

Legislative  
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of Ontario



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(Hansard)**

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(Hansard)**

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8 décembre 2021

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Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott  
Greffier : Todd Decker

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 8 December 2021

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 8 décembre 2021

*The House met at 0900.*

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

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

BUILD ONTARIO ACT  
(BUDGET MEASURES), 2021  
LOI DE 2021 VISANT À PROTÉGER  
NOS PROGRÈS ET À BÂTIR L'ONTARIO  
(MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 7, 2021, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 43, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes / Projet de loi 43, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** Good morning, Speaker.  
*Remarks in Oji-Cree.*

It's a good morning. It's always an honour to stand up and speak for the people of Kiiwetinoong and be able to speak on Bill 43, to represent the great people of Kiiwetinoong, as I said.

I know there is a lot in the budget that I could talk about today, but I'd like to spend my time talking about land and what we think wealth is.

Also, number two in the government's highlights of their plan to build Ontario says: "Working in partnership with northern and First Nation communities to create jobs, unlock critical minerals and bring economic prosperity to Ontario's north, the province has committed close to \$1 billion to support the planning and construction of an all-season road network and other projects that will provide a corridor to prosperity for the remote First Nations living in the Far North."

Also, the budget goes on to say, "Unlocking critical minerals will play a key role in making Ontario a world leader in the production of electric vehicles."

This is a poor justification for rushing resource development projects that will change the ways of life of people across the north permanently. What's happening here is, it will change our ways of life forever as First Nations people. It's a form of colonialism, to erase us of who we are and where we come from.

Back in January 2021, former Chief Harvey Yesno from Eabametoong First Nation stated this, "Ontario has

been unashamed in its aggressive approach to prepare to access the wealth and resources of the James Bay Treaty 9 territory, and we remind ... that our rights are of a higher priority than the interests of government, general stakeholders and industry investors."

Any development that happens without free, prior and informed consent of everyone involved is colonialism in action—colonialism 2.0. The Premier has publicly stated on numerous occasions that the Ring of Fire mining development is going ahead no matter what. We've heard words like, "We're doing it" and "If I have to hop on a bulldozer, it's happening." These statements reflect a very clear intent to go ahead without the free, prior and informed consent of all the affected First Nations.

The treaty rights voters of the north are the only people who have ever lived in these lands, and their consent is needed. To proceed without it is the very definition of colonialism. This is also the spirit of industrialism and capitalism that has led us into the countdown toward permanent and catastrophic climate change from which we all may never recover.

We also understand as well as anyone the need for better economic possibilities in the north; also, the need to shift away from reliance on fossil fuels. Our people live with these needs every day, but we also need consideration for other matters, like a protection plan for the region's sensitive wetlands and watersheds that are in place. Before that, we need to ensure access to clean water, housing and health services for people that are upstream, downstream from the proposed Ring of Fire.

However, it doesn't matter how much money can be made from mining or even how many electric cars we can manufacture if Ontario recklessly allows unchecked mine permitting to occur in Treaty 9. This project, and whatever other development Ontario is planning to approve, may destroy the world's second-largest intact peatlands and critically important defence against climate change they give to us, and then what?

I'd like to share a bit of history with you this morning, Speaker. The following information is from a brief released by the Yellowhead Institute on the Far North Act written by researchers Dayna Scott and John Cutfeet. When Ontario introduced the Far North planning initiative in 2008—what eventually became the Far North Act—it was because of land disputes.

"The leadership of Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI) had been convicted of contempt of court for protecting their homelands from platinum mining as required under their own Indigenous laws." When they were in jail, I actually went to visit them, in the Thunder Bay district

jail, back at that time. I think they were there for three months. These are leaders. They were six of them, also known as the KI6.

**0910**

They were released from prison when the Ontario Court of Appeal considered their sentences excessive. “Ontario was then forced to pay millions to two mining companies in order to buy out their claims in the contested territories. In the midst of this dispute, KI held a community referendum passing a watershed declaration and an enhanced consultation protocol.” Then they “secured a meeting with officials from three Ontario ministries on the idea of a ‘bilateral panel’ that could jointly approve permit applications affecting KI lands.

“But the province rejected the KI proposal for joint decision-making and the meeting did not produce a resolution.

“The Far North Act, introduced two years later over the widespread objections of the Indigenous peoples who are the sole occupants of” what Ontario calls “the Far North”—the act was Ontario’s “attempt at resolving the jurisdiction question. It had the stated aims of protecting 50% of the boreal forest, ‘partnering’ with First Nations in decision-making and revenue-sharing, and allowing for new mining developments.

“In hindsight” this “was actually a development scheme designed to manage” complex “claims to Indigenous governance authority across the region.

“The initiative was ... rejected by the northern” First Nations “themselves, with the Nishnawbe Aski Nation calling it ‘a new form of colonialism’. But in some ways it was just more of the same: consultations were rushed and under-resourced, took place outside of the affected communities, and arguably did not even meet the basic legal standard for genuine consultation.”

Speaker, this all sounds very familiar.

“Ultimately, however, the fundamental and enduring problem is with the underlying colonial architecture and the broader set of assumptions upon which the Far North Act” sits.

The reality is, “Ontario does not possess the exclusive legislative authority to make laws about land use in the Far North: It must recognize the inherent jurisdiction of the Indigenous peoples who have always and continue to care for” our “lands and waters.” It is our way of life. It is what we do. It is what we’ve been doing for thousands of years. It is what we will be continuing to do.

The flaw of the legislation is that, in writing, in Canadian law, it gives “the government the ultimate and unilateral authority to approve mining developments, or roads and other infrastructure, even if those decisions run contrary to community land use plans whenever the ‘social and economic interests of Ontario’ are engaged...

“This means that First Nations must have control over permitting” in our treaty territories. That Ontario is the one that approves these licences and permits “that give rights to third parties on the land” is how our “treaty rights and interests are undermined.

“For a lasting resolution and a just and sustainable planning regime in the Far North, shared authority” is where any future negotiations must start.

Bill 43 proposes to amend the Far North Act to facilitate economic development and enhance provisions that encourage collaboration between the province and First Nations. The proposed amendments seek to remove the protection under the Far North Act for 225,000 square kilometres of land. These 225,000 square kilometres of land hold a very sensitive ecosystem called the breathing lands. These peatlands sequester a huge amount of carbon, storing an estimated 35 billion tonnes of carbon in the north. This is equivalent to annual emissions from six and a half million cars. This area represents 42% of Ontario’s land mass and is a globally significant carbon storehouse.

The peatlands in the Hudson Bay lowlands can contain up to five times as much carbon as the Amazon rainforest per square metre, and this ecosystem is directly impacted by any changes that take place in the bay or the river systems. The peatlands also serve as critical habitat for wildlife, including caribou, wolverines and many kind of migratory birds.

The north is a landscape that cannot be divided. What happens upstream has impact on the animals, the plants and the people who live downstream. To us, these are the breathing and the cooling lands for the planet and they must be protected for the future.

Bill 43 is also going to remove provisions prohibiting the development of land that does not have a community-based land use plan in place. The result would be greater land mass for resource development.

I know that these proposed amendments were recommended by a joint process between Ontario and the Nishnawbe Aski Nation, but I remind this government, I remind this House, that political and territorial Indigenous organizations at any government decision-making table are not the treaty rights holders and title holders. They can represent the interest of their constituents, but how does this important information get circulated to their members? What processes are in place to ensure decisions, particularly ones related to land and water, are consensual?

There have always been many points of view in the north, some in favour of the land use processes that are happening under the Far North Act and some who did not agree with the legislation at all.

**0920**

At the end of the day, we have to ask ourselves, where are we going to be in 100 years, 150 years, 200 years, with the development? What is the land going to look like? Will we be able to drink the water? What is the legacy we are leaving for our children, for our grandchildren, for our great-grandchildren?

Last year, during the water crisis in Neskantaga, when they found the oily sheen, I went to one of their youth rallies. I remember spending time with these young children, eight years old, nine years old, 12- and 13-year-olds. They were very emotional. I saw them cry. I saw them very emotional. During that time, they wanted two things—I know they were evacuated for 61 days in a hotel during the pandemic—(1) they wanted to go home; (2) they

wanted clean drinking water, and that's it. Sometimes I feel bad when I just go in the back and I drink water. The community of Neskantaga has been in that place for over 26 years.

Again, I want to thank the government for reminding me that colonialism still exists. I want to thank the government for reminding me that oppression still exists. And I want to say, the more oppressed we are, the more colonized we are, the stronger we become as a nation. Bring it on.

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

**Mr. Norman Miller:** Thank you to the member from Kiiwetinoong for that thoughtful speech. He did talk a fair amount about mining. I note that, in Ontario, over 11% of the jobs in the mining sector in Ontario are held by Indigenous people—very good jobs, I would say.

He also talked about climate change and mentioned that the minerals from the Ring of Fire would be used in electric vehicles, which obviously helps us move away from fossil fuels, helps us fight climate change, both things that seem to me to be fairly positive. So I'm wondering, does the member support development of the Ring of Fire, which would benefit more than any other community the Indigenous communities surrounding the Ring of Fire?

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** Meegwetch. Thank you for the question. I think we have always been at a place where it's not about whether we support development. But I think it's important to note that First Nations are not against development; they just need to be at that decision-making table. They want to be able to have the benefits, as well, of those agreements. We are treaty partners. Ontario is a signatory to Treaty 9, where we agreed to share the benefits and the resources of the land. That's all we ask for: Let us be at the table, and that we have a good process, with free, prior and informed consent.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I recognize the member from Beaches—East York.

**Ms. Rima Berns-McGown:** I've sat in this House with my colleague for three and a half years, and I've heard the government, every time you speak, respond respectfully and then go into exactly the same thing that they had been doing before. My question is, what it is going to take, in your view, for the government to stop saying one thing out of the side of its mouth and then acting in the old colonial, oppressive ways? What is it going to take to move forward in a good way? What it is actually going to take?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I'll just remind all members to please put their questions through the Speaker.

I return to the member for Kiiwetinoong.

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** Meegwetch for the question. I think it's about respecting—change will only come when the government starts honouring the treaties. Again, I spoke earlier about how important that is. Without the treaties, what is Ontario? What is Canada? I think, all over Ontario, we have all these treaties that we signed with the province or the feds, and we need to be able to move forward in a good way.

We accepted settlers to our lands. We welcomed you—everyone that's here, no matter where you came from. We were supposed to work together. Honour the treaties; that's all it means.

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

**Mr. Sam Oosterhoff:** My thanks to the member for Kiiwetinoong for speaking.

Earlier, when my colleague from Parry Sound—Muskoka asked a question, I thought it was very relevant, what you were speaking about, with regard to free, prior and informed consent, and the importance of working with Indigenous communities and meaningfully listening.

I also thought it was very important when you said that First Nations are not opposed to development. I really appreciate the member opposite's comments, but what I didn't hear was his personal position on developing the Ring of Fire. I'm just wondering: Are you personally in favour of developing the Ring of Fire?

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** Thank you for that direct question. Any development that happens on our treaty territories, on our traditional territories, is going to have an impact on our ways of life—forever.

I know in Neskantaga, for example—I get traditional food from them, and one of the things that they always give me is sturgeon. Sturgeon is a delicacy of who we are as First Nations people. I have some in my apartment. But, without that, if there's development happening there, that will change their way of life, and access too. I think it's important to say that, again, we have to do it properly.

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

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** My colleague responded about development very clearly, that they feel that they're not against development, that they believe there should be benefits for both parties from anything that happens there. What they're saying very clearly is that there is Treaty 9 and you should consult.

So, what happened under section 10, it changes the current ability of any First Nations with reserves in the Far North to be consulted in land use planning. Also, the government said they would undertake a consultation and review, beginning in 2019. Many First Nations groups were not properly consulted; maybe you could talk about that. My question is, why do you think this government will not consult properly with First Nations?

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** Because they do not honour and respect treaties—period. We need to be able to have that dialogue whereby the government cannot continue to push for development. The government cannot continue a divide-and-conquer approach to development. That's what is happening. We see it. There are different communities that have been consulted; there are different communities that haven't been consulted.

An example is during the water crisis—and they wanted a moratorium on the work on the processes that are in place—in those 61 days, the minister never reached out to the First Nations on how we can help—nothing.

0930

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

**Mr. Sam Oosterhoff:** I appreciate the comments from the member opposite, and especially understanding the importance of ensuring that that way of life is maintained and that there aren't negative consequences as a result of development. I appreciate you especially sharing with regard to how the sturgeon could be impacted. I wasn't aware, actually, that it was a delicacy. That's amazing. I'll have to try it at some point.

I totally agree with the member opposite that it needs to be done properly, any type of development. It has to be done with meaningful consultation, it has to be done in the proper way, and then it has to benefit both parties, as mentioned by the member for Niagara Falls.

And I'm sorry if I'm too pushy on this, but I just want to get an answer from the member directly. Is he personally in favour of developing the Ring of Fire: yes or no?

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** He keeps asking the same question, Speaker.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** No, I'm just kidding.

It's the people that live in those communities, the treaty rights holders. Those are the people you need to consult with. Those are the people that you need to talk to. It's in my treaty territory, yes. It's not my traditional territory, but I have lots of members that are there. There are people that tell me, that are not in leadership roles, that it's their land, that's where they grew up. They tell me, "There's no way development is happening in my traditional territory. If I have to die for my land, I will." That's the response. It's so important that people understand that if you just push it through, it is not happening.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** There's time for a very short question and response.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I just want to say that I appreciate the comments made by my colleague, and particularly how he ended his speech by thanking the government for strengthening First Nations. I'm just wondering if you can clarify that.

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** We've been oppressed for so long. There have been so many approaches to being oppressed, that conquer and divide—how we fight amongst each other, the strategic underfunding of programs and services on-reserve. The more it comes, we become stronger as people. We start to rise as land rights holders. We become stronger. Thank you for doing that.

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

**M. John Fraser:** Je suis content d'être ici pour parler du projet de loi 43, l'énoncé économique de l'automne. Ce sur quoi je voulais me concentrer aujourd'hui sont les articles du projet de loi qui traitent des services en français, plus particulièrement les amendements que notre parti et la députée de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell ont déposés à l'étape du comité.

Il est important de se rappeler ce que ce gouvernement a fait avec les services en français lorsqu'il a été élu en

2018. Premièrement, il a supprimé le poste indépendant de commissaire aux services en français. Ce commissaire était une ressource importante et indépendante pour s'assurer que l'Ontario tienne son engagement à promouvoir et à améliorer les services en français. En supprimant ce bureau spécifique et en le combinant au sein du Bureau de l'ombudsman, ils ont considérablement réduit les ressources du commissaire et dilué sa capacité à surveiller efficacement les progrès de la langue française en Ontario.

Ensuite, ils ont essayé d'arrêter le travail en cours pour créer une université de langue française en Ontario, quelque chose que le gouvernement libéral précédent a travaillé très fort à mettre en oeuvre après de nombreuses consultations avec la communauté franco-ontarienne. Heureusement, les étudiants et les universitaires et la communauté franco-ontarienne ont exprimé leur mécontentement face à cette décision, et le gouvernement a autorisé sa poursuite.

Alors, monsieur le Président, vous comprendrez pourquoi notre parti est sceptique quant à la position de ce gouvernement sur la promotion et la protection des services en français dans cette province.

Lorsque le projet de loi 43 a été publié, nous avons été déçus. Après que le dernier gouvernement ait travaillé fort pour moderniser la Loi sur les services en français, il semble que ce gouvernement ne soit pas aussi déterminé à le faire qu'il le prétend. Les amendements proposés par la députée de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell étaient simples et reflétaient l'opinion de l'Association des juristes d'expression française de l'Ontario et de l'Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario.

Premièrement, il serait important de mieux définir la notion d'organismes gouvernementaux pour que les ordres professionnels, les fonctionnaires de l'Assemblée législative et l'administration des tribunaux soient assujettis à la Loi sur les services en français. Cela me semble très raisonnable, monsieur le Président : que les Ontariens aient une compréhension claire de qui la loi affecte. Apparemment, ce gouvernement ne croit pas que c'est raisonnable, car ils l'ont rejeté.

Prochainement, on voulait que l'ombudsman de l'Ontario soit capable de maîtriser le français. Et je dois être clair, cela ne veut pas dire que nous pensons que la commissaire actuelle n'est pas qualifiée. Elle est, en fait, hautement qualifiée. Mais nous pensons que si le gouvernement ne croit pas que cette position est suffisamment importante pour justifier son propre bureau avec des ressources suffisantes—que le bureau où ils résident soit légiféré d'avoir les outils appropriés pour effectuer le travail de commissaire aux services en français. Encore une fois, le gouvernement n'était pas d'accord avec cela.

Enfin, monsieur le Président, ce que je pense être l'amendement le plus raisonnable :

—ajouter le mot « annuel » dans l'une des annexes du projet de loi pour s'assurer que les progrès des ministères dans la livraison des services en français soient présentés annuellement—I'ajout d'un mot, monsieur le Président, un mot;

—veiller à ce que le gouvernement fasse régulièrement rapport de leurs progrès à la population de l'Ontario.

Le but de cet amendement était de s'assurer que le gouvernement et tous les futurs ministres seraient tenus de rendre des comptes. Le gouvernement ne voulait clairement pas que cela se produise.

Alors qu'il manquait beaucoup à l'énoncé économique de l'automne, dont un engagement de ce gouvernement à moderniser et à améliorer la Loi sur les services en français, le gouvernement a prouvé qu'ils ne sont pas engagés en rejetant tous ces simples amendements—tout cela, qui a été accepté par les associations francophones de cette province.

Si ce gouvernement est engagé envers la communauté franco-ontarienne et envers la promotion et l'amélioration des services en français, je l'exhorte fortement à reconsidérer. Merci.

**0940**

Monsieur le Président, I'm sharing my time avec ma collègue de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I recognize the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

**M<sup>lle</sup> Amanda Simard:** Je ne planifiais pas à intervenir, mais je voulais partager avec la Chambre ce qu'on a vécu la semaine dernière à propos de ce projet de loi-ci lorsqu'on était en comité. C'était vraiment choquant. C'était incroyablement choquant, puisque les amendements qu'on a présentés étaient, en fait, des amendements demandés par l'Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario, l'AFO, et par l'AJEFO, l'Association des juristes d'expression française de l'Ontario. Donc, on était des messagers. Ce n'était pas simplement qu'on s'était réveillé un matin puis on a décidé de faire des amendements.

Mon collègue de Mushkegowuk–James Bay—j'espère que je l'ai bien dit—et ma collègue de Waterloo étaient également sur le comité. J'ai bien apprécié leurs contributions. Ils avaient de très bons amendements également, que j'ai appuyés, à ce sujet.

Monsieur le Président, mon collègue d'Ottawa-Sud a fait un bon résumé des amendements qu'on a présentés. C'est complètement impensable. Pourquoi ne pas ajouter le mot « annuel » au mot « rapport »? C'est vraiment une technicalité. Sans ce mot-là, vraiment, comment sait-on la fréquence des rapports? Est-ce que c'est à chaque trois ans, à chaque 50 ans, à chaque 100 ans? Il n'y a aucune clarification. Donc, c'est juste—it's just not good law-making. Ça ne fait pas de sens de ne pas clarifier et d'ajouter le mot « annuel ». Et ce n'est pas partisan. Ce n'est même pas une chose de contenu, monsieur le Président. C'est vraiment une chose de forme pour clarifier.

Ça, c'était l'amendement qui, je pense, nous a le plus surpris qui n'a pas été adopté par le gouvernement. Il n'y a aucune raison de ne pas adopter ça. Ils ont toujours la chance de le faire dans le futur, j'espère bien, mais on ne va pas—we won't hold our breath.

L'autre chose, c'était pour clarifier la définition de ce qu'était un organisme gouvernemental ou une institution

publique. Ça, c'est venu de l'Association des juristes d'expression française de l'Ontario et des avocats qui, eux, sont sur le terrain et doivent gérer tous les litiges, et ils voient les litiges qui surviennent en raison du manque de clarification. Mais ce qui était le plus surprenant, c'est que la réponse de l'adjointe parlementaire à la ministre était que ça causerait de la confusion et qu'on ne pourrait pas bien l'interpréter, ce qui est exactement le contraire de ce qu'on essaie de faire. Clairement, elle lisait ses notes sans même les comprendre. Ça ne faisait aucun sens, ce qui était communiqué. Donc, ça nous fait vraiment penser à quel point le gouvernement a vraiment pensé à propos de cette législation-là, à quel point ç'a été étudié. C'est vraiment broche à foin, comme on dit en bon canadien-français—je ne sais pas comment ça va être traduit, mais c'est juste n'importe quoi.

Alors, l'offre active : l'offre active, ça, c'est un « no-brainer ». On voulait tous avoir l'offre active. Ça fait longtemps qu'on aurait dû le faire. Et ça, ce n'est pas juste ce gouvernement, c'est tous les gouvernements. Mais ça ne change pas qu'on a modernisé une loi de 30 ans avec vraiment un seul changement significatif, et là, il faut attendre un autre 10 ans, si on garde le même gouvernement, pour modifier la loi. C'est vraiment décevant, parce qu'on avait l'opportunité ici de faire quelque chose de bien.

L'autre chose était pour l'ombudsman de pouvoir maîtriser le français. La ministre des Affaires francophones s'est déjà engagée à nommer des ombudsmans bilingues, et je crois qu'ils ont toujours été bilingues dans le passé. Alors, pourquoi ne pas le mettre dans la loi? Pourquoi ont-ils peur de le mettre dans la loi? Et même, ça pourrait entrer en vigueur maintenant, parce que l'ombudsman est bilingue présentement.

L'autre chose qui était très surprenante, c'était que le député de Mushkegowuk–James Bay a présenté un amendement qui demandait que les bureaux centraux de certains organismes puissent offrir des services en français. L'adjointe parlementaire à la ministre a dit que ça enlèverait des services, que ça réduirait des services. Et je lui ai demandé de pointer où, dans la motion, ça réduirait les services. Monsieur le Président, ça ne fait aucun sens. C'est vraiment pour clarifier que ces bureaux-là puissent offrir les services.

Alors, vraiment, les positions du gouvernement ne faisaient aucun sens dans le comité. Ça fait longtemps qu'on le sait, que le gouvernement n'a pas à coeur les services en français, mais là, on l'a vraiment vu qu'ils ne comprennent juste pas. Monsieur le Président, de ce côté-ci de la Chambre, on va continuer à pousser pour une vraie modernisation de la Loi sur les services en français.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Merci. Question and response?

**M<sup>me</sup> Natalia Kusendova:** En réponse à cette députée, si l'offre active était « such a no-brainer », le gouvernement précédent avait 15 ans pour le faire, pour faire la modernisation—15 ans. C'est cinq fois plus que notre gouvernement a pris de temps à faire la modernisation de la Loi sur les services en français.

Alors, ma question est simple : si c'était si facile et « such a no-brainer », pourquoi le gouvernement précédent libéral n'a rien fait pendant 15 ans de leur pouvoir?

**M. John Fraser:** Merci—

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

**M. John Fraser:** —le Parti conservateur et cette députée pour les droits de langue française en Ontario. Hier était le 20<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la victoire de la communauté franco-ontarienne de l'Hôpital Montfort. Il y a 25 années—25 années?

**M. Gilles Bisson:** Vingt-cinq ans.

**M. John Fraser:** Il y a 25 ans, le gouvernement a essayé de fermer le seul hôpital franco-ontarien en Ontario.

**M<sup>lle</sup> Amanda Simard:** Les conservateurs.

**M. John Fraser:** Oui. On ne va pas accepter de leçons de votre parti.

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

**M. Gilles Bisson:** Bien, écoute, la question pour la députée, c'est simplement ceci : nous, le parti NPD, on dit que quand on vient au pouvoir, la prochaine élection—si on est chanceux et les électeurs nous donnent le droit de gouverner la province—c'est un projet de loi que nous, on veut amener puis mettre en vigueur. Parce que, comme vous, on comprend que les francophones sont ici. Ils sont présents. Ils vivent en Ontario. On a besoin d'avoir ces propos dans les projets de loi—et d'autres que nous autres, on a suggérés—pour être capable de s'assurer que la communauté francophone non seulement survit mais s'épanouit.

Puis moi, la question que j'ai : si vous êtes à l'opposition, allez-vous supporter notre projet de loi?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I recognize the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

**M<sup>lle</sup> Amanda Simard:** J'aimerais remercier mon collègue pour sa question. C'est certain qu'on a des projets de loi qu'on veut appuyer, et certainement, ça, c'est un projet de loi que j'appuie. C'est le député de Mushkegowuk—James Bay qui a ce projet de loi en ce moment, et je l'appuie. On s'appuie parce que—vous savez ce qui est vraiment drôle, monsieur le Président? C'est que les deux députés, on a formulé des projets de loi séparés, sans se parler. Parce qu'on consultait la communauté francophone, on a pris tout ce qu'ils voulaient, on l'a inséré dans nos projets de loi, et on est ressorti avec deux projets de loi pratiquement identiques. Donc, ça démontre qu'on a vraiment consulté et écouté.

La ministre et son adjointe, là, je peux dire qu'elles ont consulté, mais elles n'ont pas écouté, parce qu'elles ont juste l'offre active dans leur projet de loi. C'est pour ça qu'on pensait que la ministre allait sortir avec un projet de loi très similaire—mais non. Il y avait simplement l'offre active, et complètement, une dizaine d'autres recommandations n'était pas présente.

