who produce the Civic, for more than 20 years now the number-one car in Canada. It’s a great opportunity. These are five great companies, all continuing to invest in Ontario and grow.

We have been working through these programs with the parts makers, with the tool, die and mould makers, and they’re all getting involved now, more heavily, with our support, in this new, exciting electric vehicle program. All of this was announced in 2019, and it’s called Driving Prosperity. It has been our plan to return the auto sector not only to their former might, but to bring them into the future. The Driving Prosperity plan has been out there since 2019, and it’s coming to fruition. All the pieces are lining up nicely.

There are two other things, Speaker. The batteries that are going to be required to power these vehicles—we are making pitches to these battery companies worldwide. They’re looking to Ontario. They know that we have this advanced manufacturing might. They know that we have the connected and autonomous vehicle technology, the mobility technology. We’re looking to them to locate in Ontario, and we’re working very hard on that. Hopefully we’ll have news as time unfolds on the battery side of it.

But what will be an important component is also in this bill, and that’s to support the Critical Minerals Strategy.

That Critical Minerals Strategy is incredibly important when you think about Ontario, where we have cobalt in the aptly named town of Cobalt: the only permitted processing facility and smelter in North America. That's in Cobalt, Ontario, just north of my riding of Nipissing. You've got lithium north of Red Lake in the western end of Ontario. You have graphite in Hearst, a little bit farther north than Cobalt, and, of course, you have nickel in Sudbury. It's one of the largest producers in the world of class 1 nickel and nickel sulphide. All of these are the components that are required in batteries. We have them here in Ontario. In fact, we have them here in northern Ontario.

In this Supporting People and Businesses Act, Speaker, is an area that will make it easier for mining companies to reprocess mine waste. I think about a place like Temagami. In its heyday, Temagami did three things. They produced so much lumber for the province of Ontario at Milne lumber. I remember a ceremony—I think it was long before I was mayor of North Bay, so this would probably be in the 1990s—where there was a plaque being erected at Ontario Northland when they shipped the 20-millionth tonne of ore from Sherman Mine. And then, of course, Temagami, with its beauty—the Temagami pines, as we call them—and Temagami Dry Ginger Ale, is known for its tourism. Today, it's still known for its tourism, but the lumber sector has long moved on from northern Ontario, primarily due to the high cost of energy that began under the previous government, more than a decade ago. We saw 62 mills throughout the north closed. The Temagami mill, Milne lumber, closed before that, I will grant you that, but we did see 62 of our mills close forever in northern Ontario under the previous government.

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But for Sherman Mines and the tailings that are there, this bill allows companies to get in there and reprocess the mine waste and the tailings. If you've ever been to Temagami, you move off the highway a little—I got a prospector's licence. Oh, I wasn't married yet, so I would have been in my very young twenties when I first got my prospector's licence. I still pan for gold to this day in Temagami, and you see these massive tailings piles. For a guy with a pan and a little sluice to go in, it's a little bit of fun on the weekends and a little bit of relaxation, but there's an opportunity to extract minerals—the minerals, I'll say, that the old timers left behind. There were very rudimentary techniques.

The place I go was called the Little Dan Mine. It opened in the 1920s. It was a gold mine and it only stayed open for a couple of years, and then the crash of 1929 came, and nobody ever went back. The property has changed hands and is tied up in legalities and that type of thing. But there are minerals in those tailings ponds, and this bill, the Supporting People and Businesses Act, will allow the companies to be able to get in there and process these tailings. It's going to be an incredibly exciting opportunity, when you think about what's in those tailings ponds in Cobalt.

Again, this is, in our entire opportunity in this Driving Prosperity plan—I'm born and raised in northern Ontario, lived there all my life. So it's exciting to be able to say that the most crucial advantage we have in Ontario—yes, we have the sights and we have the STEM grads; 55,000 grads a year in the tech sector as well. We have all of these beautiful components, but the most crucial advantage of the location here in Ontario comes from our mining industry.

Canada, again, is the only country in the entire Western hemisphere with all the raw materials, and this bill, the Supporting People and Businesses Act, 2021, opens that door. It unlocks that wealth that's not in the ground anymore; it's actually sitting above the ground, untouchable. This is going to open that. It's going to help us, as I like to call it, unleash Ontario.

It's going to be exciting to be able to know, in northern Ontario, that we also have the world's first all-electric, battery-powered underground mine, and that eliminates greenhouse gas emissions, especially when it's involved with moving materials. So this is really coming together wonderfully. If the Premier were sitting right here, he would say that the Driving Prosperity plan that was announced in February 2019 is working. We've seen it in the original equipment manufacturers, the OEMs; we're seeing it now in all of these parts and tool-and-die and mould makers. We're seeing their companies with “help wanted” signs right across Ontario. It's going to work in the electric vehicle battery production—we're highly confident—and it all will work because we have these critical minerals that are going to be tapped, that are sitting above ground in northern Ontario.

So this is a very, very important bill. I've only touched on the auto sector, how important—

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Just scratching the surface.

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Exactly. We're scratching the surface for these minerals as well; I love it.

There are so many other pieces of this bill others have spoken about and will continue to speak about, but I want to focus today on the auto sector, because driving prosperity is exactly what we're doing in Ontario. As you drive up and down, and to have visited all of these plants with the Premier and to see the interaction that he has with the workers, with the owners, with the manufacturers, all of these small tool-and-die shops—it is an exciting renaissance in the province of Ontario that was created by driving prosperity, and now we truly are ready to unleash Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Questions and concerns?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'd like to thank the minister for his presentation. It was very interesting that you're dealing with high-tech companies and you're touring and doing the things that promote business, which is a good thing for Ontario. I noticed you focused on the auto industry quite a bit. Obviously that's a big part of our economy, but if I recall my years in the steel industry in Hamilton, many years ago, we brought forward a proposal to the government of the time, and it didn't go too far. We went federally, too.

It's called cogeneration. What we had done in Hamilton—we had coke ovens, as you know, as part of the steel processing, and we had blast furnaces, and the emissions of these were going up in the air, and we asked the government of the time if they would look at cogeneration, which could have—the CBS, the central boiler shop, in Hamilton at the plant could actually light up the whole city if it was set up properly. So if you're looking for savings, maybe the minister could answer on that situation.

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Thank you very much to the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek for the question. The steel industry in Hamilton—I'm going to stick with auto. The steel industry is incredibly important to the auto sector. Forty per cent of the steel that comes out of one of those plants ends up in one of the OEMs. As we've seen this green revolution in our electric vehicles, we're seeing it with the electric vehicle batteries—we have a really good shot at these battery plants because we don't burn coal in Ontario. Now, we do know that the steel plants are still relying on coal, and that is something—to the member—that we continue to work on with these steel plants in Hamilton to look at the new electric arc technology. That is going to save a tremendous amount of greenhouse emissions.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I recognize the member from Flamborough–Glanbrook.

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of serving as parliamentary assistant to the minister and saw first-hand how tirelessly he worked, and the Premier worked, to return Ontario to its natural status as being the economic powerhouse of this country. My question to the minister is, could you share again with members of the opposition and all of us here in the Legislature this afternoon some of the programs, some of the initiatives that we have brought forward to create an environment that is attracting businesses around the globe to return us once again, as I said, to that economic powerhouse that we are seeing as more and more businesses come to Ontario?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Thank you very much to the member from Flamborough–Glanbrook. It's interesting, the difference today in the business community and the spirit of these businesses when compared to where we were in 2018 when we got elected. There are new programs. Invest Ontario is our new investment agency for all of these businesses to help shepherd them. They'll move at the speed of business. We put \$400 million into Invest Ontario over four years for them to be able to work with these companies. That is a brand new investment vehicle, and one that we expect to be run by deal hunters, but mostly deal closers. That's \$400 million that's there today that was not there yesterday.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Questions and concerns? The member from—

**Interjection:** Humber River–Black Creek.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** —Humber River–Black Creek.

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**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** Thank you, Speaker. You got there eventually; that's good.

I'm going to repeat a question very similar to what I asked the minister's colleague this morning, and I thank him for the presentation. Something that I continue to hear about from business in my community is commercial insurance and how it is going through the roof. It's going up by 200% to 300% in some cases. These business owners are saying to me that their businesses were shuttered during the pandemic in many cases, and while they were not seeing clients or customers, their rates were going through the roof. I don't understand why the government isn't taking strong action on this, and I'm hoping for an answer.

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** It's the same approach I would take when we're dealing with large corporations and we sit down with them and we tell them it's the cumulative savings that we've developed and delivered for the business community. So I would say the same in the small business community, especially through this last period, where we had \$3 billion in small business support grants, where we had PPE grants that were given out to businesses. In our area of northern Ontario, we had a very special grant called the Northern Ontario Recovery Program, which helped all of these businesses along the way. There is a long stream of these incentives, including lowering the business tax down to just over 8%, lowering the share of the education tax locally. Cumulatively, we have made a better environment for these small businesses.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I recognize the member from Sarnia–Lambton.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** It's a great afternoon here. I'm excited to be alive in Ontario today. I just wish I was 30 years younger; I'll be honest. There's a lot of money and a lot of opportunities out there.

But I would like you to speak a little bit—everything else is very interesting—about the hydrogen industry that we're going to hope to build in Ontario and hopefully in Sarnia–Lambton. Like I said, I wish I was 30 years younger.

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** God bless the member from Sarnia–Lambton, because he knows how—we were talking earlier. He has got to have more private member's bills passed than anybody ever in the Legislature, and he goes right for the nub of it: “Yes, yes. It's a great talk, but what about hydrogen in Sarnia? What's going to happen?”

I can remind the member, he was such a great mentor to me when I got elected in 2011, and I've always thanked him for that. One of the things that we did was develop our hydrogen plan back there. It was a white paper. I think it was 11 or 12 steps to reducing energy costs, and one of them was hydrogen. Because of the previous government, who was making more power than we needed, by a tremendous amount, the cost of energy was so much that we were paying the States and paying Quebec to take our surplus power. We should be using that surplus power to make hydrogen. That's the long and the short of it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I recognize the member from Toronto Centre.