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

**M. Sam Oosterhoff:** Je veux remercier les députés pour ce discours ce matin. J'ai une question pour le député, parce que je pense que c'est très important que nous reconnaissons l'importance de l'histoire, la culture et l'association des francophones ici en Ontario. C'est très important, et je comprends pourquoi il est fier et elle est fière de cette communauté.

Mais, ma question est : pourquoi, après 15 ans dans le gouvernement, il y a une plus mauvaise pénurie d'enseignants francophones ici en Ontario? Après avoir été au gouvernement pour 15 ans, pourquoi est-ce que ça se passe?

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

**M. John Fraser:** Simplement, notre gouvernement a créé le commissaire indépendant des services en langue française en Ontario. Ce gouvernement—comment on dit—« crush » la victoire de la communauté franco-ontarienne—

**M. Gilles Bisson:** Écraser.

**M. John Fraser:** Écraser : il écrase la victoire de la communauté franco-ontarienne. C'est un symbole de la lutte, et pas grand-chose pour vous, pas grand-chose. Les premiers six mois, le gouvernement—

*Des voix.*

**M. John Fraser:** Le gouvernement n'est pas sérieux. La communauté franco-ontarienne a besoin de plus que leur drapeau dans la Chambre.

0950

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

**M. Gilles Bisson:** Je veux continuer dans la même veine, comme on dit, quand ça vient aux questions, parce que nous, les néo-démocrates, avons toujours été clairs quand ça vient à la question de supporter les francophones en Ontario. Ça veut dire, oui, légiférer certains projets de loi pour être capable d'assurer ces protections.

Ma question est très simple : pour quelle raison pensez-vous, madame, que ce gouvernement est si, comment dire, négatif en action quand ça vient à fortifier les lois pour les francophones et, à la place, il retire les lois qui donnent des protections?

**M<sup>lle</sup> Amanda Simard:** J'aimerais remercier mon collègue pour sa question. C'est difficile de répondre, parce qu'on n'est pas certain si c'est de l'ignorance, de l'incompétence ou si c'est vraiment un sentiment d'hostilité contre les francophones. On ne le sait pas. C'est difficile à dire parce qu'il y a différentes choses qui se passent et différentes décisions qui sont prises qu'on ne peut juste pas comprendre : comme les amendements qu'on a présentés; comme l'élimination du commissaire aux services en français; comme l'annulation du projet de l'Université de l'Ontario français qu'ils essaient de dire que c'est eux qui l'ont ravivé, quand c'est eux qui l'ont tué. Ça, c'était vraiment le plus drôle que j'ai entendu en Chambre, je crois.

Alors, c'est vraiment incompréhensible, surtout certaines positions. C'est seulement quand il y a un « backlash » du public, quand ils voient qu'ils perdent un

peu de popularité que, là, ils vont changer de décision, mais ça, c'est « on brand » pour toutes les autres décisions.

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

**M. Sam Oosterhoff:** Ma question était simple, complètement simple : pourquoi, quand ce Parti libéral était au gouvernement, il a aggravé la pénurie d'enseignantes et d'enseignants ici en Ontario? Ils avaient 15 ans, quand ils étaient au gouvernement, pour améliorer la situation.

Qu'est-ce qui se passe? Quand notre gouvernement a créé la stratégie historique pour adresser la pénurie d'enseignantes et d'enseignants ici en Ontario, ils ont voté contre. Ils n'aiment pas cette stratégie historique, après qu'ils ont créé le problème.

Ma question pour la députée est simplement : pourquoi, après 15 ans, [*inaudible*] pas cette pénurie, mais vous avez actuellement créé et aggravé ce problème—un grand problème—pour la communauté franco-ontarienne ici en Ontario?

**M<sup>lle</sup> Amanda Simard:** C'est toujours vraiment drôle quand les membres du gouvernement ne lâchent pas de dire « les 15 ans du gouvernement libéral ». Le député sait très bien qu'on était adolescents à ce temps-là.

I find it very flattering that he thinks I was old enough and smart enough to be in charge of an entire government at that time. And he was even younger than that, right?

C'est tellement incompréhensible, parce que si les conservateurs avaient été au pouvoir, la pénurie serait encore plus pire—encore plus pire—parce qu'ils n'ont pas de francophones pour les appuyer. Puis, nous, on essaie de faire leur job—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Members of the government, come to order, please.

**M<sup>lle</sup> Amanda Simard:** On essaie de les aider à faire leur job, puis ils ne veulent juste pas comprendre.

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

**M. Gilles Bisson:** Monsieur le Président, que mes collègues conservateurs sont en train d'attaquer madame de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, je trouve ça un peu riche. Écoute, on sait pourquoi elle est ici sur ce bord-ci de la Chambre. Ça fait affaire avec les actions du gouvernement quand ça vient aux francophones.

So donc, la question devient très simple : qu'est-ce qui motive le gouvernement conservateur de continuer à nier aux francophones, aux Premières Nations et autres les droits qu'ils ont besoin d'avoir pour être capable de s'épanouir dans cette province?

**M<sup>lle</sup> Amanda Simard:** Je veux remercier mon collègue pour sa question. Monsieur le Président, je pense qu'il y a juste quelque chose avec les conservateurs. Toutes les crises linguistiques dans l'histoire de l'Ontario furent déclenchées par des gouvernements conservateurs. Le règlement 17, c'était des conservateurs; la crise Montfort, des conservateurs; la crise linguistique de 2018, c'était des conservateurs.

*Interjections.*

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

**M<sup>lle</sup> Amanda Simard:** Je sais que les conservateurs n'aiment pas ça, surtout l'adjointe parlementaire, parce que c'est elle qui doit gérer tout ça maintenant puis elle n'a pas vraiment d'appui dans son parti. Mais, c'est la réalité : les conservateurs aiment couper dans les services en français. Je ne sais pas c'est quoi, mais si on regarde dans l'histoire, l'ami des francophones, c'est peut-être le NPD, c'est les libéraux, mais ce n'est certainement pas les conservateurs.

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

**Hon. Parm Gill:** It's always an honour and a pleasure any time I get an opportunity to rise in this House and speak on behalf of my constituents in the great riding of Milton.

Obviously, this morning I rise to support Bill 43, the Build Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2021. The measures outlined in this bill, and in the 2021 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review, will help us move forward as a province. Together, they create a plan to protect our progress in the fight against COVID-19, build a stronger Ontario, and grow our economy by working for workers.

I want to acknowledge the importance of this plan at this moment in time. We're laying the foundation for a more prosperous future. The choices we make now will be critical, so we must ensure they benefit everyone. With our plan, we will advance social and economic inclusion so no one is left behind.

Speaker, I rise here today as the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism, but I also proudly speak to this bill as the MPP for my great riding of Milton. I am proud each and every day that I get to represent my constituents and deliver real results for our community in Milton.

During the pandemic, Milton embodied the true Ontario spirit, whether it was looking out for their neighbours in need or donating PPE. For the most part, COVID-19-related challenges have been clear, and while we continue to battle the Delta-driven fourth wave of COVID-19, we know we are ready for the new Omicron variant because we have the infrastructure in place to respond to outbreaks.

Over the past two years, our government has done everything possible to save lives and keep Ontarians healthy. That includes strengthening our health care and long-term-care sectors and supporting our heroes on the front lines.

Nearly 24 million doses have been administered to date. That's almost 90% of eligible people in Ontario who are fully vaccinated. We are accelerating the rollout of the booster shots for people aged 50 and above and vaccines for children aged five to 11 to further expand our immunity against this ongoing threat.

In addition, we have worked to protect the safety of students in schools, seniors in long-term-care homes and workers in every type of environment. We supported small businesses and their customers, and strengthened social services for the people who needed them the most. But our

work is far from over and the battle against COVID-19 continues.

As we monitor the new Omicron variant, our government is keeping people safe. We took immediate action with high-volume capacity for testing and an accelerated rollout of booster doses.

These budget measures will also help us navigate the challenging road ahead. Mr. Speaker, this bill and these budget measures will help us move forward. We have listened to health care experts, communities, industries and economists, and we know what needs to be done. Now we are calling on the full support of the House to make it happen. We will protect Ontario's progress, build Ontario and work for workers.

As we fight this pandemic, we will care, of course, for the most vulnerable. As we rebuild our province, we will ensure everyone can fully participate in our economic recovery. Our plan will help bring us closer to a stronger and more equitable province, and I will illustrate how we are advancing social and economic inclusion with these efforts.

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We start with concrete actions to protect Ontario's progress, building health and long-term-care systems that deliver the quality care our loved ones deserve. This, of course, includes significant investments to strengthen the workforce, expand home and community care, increase access to mental health care services and more.

In my riding alone, we are building 608 long-term-care beds. That's 608 long-term-care beds for our community in Milton. That means visits to our loved ones without having to travel out of town. That means celebrating milestones close to home. That means not having to move out of our great town in the later years of your life.

Speaker, for over a decade, the previous Liberal government repeatedly neglected Milton and the province, especially when it came to long-term care. We all know that they only managed to build 611 long-term-care beds in almost a decade while in power. Our government was elected in 2018 and we got right to work. My community in Milton is getting 608 new long-term-care beds.

One of these long-term-care homes is named Excellent Care. I want to give a shout-out to Mohamed Karatella, who is taking on this important task of looking after some of our aging loved ones from our Muslim community in Milton. I am proud that our government is committed to investing in long-term-care homes and culturally centred care as well.

We have more to do in our fight against COVID-19. In doing so, we will take further action to protect Ontario's most vulnerable population. Everyone deserves to be safe, regardless of where they live. That is why we will do all we can to support congregate care settings, shelters, children's residential settings, youth justice facilities and Indigenous residential programs.

We will also continue our last-mile strategy to vaccinate individuals with first and second doses, using mobile and drive-through clinics, community-based pop-ups, dedicated clinic days for people with disabilities and their

families, town hall meetings in multiple languages, and translation services. With our plan, our government will work to reach every community and make health care more equitable for everyone.

Our bill and budget measures also outline a path to build Ontario's future. By putting shovels in the ground for critical infrastructure, attracting increased investment and restoring leadership in every sector and industry, we are creating the conditions for long-term growth. We are building tomorrow's future today. This includes a fully integrated transit network with transit-oriented communities to connect more people to jobs and housing. Anyone living in an urban centre knows how important this is. This bill commits to moving Ontarians faster, with funding allocated for the much-needed Highway 413.

We've heard a lot from those on the other side of the House wanting to commit to the status quo. Those on the other side of the House say no to drivers in my riding of Milton, in the GTA and right across our great province. Well, Speaker, I couldn't be more proud of our government for listening to the drivers in my riding of Milton and saying yes to building new roads, bridges and highways.

Our government said yes to extending Highway 427 north. Our government said yes to widening Highway 410. Our government said yes to widening Highway 401 from Mississauga to my riding of Milton. And our government is saying yes to building Highway 413.

Speaker, as we look ahead, our future will be brighter if everyone can participate in our economic recovery. That's why we're working for workers. Our government is raising the minimum wage, investing in skills training opportunities and attracting investments, all to create good and well-paying jobs in every region of our province. Changes to the Employment Standards Act, 2000, in Bill 43 help make this possible.

We are also building an inclusive labour market, where everyone has equitable access to jobs and opportunities. Mr. Speaker, my ministry is leading programs to help employers build a fully inclusive workplace. Working with partners in different sectors, we will develop resources for employers to support the hiring of talent from all backgrounds and walks of life.

We are also focusing on economic empowerment, a powerful tool for positive change. One of our ministry's new anti-racism initiatives is the Racialized and Indigenous Support for Entrepreneurs Grant, also known as the RAISE Grant. This will provide \$5 million in funding to innovative but underrepresented business owners. Targeted supports to Indigenous, Black and racialized entrepreneurs will help unlock economic opportunity. And expanding eligibility for the Second Career program to help more women participate in the workforce: This is good for business and good for the economy. With these budget measures, all Ontarians can be part of the province's economic engine.

Mr. Speaker, these health care and economic measures are critical for a path forward. But, Speaker, one thing we on this side of the House will always do is listen to our constituents and all Ontarians. When it comes to the anti-

racism, anti-hate grant, we heard that more money was needed. So I'm proud to have worked with the Minister of Finance and many of my colleagues to double this grant, doubling the number of community-based solutions, doubling the number of organizations that can continue their good work to eliminating hate and racism in their communities. Speaker, this represents an investment now of \$3.2 million.

Our government is doing more to support communities right across our great province. Our government has worked with partners from across Ontario to support community-driven solutions. This includes an investment of \$60 million over three years for the Black Youth Action Plan. That's \$60 million that will be going directly to support our young people. As a proud father of three, there isn't anything more important to me than supporting our next generation.

Speaker, when I was a federal member of Parliament, I had an opportunity to bring forward a private member's bill that went on to become law, which will help protect young people as well in communities right across the country from being recruited into organized crime, destroying not only lives of young people but also families and, in some cases, communities, Mr. Speaker. This work was important to me, as I saw a generation that wasn't being given opportunities that they deserved.

Young people in this province and right across this country are eager to learn, to work and to grow to their fullest potential. With these investments, in the province of Ontario, our young people are being given the opportunity to indeed reach their fullest potential. With our plan and with our ongoing commitment to supporting anti-racism programs and initiatives, we can build a more inclusive and equitable province for all.

**1010**

The people of Ontario have always been the greatest resource and strength. During the pandemic, people from all walks of life stepped up to support their communities and help the most vulnerable. Many volunteered and were shining examples of the Ontario spirit.

I saw this first-hand in my community of Milton. Miltonians came together in a big way to support one another. My office was inundated with offers of PPE, sanitizers, even offers to drive meals to those who were in quarantine or seniors—and picking up groceries for their neighbours. Speaker, we had a network of volunteers even sewing masks and gowns for those who needed them. This is truly the Ontario spirit.

I know many of my colleagues have similar stories to share from their own ridings. We saw many people eager to volunteer and ensure their neighbours were safe and supported.

Not only during a pandemic is the true Ontario spirit demonstrated, but during disasters and emergencies Ontarians step up like nowhere else.

To harness this goodwill and the goodwill that is regularly on full display in communities right across our province, we are investing \$1.6 million over three years to create an emergency volunteer database. This will help our

province respond to emergencies and assist in times of need. Our collective strength, determination and compassion will see us through.

While the pandemic is far from over, we must plan for the future. Bill 43 and these budget measures outlined in the fall economic statement will help us do exactly that. I'm proud that our government is bringing forward a bill that doesn't just say we're "protecting our progress, working for workers, building Ontario," but we're doing it.

I will always stand up, of course, for my constituents in my great riding of Milton. I like to repeat the old saying that actions always speak much louder than words. The actions being taken in this bill are actions that Ontarians want from this government. We will continue the fight against COVID-19, lay a foundation for economic recovery and ensure that no one is left behind, Mr. Speaker.

In my riding of Milton, as most would know, it is one of the fastest-growing municipalities in the province and we recognize the investments that are necessary with a growing community. Since getting elected in June 2018, I've announced six new schools, two expansions, and our work isn't done yet. Before our mandate is over, I'm looking forward to potentially announcing more schools and more expansions in our community of Milton because that's what parents want. It is important to see our next generation be put on a path to succeed in life. Their success is the success of our province.

Along with new schools, I was proud to announce the Milton Education Village, bringing in Laurier university, Conestoga College and Schlegel Villages, and thanks to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing who issued an MZO to make all of this possible for us and our community to be able to get the shovel in the ground.

When I say we don't just make announcements like the previous Liberal government—we deliver results. That's exactly what we have been doing for the last three and a half years, and we will continue to do that. Once again, I appreciate the opportunity to be able to rise on behalf of my constituents in the great riding of Milton, and I look forward to doing my best in the future as well.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I know you were quite prepared to take questions and respond, but we do not have time for that. It is now time for members' statements.

*Third reading debate deemed adjourned.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### FOOD AND TOY DRIVE

**Ms. Doly Begum:** Good morning, Speaker. It is a true honour to rise on behalf of the amazing people of Scarborough Southwest.

As we enter the holiday season, I would like to share a heartwarming story about the kindness and spirit of Scarborough Southwest. Over the past few weeks, Mr. Adams, a senior veteran, and Janet Stokes, a local personal support

worker with the Care Company, have been working with community members from the neighbourhood to secure supplies to help local organizations that help those in need across Scarborough. Speaker, while the holidays bring festivities and precious time with loved ones, it can also be a very challenging time for many families, especially given the year we have had.

Mr. Adams is a World War II veteran who served as an air force pilot, and wanted to find ways to bring joy and support to those who need it the most. He has set up a Christmas tree and some decorations on his front porch, where neighbours and community members have been donating toys and food. They have partnered with the wonderful folks at our local Bluffs Food Bank and the Care Company to distribute these items towards the end of the month. So if you're hoping to donate something, please go to Mr. Adams's Christmas tree. So far, Mr. Adams's efforts have yielded over 300 items.

Speaker, this past year has been extremely difficult for our community members in Scarborough Southwest and for people across this province, from community members losing loved ones to COVID-19 to many losing their livelihoods because of the pandemic's impact. Despite these challenges, our community constantly came together to uplift one another.

Sometimes one person's kindness and determination can have a huge impact on our communities, and that is why I would like to dedicate my statement and time in the Legislature today to Mr. Adams and thank all the incredible leaders and community members who have been doing amazing work across our Scarborough Southwest neighbourhoods.

#### SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** I am proud that our government is investing an additional \$3 million in the David C. Onley Initiative to build the capacity of post-secondary institutions like Durham College in my riding to prepare local students with disabilities to transition into the workforce. Speaker, this investment will help extend supports to more learners through the creation of an online tool kit providing a comprehensive road map that more institutions can use to help students with disabilities. Through the initiative, we are leveraging key talent to help overcome critical labour shortages, and strengthening our economy.

Speaker, it's vital to empower students with disabilities as they prepare to enter the workforce. Transitioning from post-secondary education into employment is a major milestone.

Institutions, employers throughout the region of Durham and government will continue to work together to remove barriers as students with disabilities plan their path to the workforce, and to help position them for career success. This investment will allow these academic institutions, like Ontario Tech University, Trent Durham and Durham College, to continue to help graduates with disabilities enter and, importantly, succeed in the working world.

#### RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** I rise this morning to talk about the importance of preserving residential school records. In October, the Prime Minister stated that all residential school records had been released. We knew that this was false and that there were more.

Now more information will soon be released by the federal government. This is a very significant moment for survivors and a major step towards accountability and truth about the legacy of Indian residential schools. It is also very important that we keep these records, as they have proof of what happened.

The United Nations has principles which set out the standards for the treatment of survivors of human rights violations, the most important being that a community that has experienced collective trauma has the right to remember and the right to justice.

**1020**

Ontario says that it has found 1,800 death registrations of school-aged Indigenous children that it will release to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. Identifying Indigenous students who died away from home can be so complex, requiring a paper chase across many jurisdictions and institutions. Students who became gravely ill, for example, could have been sent to a variety of health care settings, such as local clinics, provincial hospitals or federal Indian hospitals.

The time has come for all levels of government and this institution to turn over their records. We must support survivors and do everything we can to recover and remember our lost children and ancestors.

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto:** Last week, I was thrilled to join the Premier and the Minister of Health in Mississauga-Lakeshore for a very special announcement. This government is making an historic, multi-billion-dollar investment to build a new state-of-the-art Mississauga Hospital in Mississauga-Lakeshore. When it is completed, this will be the largest hospital in Canada, with almost 1,000 hospital beds, one of the largest emergency departments in Canada, 23 operation rooms, an advanced diagnostic facility, a new pharmacy, a new clinical lab and a new parking structure. This will be the largest investment in hospital infrastructure in the history of Canada—a very significant part of our \$30.2-billion plan to build, expand and upgrade hospitals across Ontario.

The current Mississauga Hospital first opened in 1958. I was born there. My sons were born there. But as Mayor Bonnie Crombie said, this pandemic brought to light some real limitations of our current hospital. The truth is, Speaker, this investment should have been done 15 years ago, but the former Liberal government kept saying no. I can't tell you how proud I am that this Premier and this government said yes to this historic project.

We are also building 632 long-term-care beds in partnership with Trillium Health Partners, and a total of 1,152 new long-term-care beds in Mississauga-Lakeshore, more

than any other riding in the province of Ontario. These projects are game-changers. They will help put an end to hallway health care for the people of Mississauga–Lakeshore and across Peel, and across Etobicoke as well.

#### FOOD DRIVE

**Miss Monique Taylor:** This morning, I am excited to stand and share the news of my second annual food drive parade that will be happening on Sunday, December 19. The Santa food drive will begin at 11 a.m., and will be starting at Dave Andreychuk arena and heading south. Donations will be happily collected from your porch or a street site. Last year, we raised over 1,000 pounds of food for our local food banks. We had such a great turnout from our community. The donations raised from this year's food drive will be going to our local food banks, such as Neighbour to Neighbour, Good Shepherd and the King's Way Outreach Centre.

Feed Ontario reported that 592,308 adults and children accessed food banks in Ontario between April 1, 2020, and March 31, 2021, an increase of over 10% in the last year, and the largest single increase since 2009.

Our neighbours need us. They need various non-perishable food items such as cereal, oatmeal, canned fruit and granola bars, as well as toiletries, diapers and feminine hygiene products, just to name a few, so please donate generously this holiday season. We'll be joined by our local firefighters and our pal Stripes from the Tiger-Cats, and of course our dear friend Santa, who always graciously joins us in Hamilton Mountain. Volunteers are welcome to attend, so if you're interested in joining us, please reach out to my office and we will make sure that you get all the information that you need. Next Sunday's food drive is going to be a fantastic event and we look forward to coming to your community, so don't miss out.

Finally, I just want to wish all members of the Legislative Assembly a very happy holiday. Merry Christmas to all people across Ontario, and particularly in my riding of Hamilton Mountain.

#### SNOWFLAKE BREAKFAST

#### DÉJEUNER FLOCONS DE NEIGE

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** The holiday season is upon us, and I want to recognize a great initiative in my community that brings the community together every year around this time to raise funds for the Partage Vanier Food Bank. It was a pleasure again this year to take part in the Snowflake Breakfast with my team. The generosity of the people of Ottawa–Vanier once again made this event another great success, raising \$48,000 for the food bank.

Les partenaires communautaires qui ont organisé cette 16<sup>e</sup> édition du Déjeuner Flocons de neige ont fait preuve d'ingéniosité en proposant des boîtes à déjeuner pouvant être ramassées en service à l'auto et mettant en vedette les produits des commerçants locaux. Monsieur le Président, le Centre des services communautaires Vannier est un

pilier et un partenaire incontournable à Vanier. Le directeur général, Michel Gervais, prend sa retraite après 30 ans de leadership exemplaire et de dévouement envers sa communauté. Je voudrais prendre cette occasion pour lui rendre hommage, le remercier chaleureusement et lui souhaiter une longue retraite en santé.

It's getting cold out there and I know that all of us here are hoping that every Ontarian finds a safe place to sleep and nutritious meals. Although raising money for food banks is incredibly important, as legislators we need to work constructively together to find long-lasting solutions. As we all head back to our homes and constituencies, I want to wish everyone a great holiday, quality time with your loved ones and a start of the new year with renewed motivation to work in collaboration for the best interests of all Ontarians.

Happy holidays, everyone. Joyeuses fêtes.

#### GENOCIDE

**Mr. Logan Kanapathi:** Tomorrow, December 9, is the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and the Prevention of this Crime. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honour the victims and survivors of genocide living in Ontario, Canada, and across the world. From the Armenian genocide, to the Holocaust, to the Bosnian, Rwandan and Indigenous genocides, and more recently, the genocides in Darfur, in Sri Lanka against the Tamil people, and of the Rohingya people and Uyghur Muslims, time and time again, the world said "never again," but the world and the United Nations failed over and over again.

Mr. Speaker, the horrors of genocide and ethnic cleansing have plagued history and cruelly taken away the lives of so many innocent human beings. Marginalized groups have been, and continue to be, targeted because of their identity. This heinous crime is born out of hate, discrimination and fundamental violations of human rights. We have a moral obligation to protect and uphold the principles of equality and human dignity. Our words and actions matter. As Elie Wiesel once said, "What hurts the victim most is not the cruelty of the oppressor but the silence of the bystander."

Let us say "never again" and commit fully to preventing another genocide from ever happening again.

#### SUDBURY SECONDARY SCHOOL VALUE VAULT

**Mr. Jamie West:** I recently went to visit Sudbury Secondary's Value Vault. I was invited by Janine Hebert. Janine is an educational assistant and she's part of the team running Sudbury Secondary's life skills program.

When I arrived, Janine introduced me to Dave Bertrim, the school's principal, and Lorrie Leger, who Janine described as "the driving force behind the Value Vault initiative."

And if Lorrie is the driving force, then you have to acknowledge the students in Sudbury Secondary's life

skills/ASD program, because those students are the heart and soul of the Value Vault. Without them, it simply wouldn't be as well organized and as available as it is.

Speaker, you may be wondering: "What is the Value Vault?" It's like a food bank, but it's so much more. They have perishable and non-perishable foods, but they also have clothing, hygiene products and household items. They also offer students the use of washing machines and a dryer.

Obviously, this is designed for students in need, but it's also in use by all students at Sudbury Secondary. During my tour, there were students stopping by to grab snacks before their practice, others looking for a toque or warm gloves and still others who wanted a reusable water bottle or some food to bring home. The whole place was warm and welcoming, without even a hint of stigma. It truly is a model to be proud of and copied—except, let's be honest, Speaker: Students from lower-income families wouldn't have the need for food banks like the Value Vault if successive Liberal and Conservative governments would stop pretending that a single mom with two children can survive on 1,000 bucks a month from OW.

If we're going to copy models like the Value Vault—and I think that we should—let's ensure they're a place to get extra snacks, and not a place that our children must depend on because their bellies are empty.

1030

#### NURSES

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova:** As a nurse, I always appreciate hearing from the members of my profession on how our government can support nursing across Ontario. Two weeks ago, I was pleased to join several of my caucus colleagues for a virtual round table with the Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario, or WeRPN for short. Over 95% of registered practical nurses provide direct care to patients in our province and we much appreciate hearing their perspective directly.

The topic of the round table was facing the nursing and retention challenge head-on, a crucial subject as we seek to both attract and retain talented nurses in Ontario. Earlier this year our government announced the new \$2-million Recruitment and Retention Incentive Program as part of our 2021 budget, to be delivered directly by WeRPN. The program will provide financial incentives for eligible nurses and PSWs to work in Ontario retirement homes for six months to one year.

Above all, we enjoyed a productive discussion, and the rich input and perspectives from the WeRPN members will inform our government's next steps in addressing this challenge. Thank you to the WeRPN CEO, Dianne Martin, the board and front-line members who hosted and spoke at the event.

Our government remains committed to meaningful and constructive dialogue with Ontario's nurses as we work toward our shared goal of providing the best possible care for patients in Ontario.

#### VISITOR

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I am very pleased to inform the House that page Rishi Bhargava, from the riding of Etobicoke North, is one of today's page captains. We have with us today at Queen's Park her mother, Kamal Bhargava. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. We are delighted to have you here.

#### QUESTION PERIOD

#### NURSES

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My first question this morning is to the Premier. The Ford government has a disastrous history of not getting out in front of this virus. In April, the Solicitor General said, "We wanted to make sure that the modelling was actually showing up in our hospitals." As we know, that's what walked us right into the third wave of COVID-19.

Yesterday, the science table report says this: "There is a growing crisis in staffing for critical care patients with significant contribution from health care worker burnout."

Speaker, Ontario has the lowest nurse-per-capita ratio in the entire country—the fewest number of nurses per person across Canada, right here in Ontario. Will the government once again be waiting for cases to skyrocket before they take action to deal with the crisis in nursing in Ontario?

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

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Thank you to the leader of the official opposition for the question. In fact, we are aware that there has been significant impact on our health human resources as a result of the pandemic. They've been on the front lines for the past 21 months, and we are very grateful for all of the work that they've done.

However, we do recognize that they need to be assisted. We are making significant investments in increasing our nursing workforce. We are investing over \$342 million, beginning in 2021-22, to add over 5,000 new and upskilled registered nurses and registered practical nurses, as well as 8,000 personal support workers.

In addition, Ontario is investing \$57.6 million, beginning in 2022-23, to hire 225 nurse practitioners to the long-term-care sector.

We are also investing an additional \$548.5 million over three years to expand home and community care. This funding would support up to 28,000 post-acute surgical patients and 21,000 patients with complex health conditions every year.

Our government is fully aware of and making the investments that are necessary, both now and into the future, to add to our front-line health care workers, particularly—

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

Supplementary question?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, Health Quality Ontario reports that ER wait times are increasing. In fact, they have almost doubled in the past 20 years.

The Minister of Health talks a good game, but when I talk to nurses, they are saying new nurses might be coming in the front door, but experienced nurses are walking out the back door.

The Ontario Hospital Association's president and CEO, Anthony Dale, says this: "We're looking at a 20-year period where the needs of rural and northern communities, with respect to hospital services, have been more or less overlooked. Now the pandemic has revealed to all ... the system is extremely fragile everywhere."

Things were bad under the Liberals, Speaker; I would agree when the government criticizes them. But they've become worse. Things have become worse under this Premier.

Ontario desperately needs 20,000 nurses just to keep our existing system afloat. So my question is: Why is this Premier and this government doing nothing—literally nothing—to address this crisis?

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** I would say to the contrary: Our government is taking action on every front to make sure that we have a strong health care system to get us through this pandemic, and also to deal with the number of people who had to have their surgeries or diagnostic procedures delayed as a result of COVID. So we are making investments to increase our nursing workforce and our personal support worker nursing force.

We're also making sure that we have the capital investments necessary to be able to operate. We know that we need beds. We've added 3,100 more beds to the system. We have increased our capacity for the workforce. We're also investing over \$30 billion in the next 10 years to increase the number of hospitals we have.

We are constantly building, both in terms of the workforce and in terms of the capital investments necessary, across the entire province to make sure that if someone has health care needs, whether it's COVID or something else, they will be cared for, and we do have the facilities and services available for them.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, the health human resources capacity of this province is terrible, and this government is not acting at all urgently to address that problem. In fact, it's not only that this government is not making things better; they're actually making things much worse.

This Premier's low-wage-policy Bill 124 has led to Ontario nurses feeling disrespected and abandoned by their government at a time when they have been working their backs off. They're leaving nursing in droves. All health care workers, Speaker, are burned out. They don't need a government to say that they are grateful; they need a raise, Speaker. All health care workers in this province have been suffering under this government's low-wage policy.

Our ICUs are filling up as we sit here in this Legislature, emergency wait times are rising significantly, and the science table is calling it a crisis. And we're heading into a holiday season. Why is the Premier doing nothing to address this crisis?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The President of the Treasury Board.

**Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria:** Our government will continue to invest in our health care sector. As our public estimates from last year showed, we made record-breaking investments to fight the pandemic: \$19.1 billion to support the pandemic recovery over the past year.

We reaffirmed that commitment and many of those investments in our fall economic statement. The province invested over \$342 million to add over 5,000 new and upskilled registered nurses and registered practical nurses, as well as an additional 8,000 personal support workers. This includes providing 500 registered nurses with specialized acute care training. It includes adding 420 registered nurses through the existing Community Commitment Program for Nurses. It's adding 900 registered nurses and 700 registered practical nurses through the WeRPN bridging program.

This government is saying yes to investing in our health care sector. It is saying yes to investing to keep our front-line workers safe, and to continue working with our province to get through this pandemic.

#### COVID-19 TESTING

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is also to the Premier. The new science table predictions are extremely worrying. The province can and must act now to prevent another COVID wave.

They need to finally reduce class sizes in our schools. They need to provide clear direction to Ontarians about reducing our number of contacts, reducing the size of our gatherings. They should mandate vaccines for all health care and education workers in this province, and they should introduce free and accessible access—widely available access—to rapid tests.

1040

My question is, why hasn't the Premier rolled out free, widely available rapid tests for Ontarians, like other provinces and other jurisdictions worldwide have done?

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

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Well, in fact, we have been rolling out rapid tests. We have received over 58—

*Interjection.*

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

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Canada has deployed over 58 million rapid tests, of which Ontario has received 31 million and has deployed over 33 million because some of the tests were paid for also by the government of Ontario to be deployed in schools for students to be able to take over the holidays. That is compared to the next closest province, with Ontario at 33 million and Quebec at five million.

There's no question that these tests are being deployed across our schools, across our workplaces, in hospitals, in congregate care settings. In hospitals, we're making full use of these tests because we recognize that inasmuch as vaccines are the most important way that we can protect Ontarians, testing is also extremely important, especially with the appearance now of the Omicron variant.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Minister of Health is missing the point. Ontarians should have free access to the rapid test. That's what should be happening in this province. The science table advice for widespread access to rapid tests was clear, and I quote from Dr. Jüni: "It makes sense from a scientific perspective to use rapid tests more frequently, for example, schools, in workplaces, in congregate settings, and to make rapid tests more available in this province."

Over a year ago, in November 2020, the Premier called rapid tests a game-changer, and I'd ask a page to come and provide that evidence over to the Minister of Health—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke will come to order.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Right now, there are more than five million unused rapid tests sitting locked up in warehouses instead of being made freely available to Ontarians. Why won't the Premier do the right thing now and commit to rolling out free rapid tests to all Ontarians?

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** In fact, our government is doing the right thing by rolling out free rapid tests to all Ontarians who need them. People are receiving them in the workplaces through our chamber of commerce. The children are going to be receiving them in schools. People come to our pharmacies in order to receive the tests. These are free of charge to the people who need them, courtesy of the government of Canada providing a number of the tests, but also the government of Ontario paying for the tests for children.

We also have expanded the places where people can receive those tests because we recognize that an assessment centre might not be the closest place for someone living in a rural or northern area. That's why we're bringing forward these tests free of charge to people at participating pharmacies. So there are a number of tests. There are no tests sitting in storage anywhere. We have deployed all of those tests. They are all being used, and they are readily available and free to anyone who needs them.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, I think the Minister of Health needs to study up on exactly what's happening with the rapid tests. In fact, just yesterday, a pharmacist was relaying a story about a dad and his son who is living with autism who went to the pharmacy to get a rapid test because they both had symptoms of colds. Lo and behold, the test was positive and the pharmacist was very, very concerned because while this dad was able to pay the 40

bucks it cost him to get the test done, lots of families won't be able to afford that.

People need to take the rapid tests so that they can go see their loved ones and feel safe. That's what's happening in other provinces. In other provinces, they use the rapid tests at first signs of a cold, like the story I just told. We can make the holidays safer for folks by providing rapid tests. They are a tool that should be being used freely and made available everywhere so anyone can get one whenever and wherever they need it.

Will the Premier finally do the right thing, change the game and make rapid tests free and accessible to all Ontarians?

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** I would say, through you, Speaker, to the Leader of the Opposition opposite that you cannot suggest that just because there was one situation that occurred when someone went into a pharmacy with symptoms that they were not able to get a free test—that is not the way this system is working. The only reason why people need to pay \$40 for a test is if they are going to travel. If that is happening, yes, they will have to pay \$40. Otherwise, these tests are free of charge to people who come in, symptomatic or asymptomatic in some situations where they have been close to someone with COVID. But I can assure the members opposite and the people of Ontario that if they need to have a test, they can go to their pharmacies, and they will receive a test free of charge.

## EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

**Mr. Gurratan Singh:** My question is to the Premier. Paid sick days save lives. We know this—it's a fact—because they allow workers to stay home when they're sick and not spread the COVID-19 virus. But a year into this pandemic, workers in Ontario had no paid sick days, and when the Premier was finally pushed to bring in paid sick days, they were temporary, and they were not enough. Now we know that if those workers, rightly so, used their paid sick days to stay home when they were sick, to get vaccinated, to care for a loved one who was sick, they will be entering into 2022 with zero paid sick days—not a single paid sick day. That's not just wrong, it is cruel.

I'm going to ask the Premier again: Will he do the right thing? Will he bring in permanent paid sick days so workers don't have to choose between going to work sick or paying the bills?

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

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Again, I appreciate this question. The member will, of course, know that the minister announced yesterday that the paid sick day regime that we brought in to supplement the federal program—a federal program, by the way, which was negotiated by our Premier, which provided, I believe, up to 20 sick days—our program filled in some of those gaps that were in the federal program to give Ontarians the best sick day regime. That has been extended. Obviously, we're not through the pandemic yet, as much as we would all like to

be. That is why the minister has highlighted the fact that we are extending these paid sick days right through to July.

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

**Mr. Gurratan Singh:** Back to the Premier: We've seen the modelling. We know that in a matter of weeks, we could be seeing more than 3,000 new COVID-19 cases a day, and we know the pressure that's going to place on our health care system. We need to act now. But instead of doing everything possible to fight this pandemic, the Premier is once again doing nothing. He is not listening to the science, and he's not bringing in permanent paid sick days.

I'm going to ask the Premier one more time: Will he listen to the science? Will he help fight the COVID-19 pandemic by bringing in permanent paid sick days and help save lives?

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Again, Speaker, as I've said, we are focused on getting Ontarians through the pandemic. That is why we have extended sick days right through to the end of the summer, because the member is right: We are not quite through this yet. But as you know, the Premier negotiated a national, leading regime of sick days so that all of our essential workers could be covered. I'm very proud of the program that we have in place. We're going to continue to support essential workers.

We're seeing the results of the things that we have done to get Ontario through this. It's not just about the increased testing. It's not just about the investments that the Minister of Health has made. We're also seeing, because of these things, that our economy is starting to come back. We've recovered all of the jobs that were lost during the pandemic and actually have more jobs, with thousands more that need to be filled.

Another piece of good news is the fact that the member for Brampton South and the member for Brampton West have delivered on a new hospital, new transit and transportation, a new medical school for the people of Brampton. There is a lot of good news happening for the people of the province of Ontario, including so much for the people of Brampton. That might not have been the case always, but it is today, and we're very proud of that.

## LAND USE PLANNING

**Mr. Will Bouma:** My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. As we know, the previous Liberal government sat on their hands for 15 years and did nothing to build up our province. As Ontario enters a period of economic recovery, we need a government willing to work hard to get shovels in the ground, to create jobs and build the housing, long-term-care capacity and highway and transportation infrastructure that our province desperately needs.

After 15 long years of no, my constituents and so many others are eager to see critical local projects get off the ground instead of dragging on for years as they did before. Projects like affordable housing, health care facilities and long-term-care homes need to be moving at the pace that Ontarians need and deserve.

**1050**

Speaker, through you: Can the minister tell us how the government plans to meet these demands by fast-tracking much-needed local priority projects?

**Hon. Steve Clark:** I want to thank the member for Brantford–Brant for that question. He's absolutely right: For 15 years, the Liberal Party, supported overwhelmingly by New Democrats, only ever said no to Ontarians. Today, under the leadership of Premier Ford, our government is saying yes.

Minister's zoning orders, or MZOs, are a very important part of our policy tool kit to get critical projects moving at a pace that Ontarians need and deserve, things like long-term-care homes, transit-oriented communities. There are so many priority projects that our government is moving forward on.

When it comes to MZOs, municipalities are in the driver's seat. MZOs issued on non-provincially owned land have always come at the request of local municipalities. Here's an example, Speaker: In the middle of the pandemic, Mayor Tory requested an MZO to expand Sunnybrook Hospital. I was pleased to say yes.

I'm proud of the partnerships that our government has with Ontario's 444 municipalities. We're going to continue to use the tools in the tool kit, like minister's zoning orders, to get these projects moving.

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

**Mr. Will Bouma:** Thank you to the minister for that answer.

As the minister has said, projects that will support Ontario's economy, including building much-needed transit and housing, are often slowed down by burdensome and duplicative red tape. Ontarians are sick and tired of hearing politicians say no to their priorities, which is why we are so fortunate to finally hear from a government that is saying yes.

We need to be able to work in partnership with municipalities to say yes to critical projects like long-term care and supportive housing. While I know this is not a new tool—in fact, the MZO authority has existed in the Planning Act since 1946—Ontarians deserve a government that puts people before politics and enables municipalities to better prepare for growth.

Can the minister tell us how using MZOs in partnership with local municipalities is in the best interests of the people of Ontario?

**Hon. Steve Clark:** Again, I want to thank the member for Brantford–Brant for his leadership.

The numbers speak for themselves. We build; they don't. During the previous Liberal government, when they were in power, they built only 611 long-term-care beds. By using MZOs and MZOs alone, we've already fast-tracked 3,700.

As well, using MZOs, we've already been able, in just a short three and a half years, to fast-track 600 supportive housing units in that time. The previous government, in the time they were in office, only moved 500 new supportive housing units.

The NDP also is not without blame. They stood idly by and supported the previous government over and over and over again. They didn't build; they just simply didn't build.

It doesn't matter whether it was long-term care, affordable housing. I think I've figured it out. I think the—

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

*Interjections.*

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

The next question.

#### COVID-19 RESPONSE

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** My question is to the Premier. COVID-19 cases continue to rise in Windsor-Essex. Last week, the local hospital's EMS service provider and the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit released a statement reporting significant concerns of capacity pressures on our health care system. They report that our COVID-19 positivity rate is 8.3%, while the province as a whole is at 3%. To put that into perspective, we've had 131 new cases in the last 24 hours, four deaths, and 18 workplaces are in outbreak.

Nine schools and child care centres are currently in outbreak, with many classes and bus cohorts being dismissed. Our local health unit has made the difficult decision to impose further health measures to stop the spread of COVID-19, yet this government has remained silent.

My question is this: Why won't this government help stop the spread of COVID-19 by implementing the many calls from those of us on this side of the House and of the health experts, lower class sizes, improve ventilation in schools, provide permanent paid sick days for workers and mandate vaccines for health care and education workers?

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

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** We have made a significant investment in air ventilation in all schools in Windsor and across Ontario: \$600 million, a leading investment that has deployed 75,000 HEPA units into classrooms across Ontario. In fact, every school that does not have mechanical ventilation has a HEPA unit within every single learning space.

In addition, we have announced the expansion of testing, in partnership with the Deputy Premier, expanding take-home PCR tests to every publicly funded school and private school in the province of Ontario, to help limit the spread. In addition, we've just expanded and provided, in real time, take-home rapid antigen test kits, five per child—11 million procured; \$45 million invested—to ensure a safe return in January.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to that, we have ensured a very high level of school-based vaccine clinics. We have, as a consequence of the partnership in education, one of the highest vaccination rates of children in Canada; 20% of the youngest learners are already vaccinated. We know

there is more to do, and we're going to do it, in partnership, to keep these schools safe and open in Ontario.

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

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** If the Minister of Education thinks trying to open rickety old windows and making kids sit in classrooms in coats in the wintertime is proper ventilation, he should be listening to the experts.

The health partners of Windsor-Essex are sounding the alarms about bed capacities for surgeries at our local hospitals, many of which were cancelled during the pandemic. Constituents in my riding should not be waiting years for the health care they desperately need.

We know that in order to slow down the spread, we must test, trace and isolate, yet this government is sitting on millions of rapid tests that could be made available to businesses, schools, workplaces and households across the province. When will this government take action for Windsor-Essex and provide free, accessible rapid tests to every single person in Windsor and Essex county?

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

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Our government is providing free, accessible tests to everyone who needs them across the entire province. We have received, as I indicated earlier, over 31 million tests through the government of Ontario. We have also purchased over two million tests to send home with children. These tests have been deployed across the province. They're not sitting in a warehouse; they are being used. They are available to people who need to receive them in assessment centres, in pharmacies, in primary care, in workplaces, in congregate settings—wherever they need them.

The situation is unfolding. As Dr. Moore had indicated earlier when we indicated our plan to reopen Ontario, as the weather gets colder and more and more people are indoors, there will be more cases. We have provided for that and planned for that. We have sufficient capacity in our hospitals. We have today 154 people, I believe, in intensive care, including one person from Saskatchewan. So we have capacity in our hospitals. We have capacity in our intensive care units. We are doing rapid testing across the entire province—

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

The next question.

#### COVID-19 TESTING

**Mr. John Fraser:** My question is to the Premier. Speaker, it's time to free the RATs, and by that I mean the rapid antigen tests. Early in 2020, the Premier called these rapid antigen tests "a real game-changer," and since then millions of these tests have been on the sidelines, sitting on the bench with the Premier.

Nova Scotia, the UK, Germany and all sorts of countries around the world are providing free tests, because they know that they're an important tool to protect people—an important tool—yet this government has not done that. Speaker, the question is simple: As we head into a tough couple of months, with case counts rising, why is

this Premier denying families access to this important public health tool?

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

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** I think it's really important for me to advise the member opposite about what actually is happening in Ontario. Ontario is leading the country of Canada in rapid tests, with over 33 million rapid tests deployed—33 million—and that there is nothing sitting in storage. They are being deployed across the province. They are being deployed to assessment centres, to pharmacies, to primary care. They are being deployed and they are being used.

We know that while vaccination remains the single most important way to protect people, testing is, of course, also very important. That is why they are available, free of charge, to anyone who needs one. If they're symptomatic, they'll receive one free of charge. If they are asymptomatic, but they have been in contact with someone with COVID and there's reason to suspect they may be infected, they will also receive a test free of charge.

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We have these tests available to anyone who needs them. They can take them home and bring them back. We have expanded the locations. We've expanded the number of tests that are available to people free of charge.

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

**Mr. John Fraser:** Speaker, at least this government is consistent—indecisive and slow to act, and rapid antigen tests aren't any different.

The truth is that these tests aren't getting into the hands of families. They should have been accessible in September, when kids started school. It's December, and guess what? Families don't have them.

The bottom line is, it should be free for every family in this province—every person. They literally cost pennies, and we have millions of them gone unused. Yet the Premier is satisfied with families maybe having to go to Shoppers Drug Mart and pay 40 bucks. How's that fair? How's that fair in any way to families? These tests should be available to everyone for free.

Speaker, through you: Will the Premier commit to making rapid antigen tests free to everyone in this province so we can protect ourselves and each other, and make sure that this government distributes them widely and rapidly?

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** In light of the comments made by the member opposite, which are not actually the case in the province of Ontario, I would like to indicate what is actually the case.

The only time that a person needs to pay for a test in the province of Ontario at \$40 is if they need it for travel purposes. That's the situation. If they go into a pharmacy and they need to receive a test and they are either symptomatic or asymptomatic, under certain circumstances, they will receive the test.

These tests are being widely deployed. They are not sitting in storage anywhere. They are being used across the

province in a whole variety of settings: in schools, in workplaces, in congregate settings, in hospitals, in long-term-care homes.

We want to make sure that the people of Ontario are protected. The widely available, free-of-charge tests are available to anyone who needs them. I think it's really important that we be clear with the people of Ontario about that. If you need a test, you will receive a test free of charge.

## POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

**Mr. Sam Oosterhoff:** My question is to the Minister of Colleges and Universities. As you know, more post-secondary students had the opportunity to return to campus this fall, something I know they are very excited about.

In the months leading up to the fall semester, as students hoped to be back on campus and looked to our government to make critical investments, we saw the minister step forward to support post-secondary institutions and support the safe reopening of colleges and universities. For most students, September marked the first time in over a year that they were able to step back into a classroom on campus and the first time they have been able to return to in-person learning.

As students approach exams and the semester comes to a close, they deserve to know what the government has done throughout the semester and what more is left to be done.

Through you, Speaker, my question to the minister is: What investments were made to ensure that students could have a safe fall semester?

**Hon. Jill Dunlop:** Thank you to the member from Niagara West for sharing my concerns for the safety of post-secondary students in Ontario.

Our government invested an immediate \$25 million to post-secondary institutions at the beginning of the pandemic to support their most pressing needs with the pandemic.

This year, our government went even further by investing an additional \$106.4 million and requiring that all schools have a vaccine policy before the school year to allow the safe return of students.

With vaccination rates at 96% for faculty, staff and students across public colleges and universities—proving post-secondary is among the best sectors in Ontario for vaccinations.

When faced with adversity, our sector faced their challenges head-on and were able to deliver the high-calibre education our students expect and deserve.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of the work and resilience of our sector over the past few months, and I want to thank all of our staff, faculty and, of course, our students for their hard work to make our first semester back a great success.

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

**Mr. Sam Oosterhoff:** I appreciate the minister's advocacy and continued hard work to ensure that students, as they return to campus, are able to have a safe and supportive environment where they're able to learn in person.

It's wonderful to hear that students in Ontario had a successful semester—I've heard from many that they have—as well as a safe return to campus.

But there's a new semester around the corner, and there's always more that needs to be done. Like many Ontarians, I'm confident that our students will continue to have access to in-person learning when they return to class in January, but they deserve the surety of knowing that the proper safety measures will continue to be in place so that our students can stay safe and healthy.

Could the minister please explain to this House what she is doing in order to ensure that students remain safe on campus and in the classroom this upcoming semester?

**Hon. Jill Dunlop:** Thank you, again, to the member for that question. As this semester comes to an end, we look forward to the winter semester. We will continue to work closely with health experts and schools to keep schools open, keep students on campus and keep Ontario running.

Mr. Speaker, Ontario's post-secondary institutions are critical to the province's economic recovery as significant contributors to the local economy and for the role they play in creating a skilled and qualified workforce. We owe it to our students to keep them on campus so that they can get the full post-secondary experience, filled with learning in the classroom, connecting with one another and participating in extracurricular activities.

Our institutions proved that they can reopen safely and that students can stay healthy. Institutions like St. Clair College, Western, U of T and many others have acted swiftly when needed to keep students safe.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish students across the province, including my own daughters in post-secondary, the best of luck on their exams, and to have a restful holiday season before returning to campus in January.

#### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** My question is to the Premier. On Monday, the Minister of Housing announced members of Ontario's new Housing Affordability Task Force. The task force consists of bankers, developers—most of whom are PC Party donors. Missing from the task force are housing advocates, co-op and not-for-profit housing providers, municipal partners, representation from tenants and those experiencing homelessness.

Why is the Premier ignoring the voices of those most affected by this issue while focusing on the voices of developers and donors?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

**Hon. Steve Clark:** Speaker, from the party opposite that says no to building housing, says no to renewing community housing, says no to protecting tenants—that party opposite says no to almost every policy measure. Last week, they said, "Don't even appoint a task force." They said no to that. Now the member is questioning the members of the task force.