**Ms. Suze Morrison:** As much as I don't want to necessarily correct the record of the minister opposite, I do

believe it was the NDP's Cheri DiNovo who has actually passed the most private member's bills in this House, largely on queer and trans issues, and bringing those important voices into this chamber. I want to make sure she gets the credit she deserves there, which actually brings me to talk about my community in Toronto Centre, and specifically the Church and Wellesley Village and the utter abandonment of this government to supporting the queer- and trans-owned businesses in my community, who don't just need ongoing supports and relief to survive the pandemic, but we are dealing with the intersecting crises of the opioid crisis, of the homelessness crisis, of the housing crisis. It is untenable.

I would like to ask the minister: How exactly do you think Ontario is going to recover from COVID-19 when Toronto is arguably the economic engine of the province and my riding of Toronto Centre is the economic engine of Toronto? If the engine of the engine is failing, how do you think we're going to get through this?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Just before you go, I'll just remind people that it is your ability to correct your record, but you cannot correct others, as you said.

I look to the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade.

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** I will acknowledge the member from Toronto Centre, that we, too, miss Cheri DiNovo. I always enjoyed the debates with her, and especially the stories, when we listened to her past and how she got here. She always did bring a tear to our eye when she used to repeat that story, and justifiably.

I will tell you, I send the Premier—every single morning he gets what's called your “one a day,” and it's short for your one-a-day vitamin. It charges him up. I tell him the name of a company, where they're located, how much they've invested and how many people they hired. Every single day I've been in this job, he gets one of those, and I cannot tell you how many are from downtown Toronto, your financial sector, your fintech sector—the tech sector in Ontario is absolutely on fire, and they continue to look for jobs.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Further debate?

**Mr. Guy Bourgouin:** It's always an honour to rise in this House to represent the people of Mushkegowuk—James Bay.

Speaker, this bill is the seventh of the government's red tape reduction package, with 25 schedules and just under 30 accompanying regulation changes. The people of Ontario deserve better than this bill.

The government states that this bill will protect and offer support for business and people. Speaker, we all know COVID-19 has been hard. Families and businesses were hit hard. This bill does nothing to help people get through the pandemic, and it does not do anything to help everyday people recover.

Malgré le fait que ce gouvernement dit avoir supporté les familles et les entreprises, je ne vois pas le même résultat qu'eux. Le gouvernement est fier de dire qu'ils ont

fourni 30 milliards de dollars en prêts pour supporter les entreprises. Comme vous le savez, un prêt reste un prêt. Un prêt peut aider dans le moment même, mais il n'aide certainement pas dans le long terme, monsieur le Président. Plusieurs petites entreprises dans mon comté n'ont pas fait la demande pour votre prêt, puisqu'elles ne voulaient pas être obligées d'ajouter à leur longue liste de factures et de paiements.

Speaker, let's talk about other programs this government claims help small businesses, the small business grant. They claim that their programs are working. I say this is not reality. Well, it may be the reality of their buddy programs but certainly not for those who are not. When you look at the bigger picture of what small businesses have been put through during the pandemic, offering programs that don't deliver on their objectives are not very useful. If this small business grant was so successful, why is the program delivery so flawed and why have so many businesses had to close their doors?

Dites-moi pourquoi : pourquoi une petite entreprise de mon comté qui a appliqué pour la subvention en mars 2020 attend toujours une réponse à sa demande? Pourquoi, mais pourquoi est-ce qu'elle attend encore? Ceci ne fait pas de sens et n'est certainement pas une façon de montrer du support aux petites entreprises.

In fact, I want to continue to point out how your claim of helping people and small business is inaccurate. Our office received numerous calls from small businesses concerned about their application status for small business grants. We asked your ministry if it was possible for applications for this program to still be under review. Their response: “Absolutely. We are still going through applications.” How is that helping small businesses? How are they supposed to survive when the funding is not coming through? Well, the answer: Some of them can't and did not. We hear the members of the government talk about their success and how they support and help businesses, but oddly enough, you don't hear them talking about the ones that didn't make it, the ones that fell through the cracks, the ones who couldn't apply.

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Durant cette pandémie, non seulement les entreprises en ont arraché, mais parlons des organismes à but non lucratif, les organismes communautaires : étiez-vous là pour les aider? Oui, il y avait des possibilités de programmes, mais même comme vous l'avez bien dit vous-mêmes, certains se qualifiaient et d'autres, non. En plus, ces organismes n'avaient pas d'autres sources de revenu.

J'aimerais vous donner deux exemples dans mon comté, monsieur le Président. La première : La Forge, une institution francophone à Kapuskasing. Tout le monde connaît La Forge à Kapuskasing, avec leur fameux brunch du dimanche, leur festival western avec le grand chapiteau blanc—tout en français et en anglais—vente de garage annuel, et la liste continue. Ils ont dû utiliser leurs réserves pour survivre. Il est difficile de bâtir des réserves pour un organisme à but non lucratif dans une petite communauté comme Kapuskasing ou, encore pire, dans une pandémie.

Les deux autres : les légions—encore, une institution reconnue dans mon comté. Ils n'ont pas pu faire leur levée de fonds habituelle pour aider à les soutenir durant cette pandémie. Ils ont dû utiliser leur revenu pour survivre aussi.

Oui, il y a eu des programmes, comme j'ai dit. Mais comme vous l'aviez dit vous-mêmes, certains ont qualifié et d'autres, non.

Les entreprises sont le coeur de nos communautés, mais plusieurs n'ont pas été capables de survivre et ont dû fermer. Malheureusement, les programmes n'étaient pas là pour les aider. Ils méritent un gouvernement à l'écoute de leurs besoins, un gouvernement qui ne prend pas un an à compléter des demandes de programmes qui pourraient assurer leur survie, monsieur le Président.

Based on the numbers of complaints my constituency office has received regarding small business grants, this government is not making it easy for businesses.

Pourquoi est-ce que ce gouvernement n'offre pas une troisième vague de financement pour ces petites entreprises qui souffrent encore, qui pourrait potentiellement assurer leur survie?

Ma collègue de London West a fait un discours hier en Chambre sur G-13, le même projet de loi qu'on discute maintenant. Elle disait que dans une lettre de la chambre de commerce, la chambre de commerce disait que pour certaines petites entreprises, ça peut leur prendre 18 mois pour se remettre sur pied et qu'une troisième vague de financement était nécessaire. C'était nécessaire, monsieur le Président. Je suis certain que plusieurs entreprises pourraient en bénéficier.

Parlons des entreprises de mon comté : je suis certain qu'une troisième vague de financement serait bénéfique pour les entreprises qui ont souffert énormément des fermetures liées à la COVID-19, les entreprises comme les salons de coiffure, les spas. Ces entreprises essaient encore de se remettre sur pied étant donné qu'elles ont été fermées le plus longtemps.

Dans mon comté, j'ai une propriétaire de salon de coiffure qui a fait demande pour le programme de subvention pour les petites entreprises. Elle a attendu des mois sans nouvelles de sa demande. Nous avons essayé de communiquer avec le ministère, sans succès. Ça semble être une histoire qui se répète. Pas de réponse de ce gouvernement.

J'aimerais aussi me pencher sur les enjeux des restaurants et des petits motels. Le gouvernement n'arrête pas de dire que les personnes, les entreprises ont su s'adapter durant les temps difficiles. « S'adapter » c'est un grand mot. Je sais que pour bien des restaurants dans mon comté, ils ont dû fermer leurs portes parce que faire du « takeout » n'était pas assez rentable. C'est difficile pour les petites communautés et petites entreprises.

Leur dire de s'ajuster n'est pas une façon de faire les choses. La survie des petits motels—personne ne pensait à eux. Dans mon comté, il y en a plusieurs : des motels, des non affiliés. Si on dit que les grosses chaînes de motels en ont arraché, imaginez les petites, monsieur le Président; imaginez les petites. Celles-ci criaient au loup pour

survivre, car elles ont été oubliées et, pour plusieurs autres entreprises, comme on dit en bon français, passées à l'oubliette.

It seems to me this government is just talking about reducing red tape with this bill, and not thinking about supporting businesses and people. If you want to “improve efficiency,” you need to be able to understand underlying issues. Looking at the surface of issues or reducing red tape doesn't give you a solution and it does not solve issues. Let's talk about improving efficiency, which your government is proposing to do in this bill when it comes to schedule 1.

Mr. Speaker, it is a known fact to everyone that the number of matters on the list in criminal courts have drastically increased during COVID. The government talks about improving efficiency. How can they talk efficiency when new protocols are being putting in place to add to workloads of the crown and their offices?

Let me explain. For example, a new bail protocol is now in place. The result of this new bail protocol: even more work for the crown. But let's be clear: more work but no additional funding resources were put in place. Crowns are being asked to do more and more with less and less. We're asking them to make the impossible possible. Improving a few efficiencies does not answer to the larger problem of the crisis of our court system due to insufficient staff, who are asked to do more.

What about bail? It's one of the most important parts of the entire legal system. We need a good bail system to allow our detained to get bail in a timely manner. But to do so, we need more funding. We need duty counsel, but duty counsel needs more resources to ensure a good bail system. We need more crowns to be able to cover additional bail courts. Without proper funding, without looking at the underlying issues and needs in our system, we won't get better efficiencies, but we will keep seeing delayed justice for both the accused and the victims of crime.

The north needs more resources. We need more staffing.

Also, let's talk about the coastal communities. Do you think by amending schedule 1, our coastal communities will see better results? I don't think so. In my riding, the coastal courts have not yet resumed. Can you imagine how long it's going to take to get those moving again?