The member also forgets to talk about New Democrat donations or Liberal donations or Green Party donations. They forget to say those things every single time. But they're great at saying no, Speaker.

We've made it very crystal clear to Ontarians that we want to work with everyone on the housing affordability crisis.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Opposition, come to order.

**Hon. Steve Clark:** We've made it very clear that we are going to be engaging with Ontario's Big City Mayors next week here in the city. We're also going to be sitting with rural Ontario mayors at the ROMA conference.

We've said over and over again that the housing affordability crisis is something that all Ontarians need to work on collaboratively. There is one—

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

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** Back to the minister: The Housing Affordability Task Force mandate does not include issues like speculation, the impact of money laundering or the commodification of housing. It does not mention protection for tenants against illegal evictions or rent gouging. There is also no mention of protecting farmland from unsustainable sprawl or ensuring land use planning aligns efficiently with transit and infrastructure planning and investment.

Again, why does this government care more about delivering profit for developers and real estate speculators than about making housing affordable?

**Hon. Steve Clark:** Speaker, why does this party opposite continue to vote against measures for tenants and continue to vote against strengthening our community housing system?

Our task force represents a range of experts in non-profit housing, Indigenous housing, real estate, home building, financial markets and economics.

We are going to continue to sit down with our municipal partners, who play a key role in the housing affordability crisis. We want to emerge from next week's mayors meeting with a renewed sense of commitment that all levels of government can do better.

Again, Speaker, the opposition continues to say no at every measure of our government trying to make housing more affordable. They are saying to Ontarians that they're not going to participate in the discussion. That's fine by us.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** My question is for the Premier. Yesterday's FAO report shows the government's failure to reduce climate pollution will stick it to taxpayers: \$6 billion this decade and \$116 billion this century in extra costs to buildings alone due to climate-fuelled extreme weather. Just look at what's happening in British Columbia: economic and infrastructure devastation.

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Today, we're debating a mini budget that fails to invest in climate solutions and adaptation. Instead, the government is spending tens of billions of dollars on new highways that will cause more congestion, more pollution and more flood risk. Will the Premier tell the people of Ontario why the government is not protecting taxpayers from the costs of the climate disasters that are getting more costly each and every year?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** To respond for the government, the government House leader.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** I completely disagree with the member opposite. While I do appreciate his passion on the file, we're focused on actually getting things done when it comes to the environment.

He talks about the highways that we're building—very important pieces of infrastructure to get the economy moving, get people moving. That's the type of thing that helps us pay for the close to \$30 billion in subways that are being built in Toronto and into York region. That's the type of investment that helps us build two-way, all-day GO trains to as far away as London. It helps us pay for the eventual electrification of the system.

When you look at what we are doing, we are putting investments in place that will help us, yes, build the economy, because building the economy is important to having the resources that you need to tackle environmental problems across the province, and that's exactly what we're doing.

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

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Let's be straight with the people of Ontario. Two years ago, in December 2019, the Auditor General put forward a scathing report on the government's so-called climate plan. The minister at the time said, "We have an evolving plan," and he promised to make updates to the plan in response to the Auditor General. Now we are two years later and another scathing Auditor General's report, and still no updated plan to meet the government's weak pollution targets. The government is actually making things worse: ramping up gas plants that will increase climate pollution by 300% and building Highway 413, which will increase climate pollution by 17.4 million megatonnes.

We have to be honest with the people of Ontario about the costs and risks we face. Will the Premier tell Ontarians when he will put forward an evolved climate plan that follows science, answers the Auditor General's criticism and shows Ontarians how we can cut climate pollution in half by 2030?

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** It is a very multifaceted approach that we are taking. Not only are we building transit and transportation, because we know how important it is; not only are we investing in roads so that people can get around and we can build our economy, but it was a Progressive Conservative government—started under Robarts, continued under Bill Davis, continued under Harris, continued under Eves—that invested in nuclear technology, the Candu reactor. When you look at our

competitors around the world, the primary source of their greenhouse gas emissions is dirty energy. Ontario leads the way, thanks to a Progressive Conservative government.

Just last week, the Minister of Energy announced the next version, the small modular reactors, that will ensure Ontario access to clean energy. Not only are we going to save that technology for the people of the province of Ontario, we are going to export that technology around the world, because Ontario can do that and Ontario can play a role in cleaning up other people's environments, like we have done—

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

#### CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** My question today is for the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. Minister, I have met with constituents in my riding and have received many letters and emails from families whose children have been impacted by eating disorders. Just this past summer, we learned that children and youth aged 12 to 18 have been impacted the most by eating disorders during this pandemic.

We know that this pandemic has had a significant impact on our children and youth, but especially on their mental health. I know this is something that our government and the minister have been very concerned about.

Minister, could you please explain to the members of this Legislature how our government is addressing the ongoing issues around eating disorders in this province?

**Hon. Michael A. Tibollo:** I want to thank the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock for that excellent question. We know this pandemic has been especially challenging for our children, youth and their families. Health care providers across Ontario have seen a surge in the need for eating disorder services and supports. That's why I was so pleased to be in Ottawa, at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, to announce that our government is investing \$8.1 million this year to immediately address the increased demand for eating disorder services and provide specialized care for children and youth diagnosed with eating disorders.

This new investment builds on an additional \$11.1 million in annual funding for eating disorder services through our Roadmap to Wellness, helping to protect our progress by increasing access to mental health and eating disorder services and supports across the province. Our government will continue working with our community partners to ensure our children and youth always have access to the supports and treatment they need.

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

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I want to thank the minister for his response and his caring and compassion. I know my constituents will be pleased to hear that we have taken quick and decisive action to address the ongoing issues around eating disorders, and I'm sure all members of the

Legislature will agree that children and youth across Ontario deserve access to the highest-quality supports and treatment they need.

However, we know that the long history of underfunding by previous governments has made it difficult to access specialized eating disorder services and supports for many families across Ontario. I know our government has made investments to support the mental health of our children and youth, and I know this has been one of our top priorities.

Mr. Speaker, through you: Could I ask the minister, who is supporting children and youth and their families who are affected by eating disorders, what we have done to support them?

**Hon. Michael A. Tibollo:** I want to thank the member for that follow-up question. I have met with many families, including those with lived experience who have been diagnosed with an eating disorder.

I want to thank, first of all, the member from Toronto—St. Paul's for first bringing this issue to my attention. I also want to really thank two young ladies who came forward and spoke to me about the eating disorders that they themselves were living with during the pandemic and explain just what the situation was. I can honestly say that it was moving to listen to them and to hear how difficult a situation it was for them and their families, and the unknown issues that needed to be dealt with.

Our investments are going to immediately expand access to specialized eating disorder services that are going to support individuals with complex needs and provide critical services that have been missing up to now across the province, including filling service gaps in northern Ontario and throughout the province. Every young person struggling with a mental health or addiction challenge deserves to have the help that they need, when and where they need it. Our government will fulfill that obligation and provide those services.

#### SMALL BUSINESS

**Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens:** My question is to the Premier. From the beginning of the pandemic that hit Ontario in March 2020, small businesses across our province have been suffering. Last week, we learned from the Auditor General that this Conservative government failed to provide assistance through this program to eligible, hard-hit businesses while we had hundreds of millions of dollars flowing to ineligible ones.

I brought this up before. You knew your program was failing. You knew the problems and let small businesses hang out to dry. PowerAid Generators in St. Catharines waited six months for a response from the grant team, only to be given five days to provide invoices, or his file would be closed.

Premier, some of 14,000 ineligible businesses received over \$210 million from taxpayers. What do you say to the eligible businesses that were denied and lost in this failed program?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Brantford—Brant.

**Mr. Will Bouma:** It's an honour to be able to rise on behalf of my ministry to answer the good question from the member opposite. Mr. Speaker, I want you to imagine with me that you are a small business owner. The pandemic hits and you're shut down. You're struggling to make ends meet. The government steps in with supports on your taxes, on your rent. We opened up a small business support program. You apply, and you get funding. You apply in good faith.

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If you listen carefully, Speaker, what you will hear from the member opposite is that those small business owners are being accused of fraud, by the member opposite, in order to keep their businesses going, and that they are expecting them to pay that money pack. That's shameful, and we won't stand for that on this side of the House.

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

**Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens:** PowerAid Generators in St. Catharines don't need an imagination. They're facing what's going on, and you know it.

Back to the Premier: The Auditor General's report found that the Ontario small business grant failed to assist the badly affected accommodation and food service industries. Niagara and St. Catharines is a tourism and hospitality community that accounts for one out of every four workers. We've built our main streets and our downtowns around these businesses. As the AG's report noted, these sectors were hit the hardest when you did not give businesses sufficient notice around restrictions.

Premier, you waited nine months to start a grant program, and then when you spent money it was clear you didn't know where it was going.

How are you going to fix this for businesses across Niagara and St. Catharines?

**Mr. Will Bouma:** To the member opposite—and actually, to all small businesses in the province of Ontario: Where were the NDP when we brought forward legislation to supply rent relief? Where were the opposition members when we helped on property taxes? Where were the opposition members when we brought forward the small business support grants? Do you know what, small business owners? They voted against those measures every single time in this House. So you know who is supporting small businesses in the province of Ontario: It's the members on this side of the House, right here.

#### TAX REBATES

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** My question is for the Premier. Mr. Speaker, nobody can argue that the cost of living in Ontario has skyrocketed since this government was elected. The cost of heating your home is up. The cost of electricity is up. The cost of food is up. The cost of gas is up. The cost of taking the bus or subway is up. The cost of housing is up and up and up.

With their mini budget, the government had an opportunity to help middle-class families, but alas, there was nothing.

Ontario Liberals have a different approach. We want to help middle-class families with direct supports. That's why we've proposed a \$300 incentive for winter tires.

Given that this government has absolutely no plan to help the middle class, will they join us in supporting middle-class families and making their roads safer by providing winter tires this winter?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Government side, come to order.

To respond on behalf of the government, the government House leader.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** So you're a hard-working person in the province of Ontario, up every morning at 7 o'clock, taking the GO train, getting on one of our roads to go to work, and Steven Del Duca, who has been out of this place, and the Liberal Party, reduced to seven members—the best they've got is a \$300 tax credit for your winter tires. Now contrast that with what we're bringing forward: massive cuts for small businesses and taxes, massive investments in health care, job creation that is through the roof. But don't worry; Steven Del Duca—

*Interjections.*

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

The Minister of Energy will come to order. The member for Ottawa South will come to order. The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke will come to order.

We can restart the clock. The government House leader had the floor.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** That's the best they've got.

They brought out two policies, colleagues, you'll remember; now this is the second. The first one was, they brought in a policy to help make it easier to elect Liberals, because they were reduced by the people of the province of Ontario. And their second big policy is a \$300 tax credit. I think when Ontarians go to the polls and contrast the—

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

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** We know that they have no plan for middle-class families, and middle-class families know that the government has no plan for middle-class families. We know the types of people they like to help, Mr. Speaker. It was, of course, this government that gave a made-in-Ontario COVID grant to a company that purchased off-the-shelf gadgets from China, and when they got that grant, when the company got that grant, their stock skyrocketed. Before anyone realized that no one wanted this gadget, the executives sold their stock and made millions. So those are the type of people that this government wants to help; middle-class families know that it's not them.

With the cost of daily life out of control, it's time that this government supports middle-class families. That's why we've proposed helping middle-class families get green, get into the electric vehicle market with an \$8,000 incentive for electric vehicles. This government wants to flip-flop on—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Stop the clock. The member will take his seat.

The Minister of Education will come to order. The member for Mississauga Centre will come to order. The member for Ottawa South will come to order.

**Interjection:** It's the second time.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** It's the second time for you too.

Restart the clock. Government House leader.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, look, the legacy of the Liberal Party is very, very clear: skyrocketing hydro rates, the loss of 300,000 jobs. Businesses could not flee the province fast enough when the Liberals were in power, on every single measure. And what do they have to show for it? They left us the most indebted government not in Canada, but in the world. That is the legacy of the Liberal government.

I can understand why the member opposite is bringing a winter tire tax credit in. He needs it in Ottawa. Why? Because he was in charge of a failed transit system that was over budget, late, and ultimately doesn't work.

*Interjections.*

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

The member for Orléans will come to order. The member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell will come to order. The member for Ottawa South will come to order. Over here, the Minister of Energy will come to order. The Minister of Government and Consumer Services will come to order.

We have six minutes and 27 seconds left, and I will move to warnings next, especially for the ones who have been asked to come to order multiple times.

Start the clock. The next question.

## CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

**Mr. Faisal Hassan:** My question is to the Premier. Last week, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association released an alarming report on young people incarcerated in the province. Juvenile detention centres were described as “only human warehouses,” where education is seen as a luxury and not a necessity.

As the youth opportunities critic, I recognize the value of providing educational access province-wide. That includes youth in detention. Mr. Speaker, through you, why is this government not providing compulsory education to young people in custody?

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

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Listen, one of the things that we started to do when we came into office—it really touches on the question that I just answered from the Liberal Party. We saw that they had made so little investment in so many areas across the province, and one of those investments, quite honestly, was in our incarceration system. We had old, outdated jails that weren't able to provide the services we need. Ultimately, I think we would all agree that what we want to do—justice has to be served, yes, but ultimately, when people are released from incarceration, we

want them to become productive members of society. That is our goal. That's why we are making these investments that are so important. I hope the member will support some of those investments. We're starting to see the results in that.

Perhaps in the supplementary, the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions can also highlight some of the groundbreaking investments that we are making there as well. So I agree with the honourable member. I am saddened that the Liberals didn't make these important investments, but we're getting to a better province of Ontario despite their failures.

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

**Mr. Faisal Hassan:** That's from worse to bad, bad to worse.

My question back to the Premier: School boards in Ontario are not obligated by law to provide education in youth detention centres and only do so on a voluntary partnership basis. The report details this and mentions Black youth treated as "security threats to be managed."

1130

Clearly, we need to implement the 19 recommendations of this report by the Canadian Civil Liberties Association. Will the government take this report's recommendations seriously and act, and will they expand this report to include the voices of Indigenous young men and women, and women youth in detention centres?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** Thank you to the member opposite for the question. Our government recognizes how important it is for everyone to reach their full potential. Children and youth who are involved with the law and in a situation where they need supports, where their families need supports—this is something that our government is committed to understanding and creating the supports around these children and youth and around the families, so that children can be supported in their communities.

We're recognizing the regional differences of Indigenous communities and rural and remote communities, understanding how critical it is for us to be able to provide those services and create an environment where these children and youth can thrive and can get the supports that they need.

Our government is committing to making sure that these children and youth who need support, whether it's through the justice system or through a youth detention centre, are able to get the supports that they need.

#### COVID-19 IMMUNIZATION

**Mr. Roman Baber:** My question is to the Premier. Many Ontarians are horrified by yesterday's press conference of the chief medical officer, Dr. Kieran Moore. Since summer 2020, the Premier has been telling us that vaccination is the best and surest way out of the pandemic. First, it was 70%, then 80%. Now 90% of us are vaccinated, but yesterday, the chief medical officer said

that it could take a couple of years for COVID-19 to reach low endemic rates, and the health authorities are watching the strain in our ICUs.

Speaker, when 90% of us are vaccinated, why is the chief medical officer saying that it may take a couple of years when, for the last 18 months, the Premier has been telling us that vaccination is the sure and best way out of the pandemic?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** And to respond, the government House leader.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** I want to thank the member for highlighting how successful our vaccination program has been in the province of Ontario. I do appreciate the support from the honourable member for what has been, really, a groundbreaking effort, not only of the government in ensuring the resources are there to get us to 50%, to 60%, to 70%—I think today, actually, is the anniversary of when the first vaccine was delivered into the arm of somebody worldwide. That was in Great Britain, Mr. Speaker, if I'm not mistaken.

In that time, despite the fact that we were a little bit delayed in getting those vaccines, Ontario has not only caught up, but we have passed every other jurisdiction in the world to ensure that we lead not only Canada, but the world in vaccinations in people's arms. I think that's a great testament to the people of the province of Ontario, and I thank the honourable gentleman for highlighting that in his question.

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

**Mr. Roman Baber:** Speaker, I find it abhorrent that millions of Canadians may be home for Christmas, but only in their dreams, because they're not allowed on certain public transportation and because of the hatred and division fostered by this government by pitting loved ones against one another. Everyone in this chamber should find it distasteful.

Yesterday, Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe called for an end to stigmatizing the unvaccinated. Compare that to yesterday's press conference by the medical officer. Moore said, "A basic means of protecting individuals is stopping the mixing of unvaccinated and vaccinated."

As a Canadian who chose to vaccinate, I condemn Dr. Moore's hateful and divisive language. My question to the Premier: Does he support the stopping of the mixing of the vaccinated and the unvaccinated, or will he join me in the spirit of the holidays and distance himself from the hateful and divisive language of the chief medical officer?

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Of course, the chief medical officer—not only the current chief medical officer, but a constituent of mine, Dr. Williams, before that—has been instrumental in helping us to develop the plans that have seen Ontario lead the nation and, really, lead the world in making sure that we have vaccines in people's arms.

Unlike the honourable gentleman across the way, Mr. Speaker, we know that there is more to do to get us beyond this. If we want to continue to have the robust economic recovery that we're seeing, we have to ensure that we continue to fight this COVID pandemic. We're seeing

worldwide in other jurisdictions—I know the Leader of the Opposition tried to compare us to Germany and other parts of Europe, where they are facing massive, massive difficulties. We have things under control here in the province of Ontario, and it's because of the hard work of Ontarians to get vaccinated, Mr. Speaker. We're at 90%. Maybe we could strive to have even more. I know the honourable gentleman will help us get to that.

## DEFERRED VOTES

### STOPPING ILLEGAL HANDGUN SMUGGLING ACT, 2021 LOI DE 2021 VISANT À STOPPER LA CONTREBANDE D'ARMES DE POING ILLÉGALES

Mr. Tabuns moved second reading of the following bill:  
Bill 52, An Act to enact the Stopping Illegal Handgun Smuggling Act, 2021 / Projet de loi 52, Loi édictant la Loi de 2021 visant à stopper la contrebande d'armes de poing illégales.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** We now have a deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 52, An Act to enact the Stopping Illegal Handgun Smuggling Act, 2021.

The bells will now ring for 30 minutes, during which time members may cast their votes. I will ask the Clerks to please prepare the lobbies.

*The division bells rang from 1136 to 1206.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 52, An Act to enact the Stopping Illegal Handgun Smuggling Act, 2021, has taken place.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker):** The ayes are 26; the nays are 44.

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

*Second reading negatived.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** There being no further business at this time, this House stands in recess until 3 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1207 to 1500.*

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Pursuant to standing order 66(c), the supplementary estimates 2021-22 of the Ministry of the Attorney General and the Ministry of Transportation before the Standing Committee on Estimates are deemed to have been passed by the committee, and are deemed to have been reported to and received by the House.

Pursuant to standing order 65(c), the supplementary estimates 2021-22 of these ministries, not having been selected for consideration, are deemed to be concurred in.

*Report deemed received.*

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Standing order 66(a) provides that "The Standing Committee on Estimates shall present one report with respect to all of the estimates and supplementary estimates considered pursuant to standing orders 63 and 65 no later than the third Thursday in November of each calendar year."

The House not having received a report from the Standing Committee on Estimates for certain offices on Thursday, November 18, 2021, as required by the standing orders of this House, pursuant to standing order 66(b), the estimates before the committee of the Office of the Assembly, Office of the Auditor General, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer and Ombudsman Ontario are deemed to be passed by the committee and are deemed to be reported to and received by the House.

Pursuant to standing order 64(b), the estimates 2021-22 of these offices, not having been selected for consideration, are deemed to be received and concurred in.

*Report deemed received.*

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I beg leave to present a report on Value-for-Money Audit: Virtual Care: Use of Communication Technologies for Patient Care, 2020 Annual Report of the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, and move the adoption of its recommendations.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Mr. Natyshak presents the committee's report and moves the adoption of its recommendations.

Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** As Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, I'm pleased to table the committee's report today entitled Value-for-Money Audit: Virtual Care: Use of Communication Technologies for Patient Care, 2020 Annual Report of the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the permanent membership of the committee and substitute members who participated in the public hearings and report-writing process.

The committee extends its appreciation to the officials from the Ministry of Health and Ontario Health. The committee also acknowledges the assistance provided during the hearings and report-writing deliberations by the Office of the Auditor General, the Clerk of the Committee and legislative research.

I move adjournment of the debate.

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

#### SELECT COMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** I beg leave to present the 15th interim report of the Select Committee on Emergency Management Oversight.

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

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** As Vice-Chair of the Select Committee on Emergency Management Oversight, I'm pleased to table the committee's 15th interim report.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the membership of the committee for their work: Daryl Kramp, Chair; Bob Bailey; Gilles Bisson; John Fraser; Christine Hogarth; Robin Martin; Sam Oosterhoff; Sara Singh; Donna Skelly; and Effie Triantafilopoulos; as well as substitute member Mike Harris.

The committee extends its appreciation to the Solicitor General for appearing before the committee. The committee also acknowledges the assistance provided during the hearings and report-writing deliberations by the Clerk of the Committee and the staff in legislative research.

*Report presented.*

#### STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

**Mr. Aris Babikian:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Peter Sibenik):** Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

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):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

*Report adopted.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

#### STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

**Mr. Aris Babikian:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Peter Sibenik):** Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill 58, An Act to proclaim March as Endometriosis Awareness Month / Projet de loi 58, Loi proclamant le mois de mars Mois de sensibilisation à l'endométriose.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

*Report adopted.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

#### STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

**Mr. Aris Babikian:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Peter Sibenik):** Your committee begs to report the following bills without amendment:

Bill Pr53, An Act to revive 1664503 Ontario Inc.

Bill Pr56, An Act to revive 2238990 Ontario Inc.

Bill Pr57, An Act to revive Total Pest Management Services Ltd.

Bill Pr58, An Act to revive Vos Food Store Equipment Ltd.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

*Report adopted.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### LONG-TERM CARE HOMES AMENDMENT ACT (PREFERENCE FOR VETERANS), 2021

LOI DE 2021 MODIFIANT LA LOI  
SUR LES FOYERS

DE SOINS DE LONGUE DURÉE  
(PRÉFÉRENCE ACCORDÉE  
AUX ANCIENS COMBATTANTS)

Mrs. Stevens moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 73, An Act to amend the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007 to give preference to veterans for access to beds / Projet de loi 73, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les foyers de soins de longue durée pour accorder la préférence aux anciens combattants qui veulent avoir accès à des lits.

**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 care to briefly explain her bill?

**Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens:** The bill amends the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007, by enacting a definition of "veteran" that includes former officers and former non-commissioned members of the Canadian Forces. The bill amends the act to require the minister to ensure that the preference in admission to long-term-care homes is given to veterans.

MOUNT PLEASANT  
PUBLIC CEMETERIES  
ACT, 2021

LOI DE 2021  
SUR LA SOCIÉTÉ  
CIMETIÈRES PUBLICS  
MOUNT PLEASANT

Ms. Bell moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 74, An Act respecting the continuation of the corporation known as Trustees of the Toronto General Burying Grounds / Projet de loi 74, Loi concernant la prorogation de la société connue sous le nom de Trustees of the Toronto General Burying Grounds.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

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**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Would the member for University–Rosedale care to explain her bill?

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** The bill enacts the Mount Pleasant Public Cemeteries Act, 2021. The bill makes legislative changes to enshrine the Mount Pleasant Cemeteries Corp. as a public trust and charity.

EMANCIPATION  
MONTH ACT, 2021

LOI DE 2021 SUR LE MOIS  
DE L'ÉMANCIPATION

Mr. Schreiner moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 75, An Act to proclaim the month of August as Emancipation Month / Projet de loi 75, Loi proclamant le mois d'août Mois de l'émancipation.

**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 for Guelph to briefly explain his bill.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** This bill proclaims the month of August in each year as Emancipation Month. It gives Ontario an opportunity to pay tribute to the important contributions and leadership that Black communities have made and continue to make in Ontario as a major part of the vibrant social, economic, political and cultural fabric of our province.

LIFEJACKETS FOR LIFE  
ACT, 2021

LOI DE 2021  
SUR LE PORT OBLIGATOIRE  
DU GILET DE SAUVETAGE  
PAR LES ENFANTS

Mr. Miller moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 76, An Act to enact the Lifejackets for Life Act, 2021 / Projet de loi 76, Loi édictant la Loi de 2021 sur le port obligatoire du gilet de sauvetage par les enfants.

**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):** Will the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka briefly explain his bill?

**Mr. Norman Miller:** This bill is designed to keep children safe on the water by requiring the parents, guardians or other adults supervising children 12 years of age or younger ensure that those children wear a life jacket or personal flotation device when on a small pleasure boat that is under way on Ontario waters. There's an exemption for times when the child is inside an enclosed cabin and a provision for further exemptions to be made in regulation; for example, for young athletes, like rowers participating in supervised training or competition.

I'd like to thank Cara McNulty for her work in advocating for this and for lending the name, and Melody Greaves, my OLIP intern, for all the work she did in preparing this private member's bill.