Of course, it's complicated. COVID complicated things even more. How will counsel travel through those communities? As we know, each community has its own restrictions. Furthermore, the transportation to get there: We're talking transportation of staff, counsel, all of which will for sure have their own COVID protocols to follow. So how do we address this?

Looking at the current state of our court system and efficient staff and resources, I would assume we are not close to getting back on track. This is our court system. It's obviously in crisis. We need to do better.

Un problème encore plus imminent est l'accès aux services juridiques en français. Malgré le fait que le système judiciaire devrait être équitable et juste, j'aimerais

bien savoir pourquoi les francophones attendent deux à trois fois plus longtemps pour avoir une date en cour. Je ne peux même pas concevoir comment cela arrive encore de nos jours. Par exemple, une personne qui veut un procès en français devant le tribunal social attend des mois et des mois pour recevoir sa date de tribunal. Malheureusement, cette date sera remise aussi à plusieurs reprises. Pourquoi? Il n'y a pas de juge francophone ni le personnel nécessaire pour assurer le déroulement du tribunal en français. Encore, un manque de ressources.

Cela est inacceptable, monsieur le Président, le manque de ressources de justice et de faire attendre cette personne qui attend pour des prestations d'aide sociale ou quoi que ce soit. Une personne francophone ne devrait pas être obligée de choisir entre un procès en anglais pour recevoir une date de procès plus rapide et un procès en français et de souffrir les conséquences de son choix.

J'aimerais aussi parler de la section 25.

I'd like to talk about a section, which is the Water Opportunities Act, with the title saying the Supporting People and Businesses Act, Bill 13.

Aucune mention pour les communautés des Premières Nations dans le Grand Nord pour l'eau potable. Ils ont eu une opportunité parfaite pour essayer d'amener de l'aide aux communautés qui sont toujours sous un « boil-water advisory ». On parle d'un projet de loi pour aider le monde. Mais qu'est qu'on fait des communautés autochtones, où on attend toujours, où on est sous des « boil-water advisories », puis qu'on trouve ça acceptable, ou qu'on tourne un oeil, ou qu'on ne veut pas? On dit qu'ils ont souffert, à travers la pandémie, la même chose que les autres—l'eau potable, monsieur le Président, c'est un droit humanitaire.

It's a human right. We shouldn't see, in Ontario, boil-water advisories—for my colleague from Kiiwetinoong, 26 years of boil-water advisories.

The community of Marten Falls was talking about evacuating because the water plant fell, because they didn't have the proper—there were people there who had to leave for holidays and there were no people to supply, so the water was not potable.

Il n'y avait pas de l'eau potable. On pensait d'évacuer la population.

C'est inacceptable, en 2021, que les communautés autochtones n'ont pas d'eau potable. C'est une honte. C'est une tache sur votre gouvernement, puis le gouvernement précédent, en passant, monsieur le Président. Ce n'est pas d'aujourd'hui, là; ce n'est pas d'aujourd'hui.

On n'a aucune mention du « housing crisis » dans les communautés autochtones. Quand je parlais au chef de la communauté de Marten Falls, il m'a dit, « Guy, quand on fait venir les personnes pour s'occuper du plant, on n'a pas de place à les faire rester. Fait que, ils ne restent pas. On ne peut pas leur donner du “proper training,” on ne peut pas développer notre monde, parce qu'il n'y a pas de place pour rester. » Ils font faire ça tout le temps.

On a des générations multiples qui demeurent dans la même maison. On a des tas de matelas dans le salon pour qu'ils puissent dormir.

We have a housing crisis in these communities. And yet, we have an opportunity to fix this, because the title of this says “supporting people.” First Nations are people too. They need the help, and this government should step up when it comes to water and housing in First Nations communities.

Sur ce point, en bout de ligne, ce projet de loi parle de l'intention de supporter les personnes et les entreprises. Par contre, avec ce gouvernement, l'intention n'est pas suivie par l'action. Alors, j'espère que ce gouvernement va travailler pour le bien-être et l'ensemble de la communauté.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Questions and concerns?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** The member opposite made mention that the government is not making it easy for business. I'd like to get a perspective from the northern lands. I represent a riding about as far south as you get in the province of Ontario, and I found through our office that we did an awful lot of work encouraging business to sign up for the Ontario Small Business Support Grant. That was \$20,000 to \$40,000 for little businesses that were set back by the virus. A Main Street Relief Grant—I don't know how that would apply, say, on the shore of James Bay, but, again, help with PPE. And the Digital Main Street program to help businesses get online, it worked in my riding. How does that work out in the kind of area that you represent?

**M. Guy Bourgoin:** Pour répondre au député opposé, c'est certain qu'il y a eu des entreprises qui ont fait la demande, qui ont été approuvées. Mais il y en a d'autres qui n'ont pas été approuvées, puis il y en a d'autres qui sont tombées entre les craques. Il y en a qui ont eu plusieurs difficultés. J'ai parlé dans mon discours qu'il y en a qui attendent toujours. Il y en a qui attendent toujours pour des réponses.

Mais ce qu'on n'entend pas de votre gouvernement, par exemple, c'est toutes les entreprises qui sont tombées. On se pète les bretelles. C'est facile de se pêter les bretelles, puis dire : « Le système fonctionne. » Oui, ici, on parle juste des succès.

Mais qu'est-ce qu'on fait des personnes qui ont perdu leurs entreprises, tous les investissements qu'elles ont mis dans leurs entreprises, et qu'elles ont perdus? Ça, par exemple, c'est radio-silence de votre part.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I turn to the member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I noticed during your speech that you touched on the boil-water advisory and the lack of help, that the First Nations and Indigenous people in your area have not received. From what I can see in this situation, it must be extremely frustrating on an ongoing—decade after decade, without having any results.

Now, the minister stood over there today and talked about the hundreds of millions of dollars they're going to sink into new tech and things like that. But a basic thing, like you said, with simple fresh water to drink for the community—it's heartbreaking to think that we can talk about those types of investments and we can't do a simple thing, in a country this big and this wealthy, to put water—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Question.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** So my question to you is, what do you say to the people that you represent when you hear about these announcements?

**Mr. Guy Bourgoin:** I thank my colleague for the question. What do you tell the people, the communities, when you have a Liberal federal government that said they would fix it? But don't forget: The province was also a signatory to the treaty. We have a responsibility. It's too easy for government to play political Ping-Pong. Guess who's in the middle of this? It's the community itself. It's the community itself that is suffering. Basic human rights means water. What do I tell them? Elect an NDP government. It's as simple as that, because we'll fix it.

There's no reason, with the amount—how rich this province is. Fix the problem. Send the bill to the federals.

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**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Further debate?

**Mr. Mike Harris:** I've spent a fair amount of time travelling around northern Ontario, both professionally and personally, over the years, and it's a beautiful part of the country that often gets overlooked, which is very unfortunate.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** You're the one stealing the fish.

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Easy there, Algoma-Manitoulin. Your time will come.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Remember to go through the Chair, gentlemen.

**Mr. Mike Harris:** But in all seriousness, and kidding aside, we've seen so many jobs lost with the forestry industry and mining industry over the last 20 years, and I think that with a renewed focus and view on what's happening in the north, these are all good things. Maybe if the member could highlight a little bit, in his estimation, what some of the things that are within this bill will help do for the mining industry and the forestry industry, when we talk about prospecting and looking at ways that we're able to help communities generate some revenue.

**Mr. Guy Bourgoin:** Are you talking about how you stopped in North Bay north?

**Mr. Mike Harris:** I've been to Kap. I've been to Timmins. I've been to Hearst.

**Mr. Guy Bourgoin:** I tease you about North Bay being the north, when we know that it's south for us.

But if you're talking about the communities and the Indigenous communities, I would say to you that the first thing is that you should do proper consultation with First Nations, which is sometimes lacking, or respecting the communities' rights or the traditional territories. And it doesn't mean just negotiating with one community; there's more to that than just one community.

To answer your question: Proper consultation with First Nations is definitely important, because if you don't, you will hit a stumbling block, and jumping on a bulldozer is not an answer.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** The member from Ottawa Centre.

**M. Joel Harden:** Merci, mon ami de Mushkegowuk—Baie James pour votre discours. C'était tellement excellent, comme toujours.

Question : pourquoi, en Ontario, a-t-on une situation où c'est acceptable de partager les ressources publiques avec des gestionnaires par des exemptions d'impôts—des milliards et des milliards—avec des personnes qui prennent des stocks, des choses comme ça, diminuer les impôts pour les personnes comme ça, mais on ne peut pas chercher de l'eau potable pour nos alliés, nos voisins autochtones? Pourquoi? Parce que s'il y a, quelqu'un ici qui dit qu'on n'a pas d'argent pour ça, c'est absolument impossible—on manque de 44,5 milliards de dollars chaque année ici avec des exemptions d'impôts qui bénéficient à des personnes tellement riches.

Pourquoi, mon ami, est-ce qu'on partage des choses pour des personnes riches, mais pas pour nos amis autochtones?

**M. Guy Bourgoin:** Merci pour la question, à mon confrère d'Ottawa-Centre. « Pourquoi? » C'est similaire à la question de mon ami de Hamilton. Il m'a posé la question. Il n'y a aucune raison. Il n'y a aucune raison qu'on ne peut pas enrayer ce problème-là dans les communautés autochtones à grandeur de la province. C'est inacceptable en 2021 qu'une communauté autochtone bouille son eau pour 26 ans. Il y a des enfants qui sont rendus des jeunes adultes. Ils n'ont jamais vu l'eau dans un « tap »; ils n'ont jamais goûté l'eau. Ils vont dans un motel, et ils boivent de l'eau d'une [inaudible]. Ils n'ont pas confiance en l'eau qui vient du robinet.

Il n'y a aucune raison. La province est assez riche pour enrayer ce problème-là, mais on se cache derrière des jeux politiques.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I turn to the member from Flamborough-Glanbrook.

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** To the member from Mushkegowuk—James Bay: I enjoyed your presentation. You did talk about bail hearings, and I wanted to remind the member that immediately once we started moving through the pandemic, our Attorney General brought in measures to bring bail hearings online. We had initially targeted 80% of the bail hearings to be virtual, but I'm pleased to report that 100% of the bail hearings were able to be held virtually. It's one of the many measures that our Attorney General is bringing forward to modernize a very outdated court system, and I'm very pleased to be able to report that.

But I wanted to touch on one of the questions that the member from Kitchener-Conestoga mentioned, and that is the mining industry. I agree that North Bay is not northern Ontario; I'm a little bit closer to Capreol. Do you agree that some of the proposals in this legislation will help the mining industry?

**M. Guy Bourgoin:** Écoute, c'est sûr qu'on n'est pas contre toutes les affaires qui sont dans le projet de loi. Je pense que ça serait mal de dire qu'on est contre tout. Mais on est habitué à ce que votre gouvernement cache beaucoup de choses dans les projets omnibus. Je pourrais vous en nommer, mais je pense qu'on ne dégènera pas. Mais il reste que quand ça vient aux peuples autochtones,

ou qu'on parle d'autres choses, ça a besoin de consultation.

J'aimerais répondre à ta première partie, parce que j'aimerais bien que ce gouvernement m'explique pourquoi un francophone, par exemple, doit attendre deux à trois fois plus longtemps pour être capable d'avoir son audience. Pourquoi se fait-il dire par les cours ou par le système : « Mais tu devrais peut-être penser à aller en anglais parce que ça prend plus de temps en français »? Ça, c'est un manque envers la communauté francophone, c'est un manque de respect envers nous, puis votre gouvernement devrait régler la situation et non se cacher derrière d'autres choses puis de dire—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Answer.

**M. Guy Bourgouin:** On a droit à ces services-là et c'est inacceptable qu'on attende deux à trois fois plus longtemps.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Further debate?

**Hon. Doug Downey:** I really appreciate the opportunity to be able to stand up and support my colleagues. This bill is just fantastic, Bill 13. Associate Minister Tangri and Minister Fedeli and the work they put into this to bring forward more red tape reduction and investments in our economy and our small businesses is really—you heard Minister Fedeli talk about the auto sector, so I won't cover that ground, but boy, the things that are happening in Ontario. It's pretty exciting on a North American-wide perspective. We are going to lead the North American continent in electric vehicles. And the things he's doing, along with the Premier, to open those doors and solidify those deals—it is just phenomenal, and it's right across Ontario. It's right across the supply chain. We talk about northern Ontario; it's the minerals in the ground and it's the manufacturers and the suppliers. It's really just very exciting.

But I'm not going to talk about that, Mr. Speaker. I want to talk about a couple of other things that are helping continue to support the province's economy. They've introduced new measures to expand. We're making sure that we're getting rid of red tape, and we're taking a second look at all of government, top to bottom. That's why this isn't the first red tape bill. This is the next in the series, and there are some very, very innovative things that are helping our economy grow and creating opportunities for people right across the board.

I want to use an analogy, if I can. Do you ever see these re-creations, like at Chateau Frontenac, like at the Plains of Abraham or some of these historical ones, where they fire off the cannon? I was reading a story of one in particular. They're always set up with—there are two gunners. The one, the right gunner, is doing his job. Traditionally, it was a male-dominated field, if you go back to the 1700s, Mr. Speaker. The right gunner would be priming the piece and loading the powder, and the other would be fetching the powder and firing it off. You'd have an officer there, so there would be three so far. You'd have three soldiers, and they would be ramming it and cleaning it and doing their thing. But in this re-creation, they had

those six people—the two gunners, the three soldiers and the officer—but there was a seventh person there, and through the re-creation, the seventh person stood off to the side, about 50 yards back, and just stood there. This kid comes up to the person in charge of the re-creation, and says, “What's he doing back there? He's just standing there.” He said, “Well, he's holding the horses.” Well, there were no horses.

Sometimes, we continue to do things that make no sense because we just don't question why it was that way. They knew they had to have a seventh guy, but they didn't know what to do with him, because they had no horses. Well, Mr. Speaker, we're looking at things top to bottom, in the justice system and across our economy, to find out if there are things that we're doing that make no sense. And sometimes they don't make any sense and they have unintended consequences.

I want to start with schedule 1 in this bill, in Bill 13. Schedule 1 deals with the Barristers Act, something I don't think anybody has really looked at for a very, very long time. It only has three sections. It's a very small act. What schedule 1 does is take out section 3, so it's only going to have two sections from here on. What does section 3 of that act do? It sets the order of precedence for court.

#### 1700

For those of you who haven't gone to court, I'm going to explain how it works. In modern day, when you're in person in court—so this isn't the online stuff; this is the traditional. I'm going to talk about motions days. So you have trials—I'm not talking about trials; I'm not talking about multi-day court hearings with very few parties; I'm talking about motions days, when you can have 15, 20, 25 items on the docket that the judge is going to listen to, and it can be a five-minute thing for adjournment or it can be a half hour. If it's long enough, you'll get your own special appointment.

The first thing you do as a lawyer, when you go in, is you fill out the slip. Again, the judge isn't there yet, but the court clerk is there. As you check in, you want to say, “Hi, I'm here on behalf of my client. My client is here or isn't here.” You fill out a little slip of how long you think your motion is going to be. All the lawyers put five minutes, 10 minutes, 15 minutes, whatever it is. The lawyers on both sides—when they're both there, then the clerk can check them off the list, and away you go. So you would think there would be some sort of order to getting through the day. You might do the shortest ones first. A lot of judges do that. They say, “Look, we'll do all the consent matters first—bang, bang, bang, out you go. Then we'll do the five-minute ones and see how many we can clear out. And then let's see what's left.” There's some logical order to it all. That's how you would run a business. That's how you would run a modern system.

But what the Barristers Act says is that you're supposed to go in a different order. The Barristers Act says—this isn't in my personal interest, quite frankly, because I'm changing the rules to put me in the mix with everybody else, as Attorney General. Here's the order: If we have a motions day in court and there are 20 lawyers showing up,

if the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada shows up, he or she goes first. That's what it says. Second up is me, AG of Ontario. Third up is anybody else who has held the position of Attorney General of Canada or Ontario. And then it goes down to anybody else who has a Queen's Counsel. So that's the next piece. We're not going to talk too much about that, but you do it in order of when you received your QC. I will tell you a QC story in a moment, though. And then it goes to the remainder of the bar, the remainder of the lawyers, by age of call, by year of call.

That's how it says you're supposed to order the court. Some courts are doing it; some are not, but there are unintended consequences for it. Again, you would think you go by the five-minute, 10-minute, 15-minute—whatever would make some sense. Some courts are following this. Well, there are unintended consequences, and there's an omission. The omission is paralegals. They aren't in there at all. Sometimes they're there for equally valid reasons as a lawyer. They're governed by the Law Society. They have real business to do with real clients.

Schedule 1 of this bill, Bill 13, doesn't modify section 3; it just gets rid of it, because it—let's do business the way that business should be. The judge can order the hearings in the order that the judge wants. We're not constraining them. If they want to make up their own rules and follow that, they can, but it's no longer going to be part of the law.

Here are the unintended consequences that have developed over the years—and I have to give credit. As some of you know, I sat as a court clerk. I sat in the courtroom. I was the person receiving those slips when people came in with the five-minute, 10-minute—and you knew which lawyers said five but meant 20. Part of the job is to know the local bar, and the judge knows, too. But if you have a visiting judge, they rely on the clerk to say, "It says 'five,' but you better check in." So it's an important spot to be. You're an intermediary.

So I saw some of this hierarchical piece. And then, as I became a lawyer, I was on the other side—year-one call. In fact, my very first court hearing was a family law matter; it was a motion. It was up against a very, very senior member of the bar, and the judge was giving me a hard time on my right to have standing to be there as an articling student. There's some rule somewhere that you have to get leave of the court—anyway, the senior member of the bar just said, "Can we just get on with it? He knows what he's doing. Let's go."

So I don't like when people hide behind the rules and it's not productive. We're going to get rid of that, if the bill passes.

I want to give credit to the person who brought it back to my attention all these years later. It's from an article—it's a fellow named Sean Robichaud. I haven't told Sean I'm going to even say his name, but it's a public piece—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Doug Downey:** It's out there now.

He's a criminal lawyer, a defence lawyer. Sean wrote an article a couple of years ago, in 2016, and he's put it

out on Twitter since. I only know Sean tangentially; we know each other a little bit, but I haven't seen him in years and years. Well, he wrote an article, and it's based on stats. This is really interesting.

These are stats from the 2010 report from the Law Society, so they're not quite current, but they've got to be pretty close to current: "The proportion of racialized lawyers is much higher in the lower age categories." So 48% of racialized lawyers are between the ages of 30 and 39, compared to 11% in the ages 50 to 65. The younger you are, the more likely you're of a racialized group, and this is self-identifying information from the Law Society. Similarly, gender is affected the same way. Of the lawyers over 50—39% of all lawyers are over the age of 50. Of that group, 27% are women, compared with below 50, where it's 51%. So it has a gender lens and it has a racial lens as well.

What that means, as you look at—I'm going to throw out a couple more stats—who is affected by this scheme of who gets to speak first in court, 39% of all lawyers have over 20 years' experience. We're over 20 years' experience, so we'll just take that group: 48% are men, 24% are women, racialized are 8% and Aboriginal lawyers are 13%. I'm just going to repeat those again so you can get them, because the comparison is quite shocking: men, 48%; women, 24%; racialized, 8%; Aboriginal lawyers, 13%.

Now if you look at the group that are under 10 years' experience, men are 29% compared to the 48%, women are 37% compared to the 24%, racialized are 66% compared to the 8%—so even if it's half wrong, it's still big—and Aboriginal lawyers are 53% of that cohort compared to 13%.