ONTARIO CONSUMER WATCHDOG  
ACT, 2021

LOI DE 2021  
SUR L'ORGANISME ONTARIEN  
DE DÉFENSE DU CONSOMMATEUR

Mr. Rakocevic moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 77, An Act to provide for the development and implementation of a plan to establish a consumer watchdog organization / Projet de loi 77, Loi prévoyant l'élaboration et la mise en oeuvre d'un plan visant à créer un organisme de défense du consommateur.

**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 like to explain his bill briefly?

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** The bill enacts the Ontario Consumer Watchdog Act, 2021, and it's co-sponsored by the members for London North Centre, Scarborough Southwest and York South–Weston. The act requires the minister, in consultation with relevant stakeholders and the public, to develop and implement a plan to establish an independent consumer watchdog organization that is responsible for overseeing consumer protection matters in Ontario.

The act provides that the plan shall include the steps the minister intends to take to establish the organization; the powers and duties of the organization; the role of the organization in relation to other regulatory bodies; and such other matters as the minister considers advisable. The minister must publish the plan on a government of Ontario website, as well as prepare and table a progress report on the plan in the Legislative Assembly.

POLICE SERVICES AMENDMENT  
ACT, 2021

LOI DE 2021 MODIFIANT LA LOI  
SUR LES SERVICES POLICIERS

Mr. Harris moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 78, An Act to amend the Police Services Act /  
Projet de loi 78, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services  
policiers.

**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 Kitchener–Conestoga care to explain his bill?

**Mr. Mike Harris:** The Queen’s Commission is an  
award of recognition granted to police officers for exem-  
plary performance of their duties. Under existing legisla-  
tion, only police officers serving with the Ontario  
Provincial Police qualify for the Queen’s Commission.  
The Police Services Amendment Act, 2021, will provide  
that the Queen’s Commission may be granted to  
exceptional municipal police officers and First Nations  
constables, thereby honouring those officers who  
demonstrate leadership consistent with seeking justice,  
applying the law respecting human dignity and upholding  
the democratic principles which sustain our society.

PETITIONS

PHARMACARE

**Mr. Faisal Hassan:** I have a petition entitled  
“Universal Pharmacare for All Ontarians.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas prescription medications are a part of health  
care, and people shouldn’t have to empty their wallets or  
rack up credit card bills to get the medicines they need;

“Whereas over 2.2 million Ontarians don’t have any  
prescription drug coverage and one in four Ontarians don’t  
take their medications as prescribed because they cannot  
afford the cost;

“Whereas taking medications as prescribed can save  
lives and help people live better; and

“Whereas Canada urgently needs universal and com-  
prehensive national pharmacare;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assem-  
bly of Ontario to support a universal provincial pharma-  
care plan for all Ontarians.”

I fully support this petition. I will be affixing my name  
to it and providing it to page Athisha to deliver to the table.

ANTI-RACISM ACTIVITIES

**Ms. Laura Mae Lindo:** I have a petition entitled “End  
Racism in Ontario Schools.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the recent occurrences of violence against  
racialized children at Alpine Public School (Waterloo

Region District School Board) has left communities and  
families traumatized;

“Whereas a teacher at Parkdale Collegiate (Toronto  
District School Board) wore blackface to school for  
Halloween, a blatant form of anti-Black racism and  
violence;

“Whereas the Conservative government was forced to  
temporarily take over the Peel District School Board after  
community demanded action to address anti-Black racism  
within the board of trustees;

“Whereas in the Anti-Racism Act, 2017, the Liberals  
left it to the discretion of a minister to collect race-based  
data system-wide in their ministry;

“Whereas ETFO, AEFO, OECTA and OSSTF/FEESO  
signed a joint statement on September 28, 2021, to the  
Conservative government that reads in part, ‘While the  
Ontario government is on record as committing to legisla-  
tive and system changes to “advance equal opportunity of  
Black, Indigenous, and racialized students,” we question  
how sincere this commitment is, given that it has turned  
its back on funding programs that have proven impact and  
that show evidence of lasting change.’”

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legisla-  
tive Assembly of Ontario to:

“—use the powers of the Anti-Racism Act, 2017, to  
conduct a system-wide equity audit in all Ontario public  
schools;

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“—create a line item with dedicated funding in the  
Ontario budget to specifically address the equity gaps in  
schools outlined as a result of the equity audit;

“—immediately implement a streamlined, province-  
wide data collection system using the data standards that  
were developed as legislated by the Anti-Racism Act,  
2017, to collect race-based data for students, education  
workers, school boards and other staff to illuminate gaps  
in representation across educational institutions.”

I fully support this petition. I will sign my name to it  
and give it to page Alfie to bring to the Clerks.

NURSES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to thank the front-  
line registered nurses and registered respiratory therapists,  
members of ONA, for speaking out about the risks to  
patient safety they want to prevent, and the 4,383  
Ontarians who have signed this petition and are concerned  
about the quality of care in the intensive care unit at  
Southlake hospital in Newmarket–Aurora. It reads as  
follows:

“Petition to Stop Unsafe Patient Care and the Erosion  
of Quality Critical Care at Southlake Regional Health  
Centre in Newmarket.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas patients requiring critical care have complex  
and urgent care needs ...

“Whereas these patients need registered nurses with  
specialized education and training ...

“Whereas Southlake’s response to the RN staffing crisis in its intensive care unit is to hire RNs without providing full education and training ...

“Whereas existing expert RNs will be required to intervene to provide care to multiple patients when the appropriate level of care in an ICU is a 1-to-1 nurse-to-patient ratio; and

“Whereas while ICU RNs are exhausted from providing life-saving care during the COVID-19 pandemic, Southlake’s plan puts patient and staff safety at risk ...

“Whereas cutting skilled care means patients can suffer from unnecessary complications or death ...;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“Stop the pre-sponsorship program in the ICU at Southlake Regional Health Centre ...

“Immediately transfer any RNs who were hired into the pre-sponsorship program enrolment into the sponsorship program—a comprehensive critical care education and training course ...

“Cease the plan to implement ‘team nursing’ in the ICU at Southlake ...

“Cease any subsequent plans to implement a team-based nursing model of care in the cardiac intensive care unit and the cardiovascular intensive care unit at Southlake;

“Create increased opportunities for funded full education and training of new critical care RNs at Southlake;

“Commit to fund initiatives that retain existing specialized, highly skilled, educated, and experienced critical care RNs at Southlake;

“Ensure this hospital recruits appropriately educated and trained critical care RNs to provide safe, quality care to patients who need life-saving care.”

I fully support this petition, Speaker. I will affix my name to it and ask my good page Nathaniel to bring it to the Clerk.

#### CHILD CARE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to thank Suzanne Plouffe from Hanmer in my riding for these petitions. It reads as follows:

“Demand \$10-Per-Day Child Care...”

“Whereas several provinces and territories, including British Columbia, Nova Scotia, Yukon, PEI and Newfoundland and Labrador” and many more—every single province—“have implemented a \$10-per-day child care program;

“Whereas Ontario has some of the highest child care costs in the country and the costs have made quality child care hard to access for many families;

“Whereas the COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating effect on the child care sector;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“To immediately negotiate an agreement with the federal government to introduce a \$10-per-day child care plan in Ontario; improve wages for ECEs and child care professionals; and invest in child care capacity to support the recovery from COVID-19.”

I fully support this petition, Speaker. I will affix my name to it and ask page Nathaniel to bring it to the Clerk.

#### HIGHWAY SAFETY

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to thank Michelle Landry from Capreol in my riding for these petitions.

“Make Highway 144 at Marina Road Safe...”

“Whereas residents of Levack, Onaping and Cartier” in my riding, “as well as individuals who travel Highway 144, are concerned about the safety of a stretch of Highway 144 in the vicinity of Marina Road and would like to prevent further accidents and fatalities; and

“Whereas three more accidents occurred in summer 2021”—unfortunately we’re at five now—“resulting in severe injuries, diesel fuel spilling into the waterways, the closure of Highway 144 for several hours delaying traffic and stranding residents,” as well as the death of two people and their dog; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Transportation has completed a review of this stretch of Highway 144, has made some improvements and has committed to re-evaluate and ensure the highway is safe;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“That the Ministry of Transportation review Highway 144 at Marina Road immediately and commit to making it safe, as soon as possible, and no later than December 2021.”

I fully support this petition. I will affix my name to it and send it to the Clerk with my good page Nathaniel, who has been very patient.

#### MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to thank Suzan Wagner from Dominion Drive in Val Caron in my riding for these petitions.

“MS Specialized Clinic in Sudbury.

“Whereas northeastern Ontario has one of the highest rates of multiple sclerosis (MS) in Ontario; and

“Whereas specialized MS clinics provide essential health care services to those living with multiple sclerosis, their caregiver and their family; and

“Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is recognized as a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“Immediately set up a specialized MS clinic in the Sudbury area that is staffed by a neurologist who specializes in the treatment of multiple sclerosis, a physiotherapist and a social worker at a minimum.”

I fully support this petition. I will affix my name to it and ask my good page Nathaniel to send this to the Clerk.

#### LAURENTIAN UNIVERSITY

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to thank Rose and André Langlois de Sudbury pour ces pétitions.

“For a Francophone University in North Eastern Ontario.

«To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

«Whereas Laurentian University has announced, on April 12, 2021, a debt restructuring exercise comprised of the abolition of 69 programs (28 of which in French), the dismantling of the Laurentian federation, and the firing of more than 100 faculty members...;

«Whereas the Franco-Ontarian community has demanded French-language post-secondary institutions since the 1960s, and that the demonstrations held on December 1, 2018, have shown this community's commitment and desire to have post-secondary institutions managed by, for, and with the francophone community;

«Whereas on March 12, 2021, the University of Sudbury and the Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario announced their intention to transform the University of Sudbury into a French-language secular university;»

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

«Ensure forthwith the repatriation of all programs and courses offered in French and the transfer of all material, physical and human resources ... associated with the delivery of French-language services and francophone programs at Laurentian University...;

«Impose a one-year renewable moratorium to all francophone programs offered by Laurentian University and the federated universities as of April 9, 2021...;

«Establish an implementation commission tasked to ensure the transfer of said French-language programs to the University of Sudbury and to support this institution's development, in order to ensure the sustainability of French-language post-secondary education in northern Ontario and to prioritize current and future francophone students' needs;

«Ensure, by all means possible, that current students enrolled in French-language programs impacted by Laurentian University's restructuring exercise be able to obtain their degree in the program they were enrolled in....»

I support this petition. I will affix my name to it and send it to the Clerk with page Nathaniel.

## DOCUMENTS GOUVERNEMENTAUX

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** J'aimerais remercier Lina Mayer de Thunder Bay pour ces pétitions.

« Accents en français sur les cartes de santé de l'Ontario...

« Alors qu'il est important d'avoir le nom exact des personnes sur les cartes émises par le gouvernement », telle « la carte santé...

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« Alors que plusieurs personnes francophones ont des accents dans l'épellation de leur nom;

« Alors que le ... ministère de la Santé » a « confirmé que le système informatique de l'Ontario ne permet pas l'enregistrement des lettres avec des accents; »

Ils et elles demandent à « l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario ... qu'elle s'assure que les accents de la langue française soient inclus sur tous les documents et cartes

émis par le gouvernement de l'Ontario » et ce, « avant le 31 décembre » 2021.

J'appuie cette pétition, je vais la signer et demander au page Nathaniel de la remettre à la table des greffiers.

## TRAVAILLEURS DE PREMIÈRE LIGNE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** J'aimerais remercier Jeanne d'Arc Audette de Val Therese dans mon comté pour ces pétitions.

« Alors que depuis de nombreuses années, il y a une pénurie de préposés aux services de soutien personnel (PSSP) dans les soins de longue durée (SLD) et les soins à domicile en Ontario;

« Alors que les préposés aux services de soutien personnel de l'Ontario sont surchargés, sous-payés et sous-estimés, ce qui amène bon nombre d'entre elles et eux, à quitter la profession;

« Alors que le manque de PSSP a créé une crise dans les SLD, un système de soins à domicile défaillant et des soins de piètre qualité pour les résident(e)s des maisons de SLD et les client(e)s des soins à domicile;

Ils et elles demandent à « l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario de dire au premier ministre Ford d'agir maintenant pour faire des emplois de PSSP, une carrière à temps plein, avec de bons salaires, des congés de maladie payés, des avantages sociaux, un plan de retraite et une charge de travail gérable afin de respecter le travail important des PSSP et d'améliorer les soins aux patients. »

J'appuie cette pétition, je vais la signer et je l'envoie à la table des greffiers avec Nathaniel, qui doit être pas mal fatigué d'être debout à côté de moi.

## CONSIDERATION OF BILL 75

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I recognize the member from Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill on a point of order.

**Mr. Michael Parsa:** Speaker, I am seeking unanimous consent to move a motion without notice respecting the expedited passage of Bill 75, An Act to proclaim the month of August as Emancipation Month.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** The member from Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill is seeking unanimous consent to move a motion without notice respecting the expedited passage of Bill 75, An Act to proclaim the month of August as Emancipation Month. Agreed? Agreed.

I return the floor to the member from Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill.

**Mr. Michael Parsa:** I move that, notwithstanding any standing order or special order of the House, when the order for second reading of Bill 75, An Act to proclaim the month of August as Emancipation Month, is called, one hour shall be allotted to debate on the motion for second reading of the bill, with 20 minutes allotted to the government, 20 minutes allotted to the official opposition,

and 20 minutes allotted to the independent members as a group; and

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

That, if passed, the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called the same day; and

That the Speaker shall immediately put the question on the motion for third reading without debate or amendment; and

That notwithstanding standing order 38, any division on the motions for second or third reading of the bill arising during afternoon orders of the day shall not be deferred.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Mr. Parsa has moved that, notwithstanding any standing order or special order of the House, when the order for second reading of Bill 75, An Act to proclaim the month—

**Interjection:** Dispense.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Dispense? Agreed? Agreed.

*Motion agreed to.*

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### BUILD ONTARIO ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2021 LOI DE 2021 VISANT À PROTÉGER NOS PROGRÈS ET À BÂTIR L'ONTARIO (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 8, 2021, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 43, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes / Projet de loi 43, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Questions and responses to the speech of the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism?

I recognize the member from Timiskaming—Cochrane.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I was here this morning, and I did listen to the speech. There were certain things that the member focused on.

The one thing that I would like to focus on is on the minimum wage.

Where would the minimum wage be if the current government hadn't rolled it back in the first place?

**Hon. Parm Gill:** I want to thank the member opposite for the question.

Mr. Speaker, our government was obviously elected to make life affordable for all Ontarians.

We saw what happened under the previous Liberal government for 15 years: Life became very, very unaffordable. Businesses were fleeing our province, and Ontarians, especially when it comes to the manufacturing

sector—350,000 jobs were gone. The conditions in the province were so unbearable that the businesses just couldn't afford to operate.

That's the mandate that we were elected on, and we committed to working hard each and every day since, to make the price of electricity affordable, to make the price of groceries affordable, to make sure that we're creating the environment for individuals and businesses to be able to create jobs and get the economy going. I think we've done very, very well when it comes to that, Mr. Speaker.

Of course, the minimum wage will be going up to \$15 as of January 1.

I'm really proud of all of the initiatives that our government is taking to make life affordable.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I recognize the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

**Hon. Steve Clark:** The Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism made a great speech this morning.

One of the things that he didn't get a chance to elaborate on, because it was in, I think, the last minute of his speech, was the great announcement that I participated in, which was the Milton education hub. I know how hard the minister has worked for that in his home riding of Milton, and I think it's very important that he be given the chance, so will the minister outline more information regarding this wonderful announcement in his riding?

**Hon. Parm Gill:** I want to thank the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for that important question.

The project that he's talking about, the Milton Education Village—under the previous Liberal government, our town of Milton had desperately been trying to get a university or college into Milton, for over a decade, and all they got was neglect from the previous Liberal government. But we made a commitment—I ran on this. I knew how important it would be for our community in Milton. I was proud to participate in an announcement in June of last year, when we announced Wilfrid Laurier University, Conestoga College, Schlegel Villages—everything is coming into Milton.

Of course, I also want to thank the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for his co-operation and for issuing an MZO at the request of our local municipality in Milton, which is obviously going to help us get the shovels in the ground much, much quicker.

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

**Mr. Gurratan Singh:** We know that auto insurance is one of the biggest issues that is causing an affordability crisis in Brampton and other communities across Ontario right now. Brampton pays some of the highest car insurance rates in the entire province, in the entire country, but we know that across the board in Ontario, our rates are some of the highest. The minister is well aware, because he put a bill forward on auto insurance, but since putting his bill forward on auto insurance, year after year, we're seeing rates continue to go up.

So my questions to the minister are very simple: Why hasn't the Conservative government stood up for Ontario drivers? Why haven't they put forth the needs of drivers

before billion-dollar insurance companies? And why won't the Conservative government do the right thing and actually lower auto insurance rates?

**Hon. Parm Gill:** I want to thank the member from Brampton East for that important question.

I'd like to remind him that it was his party that supported the Liberals when they were in power and promised to cut insurance rates by 17%, only to find out—eventually, years after—that the intention wasn't really there; it was just a stretch goal. They knew full well that it couldn't be delivered.

1540

But under our government, Mr. Speaker, the drivers in Ontario have received relief to the tune of almost \$1 billion, and of course, we continue to listen to Ontarians. We continue to listen to drivers across our province, and we want to encourage competition. We are trying to make sure that the insurance companies are able to deliver relief when it comes to auto insurance and make auto insurance more affordable for every single driver in our province.

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

**Mr. Sam Oosterhoff:** My question is to the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism and immigration. I want to thank the minister for his speech this morning. It was a riveting speech, and I'm sure many members in this House were greatly informed by it.

One of the pieces that I think is so important is ensuring that we're investing in fighting racism and hate. I know that the minister came to my riding. We met with members of the Muslim community from across Niagara. They spoke about the challenges that they face and about the need for continued investment in this area. I wonder if the minister could explain to this House a little bit of that conversation, about the supports that are available and the investments that are being made by this government and by his ministry in fighting racism and hate in this province.

**Hon. Parm Gill:** I want to thank my colleague for that important question.

We know, when it comes to discrimination, racism and hate, our government has absolutely zero tolerance when it comes to that. We've been working with our community leaders, with organizations to find ways of addressing this serious, serious concern. We recognize there's more work that needs to be done, and by working with our stakeholders and community organizations, we recognized that more investments were needed. I was proud to work with the Minister of Finance and other colleagues on this side of the House to make that possible.

We are investing over \$8 million—the announcement that we made in our recent fall economic statement—doubling the anti-racism and anti-hate grant from \$1.6 million to \$3.2 million; another \$5 million to the RAISE grant to help small business entrepreneurs, especially when it comes to Black, Indigenous and other racialized communities, to support them with seed funding to get them off the ground.

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

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I was also here this morning, paying attention to the member's 20 minutes on Bill 43.

In this House, we have a process, which has been here historically, of how bills move through the Legislature.

Every time a bill comes to committee before this government, there are never any amendments taken from any other party in the House. It's unfortunate that the government doesn't think it's important to listen to other members of this Legislature.

I would like to hear from the member himself why he doesn't think that it's important to take stakeholders' words, to take words from other people in the province to make their bills and their legislation better.

**Hon. Parm Gill:** I want to thank my colleague opposite for that question. I'm sure she and other members in this House understand the process that this government goes through before even getting to tabling a piece of legislation—the comprehensive consultation that takes place across the province.

I don't know about the members on the other side, but I can definitely assure you, Mr. Speaker, that on this side of the House, each and every member of our caucus takes our job very, very seriously. As a matter of fact, when we're not in the Legislature—whether it's a constituency week, whether it's over the summer, the winter break—we spend countless hours consulting with Ontarians and receiving their feedback, which is ultimately funneled to the Minister of Finance before he tables his budget. We take this process seriously. We're committed to it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** There's time for a very, very short question and a very short answer.

**Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto:** What does your community think about the 413 highway being built?

**Hon. Parm Gill:** I appreciate that extremely important question.

I can tell you, my constituents in Milton spend hours and hours in gridlock on the 401 in the morning, afternoon, you name it, so the announcement was very, very well received. My community is definitely excited about the 413. We just can't wait to get this thing built as quickly as possible.

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

**Mr. Faisal Hassan:** I'm pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 43, the Build Ontario Act, on behalf of the hard-working and decent people of York South–Weston. This government bill dealing with budget measures is made up of 21 different schedules. There is a lot to unpack in this bill, and I won't have nearly enough time to talk about what is in the bill or, more importantly for my community, what isn't in the bill.

Speaker, when the fall economic statement mentions “climate” four times and the word “environment” 12 times, while using the word “highway” an astounding 58 times, I think that telegraphs pretty clearly to the citizens of Ontario exactly what the priorities of this government truly are.

Here we are in the last days of this session and another year coming to a close. This spring, it will be two years of dealing with the pandemic. This has been a stressful and

often heartbreaking time for so many in our province. With new variants of COVID-19, this trouble continues for families, and leadership from the government is needed more than ever.

I have many times spoken in this House of the hard-working people who live in my community of York South–Weston. These are the front-line essential workers who have done the most to help keep the province moving, often while putting their own health at risk. Those are exactly the people I consider when I reflect on this government's fall economic statement, the budget and Bill 43 before us here today. I wish the government would consider their policies and the measures they enact in legislation through the eyes of our essential front-line workers. We know they don't listen to their voices. When developers, lobbyists and business consultants inform a government's decisions, it is not a surprise that they aren't working for workers or protecting their interests. "We are all in the same boat" is not a phrase that has applied to COVID-19 and its effects on people across the province.

A new report released by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives has acknowledged what we in York South–Weston have seen and experienced during the pandemic. The research by the CCPA that analyzed labour force data from the first year of the pandemic and from before COVID-19 showed that, clearly, the economic impact of the pandemic was not equal. Indigenous and racialized workers, especially women, lived with a higher rate of economic insecurity than well-to-do workers during COVID-19, due to precarious jobs, pandemic layoffs and exposure to the virus. This report and others that have been done all point to the reality that the pandemic was highlighting existing socio-economic inequalities that are based on race and gender, including age and where someone lives. We know this in York South–Weston. Our essential workers and families experienced this reality. Workers in York South–Weston faced higher job loss and worked in jobs that put them at higher exposure to COVID-19 than in any other areas, yet this government, during the pandemic—and, indeed, with these budget measures—offered little in the way of support or of equalizing those inequities that exist.

During the pandemic period studied by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, they found that three industries accounted for 80% of job losses in Canada. Those three industries were: accommodation and foodservice; information, culture and recreation; and wholesale and retail trade. Racialized workers and women were overrepresented in those jobs and were therefore at a higher risk of job loss and a greater risk of exposure to the pandemic. Those industries have still not recovered from the impact of the pandemic.

This government failed to protect those very same workers in our community in their very delayed response to first providing local testing facilities for COVID-19 and, next, in failing to provide access to local vaccination clinics.

**1550**

I will always remember the government's neglect of York South–Weston when it comes to pandemic measures

that were always weeks and months behind when our community needed action. Our community remembers this as well, and we won't forget.

Think of how a front-line essential worker in York South–Weston getting on a crowded bus to go from one part-time job to another felt when the Premier called them heroes and champions but didn't deliver on COVID-19 protection, paid sick days or child care. Talk is cheap, and workers deserve better.

I can tell you that what the good folks of York South–Weston want to see in this bill, Bill 43, is something that will address the fact that life is simply unaffordable. This government, of course, cruelly removed the raise to minimum wage for workers in Ontario, quite literally as one of their first actions when elected.

The Liberals, of course, had 15 years to address a decent minimum wage for workers, and only with months before an election they saw the light and promised a raise.

I will remind the House that last week the official opposition detailed how a \$20 minimum wage could be achieved. If we want to truly talk about a just and equitable economic recovery in this province, and if we want to help those workers I've spoken about who have been hit hardest by job losses and reductions in working hours, then we need to talk about a realistic minimum wage. Those racialized and female workers, who are often both, who have been hit by job loss and face higher rates of COVID-19 exposure are disproportionately impacted by the existing minimum wage. By every means measurable, it has been shown time and again that raising the minimum wage not only lifts the standard of living for workers, but gives them more discretionary income to spend, and only helps businesses and the economy. It is the right and fair thing to do, and the official opposition has a plan to have a graduated raise to \$20 an hour.

Speaker, we all in this House should be very proud of our fellow Canadian David Card, an economist whose groundbreaking research demonstrated that a higher minimum wage does not result in fewer jobs or job losses. Conservative economists and governments have rung alarm bells for years, saying paying workers more money means job losses. Not only did David Card disprove this myth, but he was honoured with the Nobel Prize for his work. Raising minimum wage away from this government's low-wage policies ensures that we can begin building the basis for recovery with jobs, decent work, and a step towards lifting people out of low-income realities. I urge the government to read economist David Card's Nobel Prize-winning report and take a serious look at what wages for workers in this province truly should be.

Speaker, another issue of an economic nature that is greatly important to York South–Weston residents is the very high cost of auto insurance and the postal code discrimination that is the direct cause. I have spoken many times to the issue of postal code discrimination and how some members of our community are paying upwards of \$3,000, average, for auto insurance per year. This issue goes back to when the Liberal government was in power for 15 years. They refused to act in getting a handle on

unreasonable insurance costs, and like the Conservative government now, they let insurance companies do exactly as they like. Why on earth is it that during a pandemic, when cars remained parked in driveways and accidents were drastically lower, we did not see relief for drivers?