So when we have a scheme—it was put in place for good reason. It was put in place to respect the senior lawyers, and you learn great things when you're sitting in court watching other lawyers do their craft and do their piece. The more senior lawyers have learned things, and they impart knowledge just by being there. But that doesn't mean that it has to be that way. I think there are ways for people to be mentored and to get that kind of leadership without having this side collateral effect of having people who are of other groups disproportionately affected.

It seems like a very simple thing, being section 3 of that act and schedule 1 of this act, Bill 13, but it does two things. It lets us organize ourselves in a more business-like and more efficient way, and that's really what red tape reduction is all about, making sure that when people go to court, or when their lawyers go—and I'm not just talking about criminal law and family law. I'm talking about corporate law. I'm talking about personal injury. It's right across the board. It is one of those small things that gets in the way of being efficient and drives up the cost of doing business in Ontario.

So I just wanted to walk through and put some context in that because it's something that, really, I don't think many people thought about very much. I wanted to give credit to Sean for raising it again. Again, it's not one of

those big headline-making, very exciting issues, but it's concrete change, and that's what our government is all about. You don't need all the flash. You crunch through it.

If you look through Bill 13, it is incredible the number of things that are in here that are making it easier for business in Ontario. Like I say, Associate Minister Tangri went ministry to ministry to ministry finding things that would make it better and easier to do business in Ontario and to create innovation, to create growth, to create opportunity.

Some of these things could have been done without COVID—that isn't really a COVID thing—but some of the things came about because of the ingenuity and the speed and the real creativity we did through COVID. One piece that I'm particularly proud of—and I'll get the schedule right—is schedule 11, which is extending outdoor liquor sales licences. This is something that, when we got into COVID, we said, “How do we help our small businesses?” Minister Fedeli went to the wall on getting resources and making sure that we could flow money to make sure it was going to the right spots to help people survive.

1710

We all have friends, colleagues and constituents who own restaurants, work in restaurants—an incredibly important sector. We did a lot of supports, but we also made it possible for them to do business differently, and extending patios is one of them. Am I ever proud that we were able to allow people to not have to have permanent structures to service their clients outside, be healthy, be safe, keep people employed and keep those businesses going. It has led to some really, really wonderful pieces—and for the MPPs who are in Toronto, you'll know CaféTO. A news release came out from the city of Toronto on October 20, just a week ago. The city saw a 51% increase in participation compared to 2020. So 2021 saw a 51% increase in participation. We're talking about patios and curbside. This year, CaféTO is supporting more than 1,200 restaurants, with expanded outdoor dining opportunities on streets and sidewalks in 2021, including 940 restaurants with curb lane closures, totalling more than 12 linear kilometres of public space allocated for outdoor dining opportunities. Sixty-nine business improvement areas have had at least one restaurant participating in CaféTO this year, and 158 participating restaurants are located outside of BIAs. That's just Toronto.

I can tell you that up in my part of the world, when they shut down Dunlop Street to allow people to be out there—Orillia was the same. MPP Jill Dunlop—on Friday nights, they would shut down Mississauga Street, I believe it is. And I know in MPP Harris's riding, in Woolwich in particular, I think, they did some really innovative things. It brought the downtowns to life. It brought people out in a safe way to be able to support local business and support local employment. It's something that was so successful.

On the front end, I was a huge proponent of it—of course, it falls within the oversight of my ministry, with the AGCO—but even I didn't understand how successful it would be, how it would help those restaurants survive, and the creativity.

Now we have people coming forward—in fact, the mayor of Woolwich was one of them who said to me, “We want to start planning for next year. Is there any chance that this is going to be repeated or extended?” Well, all my friends and Your Worship, in schedule 11, we propose to make this permanent. We propose to make it permanent for people to be able to serve their customers and their clients in safe environments, in ways that they want to be served. What a wonderful way to support our downtowns and our local businesses.

If you haven't been to any of these cafes outside, on a sidewalk, I wouldn't believe you, because there are so many of them all over the place.

It's one of the best things that we've done through COVID-19, and it's one of the best ways that government can support businesses, because it costs the taxpayer nothing to allow businesses to do what they do safely, in a way that meets the needs of the customers. All we had to do was get out of our experience of saying, “Why should we do that?” instead of saying, “Why not? Why wouldn't we do that?” Why wouldn't we let local businesses partner in municipalities and let them set some guidelines and unleash the economic power of restaurants and the service industry?

I can tell you, there's nothing more satisfying than seeing a small businessperson adapt and meet their need.

The next challenge—and it's not directly in this bill, but we need to make sure that those service industries have staff. You've heard the Premier say it, and you've heard Minister Fedeli say it: The most common sign in Ontario is “help wanted.” We all know somebody in that spot.

So we have work to do. I look for support from the opposition as we continue to make change, to get Ontarians to work, to create opportunities. And it's exactly this kind of thing that we want to do.

Just before my time is up, I want to touch on a couple of other smaller pieces. Schedule 4 is an update to the Courts of Justice Act. It's largely administrative. It's doing some cleanup. We changed the nomenclature, because I think words matter. Everybody here gives speeches; you know your words matter. We changed the name of masters to associate judges. We thought that that was appropriate in this day and age. The connotations of calling judicial officials “masters”—we did away with that in a previous bill. And so the Courts of Justice Act update does some corollary changes to make sure that it's across the board.

The Crown Administration of Estates Act, schedule number 5: again, some good changes, some good cleanup, red tape, making sure that things are working as well as they can. I can go on about the estates world for a whole other 20 minutes, but I know the Speaker is going to cut me off.

I'm going to touch on the last piece in there, schedule number 2, which is, again, something that we came upon through COVID and has been a huge success, keeping people safe, making sure businesses can survive. Schedule number 2 will permit cannabis delivery and pickup services, with all the appropriate guardrails on that.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for the time, and I look forward to questions.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Questions and responses.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I am grateful to have the opportunity to ask the Attorney General a question today as we're talking about supporting people in business. I have a question actually specifically around long-term-care accountability. We've been having a conversation about making it easier for business to do business, but when it comes to penalties and fines, I had sat opposite the former long-term-care minister and had an understanding that those fines come out of the money the government would give to those businesses to do business, as opposed to, for example, cutting into profit margins or being really a financial disincentive.

I understand that gets into contract law. The Attorney General being better versed than I, I wonder if the Attorney General would commit—as we're usually trying to make life easier for business, but when it comes to negligent and nightmare actors, could we perhaps make it a little harder for them to make a buck off of the backs of the vulnerable in Ontario?

**Hon. Doug Downey:** I'm happy to address this, because the things that the Minister of Long-Term Care is doing are very progressive: making sure that we have more inspectors, making sure that we have the inspections actually enforced. It's a myth, Mr. Speaker, that if one of the operators gets a fine, they're going to stop buying food or something like that—I don't know—taking it out of the business, but somehow leaving the money in the hands of the operator shareholders. They have to do what they have to do: They have to provide the things that they said that they would. That's the basis of contract law.

The shareholders, like all owners, and small business owners—I used to turn a key in a door. I also stood last in line to get paid, and that's how it works, and that's how it will continue to work in the long-term-care industry.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I look to the member for Mississauga–Malton.

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate it.

COVID-19 has required government to make many adjustments to how we provide services across many sectors. It has also shown us some major issues in legislation and regulation that were outdated and in need of modernization.

I wrote this question for a member on the opposite side, but now—I wrote it at that time. Some sectors include our court system, which the Attorney General has been making major investments to. Now we don't have the member; we actually have the AG himself.

So can the AG talk about why it is so important to make these improvements to government-related services and how it can benefit the residents, especially in northern Ontario?

**Hon. Doug Downey:** Thank you for the question. The investments that we're making have to allow us to do business differently. It's not temporary; we're able to make permanent changes. Northern Ontario, rural Ontario and First Nations all, quite frankly, have been ignored for

too long in the justice system. It's often an add-on in the past. But we're doing things to change not just rules but infrastructure. We're doing things to make it possible for those areas to—not just through the justice system, but when you look at what the Minister of Infrastructure is doing with broadband, that is helping to open up, and it's allowing us to design services that better meet the needs of those areas. There are so many things that we've done that make it easier, but also, little things like schedule 1 make it so we can do things in a more respectful way as well.

1720

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I recognize the member from Algoma–Manitoulin.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I want to thank the Attorney General for being in here, inside the House, with his comments today. He spent a lot of time on schedule 1. I never thought that I'd be reading and trying to appreciate the time that he has put into it. In essence, this particular schedule actually removes the order of precedence for the courts. It will put some tinkering and changing things over.

However, the concern is that we can do things that make sense, or we can stop doing things that don't make sense, but we also need to do things that are extremely important. One of them is returning the court system—because we do have an insufficient number of staff. You know that; I know that. We've talked about this. That results in long delays that are happening within our court system.

The other thing: We heard the member from Mushkegowuk–James Bay talk about the abnormal amount of time to get court service in French. Those are also things—those are huge red tape. They're actually huge barriers. I'd like to hear how those are some of the things that are going to be addressed, and I would have liked to have seen that under schedule 1.

**Hon. Doug Downey:** That's a good-news/bad-news thing. It's not in schedule 1 because we already did a lot of it. We've made French filing available across the province in civil and family. We're expanding French service—counter service; not just for filing—across the province. We're providing more DROs, dispute resolution officers, in more areas.

We're trying to meet the need. Some of these things have happened already, but that's not to downplay the need that's still there. We have a long way to go to get the system up to the expectations of the public.

But I'm working very closely with the Chief Justices, all three of them: Chief Justice Strathy of the Court of Appeal, Chief Justice Morawetz and Chief Justice Maisonnette. We work every single day in our offices on moving it forward. If I had more time, I'd talk about more of the things we're getting done.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I turn to the member from Mississauga–Erin Mills.

**Mr. Sherif Sabawy:** To the minister: I would like to thank you for all this information you've passed to us in regard to the different schedules. My question is: We know about the problems that small businesses have been

facing during the pandemic, and even prior to the pandemic, especially in mining and agriculture, because of all the many years of neglect. How, in your opinion, will the changes that we are proposing in this legislation help to inspire and get those businesses to a better place where they can do business in Ontario?

**Hon. Doug Downey:** In a nutshell, what's happening in this bill is that it's creating stability, opportunity and predictability, because that's what businesses want. They want to know when they make an investment that the government has their back and the government isn't going to change the rules halfway through.

We create a climate. You've heard the Premier say it. You've heard Minister Fedeli say it. We're creating the climate for growth, innovation and economic activity. This bill does it in so many different ways, everything from the auto sector through to if you have a dispute, which we were just talking about. It's really an across-the-economy approach to make sure that we're taking away barriers and creating opportunity, innovation and growth.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I turn to the member from Humber River–Black Creek.

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** I want to thank the Attorney General for his very detailed presentation, and I want to ask a question and share a major concern in my constituency with regard to cuts that were made to legal aid by this government, and also about the major barrier of finances when it comes to accessing justice.

Certainly these have been very, very difficult times for people in my community and communities across Ontario, but when people in my community, many of them, need to seek justice through courts or whatnot, money is a big barrier for them to seek what is rightfully theirs and the help that they need. So I'm looking for the AG to recognize that this barrier exists and propose to us concrete solutions to fix it.

**Hon. Doug Downey:** Actually, I had not reported it to the House, but LASA, in 2021, the act that we updated, the legal aid—there were many changes. Just recently, we signed agreements with all legal aid clinics and the seven student legal aid clinics, changing how we do business.

The reality is that you didn't really hear much about it because it went very well. It was very collaborative. We worked together to provide service for the front line, for those who need it the most. I'm very proud of our accomplishments in that area.

We need to spend money wisely. We need to make sure that we're spending it in the right spots. Just spending money isn't action; it's what happens with the money that creates the action. This bill helps us steer to the right spots, to make sure that we're pressing the right buttons for the economy, to allow it to grow.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I recognize the member from Flamborough–Glanbrook.

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** To the Attorney General: Prior to getting into politics, I was fortunate enough to be a journalist, and I spent some time in the courtrooms, and I was absolutely stunned at how archaic that system is and how unfriendly. If you've never been exposed to a court

system, it can be very difficult to navigate, very frightening.

But when the pandemic hit—and prior to—under your direction, the ministry has really moved mountains to drag the court system to a much more modern state.

Can you share with us some of the things that you've done, since being Attorney General, to modernize the system?

**Hon. Doug Downey:** Boy, I could go on with the thousands of things that we've done, and I give credit to the department: to my deputy, David Corbett; to my chief of staff, Joseph Hillier; and the team that we have. We work with other departments, and really, their leadership is phenomenal.

But what I really want to say is: Congratulations to the PA to the Attorney General, Donna Skelly—and my closing words: It is partly now your problem.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Since we're recognizing those who do a lot of work, I want to recognize some of the individuals who have helped me in me getting and performing my job as MPP. I have some great staff in my constituency office. I have Cindy Haddow, who's on maternity leave right now. Grant Buck has been with me for the last 10, 11, 12 years. I have Vicky Arsenault, who is also integral to my team.

I did lose Thomas Forget, who was my legislative assistant here over the course of the summer. He has moved on to a new job. Good luck to you, Thomas. Tu étais fameux avec moi au bureau, Thomas. Tu vas me manquer.

I have a new addition to my team. His name is Max Chapman. He comes from the beautiful island of Manitoulin. We are going through some growing pains, and it's a lot of fun, because he's starting to find out how his member does certain things. I'm always one to speak off the cuff, and I try to speak my heart. He takes the time to prepare some really good notes for me.

So, Max, I'm going to be using your material today.

I hope that everybody enjoys a lot of the points of Max and my team.

What I'm trying to do is get more of a sense of community, get more of my entire team involved, because they're the ones who deal with the front-line people. They're the ones who take the calls from the small business owners. They're the ones who take the calls from the family members in a long-term-care home. They feel the same frustration I feel at times, when getting answers proves to be difficult. I'll just give you a short example.

Just a couple of days ago, one of the local mayors, on the North Shore, called me. I very rarely hear from him because usually everything goes good in the community. It was personal in nature. He said, "Mike, can you help me out? I've been trying to get a hydro connection for my home. I'm building, but it has been 10 months that I've been waiting for a connection." Speaker, I've dealt with these kinds of issues before, where it was even longer periods to get a connection for hydro. Can you imagine a

business or someone trying to connect to hydro and it takes that long?

Those are some of the issues that we deal with on a regular basis. Everybody in this room has dealt with those personal issues. And what do we do? We pick up the phone, because we have a contact we can call. The frustrating part for a lot of people across this province is that they don't have that person they can call. They don't have that MPP who is sitting in government that you can just walk over and have a chat in order to get some information. My staff are frustrated with not getting that information. They're frustrated because they can't seem to make that connection, and that's the role that we play, which is so important in this House: We help our constituents from wherever we sit across this province.

1730

So here I go again; I'm not using the notes that were provided to me. I'll go back to what Max has prepared for me today.

Today we're discussing Bill 13, the Supporting People and Businesses Act. I have to say that I am disappointed with this bill, because it does a lot of window dressing and there's a lot of tinkering, but it does miss a lot of the meat to getting things actually done. Especially now that we're with this government who has reset the House—when they prorogued the House, it was an opportunity. As much as I was not happy with seeing a lot of things being put to the side—off the docket, no longer in committee, those private members' bills washed down the stream—I thought it was an opportunity to get excited about, “Okay, what's going to be next? What is going to be the focus? Where are these priorities going to be coming from? How is this government going to start tackling a lot of the global pandemic? How are we going to start attacking our economy? What are we going to be doing for our small businesses? What are we doing for our restaurant owners? What are we going to be doing for our health care and long-term-care homes and everything?” And I was really disappointed with the contents of what we see, the actual meat in Bill 13.

I was hoping we would return here and discuss legislation on a potential 14 days of paid sick days for Ontario workers, or that we would see the government announcing a new round of grants for small businesses who took a massive hit during the pandemic. Instead, the legislation that the government has brought forward in Bill 13 focuses more on tinkering around the edges, as I have said, and fails to provide much in the real way of supporting people and businesses in my riding of Algoma-Manitoulin.

We are lucky to have many local family-owned businesses across my riding. The people who own and operate businesses in my riding were hit hard by the pandemic. These families, who worked hard to contribute to their community, through no fault of their own find themselves struggling to stay afloat. So when the government introduces a bill about supporting businesses and people, after proroguing the Legislature to make sure we can address it as urgent business, I had hoped that they would propose something that would help those local businesses.

Again, I'll stray away—sorry, Max, I have to do this—and I'll talk about one of the small businesses where I'm a big participant in that business, and that's Yanick's Muscle Factory in Elliot Lake. I go down there and I meet up with my gym rats. Some of my gym rats are Lois and Kathleen. I call them my twisted sisters. They're fabulous ladies who are a little bit, well, let's say, “playful” when they come to the gym, and I always have a lot of fun with them. Or I see Wayne. He's another gentleman who has some mobility issues, but it's fantastic when you meet up with these individuals who have gone through so much turmoil in their lives and you see the small increments, as I do in myself, when you start improving walking, when you start improving bending, turning, twisting, lifting. These are all things that you enjoy while being at the gym. There's also Ken. Ken, who is there, is this 70-plus-year-old gentleman who has just exploded and is lifting weights beyond his size. That's over at Yanick's Muscle Factory.

Yanick is one of those small business owners who has gone through every opportunity. And he's creative; he's found ways to survive through promotion, new exercise programs, online and everything, but it was such a chore for him and such a task in order to get some of the business grants that were available, both federally and provincially.

So what did Yanick do? He does what any person who knows and who has the contact does. He called up his MPP. And, yes, I tried to help him. With my staff in my office, we helped out a lot of people across Algoma-Manitoulin, and it's difficult. It's hard, because he would need that third opportunity to get more funds from this government, because the federal portion of the grant that has been provided to businesses has to be paid within a certain amount of limit by year's end, and it's going to be tough. He's just barely making ends meet right now and he could use more help. By the end of the year, he's going to be required to pay a lot of money back to the federal government. So the province should, at the bare minimum, look at trying to help out these small businesses with a third round.

I want to give another shout-out to Ty Scratch. He's a new nurse who has started at the hospital in Elliot Lake—a great addition. Also, Ty holds many records as far as lifting with squats and bench presses, but he has been helping me with my shoulder mobility, my hip mobility and my back mobility as well. So, Ty, thank you very much. Things are moving quite well. Now back to what Max prepared for me.

There is no mention in this bill at all about providing aid at this critical point of our province. Reopening once again, the government has returned to its old way of doing business, introducing large omnibus legislation that contains lots of housekeeping provisions and little real support.

One of the fastest growing industries in my riding is the tourism industry. We all know this sector was hit first and hit the hardest when COVID-19 shut down the economy back in 2020. In my role as tourism critic for the official opposition, I've had the opportunity to meet and discuss issues that tourism operators are having both in my riding

and across this province. While opening up is providing some much-needed breathing room, the industry stakeholders I have met are very clear that they need some help.

Here's one of them that it would really help removing some of the red tape. The government should be reducing red tape in ways that help people. After so many workers and industries faced months of closure and hardship, the government needs to prioritize encouraging good-paying jobs, and here's one of them.

Yesterday, the member from London West brought up the student minimum wage and red tape to be removed. The Canadian Outdoor Professional Association has called for the Ontario government to remove wage and hour exemptions on wilderness guiding in Ontario. Ontario currently has the lowest legislated standards for wilderness guides in Canada. This has driven workers to leave the field or to look for work in provinces like British Columbia, where there are better legislated conditions.