The Premier suggested to insurance companies that they give drivers a break, but most drivers I hear from have not seen their rates lowered. Governments need to do more than suggest. And this Premier has done this time and again during the pandemic. Despite “coming down like an 800-pound gorilla” and “I’m not at all happy”—words are not enough. People are tired of the performances, and they want action.

The official opposition called for a 50% reduction in auto insurance during the pandemic. Despite record profits for insurance companies, the Premier didn’t take our recommendations.

Drivers in York South–Weston should not be penalized by insurance companies because of their postal code. Postal code discrimination needs to end, and it is regrettable that this government didn’t make this a budget measure.

Speaker, I began by speaking about how the word “highway” was mentioned 58 times in the fall economic statement. Bill 43 puts forward Highway 413 and the Bradford Bypass, a highway that nobody wants. It is a highway that destroys valuable farmland, and for whose benefit? Do we need a highway that runs parallel to Highway 407 that badly?

Let us recall, Speaker, that Highway 407 is so lightly travelled that an airplane recently found it very safe and convenient to make an emergency landing on that road. Highway 407, of course, was built and owned by the province when the official opposition was in charge in this province. It was a great benefit to taxpayers and relieved traffic congestion when built.

Of course, the ideology of Conservatives is such that profitable corporations shouldn’t be in government hands but should belong to their donors and buddies and friends.

History shows that this government’s friend and current Chartwell long-term-care board member Mike Harris sold off the 407 the same way he led the privatization of long-term care while Conservative Premier—the 407 being the same highway, and the highest-toll road in North America, that this government decided to recently look the other way on and not collect \$1 billion in penalties they could have legally collected for the 407 not holding up to their contractual agreements. How is it that this government can choose to not collect much-needed money that is rightfully due to the province? Why is it, as well, that this government seems afraid or unwilling to hold big corporations accountable?

Certainly, traffic is down on the 407 because of COVID-19, like it has been elsewhere. That’s why we asked for drivers to have an auto insurance break. But no, the breaks in this province seem to go to corporations. The government could have used the pandemic and lower driving numbers to have the 407 lower their North America-leading toll rates. Why did that not happen, and

why does this government never seem to act in the interests of everyday workers? We missed an opportunity for lower tolls and to collect \$1 billion into our provincial revenues.

This government instead focuses on ramming through an unwanted highway in the 413 and Bradford Bypass. We know that this highway will directly benefit some of this government’s largest donors. This is a roadway that is estimated to cost \$10 billion. Speaker, I’m very doubtful of the government’s cost projections, because the details have been difficult to find. I suspect, like many of the government’s plans, it ends up being a day later and several dollars short.

Child care is another issue that this government has dropped the ball on. I would suggest it is because they are once again playing petty politics. Of course, that game of petty politics only hurts families who need affordable child care—and they need it now. It has been 232 days now since the federal government announced funding available to the provinces to cut child care fees by 50% by 2022, with a five-year target of \$10 per day for families, in five years. Families in York South–Weston tell me they are paying upward of hundreds of dollars for child care. Those parents who already have been suffering a financial hit need that affordable child care.

This entire conversation about affordable child care has gone on long enough. The NDP, at both the provincial and federal levels, has called for affordable child care for decades. In fact, the Liberals first raised the idea in yet another campaign promise back in 1993. Mothers in 1993 who had a young child are now grandmothers and still waiting for a government, any government, to take action.

**1600**

So when the door opens for affordable child care through the federal government with a provincial partnership, this Conservative government should have been at the table. Instead, we trail the entire country in striking a deal. This government’s excuse is that they want a better deal from the federal government. The reality, as told by the federal government, is that Ontario didn’t come to the table, didn’t make an offer and wasn’t ready to negotiate. This, Speaker, is the definition of petty politics. Once again, it is families that pay the price for this government’s fumbling of the child care ball. Families in York South–Weston would have loved to have seen a child care plan in this bill.

Speaker, Conservatives present themselves as fiscally responsible and good stewards of the economy. Nothing could be further from the truth. The fall economic statement and the budget bill showed this.

The Auditor General of Ontario issues reports and economic responses that we, on this side of the House, respect and appreciate. The Premier, however, has gone on record doubting the accuracy of the Auditor General. This government doesn’t like to hear voices that sometimes say the emperor has no clothes. I, however, will take the Auditor General’s research and reports seriously and consider her responses critically.

In terms of the Conservatives being good fiscal managers, the Auditor General points out some glaring

flaws. One, in particular, I found very concerning because it deals with small businesses. Small businesses in York South–Weston have been struggling during the pandemic and during the Eglinton Crosstown LTR construction. I have been in contact with many of those businesses and have advocated for more financial support and direct support for them, especially the Eglinton Hill BIA.

This is why I found it particularly troubling that this Conservative government was discovered by the Auditor General to have paid out \$210 million to ineligible recipients of their own small business support grants. In total, 14,500 ineligible businesses collected part of that \$210 million, and the government has written that off with no effort to collect. There is a further \$6 million paid to another 222 potentially ineligible businesses that is under investigation. The property tax and energy rebate program paid \$16 million to ineligible businesses and only \$340 million of \$905 million was approved and sent to 31,000 businesses.

Now, Speaker, these programs are all needed and something small businesses, in particular, need. But when the government doesn't responsibly allocate funds, it is money wasted while deserving businesses are left out in the cold. So the myth of the Conservatives being good fiscal managers, like the myth of a decent minimum wage being a job destroyer, can be put to rest forever and a day.

The Auditor General confirms what we have all suspected: The government had no objectives set for what funds were to do, and even worse, the province did not know how much was going out the door because they weren't tracking it centrally. I have only touched on one area of financial mismanagement, but the report details the same flying-by-the-seat-of-their-pants, plan-on-the-back-of-a-napkin approach we experience from the Conservatives all too regularly.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, we have gone through difficult times. We are not out of that difficulty yet by a long shot. We need better leadership from the government. When we see no affordable measures for families; no relief in sky-high gas prices; no permanent wage increases for PSWs and, in fact, an anti-labour bill like Bill 124 that needs to be repealed; roads badly in need of repair and money instead spent on needless environment-destroying Highway 413; along with cuts to education of almost half a billion dollars and cuts to housing, while cynically appointing bankers and developers to a housing affordability task force, I see a government whose priorities are not those of everyday Ontarians.

It is high time that we put workers, families, elders and youth first in this province and give them the kind of government they deserve.

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

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** A key feature of Bill 43, the Build Ontario Act, is protecting Ontario's progress, including investments, as my colleague from York South–Weston knows: \$61 million to expand home and community care services to enable the transition of patients—some from his riding—recovering from surgeries or living with

complex health conditions from hospitals and back into their homes, many of whom aspire to that. Why is the member from York South–Weston continuing to say no to those levels of investment that will build up and improve the lives of his constituents?

**Mr. Faisal Hassan:** Thank you to the member from Ajax for his question. I'm saying yes to investment in my community of York South–Weston. We haven't seen any. We have been fighting. I've been fighting, as I said. We need those investments now, not four years from now. We need it now, and we are saying yes to investment—but provide it.

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

**Ms. Jill Andrew:** Thank you to the member from York South–Weston for, as always, a compelling presentation.

My question to the member from York South–Weston on the government's Build Ontario Act: We are in a housing crisis. Workers only have three sick days to carry them over the next 16 months. We know that workers are not being paid for the rigorous work that they're doing, and this government refuses to slash Bill 124. We also know that the Bradford Bypass and Highway 413 are not saving time; in fact, it's a climate killer.

I'm wondering, to the member: Why do you think this government refuses to listen to not only the proposals that the NDP official opposition have put forth, but the proposals of the people of Ontario in both Toronto–St. Paul's and in York South–Weston, who care about workers and the climate?

**Mr. Faisal Hassan:** Thank you to my colleague from Toronto–St. Paul's, my neighbour to the east. You're right: This government has been saying no to the people of Ontario. As you know, housing is in a crisis, and I'm glad that this afternoon the minister of housing is here. The waiting list for affordable housing is over 100,000, only in the city of Toronto. I know that the federal government also downloaded housing responsibilities in 1993, in the 1990s. But what did Mike Harris, Ernie Eves, Dalton McGuinty and Kathleen Wynne do? They just downloaded to municipalities. Now is an opportunity to do something about it, but this government says no.

We know the workers want paid sick days. I've talked in my remarks about how workers in York South–Weston are front-line workers. Yes, we need support now, not later, and I hope that the ministers who are here—the Minister of Finance, the minister of housing and municipalities—act now—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Thank you.

I recognize the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

**Hon. Steve Clark:** I appreciate the member's interest in affordable housing. He and I have had many conversations. One of the things that I believe is critical for our success in the housing affordability crisis is to take the same approach we took at the start of the pandemic, and that is to ensure that all three levels of government work very closely together.

One of the things that our government is advocating for with the federal government is that we need to have our fair share under the National Housing Strategy. Our core housing need, which the member knows, is particularly severe in the city of Toronto. Through you, Speaker, my question to the member is, will you support our call to the federal government for an additional \$490 million under the National Housing Strategy?

**Mr. Faisal Hassan:** Thank you for the question, minister of housing and municipalities. Yes, I acknowledge we are in crisis, and we have been for the last 15 years, and now the last three. We have an opportunity to work together, all levels of government. But the city of Toronto cannot alone—the responsibility of the municipalities, because this province, under Mike Harris, Kathleen Wynne, Dalton McGuinty and Ernie Eves, has downloaded housing responsibilities to municipalities. It's an opportunity now for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to act. The official opposition is ready to act on the issues of affordable housing, building more co-ops and providing also equity loans to young people so they can become owners of their own homes.

1610

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

**Ms. Laura Mae Lindo:** Thank you to my colleague and friend from York South–Weston for this compelling debate. I was taken by your discussion of missed opportunities. What I have also been hearing in my own riding of Kitchener Centre is that a number of cuts that came before the pandemic revealed a dearth of issues and gaps in the social fabric that people expect to have from their government in Ontario. I'm wondering if you can speak a little bit more about the unequal impact of the pandemic on some of the most vulnerable, and the kinds of things that you are hearing people want to see in a budget bill, especially at this urgent, urgent time.

**Mr. Faisal Hassan:** Thanks to my colleague from Kitchener Centre for the question. Definitely it has been an opportunity for this government to act on the priorities of this province. Definitely it was an opportunity to put out a budget that really supports people.

In our community, the people impacted in the pandemic were women and racialized. Now we need also a she-coversy. I don't see a plan for that, supporting women or racialized people. Also, paid sick days are important. Workers cannot go to work being sick. They need 10 paid sick days, and 14 days of emergency paid days. There is also an opportunity to raise PSW pay and give them a living wage. And also to rebuild. Build—

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

**Mr. Faisal Hassan:** Thank you.

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

**Hon. Steve Clark:** I just want to go back to the question I asked the member. The one thing that people in the House and the people that are watching should know is the federal Minister of Housing is also the MP for the same riding, York South–Weston. The member opposite

does work collaboratively—I hope, I think—with his federal member. So again, Speaker, through you—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Steve Clark:** Despite the NDP's heckling across, I think housing is important. I think getting our fair share from the federal government is important. And I'd love to hear this member's answer on whether he supports an additional \$490 million, which would help the city of Toronto and all municipalities significantly. Does he and his party support that call for extra dollars, or does he not?

**Mr. Faisal Hassan:** The minister of housing and municipalities talks about the Liberal federal Minister of Housing; well, the Liberals were in government in 1990, and they washed their hands of housing. Now, it's good news that they have a Minister of Housing. I'm looking forward to working with this minister. But you have a responsibility, as housing and municipalities minister, to make sure that we have rent control in this province. We also have out-of-hand and out-of-control above guideline issues.

Decent, hard-working people in our community of York South–Weston cannot afford housing. It's a crisis. I agree with you that we need to work with all levels of government, especially the federal Minister of Housing, but still, we don't see their plan and you are representing this government and this province. We want you to act now, not just pass the buck to the federal side.

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

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Thank you to the member from York South–Weston for his 20-minute debate on this bill, on which he did a fantastic job. He highlighted a lot of issues around the minimum wage, talked about how the government, when they came into power, cancelled that increase to \$15 and is now dropping it on businesses' laps, pretty much overnight.

What would the effect have been and the benefits have been to his community had the government kept the \$15 in place, which we would already be seeing the benefits of now in our communities? How would his community feel about that?

**Mr. Faisal Hassan:** Thanks to my colleague from Hamilton Mountain. Indeed, that would have helped many of them. It meant that they would not have been evicted from their houses. I know that in the month of November alone, 170 members of our community were sent eviction notices by the Landlord and Tenant Board. It would have helped them earn and provide protection and support for their families.

This government—as you know, really, this is about an election coming next year. As soon as they arrived and became a government, what did they do? They simply eliminated the minimum wage increase and paid sick days that it took the Liberals 15 years—this little, little thing.

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

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** It's always an honour to rise in the House and, today, to contribute to the debate on Bill 43, the government's mini-budget.

Yesterday, the Financial Accountability Officer released a report that I requested that assesses the cost of climate change on our public infrastructure, and the numbers are staggering. If we continue on the path we're on without taking meaningful steps to reduce climate pollution, Ontarians will be on the hook for billions of dollars in additional costs; billions of dollars that could be spent on health care, education, affordable housing, autism services, support for people with disabilities, and good, green jobs.

The FAO was abundantly clear: The cost of inaction far outweighs the cost of climate action. The FAO estimates that the impact of climate-fuelled extreme weather events will cost an additional \$6 billion this decade on buildings alone and \$116 billion this century on buildings alone. Climate change is nature's tax on everything. Instead of addressing the climate crisis in the fall economic statement, the government has pledged to build two new 400-series highways costing tens of billions of dollars that will increase pollution, sprawl and congestion.

If this were a Green budget, we would be using taxpayer dollars responsibly to address the rising cost of the climate crisis while protecting people's pocketbooks and the citizens of this province. We would be skating to where the puck is going, investing \$2 billion a year in a climate adaptation fund to prepare our municipal and provincial infrastructure to withstand the kind of climate impacts we're seeing in British Columbia. We would be investing in fiscally responsible, nature-based solutions to protect people, investing and allocating at least 15% of infrastructure spending on low-cost natural solutions. We would be working with Indigenous communities to conserve and protect 25% of Ontario by 2025 and 30% by 2030. We would be allocating funds to make it easier and cheaper for people to access electric vehicles and electrified public transit so we can get Big Oil out of our wallets. We would be helping people to retrofit their homes so they can save money by saving energy. We would be addressing the housing affordability crisis by investing in co-op, non-profit and social housing supply. We would be helping people with disabilities find an affordable and accessible place to call home. We would accelerate funding for mental health and addictions services to reduce wait times, especially for children, which are up to two and a half years long. We would revoke Bill 124 so our front-line health care heroes can get the pay raises they deserve, and make pandemic pay permanent for PSWs.

The fall economic statement sets in motion a fiscally reckless plan to spend billions on new highway projects that will increase flood risk, increase sprawl, increase pollution and ultimately increase congestion. It will make life less affordable for people because they will have to commute even further distances to find an affordable place to call home.

Highway 413 alone will pave over 2,000 acres of farmland, 400 acres of the greenbelt and cross 85 waterways, unleashing expensive sprawl development on even more farmland. The Holland Marsh highway would slice

through the greenbelt, pave over 42 acres of the Holland Marsh, and destroy 96 acres of wildlife habitat and 25 acres of provincially significant wetland.

Budgets are about choices, they're about priorities, and we simply can't continue to lose 175 acres of farmland each and every day in this province when only 5% of Ontario's land mass is suitable for growing food. We simply can't continue to pave over wetlands when we've already lost 75% of our wetlands in southern Ontario.

**1620**

Speaker, we have 100 years of history that have shown us that when you build more highways, it leads to more sprawl and more congestion. I understand why people are frustrated and angry about commute times, but we can't be doing the same thing over and over again and expect different results.

There are many higher priorities that could be in this budget: priorities like spending more on health care and education, affordable housing and climate action instead of billions on highways—billions that will pave over the farmland that feeds us and the wetlands that clean our drinking water and protect us from flooding.

We can build a better Ontario, an Ontario where we build livable, affordable, sustainable communities, where we make life more affordable for people by building homes close to where they work, live, shop and play. We can get big oil out of our pockets by investing in electrified transportation. We can help people save money by saving energy and making our homes and buildings more energy-efficient. Unfortunately, this mini budget takes Ontario in the opposite direction, and that's why I'll be voting against it.

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

**Hon. Steve Clark:** I appreciate the member for Guelph's address this morning—and I was actually in Guelph on Monday morning with the great mayor there, Mayor Cam Guthrie. I know he mentioned in the last 30 seconds of his speech the words "drinking water," and that got me twiggled for my question.

On Monday, I did an MZO at the request of the city of Guelph that really saved their drinking water at the Dolime quarry, and also put in place a plan to build more housing. I know the member was here that day. He hasn't had a chance to get on the record his support of that project, so I want to give him the opportunity.

Will you let us know how you feel about that announcement on Monday?

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I've spent over 10 years fighting to protect Guelph's drinking water from the Dolime quarry.

I've made it very clear on many occasions that ministerial zoning orders are a tool that should be rarely used. There are certain circumstances where it's appropriate to use them. In the case of Guelph, to protect the city's drinking water, this was an instance when an MZO was used appropriately. This MZO had full consultation with the city of Guelph, the county of Wellington, the municipality of Guelph/Eramosa and Indigenous nations

as well, and it complies with provincial and local planning rules. This facilitates the protection of Guelph drinking water, and I support it.

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

**Mr. John Vanthof:** In his remarks, the member from Guelph quoted something—that we are losing 175 acres a day, approximately, of farmland. That number is actually from 2016, and I would say that we are losing it at a much more rapid pace with the current government. I would say that that is not sustainable.

The government says that we're going to have 30 million people in 15 years, and that's why we need extra roads. But we're also going to have those 30 million people to feed, and we can't rely on the rest of the world to do that. Would you agree with that?

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I would agree the member's statement raises a question.

Let's be clear to the people of Ontario: 5% of Ontario's land mass—think of Ontario—is suitable for growing food, and half of 1% is prime farmland. Most of that prime farmland you can see from the top of the CN Tower. If we continue to pave over it, we simply will no longer be able to feed ourselves. If the pandemic has taught us anything, it's that food security, the ability to grow your own food, is vital to the security of our province.

We have to stop paving over farmland. We have to stop paving over the land mass that creates over 800,000 jobs in this province and contributes \$50 billion to our GDP.

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

**Mr. Stephen Crawford:** My question is on the same topic with respect to highways.

I think highways are kind of like going to the dentist. Nobody is going to go out there cheering, “We want highways”—although I think a lot of residents, certainly in my riding, are pleased that our government has taken the initiative to reduce commute times; I'm sure residents of Guelph are too. No one is going to go out there and say, “Yes, we want highways.” But what they do want is to reduce their commute times. Businesses want to reduce their commute times. Families want to reduce their commute times.

The population of the greater Golden Horseshoe is one of the fastest-growing regions in the entire world. Unless we stop immigration completely, which we're not going to do, or become not an attractive place to live and invest, which we're not, we need more roads to take people from A to B.

My question to the member is, why won't you agree with this? And my second question would be, how did you get down here from Guelph today?

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** In addition to wanting to reduce our commute times, people want to be able to eat. They want to be able to eat locally grown Ontario food. They want to be able to support the 870,000 people who work in the food and farming sector, and they want to support the \$50 billion that it contributes to our economy.

We have 100 years of history that have shown that when you build more highways, it creates more sprawl, which leads to more congestion. We simply can't keep paving over our farmland.

Let's expand regional transit. Let's build communities where you can live, work and play in the same community, so you don't have to commute so far to find an affordable place to call home. We have—

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

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova:** Before I debate, I would like take this opportunity to wish my brother, Jakub, a very happy birthday. He's turning 28 today. He lives far away in British Columbia, so I miss him very much. I just want to say how proud I am of him, of the man he has become. He became a homeowner this year. He saved up, he worked hard and bought his very first house a lot sooner than I was able to do. I'm so proud of you, Jakub. I miss you, I love you and I hope to see you soon. Happy birthday.

Monsieur le Président, le 4 novembre, nous avons franchi une étape historique pour les francophones de l'Ontario en présentant, fidèles à notre engagement, des amendements qui moderniseraient la Loi sur les services en français.

Mr. Speaker, on November 4, we reached a milestone for Ontario's francophones as we delivered on a commitment to introduce amendments that would modernize the French Language Services Act.

Nous avons proposé des modifications législatives qui, si elles sont adoptées, constitueront la première mise à jour significative en 35 ans de la Loi sur les services en français. Nous sommes fiers de souligner que notre gouvernement a été le premier de la province à répondre à la demande de longue date de la communauté francophone de revoir cet important cadre législatif.

Avec 1,5 million locuteurs de la langue française, la belle langue de Molière, dont plus de 622 000 francophones, la francophonie ontarienne, dont la diversité ne cesse de croître, est un atout culturel, social et économique majeur pour la province, qui continue de se distinguer par son dynamisme, sa résilience, sa détermination et son esprit entrepreneurial, de sorte que nous proposons faire état de cette diversité en modifiant le préambule de la loi afin de souligner que le patrimoine culturel de la population francophone s'enrichisse de sa diversité. Si elle est adoptée, une telle modification permettrait de reconnaître la francophonie dans son ensemble : les francophones d'ici, tout comme celles et ceux qui ont immigré—comme moi et ma famille, par exemple. Ces communautés francophones ont joué un rôle important dans l'édification de notre province et contribuent à façonner son avenir. En adoptant ces amendements significatifs, nous célébrerions la pluralité culturelle de la plus grande communauté francophone hors Québec.

We introduced legislative amendments that, if passed, would constitute the very first significant update to the French Language Services Act in 35 years. We are proud

to say that our government was the province's first to respond to a long-standing call from the francophone community to review this important legislation.

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With 1.5 million Ontarians who speak French, including more than 622,000 francophones, Ontario's francophonie, with its growing diversity, is a major cultural, social and economic asset to the province—one that continues to distinguish itself with its dynamism, its resilience, its determination and its entrepreneurial spirit. We are proposing to acknowledge this diversity by amending the preamble of the act to recognize that the cultural heritage of the French-speaking population is enriched by its diversity. If passed, such an amendment would recognize francophone communities, including those who are from here and those who have immigrated from abroad. These communities have played a significant role in the edification of our province, and they are helping shape its future. With these significant improvements, if passed, we would celebrate the cultural diversity of the largest francophone community outside of Quebec.

Monsieur le Président, nous savons que l'accès à des services de qualité en français est essentiel à la prospérité de la communauté francophone.

La modernisation de la Loi sur les services en français est l'aboutissement d'un travail collectif. J'aimerais remercier l'Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario, ainsi que tous les intervenants et les gens sur le terrain pour leurs contributions qui aident à élargir l'espace francophone en Ontario. J'aimerais particulièrement féliciter le travail de la ministre des Affaires francophones qui, pour arriver à cette importante réforme, a tenu des consultations malgré les défis posés par la pandémie dans le but d'améliorer la qualité et l'accès aux services en français.

Lors de nos récentes consultations, les francophones nous ont dit que les services en français ne sont pas toujours disponibles et faciles d'accès au moment où ils en ont besoin. C'est pourquoi nous avons priorisé des amendements qui visent à moderniser et à renforcer la loi qui régit les obligations en matière de prestation de services en français. C'est également la raison pour laquelle les amendements proposés, s'ils sont adoptés, énonceraient expressément l'obligation de fournir une offre active de services afin que les francophones puissent avoir accès à ces services dès qu'ils en ont besoin.

L'offre active ferait en sorte que les services en français offerts par les ministères, les organismes gouvernementaux et les institutions de la législature de l'Ontario soient non seulement disponibles mais également portés à l'attention de l'utilisateur ou du client, au premier point de contact. Avec cette proposition, nous voulons nous assurer que la responsabilité d'identifier ces services n'incombe pas aux utilisateurs mais aux prestataires de services.

We know that access to quality French-language services is key to the ongoing prosperity of the francophone community. The modernization of the French Language Services Act is the result of collective work. I

would like to thank the Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario as well as all the stakeholders and people on the ground for their contributions helping the expansion of francophonie in Ontario.

I'm proud to say that I was able to participate in these consultations, and I found them very engaging, meaningful and informative.

I would like to commend the work of the Minister of Francophone Affairs, who worked so hard to achieve this important reform, even during a global pandemic, in order to improve the quality and access to French-language services.

It was during these consultations that francophones told us that French-language services are not always readily available when they are needed. This is why we made it a priority to introduce amendments to modernize and strengthen the legislation that sets out obligations for the delivery of services in French.

It is also why our proposed amendments, if passed, would expressly set out the obligation to provide an active offer of French-language services. An active offer would provide that French-language services delivered by Ontario government ministries and agencies as well as institutions of the Legislature are not only available but also brought to the attention of users or clients from the very first point of contact. In essence, we propose shifting the onus from the user, the client or the patient to the service provider.

Monsieur le Président, qu'il s'agisse de renouveler un permis de conduire à Kingston, de demander un certificat de naissance à Windsor ou de recueillir des renseignements relatifs à la santé à Penetanguishene, vous devriez pouvoir obtenir ces services quand vous en avez besoin, et vous devriez pouvoir les obtenir en français immédiatement.

Mr. Speaker, whether you're getting a driver's licence in Kingston, applying for a birth certificate in Windsor, or getting health information in Penetanguishene, you should be able to get these services when you need them, and you should be able to get them in French right away.

Face à une population francophone dont on prévoit un taux de croissance de 5,9% entre 2016 et 2028, la nécessité d'améliorer l'accès aux services de première ligne en français est bien réelle pour répondre aux besoins essentiels de la communauté francophone de l'Ontario.

Nous proposons donc également d'inclure dans notre législation la possibilité de désigner, en vertu de la loi, les bureaux d'organismes gouvernementaux et d'institutions de l'Assemblée législative situés dans des régions non désignées afin d'améliorer l'accès aux services en français. Si elle est adoptée, cette mesure donnera au gouvernement la possibilité d'ajouter, au fil du temps, des points de service spécifiques afin d'étendre la prestation de services en français à travers la province.

Et nous proposons des modifications pour renforcer l'imputabilité des ministères et de leurs organismes gouvernementaux quant au respect de leurs obligations en matière de services en français. Si les modifications sont adoptées, les ministres seront tenus de faire un rapport sur

la mise-en-oeuvre de la loi et sur la qualité des services en français fournis par leur ministère.

Si elles sont adoptées, les modifications proposées prévoient également de nouvelles dispositions permettant au gouvernement de clarifier les responsabilités en ce qui concerne le moment, le lieu et la manière dont les communications en français doivent être fournies, y compris les exigences relatives à la disponibilité en français des règlements d'intérêt public.

Mr. Speaker, with a growing francophone population that is expected to have grown by almost 6% between 2016 and 2028—I know in Mississauga, in my region of Peel, we have a growing and vibrant francophonie—there is a real need to improve access to the front-line French-language services that are critical to Ontario's francophone community.

We are therefore also proposing to include in our legislation the ability to designate under the act offices of government agencies and institutions of the Legislature located in non-designated areas to improve access to French-language services for the about 20% of francophones who live in those non-designated areas. If passed, this would give government the option to add, over time, specific points of service to expand the provision of French-language services across the province.

And we are proposing amendments to strengthen the accountability of ministries and their agencies in terms of meeting their French-language service obligations. If passed, ministers would be required to report on the implementation of the act and the quality of French-language services provided by their ministries. We're giving these ministers a lot of homework, and I like that.

If passed, the proposed amendments would also provide for new provisions that would help government clarify responsibilities in terms of when, where and how communications in French are to be provided, including requirements for making public-interest regulations available in French.

Monsieur le Président, les modifications législatives proposées s'inscrivent dans une stratégie plus large portant sur les services en français qui vise à renforcer notre capacité de prestation de services.

En effet, de manière à atteindre notre objectif de meilleure mise en oeuvre des services en français, il nous faut absolument nous assurer d'un bassin adéquat de professionnels francophones et bilingues qualifiés. Nous savons qu'il y a une grave pénurie de main-d'oeuvre francophone dans les secteurs clés tels que l'éducation, la santé et la justice. Ces efforts font partie de notre engagement visant à répondre à la demande de professionnels qualifiés, afin de renforcer les collectivités et l'économie de l'Ontario.

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Par exemple, en juin 2021, notre gouvernement a annoncé un investissement de 12,5 millions de dollars sur quatre ans pour mettre en oeuvre une stratégie de recrutement et de rétention du personnel enseignant de la langue française.

Dans le secteur de la santé, le gouvernement a financé un programme de formation accélérée pour 216 préposés

au soutien personnel francophones. Et tout récemment, nous avons annoncé un investissement de 400 000 \$ pour une formation novatrice et des possibilités d'apprentissage pratique pour 350 étudiantes et étudiants en soins infirmiers de langue française à Ottawa afin qu'ils et elles puissent bénéficier des outils et de l'expérience clinique dont ils ont besoin, le tout en vue de renforcer le secteur de la santé et des soins de longue durée en Ontario.

Ce gouvernement sait qu'il est nécessaire d'établir une main-d'oeuvre francophone solide et de mettre l'accent sur des modèles de prestation de services efficaces et novateurs si l'on veut améliorer l'accès aux services de première ligne de qualité en français dans l'ensemble de la province.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move that the question now be put.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** As of 4:30 p.m., over six hours of debate has happened and 16 speakers have spoken. Ms. Kusendova has moved that the question now be put. I am satisfied that there has been sufficient debate to allow this question to be put to the House.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion that the question now be put, please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion that the question now be put, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, it will be deferred until the next instance of deferred votes.

*Vote deferred.*

**Mr. Michael Parsa:** Speaker, point of order.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Point of order, the member for Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill.

**Mr. Michael Parsa:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I just want to inform the House that there will be no night sitting tonight.

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

## EMANCIPATION MONTH ACT, 2021

### LOI DE 2021 SUR LE MOIS DE L'ÉMANCIPATION

Ms. Hunter moved second reading of the following bill:  
Bill 75, An Act to proclaim the month of August as Emancipation Month / Projet de loi 75, Loi proclamant le mois d'août Mois de l'émancipation.

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

**Ms. Mitzie Hunter:** It is an honour, indeed, for me to rise in this Legislature on behalf of the people of Scarborough–Guildwood. Today, I also rise on behalf of my family—my grandmother Eva Hunter, who brought me here to Canada from Jamaica.

Speaker, this opportunity that we have today should not be taken lightly. As legislators and decision-makers, we are responsible for the policies and the debates that we have in this House.

Today, as a woman, as a Black woman, as an immigrant from Jamaica, I stand in this Legislature to speak in support of this very important piece of legislation that would proclaim August as Emancipation Month in Ontario.

I would like to begin by acknowledging the work of Mr. Dewitt Lee and the team at Emancipation Day Canada for their efforts and for their advocacy for Black Canadians.

I would also like to thank the member for Guelph, the member for Kitchener Centre and the member for Barrie–Innisfil for co-sponsoring this bill.

Anti-Black racism is a historically deep-rooted systemic issue that is entrenched in Ontario and Canada's own history of enslavement of people of African descent.

Emancipation Month not only serves as a celebration of freedom and the expression of identity, but also as an opportunity to reflect on the adversity that characterizes the struggle for human rights as experienced by Black people who were enslaved here.

The United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent and the diaspora recognizes that those of said descent represent a distinct group whose human rights must be promoted and protected everywhere.

The historical significance of the month of August is that on August 1, 1834, the Slavery Abolition Act came into effect and formally ended slavery throughout the British Empire.

Speaker, I was elected to this Legislature on August 1, 2013, and it was not lost on me—the importance of that day and the sense of where we had come from as a people.

The fact that slavery is a part of this nation's own history may be new knowledge to some, but Emancipation Month represents an opportunity to bridge the gap between what is known about our history and what is yet still to be learned.

I've visited Birchtown, Nova Scotia, and there is a significance to that part of Canada. It's where the Black Loyalists first settled in this country in the late 1700s. They moved here on a promise of settlement, but when they got here, the conditions were so harsh. I saw those hovels in the ground covered with branches that they lived in.

Yes, indeed, this month is an opportunity to recognize the strength, the perseverance, the resilience, the success and the contributions of Black communities, as well as other marginalized communities, in the face of systemic racism and discrimination.

I would like to highlight some equity-seeking groups in education, health care, justice, child welfare and employment.

Those at the Taibu Community Health Centre work every day to support the Black populations in Scarborough and the GTA in their health outcomes, in the face of systemic oppression, which has fostered the conditions of inequities in our health system and often ill health for Black Ontarians.

The Black Opportunity Fund and the BlackNorth Initiative are new organizations just emerging after what we saw with George Floyd. These organizations are bringing business, philanthropists, foundations and the Black community together to combat the impact of anti-Black systemic racism.

I would also like to recognize Wisdom Tetey and all those who worked together to deliver the Scarborough Charter, a national plan of action to address anti-Black racism and promote inclusion in post-secondary institutions and in education. It was not so long ago that Black Canadians could not register for certain faculties, like medicine, in Ontario. We have to right those wrongs, and we have to move forward in a positive direction. The almost 50 colleges and universities across Canada that have signed on to this charter acknowledge that there is work we need to do.

I ask the members of this House to also join me for a moment to acknowledge the remarkable Canadians who have taken the path that we are now on as legislators and leaders.

Leonard Braithwaite, elected to this Legislature in 1963, was the first Black lawyer elected to be a member of the governing council of the Law Society of Upper Canada. His work here in Ontario's Legislature led to the abolition of segregation of Black children in schools in the 1960s. I remember he said that there was no need for these policies to be on our books anymore.

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The Honourable Lincoln Alexander was Canada's first Black member of Parliament, cabinet minister and the first racialized person to serve as Lieutenant Governor here in Ontario.

Her Excellency Michaëlle Jean was Canada's first Black Governor General.

Viola Desmond was not only the first Canadian woman to appear on the \$10 banknote, but she is known for her courage as a businesswoman and community leader who fought against racial segregation at a theatre in New Glasgow—because, indeed, the law at the time was wrong and needed to be corrected.

Mathieu Da Costa was the first recorded Black man to arrive on what was to be known as Canada. He was the interpreter to Samuel de Champlain.

Speaker, we can't forget Dr. Jean Augustine, the first Black Canadian woman to serve as a federal minister of the crown, and whose motion to establish Black History Month in Canada was unanimously supported.

What about my friend Dr. Alvin Curling, the first Black Canadian to hold a cabinet-level position in Ontario and the first person of colour to serve as Speaker of this House?

Of course, Zanana Akande, Margaret Best, Mary Anne Chambers, Granville Anderson and Michael Coteau have all served as role models to countless young Black Ontarians, who have the ability to also see themselves here.

I was the first person of colour to be Minister of Education in this province, and I would often say when I speak

to students, “If you can see me, you can be me.” It is important that we have representation in this Legislature.

Speaker, I don’t have a lot of time to debate this bill, but I do want to say that as far as we have come, there is more that we need to do to demonstrate to the people of this province that everyone has value, everyone needs to have opportunity, everyone needs to be included. The need to fight systemic racism is more than statements. We have to show that in our actions and in our decisions: issues such as our education system, making sure that our curriculum is inclusive of the real history in Canada and that it reflects all perspectives.

We’ve established the Anti-Racism Directorate to help ministries in that journey and in that push, such as the collection of disaggregated data that will tell us how our policies are affecting people and populations. We saw that during the COVID-19 pandemic, certain groups were more impacted by the virus, and in that recognition, we had to change course. So that type of data is needed across all systems, including our health care system, our justice system, our education system, so that we can get it right.

Speaker, I want to also recognize our Black youth. Today, I am wearing this scarf that was presented to me by students at Sir Winston Churchill Collegiate. It was actually my high school. I went back in 2017 to support a graduation, and I was presented with the Leonard Braithwaite Program scarf, which is a special program for students in that school.

We owe it to the generation that will follow us to really own the decisions that we make as legislators, because the only way we’re going to see a change and that we’re going to see a difference made in our society and in our communities is not just to talk about these months, but to actually do the actions required to see the change.

I spoke with Natasha Henry of the Ontario Black History Society, who looked at this bill and said that this bill has tremendous merit. It is needed in our province. But what is needed even more are the policies and the programs to effect that change.

So let’s not waste this opportunity. Let’s stand together as legislators and let’s do the work that is required to make our province and our country one that is more inclusive and reflective in all areas of life and society of the people across this province, including our Indigenous, Black and people of colour from all walks of life.

I want to thank particularly the member from Guelph for your initiative and your push to bring us all together as legislators to recognize this very important and historic month in Ontario, Emancipation Month, as it is to be proclaimed in this province. Thank you, merci and meegwetch.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I recognize the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism.

**Hon. Parm Gill:** I’m honoured to rise today in support of the Emancipation Month Act. Let me also start by thanking the co-sponsors, of course: the members from Guelph, Scarborough–Guildwood, Kitchener Centre and Barrie–Innisfil.

Every year on August 1, we recognize Emancipation Day in Ontario. This is the day that, in 1834, the Slavery

Abolition Act was enacted across the British Empire, leading to the end of slavery in Canada.

Privileged to live in Ontario, the strength of our province comes, of course, from our diversity, Mr. Speaker. Designating the month of August as Emancipation Month provides us with a greater opportunity to reflect on the history of our province and the progress we’ve made in advancing inclusivity and equality for all.

As the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism and the minister responsible for anti-racism, I can tell you that our government continues to drive towards a meaningful change. This includes promoting opportunities for greater social and economic participation. We’re working with community partners to create more equitable workplaces and foster economic empowerment.

In the recent fall economic statement, our government committed to providing the additional funding necessary, to the tune of \$8.1 million, to new and enhanced initiatives to help support inclusion and diversity in our province. That includes a new Racialized and Indigenous Support for Entrepreneurs Grant, also known as the RAISE grant, to help racialized entrepreneurs grow their businesses and succeed. As a former small business owner myself, I know that running a small business takes hard work and dedication, facing many challenges along the way. Through programs like the RAISE grant, we are supporting local communities and ensuring that equity is embedded into our plans for long-term economic growth.

We have also committed to doubling investment in the anti-racism anti-hate grant from \$1.6 million to \$3.2 million over two years. With this increased investment, our government is taking even stronger actions to empower community-led programs that advance the most effective solutions to ensure all Ontarians can reach their full potential.

As a proud father of three, there isn’t anything more important to me than supporting our next generation. Building a more just and inclusive province starts with investing in our children and youth, keeping young people at the heart of everything we do. This government is committed to helping children and youth from all backgrounds achieve their full potential by removing systemic and structural barriers and giving them the tools for success.

In 2020, we launched the Premier’s council of equity of opportunity to provide advice on how we can support young people to achieve long-term success. Bringing together groups with diverse expertise and lived experience, the council is working in partnership with government, communities and young people to help. Ontario youths’ success is, of course, rapidly changing our economy.

**1700**

We are also proud to be extending the Black Youth Action Plan for an additional two years, doubling our investment to \$28 million and creating a new economic empowerment funding stream that will strengthen Black and racialized communities and businesses across our great province. By empowering Black youth we can

ensure they play a prominent role in shaping a better future for our province.

Through all of this, we look to leaders and advocates, both past and present, like the Honourable Lincoln Alexander. As Canada's first Black member of Parliament, first Black federal cabinet minister and Ontario's first Black LG—and a Conservative, might I add—he overcame many obstacles in his journey to office. He was determined to end racial discrimination and make our province a better and more equitable place. Mr. Alexander also recognized the value of education in changing lives, especially the lives of Black youth, and his legacy continues to be an inspiration for us all. Together, we share a responsibility to speak out and take action to build a more inclusive province.

Recognizing August as Emancipation Month will be significant for many reasons. Heritage months help us to learn more about the history and traditions of the many diverse communities that make up our province. This bill will prompt conversations and reflections on the contributions that Black communities and individuals have made to Canadian history, society and culture. It provides us further opportunity to honour the heritage of Ontario's Black community and to celebrate the many contributions they have made towards our province.

With a better understanding of the complexities of each cultural identity, we are creating a stronger and more inclusive province. I'm happy to support this bill, which would see us all in August recognizing and celebrating the contributions of Black Canadians in our province. I invite all members of this House, of course, to vote in favour of the Emancipation Month Act, 2021.

With that, thank you for the time, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Laura Mae Lindo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'll be sharing my time with the member from Toronto—St. Paul's.

It is truly an honour to stand in this House and add my voice to those of my colleagues in and outside of this chamber who see and understand—no, who over-stand the moment in history that this Emancipation Month Act represents.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to share with you, under the auspices of this critically important bill, the reason why this work we do in this chamber to fight for the freedom of Black people is still just as necessary today as it was in 1834.

On August 1, the Black community celebrates Emancipation Day, the anniversary of when Britain's Parliament abolished slavery in the British empire in 1834. Since being elected, I've spent most Emancipation Days here at Queen's Park. I've been blessed with meeting Dewitt Lee, the founder of Emancipation Month Canada, and I'm humbled by his tenacious advocacy and reminded that what we do in this House is a continuation of the freedom fighting our ancestors have done before us, a fight for freedom that has lasted since as long as 1608, when the first enslaved person arrived on the shores of Nova Scotia.

For those who don't know, since much of this history continues to be left out of Ontario's curriculum, the first recorded Black person to arrive in Canada was an African man. His name was Mathieu Da Costa, and in 1608, he served as an interpreter of the Mi'kmaq language for the governor of Acadia. A few thousand Africans arrived in Canada in the 17th and 18th centuries. Far too many of them were enslaved.

As the anti-racism critic in your official opposition and as the chair of the Ontario NDP Black caucus, I am humbled to have been handed the torch from my ancestors to keep this history and the implications of it alive, because it's only in this way that true liberation for Black people across Ontario and across Turtle Island will remain centred in the important work we do in this chamber. And because Black liberation—true freedom—is a vision that we continue to fight for even today.

Mr. Speaker, emancipation means more to Black people than simply commemorating the white establishment for bending to the will of freedom fighters who demanded that our enslavement end. Emancipation Day and now Emancipation Month, should this bill pass and receive royal assent, is not about you. It's about us. It's about Black people finally being able to wake up free: free in our bodies, free in our minds and free in our spirits.

You see, Mr. Speaker, our shackles were legislated. As Peggy Bristow explained in her chapter entitled "Black Women in Buxton and Chatham, 1850-65," in the book *We're Rooted Here and They Can't Pull Us Up: Essays in African Canadian Women's History*, "A history of Black women's lives in Canada must start with our arrival here as slaves. Black women, like Black men and like First Nations peoples, were enslaved here, beginning with the seventeenth century, first by the French and later by the British. We were brought here to labour."

And so, our original fight was to free our bodies, bodies relegated to toil over work that white Canadians had no interest in doing, work that my ancestors were forced to do for free even as capitalism was beginning to take root on stolen Indigenous land.

The next step was to free our minds, as Bob Marley has taught us through his powerful prose: "Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery. None but ourselves can free our minds."

With centuries of being told Black people are lesser than, undeserving of, not enough for, it makes sense that so many of us have internalized the anti-Blackness of the state, because slavery was legislated. Anti-Blackness was sanctioned by the state. Anti-Blackness was brought to light as much in the laws that made it explicit as it has been and continues to be in the eerie silences in legislation that limit the tools we need as Black people to continue our fight for freedom.

Mr. Speaker, as difficult as it is to hear, my ancestors need me to use my position of privilege to speak plainly, because the truth is that anti-Blackness continues to be legislated even today. Proof of this is easily found in the continued overrepresentation of Black bodies in the carceral system, in child welfare, in low-wage jobs, in the

continued push to move us through the school-to-prison pipeline, in harsher discipline at schools.

The call for investment in upstream supports, for culturally responsive mental health services, for affordable and supportive housing, for access to education, for the removal of school resource officers from schools, for access to quality food, and for increased wages and recognition of credentials earned back home are all part of our ongoing freedom fighting.

Our calls for community safety reimagined; for holistic community care; for disaggregated data collection before, during and after the pandemic is finally over; and the creation of the End Racism in Ontario Education petition and the Racial Equity in the Education System Act, which provides a vision of racial equity in Ontario's education system from kindergarten to post-secondary, are all part of our ongoing freedom fighting.

Our calls to invest in rather than systematically disempower the Anti-Racism Directorate, to embed a strategy into the Black youth action plan, to incorporate a critical intersectional equity-focused lens on every piece of legislation that passes through this House are all part of our ongoing freedom fighting.

Sometimes these calls intersect with other communities, and that's all right. The late Derrick Bell, recognized as the father of critical race theory, named that "interest convergence." In those moments, we come together fighting with a common purpose for a common goal. Today may be one of those days.

My hope is that this bill, the declaration of the month of August as Emancipation Month, serves as a reminder that the work of our ancestors continues. I hope that we all learn from their tenacity, their laser focus on freedom and their undying hope in the face of what others might see as insurmountable challenges.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask for the indulgence of the House to end with a final reflection. Many don't know this, but August 1, Emancipation Day, is also the birthday of Justice George E. Carter, the first Black Canadian-born judge in Canada. His granddaughter is one of my best friends, and I've been blessed to spend time with Justice Carter before his passing at the age of 96 on June 7, 2018.

1710

I often reflect on sitting with him in his dining room, surrounded by mounds of newspapers and magazines he would read, review and comment on. His mind remained sharp all of those years.

I remember him telling me a story of growing up in downtown Toronto and passing hateful signs that read, "No dogs, no Jews and no Negroes allowed"—it didn't say "Negroes," but the word would be unparliamentary for me to use. I often think about that. Imagine Justice Carter as a young child, maybe 10, 16, 20, walking by those signs. Imagine what that did to his spirit, his mind, even while his body was free.

In *Colour-Coded: A Legal History of Racism in Canada, 1900-1950*, Constance Backhouse writes, "A wider prohibition would be enacted in Ontario in 1944, due to the pressure placed on government by Black and Jewish

groups demanding the abolition of hateful signs that proclaimed 'No dogs, no Jews, no'"—I'll say "Negroes" for now. "The 1944 act prohibited the publication or display of any 'notice, sign, symbol, emblem or other representation' indicating 'discrimination or an intention to discriminate' on the basis of 'race or creed.' Although the listing did not capture verbal speech, its inclusion of 'symbols' and 'emblems' carried the statute far beyond mere words. Whether this would have been sufficient to render unlawful the burning of fiery crosses at Klan rallies is open to debate. The Ontario provision also contained an express disclaimer that it should not be deemed to 'interfere with the free expression of opinions upon any subject by speech or in writing.'"

Mr. Speaker, our bondage was legislated. I hope that the swift passage of this bill can serve as a reminder for all of us that our freedom—true, authentic and complete emancipation—can be legislated, too.

May the bill not trick us into thinking the work is done, but instead, may it remind us that we stand on the shoulders of so many freedom fighters who came before us—freedom fighters who had the courage to dream of a life without slavery. Because they dreamed, we're here today.

*Singing of Baba Fururu.*

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

**Ms. Jill Andrew:** As I fight back the tears of joy, of visibility, listening to the words of my friend and colleague the MPP for Kitchener Centre, I'm very proud to stand here in this House today, knowing that this Emancipation Month bill will pass.

Again, a thank you to the MPP from Kitchener Centre, a thank you to the MPP from Guelph, a thank you to the MPP from Scarborough-Guildwood—and an exceptional thank you to Dewitt Lee III and Emancipation Day Canada. Dewitt Lee has been doing this work for many years and is a true icon in our Black community, in every riding, in every province and across the nation.

I stand here in this House, yes, because the people of Toronto-St. Paul's gave me a chance, but I also stand here because of my own mother, an immigrant, who has worked harder her entire life to give me the opportunity to stand on my feet, to hold my shoulders back and my head up, regardless of what the world throws at me or our people. She taught me very early on that to be successful in this world I had to work 10 times harder than the average person because I was Black and because I was a woman. Later on, she would nuance that conversation to talk about racism against Black folks, patriarchy. And when I came out as queer, she said, "Now you're going to have to work 20 times as hard." She has emboldened in me my work ethic, my character, my humour—sometimes my humour is a little interesting—and I am so very thankful for her presence.

I stand here, as well, on the shoulders of people like Zanana Akande, who was the first Black woman to be elected to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, who was the first Black woman to serve as a cabinet minister in

Canada, and who was seminal to the creation of the Anti-Racism Secretariat when she was in government in 1990 to 1994—an NDP government. The wisdom and the grace she provides to our community to this day, in her own retirement, is quite exemplary.

I'm a member of Ontario's NDP official opposition Black caucus, and that's amazing. I feel really proud about that. But the work continues, because that Black caucus was only formed in 2018. Why? Because the NDP was the only party that had elected enough Black folks in one session to have a Black caucus, and also because we listened to Black community leaders, to Black essential workers, to Black artists and cultural workers, to Black custodians, to teachers, to professionals, to everyone—to children and youth who called for a Black caucus, where they could be seen and heard. But the work continues.

The work continues in our education system, where we still see Black youth disproportionately dehumanized, criminalized, adultified, as opposed to other youth.

This is why the member for Kitchener Centre puts forth legislation demanding that racism be called out in the Education Act, be called out throughout the education sector.

This is why the member from York South–Weston demands that we create a day of awareness on mental health.

Let me tell you something: Racism hurts. Do you know the commercial, “Depression Hurts?” Racism hurts. Anti-Black racism hurts.

Contrary to popular belief, myself, the member for Kitchener Centre and even the member from Scarborough–Guildwood—and I name us because we are three Black women in this building. Racism hurts. Regardless of how strong and powerful we may seem and how we may walk into a room, appearing impenetrable, we are—there's vulnerability. We're not just standing here for ourselves or even our constituents; we are standing representing all Black Canadians, regardless of gender, in this Legislature.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention, as well, that we must look at the carceral system. We must look at—and I'm going to say it—the indentured labour of predominantly Black, Indigenous and racialized folks in our carceral system, working for free, working dehumanizing labour, many behind cells for crimes they have not committed.

We have to start to dismantle inequities within education, within labour and wages.

I just want to say, within housing, as we develop our communities, we cannot push out the most vulnerable. As we develop communities like Little Jamaica, we need to have the Black folks in Little Jamaica for it to be Little Jamaica. They can't be pushed out.

1720

I'm proud of our “ending police violence and investing in Black, Indigenous and racialized lives” commitment. It's not just platitudes and words; it's commitments. It's to ensure that D'Andre Campbell's family, like Regis Korchinski-Paquet's family—that families never have to experience the hell, the nightmare they are living in consistently.

Emancipation Month: I'm proud to stand in support of this, and I'm going to wrap up—I won't have enough time—with a performative piece that I created.

Hello Black Girl,

You are history in motion

The descendant of kings and queens, of royalty, of ancestors who dreamed your very stride into existence

You are the wildest dreams of free and enslaved peoples whose spirits survived ... whose resistance and resilience now live in your tears and your smile

You are the future personified

You are the future foreshadowed

Hello Black Girl,

You are strong and you are beautiful. You are also vulnerable

Your conviction isn't a weakness nor is your passion

Sometimes you may be quiet and brilliant, silent and unsure. Sometimes you may feel unwelcome. It is in those moments your presence matters more than you know

You will plant your feet firmly like concrete

Hello Black Girl,

You speak with an inquisitive fire in your voice. Your ember is unapologetic

Many will call the force of your nature aggressive. They will call those with less melanin assertive. You will be misunderstood as boisterous, intimidating, not knowing your place

Please NEVER “know your place”

Your place is everywhere and anywhere. The classroom, the boardroom, the courtroom, the kitchen, the surgical suite, the protesting streets, the arts, business, trades and entrepreneurship, politics and more. These spaces are your spaces, your places, your canvas to explore

Hello Black Girl,

When you're tired, rest

When you're hungry, eat

Try not to let society tell you how to dress, how to speak or how to move in your body

Some of us have hair, some of us are bald, sometimes it's by choice sometimes there's no choice at all. Whatever your “hairstory,” you know how to work it—or not—best.

Hello Black Girl,

You are Black excellence. There are people out here who will adore you, acknowledge you. People who will affirm your lived experience

And other people out here who will be deeply invested in wrapping you up in their own self-serving racist and sexist images and narratives of you only to make themselves comfortable—less threatened—so they can stand more assured in their own mediocrity

Please UNWRAP yourself and if you need help never be afraid to ask

Surround yourself with friends, family, chosen family, community, books, stories and mentors who can both remind you of your value, your tools and share their own

Hello Black Girl,

Always remember healthy relationships are your goal.

Quality over quantity.

Empathy and understanding over envy and jealousy. There is no space for anyone who brings physical, sexual, emotional or financial violence into your life.

Remember life is a journey with winding roads. Our journeys start and restart, we don't always know where we will end up or who will be along for the ride.

We are always becoming. And like my words to you, we are never finished. That's both daunting and exciting. Hold on to the excitement.

Signed,

A Black woman who needed to hear these words too

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

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I'm both humbled and honoured to rise and speak in support of Bill 75, the Emancipation Month Act. I'd like to thank the members from Kitchener Centre, Scarborough–Guildwood and Barrie–Innisfil for co-sponsoring this bill, and I'd like to thank the House leader for clearing a path for it to be passed before the House rises.

I want to give a special thank you to Dewitt Lee, the founder of Emancipation Month Canada, who initiated this bill. It was so important to Mr. Lee that all four parties co-sponsor this bill. I believe it is the first bill in Ontario's history to be sponsored by four parties, and for Dewitt, this was an important message to send to the people of Ontario. It builds on the fact that the first co-sponsored bill introduced in Ontario established Emancipation Day in Ontario.

Dewitt, I know you're watching today, and I want to say thank you for working so hard on this bill. It has paid off.

I want to thank the Ontario Black History Society, who contributed to the drafting of this bill. It was truly a collaborative effort with the co-sponsors of the bill.

This bill will officially proclaim August as Emancipation Month in Ontario. August was chosen because it's in recognition of the Slavery Abolition Act, which received royal assent in 1833 and was proclaimed on August 1, 1834, the day on which the British Empire ended the practice of slavery for close to a million African people and their descendants, including in Upper and Lower Canada.

Emancipation Month Canada was founded as a legacy project of the United Nations declaration of the International Decade for People of African Descent. In proclaiming this decade, the UN recognized that people of African descent represent a distinct group whose human rights must be protected and promoted. Over 200 million people identifying themselves as being of African descent live outside of the African continent. And so it is with great importance that we recognize August as Emancipation Month to pay tribute to the important contributions and leadership that the Black community have made and continue to make in Ontario. The Black community continues to be a vibrant part of Ontario's social, political and cultural fabric.

Speaker, a lot of Canadians don't know that Black and Indigenous people were enslaved in our country.

This may be a symbolic act, and I'll be the first to tell you that we need more than symbolic acts, but symbols can serve as important tools for education, for recognition and for reflection. As Dewitt said:

"Emancipation Month is not just a month to commemorate the freedom fighters from all races who helped usher in freedom to African descendants across the British colonies from the inhumanity of slavery....

"It is designed to grant the much-needed time and safe spaces to recover and repair the affected communities from the lingering intergenerational effects of slavery, racism and being colonized which we can see in our society today."

Speaker, we know that the intergenerational trauma of slavery and systemic racism persists today. We know it's baked into our institutions, into our political system, into our education and medical institutions, in deep and systemic ways that we cannot ignore.

I've always admired the courage, strength and resiliency of freedom fighters who fought so hard to remove the shackles of slavery, and I believe they deserve for those of us today to continue that fight for freedom and justice.

As the great civil rights leader Martin Luther King once said, "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."

We cannot remain silent in the fight to dismantle systemic racism and colonialism in our society. We cannot remain silent in the fight for justice and for freedom.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge an organization in my community, the Guelph Black Heritage Society, which embodies the goals of Emancipation Month each and every day of the year. Their ongoing #ChangeStartsNow education initiative provides educational programming on Black history and culture, as well as relevant resources on diversity, discrimination and anti-racism for the Black community. They preserved Heritage Hall, which was for many enslaved people the final stop on the Underground Railroad. What a feeling it must have been to reach freedom, Speaker—and the courage it took to make that journey and to know that they could land in a place like Guelph.

**1730**

So as we've affirmed in this bill, Emancipation Month is a time for healing, unification and restoration. It's a time to heal relationships so we can create a better future. It's about eliminating discrimination by continuing to educate and to advance the importance of racial equity and justice across the province.

Emancipation Month, though it's only symbolic, is an important symbol about the need to be an inclusive province where everyone is treated with fairness, respect, dignity, and receives the justice they deserve. We in this House today have an important opportunity to say to the Black community that we will celebrate Emancipation Month and we will fight. We will continue to fight together in solidarity as allies to end systemic racism in this province. That's what we're here to do.

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

Pursuant to the order of the House dated December 8, 2021, I am now required to put the question.

Ms. Hunter has moved second reading of Bill 75, An Act to proclaim the month of August as Emancipation Month. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, the bill is now ordered for third reading.

EMANCIPATION  
MONTH ACT, 2021  
LOI DE 2021 SUR LE MOIS  
DE L'ÉMANCIPATION

Mr. Schreiner moved third reading of the following bill:  
Bill 75, An Act to proclaim the month of August as Emancipation Month / Projet de loi 75, Loi proclamant le mois d'août Mois de l'émancipation.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Mr. Schreiner has moved third reading of Bill 75, An Act to proclaim the month of August as Emancipation Month. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

*Third reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Orders of the day?

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Mr. Speaker, I think if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to see the clock at 6.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Is there agreement to set the clock to 6 p.m.? Agreed.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS'  
PUBLIC BUSINESS**

PROVINCIAL DAY OF SERVICE  
ACT, 2021  
LOI DE 2021 SUR LA JOURNÉE  
PROVINCIALE DU SERVICE

Mr. Coe moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 51, An Act to proclaim the Provincial Day of Service / Projet de loi 51, Loi proclamant la Journée provinciale du service.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Pursuant to standing order 101, the member has 12 minutes for their presentation. I return the floor to the member from Whitby.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** I'm humbled to be able to bring forward Bill 51, the Provincial Day of Service Act, to inspire Ontario residents to show the kind of compassion and generosity that were in abundance following the terrorist attacks of 20 years ago, on September 11, 2001.

The enduring image of that day is not simply falling towers or smoldering wreckage. It's the firefighters

running up the stairs as others were running down; the passengers deciding to storm a cockpit, knowing it could be their final act; the volunteers showing up at recruiters' offices across the country in the days that followed, willing to put their lives on the line.

Speaker, Ontarians and other Canadians responded to the horrible events of September 11 with kindness and courage, and in the days and weeks that followed, Ontario's police officers, firefighters and first responders joined hands with all Canadians to show our true character, and the best in one another, to help our American friends.

The many acts of generosity demonstrated by Canadians from coast to coast on September 11, 2001, and afterwards serve to remind us all about the importance of humanity—nor will the assistance provided by communities like Whitby, provincial governments like Ontario, businesses in our communities, social services and volunteer agencies be forgotten.

It's critical to remember the incredible acts of courage, sacrifice and kindness by Canadians on and following that infamous day. As an example, Speaker: the efforts of the people of Gander, Newfoundland, who hosted thousands of foreign airline passengers who had been rerouted to Canadian soil following the grounding of passenger flights in the days following September 11, 2001.

The Provincial Day of Service is also meant to honour the selfless service of civilian and military volunteers who continue to stand up in the face of terrorism and the outpouring of Canadian support in the aftermath of the attacks.

The September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States took the lives of thousands of citizens from 90 countries, including 24 Canadian citizens, 11 of whom were from Ontario. In response, over 40,000 Canadian Armed Forces members would deploy to Afghanistan between 2001 and 2014. More than 150 Canadian soldiers died during the 13-year campaign and thousands were wounded, physically and psychologically.

The Provincial Day of Service will be marked every September 11. My hope is that the designation will inspire Ontarians to once more show the same kind of compassion to strangers in need by engaging on that day in charitable activities, fundraisers and community service for worthy causes across the province.

It's a fitting way to pay tribute to the Canadians and Ontarians who were lost on September 11, 2001, to show continued support for the families of the victims, to honour the sacrifices made by those who served in the rescue efforts, as we should, and to turn an infamous day into a day of hope marked by a communal outpouring of warmth and generosity.

Speaker, we know the dedication of people who serve their local communities across the province, such as local police officers, firefighters and first responders in the region of Durham. The commitment they feel goes beyond their occupations and extends into charitable activities and community service for worthy causes across the province, but it also goes above and beyond that, Speaker, doesn't

it? Every one of us can give back and contribute to our community in any way we can. We can each do our part to help those around us, whether in time, in kind or through financial support. Speaker, it's about giving people a hand up. It is by coming together that we can strive to more effectively change our communities and make them a better place in which to live and, yes, raise our families.

**1740**

Maureen Basnicki, the founding director of the Canadian National Day of Service Foundation, who regrettably lost her husband, Ken, in one of the towers in New York City on September 11, 2001, and who is watching this evening, had this to say about the Provincial Day of Service Act: "This effort sends a strong message that we will always remember the service and sacrifice that resulted from that tragic day." Speaker, I'm told that today is Maureen and Ken's wedding anniversary, and it is truly fitting that we debate this important piece of legislation to honour Ken, Maureen and their son, Brennan—to honour and pay tribute to all victims of terrorism.

Wounded Warriors Canada, situated in my riding, is a remarkable organization that supports Canada's ill and injured Canadian Armed Forces members, veterans, first responders and their families. They are also supportive of this legislation. Executive director Scott Maxwell had this to say: "Wounded Warriors Canada supports the Provincial Day of Service Act and its goal of helping to ensure that we remember the September 11th tragedy while, at the same time, honouring the service and sacrifice of our veterans, first responders and their families—and the everyday citizens that go out of their way to make a difference in their communities"—Speaker, not just in the moments of great crisis, but every single day—every single day. Let's never forget that and let's never take them for granted. Thank you for the honour of debating this bill.

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

**Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens:** I stand today to reflect on the spirit, purpose and content of this bill, Bill 51, the Provincial Day of Service Act. It is an act that will proclaim a Provincial Day of Service on September 11. We must reflect and remember the Canadians who died on that fateful day in September, on the 11th day, from a terrorist attack on the United States of America. That day we lost thousands of lives, individuals across 90 different countries, which included 24 citizens of Canada and 11 from our province of Ontario.

The act of remembering must be an active one for it to complete its function, and provincial days of service like this one ensure that we maintain these days of reflection in our shared stories as Canadians. This bill would have Ontario honour those who lost their lives in the attacks; pay respect to families, community members and friends who still feel their loss; and recognize the incredible acts of courage and sacrifice that were made on and the months and months that followed that day.

Of course, we must also remember all the men and women from the members of our Canadian Armed Forces

who have fought terrorism through their tours of duty, and the law enforcement and intelligence personnel who continue to fight on the front lines against all of these forms today. It is also a reminder that after the terrorist attacks on the United States in 2001, Canada joined international efforts to secure and rebuild Afghanistan. Regardless of political stripes, attitudes or ideologies, every Canadian can honour the sacrifice of our country's military efforts there.

There were 158 Canadian Armed Forces members who lost their lives in the service to protect our freedom, Speaker. As Canadians, we always find a way to rekindle the spirit of kindness and generosity and good will. We always find a way to remember. While a bill like this institutionalizes the memorialization in a formal way, I'm proud of the country and the citizenry that always finds a way to meaningfully remember and honour in unofficial ways.

Through this bill, we can recall the unofficial 170-kilometre stretch of Highway 401 where our fallen CAF members are escorted from the air base to the coroner's office here in Toronto. Of course, I'm talking about the Highway of Heroes. Although, even though it began in 2002 in an unofficial expression of gratitude of thousands of Canadians who stood on bridges and along the roads, it too was made official five years later by this assembly. An act like this one comes down to recognizing the spirit of Canadians and showing the same kind of compassion that we show to strangers in need through our charitable activities and good deeds.

In honour of the victims, first responders and surviving family members, let us embody a spirit of kindness, care and community in their names—taking on fundraisers, good deeds and community service.

In my community, I already see that from the many good charitable works that veterans and veteran organizations do within my riding of St. Catharines for our community. I would be remiss to not tell the story of St. Catharines resident 99-year-old Chuck Page, a Second World War veteran, who last year accomplished a goal of doing 100 laps around his housing complex for his 100th birthday—a fundraiser that raised more than \$5,000 for patient equipment for the Hotel Dieu Shaver Heath and Rehabilitation Centre.

Another veteran organization in my community, Valhalla Project Niagara, gives back to the wounded military men and women and first responders through training dogs to support post-traumatic stress syndrome.

This is the spirit of this act, and it is an example of the compassion that we show through our charitable activities. It is not only important to remember, but it is a reflection on our values and giving back to one another.

Finally, I will say the first responders experienced a harrowing scene—the loss of friends and co-workers, the deafening sounds of the beepers going off—and many have experienced years of ongoing impacts, including PTSD and deadly lung diseases from the smoke and the debris of the air that day. First responders watching from afar also experienced trauma and loss seeing their sisters-

and brothers-in-arms in crisis. September 11th should be an annual provincial day of service to pay respect to the victims, first responders and family members.

Speaker, I look forward to supporting this bill. I thank the member from Whitby. I look forward to supporting this bill and legislation, not only as a compassionate community member or official opposition critic for veterans, Legions and military affairs in Ontario, but also as the mother of a son in the Royal Canadian Navy who served three tours of duty, and a neighbour to so many veterans who fought for our freedom.

I also would like to wish Maureen a happy anniversary. We know here in this Legislature that Ken is looking down on her and wishing her a very happy anniversary.

1750

Speaker, thank you to all. We will continue to remember, and we will continue to never forget.

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

**Mr. Dave Smith:** I'm going to take a little bit of a different approach to it.

September 11, 2001, is a date that all of us here remember. We remember where we were when we heard about this. I myself was off work at that time. My daughter was going through cancer treatment and I was at home. We saw it on TV.

But there are other dates—I'll come back to September 11 in a moment, because I'm 51, and I remember August 31, 1997. I know there are a lot of others who remember that day. That was the day that Princess Diana was killed. It leaves a memory with you.

On November 9, 1989, I was in Crawpaddies, which is the pub at Lady Eaton College, and we watched the TV broadcast of the tearing down of the Berlin Wall. On January 28, 1986, I was in the high school library, watching on TV something that had become commonplace—until the space shuttle Challenger blew up.

On March 30, 1981, I was in grade 5. Our principal interrupted in the middle of the afternoon to put a radio broadcast on because Ronald Reagan had been shot.

All of those dates leave a memory because they're things that impact you.

September 11, 2001, impacted the entire world. The challenge that we face today with September 11, 2001, is it was 20 years ago, and not a single individual who is in school today was alive when that happened. They have no memory of it. Making that day something that has meaning means the sacrifice of those first responders will never be lost. The building was burning. The TV coverage showed people running, screaming, from it. But police officers, firefighters and paramedics ran into the building. That can't be lost.

All of the first responders that we have, all of our military go to work every day knowing they are putting their lives in danger, and they do that for us. Declaring this day as a day of service is one small way that we can say thank you. We don't experience the challenges that they do in their jobs. We don't have to go through the PTSD that many of them do.

I'm going to touch on a couple of people locally. In 2018 in Peterborough, there was a woman who had gone swimming in the Otonabee River, and she swam too far out. An off-duty firefighter jumped into the water and saved her life—an off-duty firefighter. It wasn't his job, but he knew what he needed to do.

There was a murder in Peterborough a couple of years ago. I won't mention the names; the murder case is being appealed right now. A gentleman was killed. His girlfriend was stabbed in the neck, and an officer friend of mine shot two fingers into the hole to stop her jugular from bleeding out and saved her life. That leaves a lasting impression on you when you go through that, and yet our first responders, our police officers, our paramedics, our firefighters and our military personnel still step up and do stuff. They help out in the community when it's not their job: coaches like Rick Allen, Steve Dyer, John Ogrodnik; service clubs, the Kinsmen Club, Steve Minnema, Justin Ledoux, both police officers; the Kiwanis Club, Terry McLaren, a former police chief. They're members of the Lions Club, they're members of the Rotary, because they give back. It's in their nature.

September 11 is one of those days that we will all remember for the rest of our lives. We'll know where we were when we first heard about it, and by making this a special day in Ontario, a day when we can honour everything that they did, it will let future generations know our first responders and our military are there for them. They go into buildings when others are running out. They go straight towards the fire. They go to the danger because they are there to serve and protect us.

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

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It's always an honour to rise in this House, and today particularly so to speak on Bill 51, the Provincial Day of Service Act. I would like to build on what the member across the way stated.

September 11: That morning, I think we can all remember where we were, what we were doing. I think for a previous generation it would be the assassination of John F. Kennedy, but for our generation—I can remember for myself, we were just finishing chores in the morning. It was a beautiful day and my wife was hosing down the milking parlour where we milk the cows and I was feeding the calves. We heard on the radio that a plane had hit the World Trade Centre. The first thing I thought was that it would be a small plane and it was an accident, but it quickly became apparent that it wasn't an accident and that thousands of people would lose their lives.

Something else I remember: It was a beautiful day there, and it was a beautiful day at home. It was a harvest day, but none of us went to harvest. It all impacted us so much, even from afar. We were glued to the TV.

The thing that impacted me most was, as we were watching as people were running away, first responders were running towards, not knowing what they would encounter, but knowing that they were risking their lives. First responders do that all the time. They answer the call.

The Provincial Day of Service, on that day—to honour the first responders who answered the call that day, who

answered the call subsequent days and who still answer the call—is a very worthy endeavour, particularly for that day because it is a day that marked a generation and it marked a generation that future generations hopefully can learn from.

In this Legislature and in Legislatures across the world, we make decisions that impact people's lives. We don't always agree on how those decisions are made, but first responders answer the call, in some cases, because of those decisions and they continue to do that. They need more than just a day, but this day is a symbol—a symbol that we can all stop on that day and not only remember 9/11 but remember everything that first responders do; that the people also who protect the democracies that we live in—the things that they risk.

**1800**

I'm very proud to be able to stand here to support this bill. I hope that those of us who are put in a position of being in a position like that, that we too help those first responders answer the call. We are trying to help a little bit today.

I'd like to thank the member for bringing forward this bill. On behalf of the New Democratic Party, I'm very proud to support it.

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

**Ms. Christine Hogarth:** I'm pleased and honoured to rise today to speak on behalf of Bill 51, and I thank the member from Whitby for bringing this bill forward to establish September 11 as the Provincial Day of Service. Through this bill, Ontario would honour those lives that were so tragically lost in the September 11 attacks and pay our respects to the families and friends who still feel their loss.

However, this day will do more. The Provincial Day of Service will honour the service workers in our communities who play an important role in ensuring the health and safety and well-being of all of us, while selflessly putting their own well-being at risk. Those are the people who, for over the past two years, throughout this terrible pandemic, have stood on the front lines and battled this scourge; the same people that sacrificed time from their families so that they could ensure others could be with theirs. Our police, fire, paramedics and all 911 services have truly performed above and beyond all reasonable expectations and deserve this day to be about them.

But, Speaker, who are the people we're talking about, exactly? They are the volunteers, the professionals, those who have dedicated their lives to public service. This includes our police officers, firefighters, military personnel, paramedics, medical evacuation pilots, dispatchers, nurses, doctors, emergency medical technicians and emergency managers. And I'm sure I haven't named them all.

The coordinated terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, have remained etched in the world's memories as one of the horrendous tragedies of the 21st century. All we could do at the time was watch on our televisions and listen to our radios as this incident occurred in Manhattan.

As my colleagues earlier mentioned, we all know where we were. I was actually in this building, just down the hall. My office was right across. The TVs were on, and I remember my parents calling, because I worked in a government building, terrified: "Are you okay?" I remember walking into my colleague Gary Clement's office, saying, "You have to turn on the TV." But it wasn't just that day. It was weeks to come that we were still glued to our TV sets, trying to figure out what had happened.

Twenty years on, this incident continues to incite anger, sadness and a loss for words from anyone who witnessed it as it happened in real time, our time. Nearly 3,000 innocent civilians from 93 countries lost their lives, families lost their loved ones and 24 Canadians citizens never returned home.

As has been mentioned, in my riding of Etobicoke, Maureen Basnicki, who was heavily involved in the consultation on this bill, lost her husband, Ken. I'm sure, Maureen, you're having a glass of champagne to toast your efforts today.

Ken was on the 106th floor of the north tower. Maureen and her family grieved, like other families affected, and then Maureen acted. She founded the Canadian Coalition Against Terror and has been active in all levels of government. She was involved in the creation of the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights and so many other causes and charities, and she has always led from the front. Thank you, Maureen.

Cindy Barkway was also from Etobicoke. She was accompanying her husband and high school sweetheart, Dave, who, at the time of the attack, was at a meeting in the second tower on the 105th floor. Cindy was five months pregnant at the time and she named her son after the father, David. Like Maureen and like so many others, Cindy, too, grieved, but Cindy and her family healed. She established the Dave Barkway Memorial Scholarship in his honour and is involved with organizations like Victims of Crime and the Canadian Coalition Against Terror.

Canadian first responders volunteered in large numbers. Many firefighters, police and others crossed the border and got to work helping, and thousands of others raised funds for the families of firefighters and those who fell when the towers came down on top of them while they tried to save lives. Our first responders often go where angels fear to tread. We all must remember the multiple risks that they face every day, from pandemics, to out-of-control fires, to violent offenders, to gun play in the streets.

The attacks called into action the largest concentrated emergency response service in American history. More than 2,000 NYPD and Port Authority officers secured the area, searched the towers and aided survivors. Crucial to the response task force was the fire department in New York City: 214 fire department units were dispatched to the location, along with several off-duty firefighters who self-dispatched to the location in an effort to save lives. Of the thousands of casualties on September 11, 343 firefighters, 37 Port Authority officers and 23 New York City police officers were also killed.

Speaker, I want to once again thank the member from Whitby for bringing this bill forward. I want to thank all

the advocates, all the families, all the grieving families out there who have lost loved ones, and I want to thank our first responders for the work they do every day, because they go in harm's way when we run away from it.

Thank you very much, and again, thank you to the member from Whitby.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** I return to the member from Whitby for his final reply.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** I'd like to thank the member for Peterborough–Kawartha, the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore, the member for St. Catharines and the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane for their compassionate remarks on the Provincial Day of Service Act.

Speaker, with the support of all members in this House for the Provincial Day of Service, our great province demonstrates once again our continued support to the families of victims of terrorism and honours, as we should, the sacrifices of those Ontario residents who serve their communities every day, every month and every year. Speaker, they represent what is best in Ontario, and what can and should bring us together, as it has this afternoon.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

Mr. Coe has moved second reading of Bill 51, An Act to proclaim the Provincial Day of Service. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Pursuant to standing order 101(h), the bill is referred to the Committee of the Whole House. I look to the member from Whitby if he wishes to refer the bill to a standing committee.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Through you, Speaker, I'd like to send it to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker):** Is the majority in favour of this bill being referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills? Agreed.

All matters relating to private members' public business having been completed, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1809.*

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Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
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<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
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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
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<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
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<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
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**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, Gurratan Singh  
Donna Skelly, 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  
Robin Martin, Effie J. Triantafilopoulos  
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