CANOPA believes this is hindering the growth of Ontario's outdoor tourism sector because skilled workers choose to work elsewhere or in a different field. Northern Ontario has many outfitters who are struggling to find skilled workers. We also have world-class outdoor recreation programs at Laurentian University and Lakehead University, but graduates of those programs often find wages and quality of work are better in other parts of Canada and leave Ontario.

That brings me to the outfitters' discussion, who were hugely hit through this pandemic. I brought to the floor, I think on several occasions, the story about Michelle Watson, who owns Kaby Lodge and who was predominantly relying on 90% to 95% of her clientele coming from the States. Mr. Speaker, I don't think it takes a rocket scientist to figure out what happened to her business. She had a small army of employees at one time servicing a clientele that ranged anywhere from 400 to 500 people with all their cabins they were having there, hunting. They had cabins out on the lake where more people would be out there, so she had people doing the docks, the repairs, the maintenance, service, rooms and so on. She had a small army of, I'd say, about 75 to 100 employees who were there. Well, you can just imagine how hard it was for them to survive.

They weren't eligible for any of the initial grants that came out. Well, they were completely forgotten when the initial grants came out, and then, hey, the tourism grant came out. I picked up the phone and gave them a call and said, "Hey, you might be eligible for this." "Oh, that's great news." This was announced in March. We're in October and they're still waiting. Finally, we heard—it was announced in March, then announced again in May and then announced again over the course of the summer.

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This is like a familiar way of announcing things, as the Liberals were notorious for always doing that. I didn't expect that from this government, but this is what's happening. They're developing a program and announcing it over about four or five times, and you're waiting for the money. Is it going to come? Where is the application?

How do I get this money? And now we've just learned that October 13 is when they became eligible to apply for any of this money—October. Well, in my riding of Algoma-Manitoulin, I don't know about anybody else, but tourism starts way before October, Speaker, and these companies, these family-run operations, absolutely needed that money in May, June, July, August. That's when they needed that money. A lot of them are now gone. Family-run-and-operated businesses that have been in operation for 40, 50, 60, 70 years—like the Watson family; they're just making ends meet. They're just surviving and they could certainly use a lot more help. Not six months from now, not another announcement of words that grants are coming, they need it now.

In fact, the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario made it very clear that the tourism industry was in no place to declare a victory over COVID-19. In a survey they conducted in June it found that going into the third stage of reopening, over half of the tourism operators feared that a lack of revenue and uncertainty about their future would mean that they can't take on any new employees or bring back those employees they had to lay off because of the provincial shutdowns.

We have received numerous complaints from tourism operators who applied to programs like the Ontario Tourism and Travel Small Business Support Grant and were turned away because the eligibility criteria for the support was too restrictive. In fact, in another survey by the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario, nearly half of the operators surveyed did not apply for the tourism small business grant because they just didn't qualify. And I will give credit to the ministry for expanding eligibility after the sector spoke out, but for many those delays in support meant lost income and lost jobs. And that's just what the government did in response to the tourism sector: They delayed providing support to businesses despite their calls for help.

The Ontario Tourism Recovery Program was announced by the Premier and the Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries in March 2021—March—and they're only starting to get it now in October, on October 13. Operators went through the summer, the busiest season for many of these businesses, without any support from government, and I'm not sure if any of them are hoping to getting through this whole pandemic and this process.

With the little amount of time I have, as well, is that I always tell my constituents I'm always going to try to come to this floor with a northern Ontario lens. Here are some suggestions that I'm looking at this government to maybe consider in eliminating some red tape or what I refer to as barriers for northern Ontarians.

Drive tests: Please, please, please, do something about drive tests. Parents—and we're going to go on the cost of insurance. We all have children—sons, daughters—and they're riders on your policy and you're paying higher premiums because they have the lower licence grade. You know it. And you're paying for it a year at a time. The delays in the testing are costing you and many parents

across this province a heck of a lot of money. And guess what? The expiry on the extension for the G1 and the G2 is set to happen in a couple of months. Will it be extended again? I certainly hope so, because I'm getting a lot of calls from community members who are concerned that they're going to have to start over with their process. Or a student that wants to use their car to go to college but doesn't have the proper licence in order to get there.

Guess what's flying outside? They're not flies. They're those white things; they're called snowflakes, and here's another barrier and red tape for northern Ontario with our economy: winter road maintenance. When we can't get to work or we can't get to a hospital or we can't get to our groceries, that's red tape. That's real red tape, and that's a fact that we're facing in northern Ontario. And when you have DriveTest centres saying, "We're not going to go on the road. The road is too bad," and they only come to our satellite community once a month? Well, that gets pushed over; there's more delays. This is an issue, and that's red tape, that has been happening in northern Ontario way before COVID ever presented itself.

The opioid crisis: People are dying everywhere across Algoma–Manitoulin. Espanola is hurting. Sault Ste. Marie, the Sault North area is hurting. The Algoma region is the highest per capita area of opioid deaths in this province.

Doctor shortages: If we can't get these people into a hospital and have a doctor there to care for them—people are struggling in northern Ontario, and these are some of the things.

Insurance rates: How the heck does it make sense—and I know I listened to the Attorney General talk about things that make sense. How is it that an insurance company cannot provide a tow truck operator, with one or two trucks, insurance—proper, affordable insurance—and can tell him, "No, if you had five trucks, then I could give you a rate. But because you don't have five, I'm not going to give you a rate" or it's going to make it so unaffordable that he can't continue doing his business?

There's a lot of red tape, barriers, from a northern lens that you could be working on. These are the things that are really impacting our economy in northern Ontario. It's affecting our families, it's affecting our way of life, and it's taking away from everyone across this province. I was certainly hoping I was going to see more inside Bill 13.

Just with the few seconds I have left: Max, thank you. They were very helpful. You did a great job.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Questions and responses. I turn the floor to Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill.

**Mr. Michael Parsa:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I really appreciate it.

To my colleague: Max did a great job. Many thanks to all our staff who do great work for us behind the scenes. That's one thing that often goes unnoticed here, so good on my colleague for acknowledging his staff.

Speaker, one of the things that you've often heard me talk about here is that election after election, the previous government promised the good people of Richmond Hill

and north of Toronto here a subway. We heard it election after election, and that promise was broken often. When we got elected, we made a promise that we were going to build subways, and we're finally going to bring up the subway to Richmond Hill. We put in a bill that the opposition often rejected. We put in a bill that made it faster, and they rejected it. This will help us finally bring a subway over to Richmond Hill that was promised often and often.

I'm wondering if my colleague would agree with me that it is important to build these subways and this will help us do that.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Oh, my goodness. Do you want me to give you a northern Ontario, Algoma–Manitoulin reality in answer to that question? The only subway that I know is the one that I go sit in and order in Blind River to get a sandwich, and the other one that I have in Wawa.

I know it's important to you, but I spoke about the things that are also important to me, which are winter road maintenance, proper infrastructure development across this province. Everybody deserves the opportunity to get to work efficiently, get your groceries, get to a doctor's appointment. From a northern Ontario lens, if we can't do that by safely making investments to have proper roads taken care of—these are promises that we hear from this government, that it's being done. I've heard it from the Liberals. For 10 years, I've stood in my place and I'm still asking for the same thing.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I recognize the member from Mushkegowuk–James Bay.

**M. Guy Bourgouin:** Merci, monsieur le Président. En passant, Mike, ma femme nous écoute puis elle dit : « Dis à Mike de parler en français. » Fait que je vais te poser une question en français.

Écoute, Mike, tu le sais, tu as parlé de « DriveTest » et de comment c'est important pour notre région. Je pense qu'il y a un « disconnect » du bord du gouvernement, qu'ils ne comprennent pas une réalité qu'on a dans le Nord. Je pense, rien qu'avec la question à laquelle tu viens de répondre, qu'il y a un gros « disconnect » là—quand on parle de tramways et que, nous, on parle juste d'entretien de chemins.

Mais je voudrais que tu en parles plus, parce qu'on a envoyé des lettres au ministère des Transports avec les signatures de tous les députés du Nord, pour leur faire comprendre comment c'est important, les « DriveTest » dans notre région, qu'on n'a pas ces services-là. Ils ont ouvert d'autres « DriveTest » satellites, puis nous, on n'a rien eu, et là on a du monde qui attend jusqu'en 2024, peut-être, pour l'avoir.

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Comme tu as dit, il y a des jeunes qui attendent pour—ils ont des autos, ils paient les assurances, et ils ne peuvent pas utiliser leurs autos. J'aimerais t'entendre sur ce sujet-là.

**M. Michael Mantha:** Je veux remercier mon collègue pour la question. Je m'excuse, je vais tout le temps parler en français, ma belle.

Oui, c'est absolument—l'impact que cela a sur les communautés dans le Nord, c'est sur nos économies. Je

vais vous donner l'exemple que j'ai donné il y a deux jours passés : M. Larry Lacroix, qui est propriétaire d'une entreprise de bus scolaires, qui est en train d'essayer de se trouver des chauffeurs pour embarquer sur les routes.

Ils partent de Chapleau pour se rendre à Wawa pour essayer de passer leurs tests. Ils ne peuvent pas se rendre à Sault Ste. Marie pour faire l'inspection. Lui, il perd de l'argent parce qu'il a investi le temps pour rendre le monde à Wawa pour pogner le test parce qu'ils ne sont pas capables de se rendre à Sault Ste. Marie, pour se rendre là.

C'est une perte sur toutes nos économies. Les chemins sont fermés. Et puis, ce n'est pas simplement que les services du gouvernement ne peuvent pas se rendre; il n'y a personne qui ne peut se rendre. Ce qui fait que, l'investissement nécessaire dans nos « DriveTest »—on n'est pas une seconde classe dans notre province de l'Ontario. On mérite les mêmes services nécessaires pour que toutes nos communautés et nos entreprises fonctionnent bien dans le Nord.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I recognize the member for Don Valley North.

**Mr. Vincent Ke:** Thank you to the member.

You mentioned the hydro rates, electricity. The previous Liberal government, supported by your NDP, mismanaged our energy sector to the point that it was in crisis and electricity bills were skyrocketing. Our government has taken a really different approach, working to keep rates stable and affordable, while also increasing transparency in the energy sector.

Speaker, my question to the member from Algoma-Manitoulin is, does the member agree that this change is important to help small businesses and residents across the province?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I want to thank the member for the question.

Again, I try not to throw stones across the way, and I try not to put spin on a lot of the comments that I come in this House with, but the fact that you say that we were supportive of the previous government—well, just to give you a little bit of information, I was sitting here, and your government, the sitting government, was supportive of the previous Liberal government over 50% of the time. Those are facts. Go look them up yourself and do your own homework. The sitting government was supportive of the Liberal government and the decisions they made over 50% of the time.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question to my colleague—a good presentation from the member for Algoma-Manitoulin. In the north, communities can be small and sometimes have one large business that is sustaining the whole community. How do the small businesses and secondary industries survive in these small communities when the one large employer is in trouble financially and has large layoffs? How is this bill going to benefit the small businesses in Algoma-Manitoulin on an ongoing basis?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** As I said earlier in a lot of the statements that I made, this bill tinkers around a lot of

small things. Does it substantially do the heavy lifting that is required to help the big industries and small industries? No, because it's just a lot of tinkering that is happening.

The problem that we have in many northern Ontario communities is that a variety of individuals who work—whether it's a big industry or a small industry, you wear a variety of hats, and what happens is, if even a small industry loses, you're losing your key players in your community, whether it's for volunteerism, whether it's for the organizations, and all of this has a huge impact on their economy. Getting sustained support and an additional round of grants would help those small businesses and other big businesses, to see them through the entire pandemic.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I look to the member from Kitchener-Conestoga.

**Mr. Mike Harris:** It's always great to hear my friend from Algoma-Manitoulin stand up in the House. He does bring a very unique perspective, and I do appreciate the fact that he always comes here and wears his heart on his sleeve and really does a great job at representing his community.

With that in mind, I would just like to ask a little bit about some of the pieces that are in here and things that we've done in previous red tape bills, where we talked about mining and looking at ways to increase forestry capacity. There are some changes here to the Public Lands Act that will allow land transfers to be done a little bit easier through municipalities and First Nations communities. There's also something very interesting with the Crown Forest Sustainability Act that will allow people to harvest their own personal firewood in a little bit more appropriate manner.

So there are a few good things in here for some northern Ontario communities, and I would just like to hear his take on those specific items.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I'll try my best to answer the question that has come forward from the member.

Again, I want to stress this: There's a lot of tinkering in regard to what Bill 13 has come forward—I was expecting a lot more from the content of this bill.

Forestry is unique. I came out of the forest industry. Actually, one of the reasons why I'm here is because of a lot of the failed decisions that the Liberal government made. I was one of those individuals who was statistically affected. I was laid off. I was out of a job. I was lucky to find myself in other employment, which led me to the path I'm on today.

There is a lot of work that we need to do with the forest industry. There's a lot of work that we need to do with our First Nations. On that, my friend, I agree with you. There is a level of trust that we need to build on, and I think we have to, as a whole, do that. That just doesn't happen from saying unique words and doing nice things. It starts by doing meaningful discussions, sitting down and building a relationship of trust—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Thank you. Further debate?

**Mr. Mike Harris:** I feel like I've put a lot of miles in today, Speaker. I think everybody is probably tired of hearing from me at this point, but you're going to have to do it for another three minutes. Sorry about that.

Speaker, I'm not going to get into the formal part of my presentation, just because I know you're going to stand up and cut me off here shortly.

I did just want to say that I think today has actually been a pretty productive day. Sometimes we don't have those here in the Ontario Legislature, and it's unfortunate. But the discourse today has been very good. I think everybody has brought something unique to the perspective of the different bills that we've had before us today. It's always nice to hear some positive comments and actual solutions to things from our colleagues across the way. I think that's one thing that we don't hear. We hear a lot that we're not doing a good enough job as government, per se, from them. But some people actually came with solutions today, and I really appreciate that—and especially to the member from Ottawa Centre. He had some good ideas that I think need to be followed up on when we're looking at the government priorities, if you will, moving forward over the next few months, before the election.

Hearing again from the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade today about the

really exciting things that are happening in our auto sector—that's one thing that I'm very proud of. Just outside my riding—very, very close, actually, to the border of my riding—is the Cambridge Toyota facility. You were talking about the RAV4 line being expanded there into their hybrid line—with their Lexus vehicles, as well. It has really become a catalyst and a hub for that area. Of course, we've also got a Toyota plant down in the member from Oxford—just only about half an hour down the highway. Those investments that Toyota has made have really brought a lot of other tertiary industries, like battery producers, into the region as well, and we're seeing a huge development going in near the Toyota plant. There's more infrastructure that's being built out by our airport. Our Waterloo economic development team has done a really good job. Tony LaMantia heads up things there. I see the minister nodding his head.

So there are a lot of good things that are coming to Waterloo region, and I'm looking forward to talking a little bit about them a little more when we have a chance next time.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I apologize for interrupting the member.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

*Report continues in volume B.*



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Kramp, Daryl (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Kusendova, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga- Centre	
<b>Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)</b>	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
<b>MacLeod, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa (PC)</b>	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	
<b>McKenna, Hon. / L'hon. Jane (PC)</b>	Burlington	Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues / Ministre associée déléguée au dossier de l'Enfance et à la Condition féminine
<b>McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)</b>	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	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)</b>	York—Simcoe	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
<b>Nicholls, Rick (IND)</b>	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	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Park, Lindsey (IND)	Durham	
Parsa, Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Rod (PC)</b>	Ajax	Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée
<b>Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)</b>	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
<b>Rasheed, Hon. / L'hon. Kaleed (PC)</b>	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	Associate Minister of Digital Government / Ministre associé délégué de l'Action pour un gouvernement numérique
<b>Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)</b>	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines, des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Roberts, Jeremy (PC)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
<b>Romano, Hon. / L'hon. Ross (PC)</b>	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
<b>Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)</b>	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Simard, Amanda (LIB)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Singh, Gurratan (NDP)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
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	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)</b>	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	
<b>Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)</b>	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
<b>Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)</b>	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction / Ministre associée déléguée aux Petites Entreprises et à la Réduction des formalités administratives
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
<b>Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)</b>	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
<b>Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)</b>	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
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	
<b>Walker, Bill (PC)</b>	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Deputy Speaker / Vice-président

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Wilson, Jim (IND)	Simcoe—Grey	
Wynne, Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	
Vacant	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

**Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Randy Pettapiece  
Teresa J. Armstrong, Toby Barrett  
Lorne Coe, Rudy Cuzzetto  
Goldie Ghamari, Randy Hillier  
Christina Maria Mitas, Judith Monteith-Farrell  
Michael Parsa, Randy Pettapiece  
Peter Tabuns  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Thushitha Kobikrishna

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /  
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Vacant  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vacant  
Ian Arthur, Will Bouma  
Stephen Crawford, Catherine Fife  
Ernie Hardeman, Mitzie Hunter  
Logan Kanapathi, Sol Mamakwa  
Jeremy Roberts, Dave Smith  
Vijay Thanigasalam  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Julia Douglas

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité  
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Logan Kanapathi  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Mike Schreiner  
Jill Andrew, Robert Bailey  
Will Bouma, Guy Bourgouin  
Chris Glover, Mike Harris  
Logan Kanapathi, Sheref Sabawy  
Amarjot Sandhu, Mike Schreiner  
Daisy Wai  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Isaiah Thorning

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité  
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Gilles Bisson  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Aris Babikian  
Deepak Anand, Aris Babikian  
Gilles Bisson, Lorne Coe  
Wayne Gates, Robin Martin  
Norman Miller, Billy Pang  
Amanda Simard, Marit Stiles  
John Yakabuski  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tanzima Khan

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de  
la justice**

Chair / Président: Daryl Kramp  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lucille Collard  
Lucille Collard, Christine Hogarth  
Daryl Kramp, Natalia Kusendova  
Jim McDonell, Suze Morrison  
Randy Pettapiece, Donna Skelly  
Gurratan Singh, Effie J. Triantafilopoulos  
Kevin Yarde  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Thushitha Kobikrishna

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité  
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Présidente: Laurie Scott  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: France Gélinas  
Rima Berns-McGown, France Gélinas  
Goldie Ghamari, Faisal Hassan  
Jim McDonell, Sam Oosterhoff  
Laurie Scott, Vijay Thanigasalam  
Jeff Yurek  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent  
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Taras Natyshak  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Hogarth  
Deepak Anand, Toby Barrett  
Jessica Bell, Stephen Blais  
Stephen Crawford, Rudy Cuzzetto  
Christine Hogarth, Michael Mantha  
Taras Natyshak, Michael Parsa  
Amarjot Sandhu  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité  
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Aris Babikian  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: John Fraser  
Aris Babikian, Lorne Coe  
John Fraser, Vincent Ke  
Laura Mae Lindo, Paul Miller  
Billy Pang, Jeremy Roberts  
Dave Smith, Daisy Wai  
Jamie West  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Isaiah Thorning

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de  
la politique sociale**

Chair / Présidente: Natalia Kusendova  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Bhutila Karpoche  
Aris Babikian, Jeff Burch  
Amy Fee, Michael Gravelle  
Joel Harden, Mike Harris  
Bhutila Karpoche, Natalia Kusendova  
Jeff Yurek  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tanzima Khan

**Select Committee on Emergency Management Oversight /  
Comité spécial de la surveillance de la gestion des situations  
d'urgence**

Chair / Président: Daryl Kramp  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Tom Rakocevic  
Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson  
John Fraser, Christine Hogarth  
Daryl Kramp, Robin Martin  
Sam Oosterhoff, Tom Rakocevic  
Donna Skelly, Sara Singh  
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell