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28 October 2021

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Jeudi
28 octobre 2021

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 28 October 2021

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 28 octobre 2021

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers/Prières.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 27, 2021, on the motion for an address in reply to the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I understand that when we last debated this government order, the associate minister had the floor. Further debate?

Hon. Jane McKenna: On October 4, Ontario's Lieutenant Governor delivered our government's throne speech to open the fall session of this 42nd Parliament. For the benefit of those watching at home, the throne speech opens every new session of Parliament. This speech introduces the government's direction and goals and outlines how it will work to achieve them. During these unique pandemic times, our throne speech reaffirmed our commitment to do everything we can to defeat COVID-19 and to support Ontarians so that we can put this pandemic behind us. Everyone in this place knows the importance of having a plan. Whether you run a small business or have a family, planning sets the foundation.

The last 19 months have been some of the most difficult in modern life. Families were separated, and many people grieved friends and family members who lost their lives to COVID-19. Jobs were lost and businesses closed. Important life milestones were put on hold. The pandemic has and continues to challenge us in ways previously unimaginable. It has impacted every aspect of our way of life. We also know that the global pandemic has not been equal. It has significantly impacted some people much more than others.

Speaker, our government has taken extraordinary measures, guided by the science and evidence, to slow the spread of this virus and keep Ontarians healthy and safe. Our approaches included some of the highest vaccine thresholds for easing restrictions. We have maintained effective public health measures, like indoor masking, while implementing vaccine policies to protect our most vulnerable in retirement homes, hospitals, home and community care, schools and post-secondary institutions, among others.

Ontario led the country in being the first to declare a provincial state of emergency due to COVID-19. Premier Ford showed strong leadership by being the first government in Canada to release modelling data that guided the government's decision-making. Ontario led the country in being one of the first to outline a plan to re-open our economy, and we're leading North America with among the highest vaccination rates. In fact, yesterday's numbers show that 88% of Ontarians 12 and older have received one dose and 84% are now fully vaccinated.

We know that some Ontarians continue to have questions about getting the shot. That's okay. As a parent, the key life lessons I taught my five kids were to always be compassionate, be respectful and be thankful for what you have. Medical experts tell us that it's important to speak with compassion when having conversations with others who may have hesitancy about getting the COVID vaccine.

We also know, unfortunately, that vaccine hesitancy can spread almost as fast as COVID-19. One story with misinformation can circulate online or through the media very quickly, and we've seen that over and over again.

We've also heard from people who were vaccine-hesitant that conversations with their friends, family members and doctors, as well as seeing those close to them get vaccinated without experiencing any serious side effects, were the reasons that they changed their minds.

Speaker, as more and more people step forward to get their vaccines, it moves us further into a phase when we can leave the pandemic behind. Each dose brings more certainty that the days of widespread closures and lockdowns are behind us. Each dose allows us to more confidently plan for our future. It is thanks to the collective efforts of all Ontarians that we're making progress on this steady road to safely and carefully eliminate the remaining restrictions and fully reopen Ontario's economy. Ontario makes up 39% of Canada's population and, as of yesterday, just 15% of all active COVID-19 cases in Canada. Despite what opposition parties want people to believe, Ontario is managing the spread of COVID-19 during the fourth wave better than British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Quebec.

Throughout the pandemic, our government has been laser-focused on keeping Ontarians healthy and safe.

On July 13, 2020, our government House leader, the member for Markham–Stouffville, introduced a motion to appoint a Select Committee on Emergency Management Oversight. The purpose of this committee was to receive oral reports from the Premier on any extensions of emergency orders by the Lieutenant Governor in Council

related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the rationale for those extensions. To date, the committee has met 15 times. I want to acknowledge the outstanding work of Ontario's Solicitor General, who has presented and answered questions from committee members at each of those 15 meetings. Committee members have also heard from and questioned the Minister of Health, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, and the head of Ontario's science table, Dr. Brown, among others.

Speaker, our government, under the leadership of Premier Ford, recognizes that the official opposition plays an important role in holding government to account. That's why, unlike other governments, Ontario's Legislature has sat in person through the entire pandemic, and it's why the Select Committee on Emergency Management Oversight was put forward by our government.

Our battle against the first, second, third and, now, fourth waves of this terrible virus has proven that when Ontarians work together, we can accomplish almost anything. The Ontario science advisory table emphasized this when they recently released data showing that Ontario has flattened the fourth wave. Nationally, the Delta-driven fourth wave also appears to be levelling off, although people who are unvaccinated continue to experience severe outcomes from COVID-19 infections at elevated rates.

As we enter the winter season, we may see a rise in cases as people head indoors, but as we've heard from Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, this is not cause for panic. Thanks to the protection offered by Ontario's world-leading vaccine coverage, people who are vaccinated are at a much lower risk of more severe health outcomes. As temperatures get cooler, Ontario's top doctor and public health officials will continuously monitor hospitalizations and intensive care units, as these indicators drive decision-making.

We also recognize that we cannot live under these exceptional measures forever. That's why last week our government outlined plans to incrementally lift all remaining public health measures, including the provincial requirement for proof of vaccination and wearing face coverings in indoor public settings, by March 28, 2022. This plan to safely reopen Ontario and manage COVID-19 for the long term was developed in consultation with Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health and will be guided by the ongoing assessment of key public health and health care indicators.

Speaker, at one time or another, all of us in this place have talked about ending hallway health care. The Ontario Liberals promised to end hallway health care in 2003, 2007, and again in 2011. In 2014, the Del Duca-Wynne Liberals said they were going to "do their best" to end hallway health care and failed miserably.

The Ontario PC Party was elected in 2018 on a promise of ending hallway health care and rebuilding our province's neglected long-term-care system. After the election, we got right to work on plans to transform Ontario's health system by breaking down administrative

silos and transitioning our health system to one that's more patient-centred. And then the pandemic hit.

0910

The pandemic exposed the failure of successive governments, both provincial and federal, to provide adequate funding for our hospitals. The clear consequence was a health system ill-equipped to handle a crisis. Since then, we have invested billions of dollars to add over 3,100 hospital beds and build and redevelop hospitals across this province. And since hospitals are more than bricks and mortar, we've also made sure that qualified nurses and doctors are by patients' sides when they need care.

Due to strong action by our Minister of Health and our government, Ontario now has one of the highest rates, per capita, of intensive care beds in Canada. As a result, Ontario is now much better positioned to respond to our current and any future health crisis. We are making record investments in our health care system, including more than \$16 billion since the start of the pandemic, to protect people's health.

We are supporting the ongoing COVID-19 response with more than \$3.7 billion over two years for Ontario's comprehensive testing strategy. This includes \$2.3 billion this year to ensure timely access to testing, to target testing to vulnerable communities, to expand the capacity to process tests efficiently and effectively, and to protect people disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Regardless of where you are in this great country where we live, the coronavirus has brought all Canadians together with the shared goal of beating COVID-19.

One of the many things Canadians take tremendous pride in is our health care system. Across our great country, our publicly funded medicare system provides health services where and when we need them. But our national health care system has been stretched to the limit.

When Canada's health care system was created in 1957, it was a 50-50 cost-sharing partnership with the federal government. I want to say that again—it was 50-50—so everybody understands where we are today. This partnership continued until 1976, when Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau broke the 50-50 partnership. Funding decreases continued for several decades. From 1985 to 1995, six federal budgets scaled back or completely froze health transfers to the provinces for health care.

And then in 1998-99, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien's government cut \$11.2 billion in federal funding. By 2003, the federal government provided just 16% of all health care funding. Over the past 15 years, the government of Canada has increased the share to almost 22%, a far cry from the 50-50 partnership our health care system was built on.

While our government will never stop in its pursuit of fixing long-term care or building much-needed hospital beds, these efforts will only benefit from the federal government paying its fair share.

That's why Ontario has joined with every other province and territory in calling on the federal government to increase the Canada Health Transfer to 35%, up from

22%. That's why Premier Ford, together with other provincial and territorial leaders, is calling on Ottawa to increase the Canada Health Transfer from 22% to 35% of provincial and territorial health care funding. This gap represents billions of dollars in lost funding that Ontario could use to accelerate progress in delivering better care for our most vulnerable citizens.

Imagine what we could do together if the federal government stepped up and once again became an equal funding partner, Speaker.

Getting older is unavoidable; it's inevitable. In fact, last year, for the first time in history, Canada became home to more people over the age of 65 than those under 15. Baby boomers now make up 25% of the population, up from 18% 20 years ago. This demographic shift certainly wasn't a surprise. We knew that baby boomers were getting older.

Today, Ontario's 626 long-term-care homes currently provide care and support for more than 115,000 people and their families every year. But for decades, long-term-care homes have been neglected right across the country. Between 2003 and 2018, the previous Liberal government added just 616 long-term-care beds in the entire province, not nearly enough to keep up with the demand. Speaker, Thunder Bay added more hotel rooms during those same 15 years.

Not only did the previous Liberal government fail to create new long-term-care beds, they also stood by as nearly 300 of our long-term-care homes became antiquated and required redevelopment. That's more than 30,000 beds that we need to bring up to today's standards. Sadly, due to this lack of planning by the previous government, by January 2018, there were over 32,000 seniors on the waiting list for a long-term-care bed in Ontario.

Right across the country, COVID-19 brought into focus the long-standing vulnerabilities of Canada's and Ontario's long-term-care sector. It uncovered unimaginable horrors that were the result of decades of underfunding and neglect. That's why our government is investing \$2.6 billion to build 30,000 new and modern long-term-care-home beds over the next 10 years and thousands more are being upgraded to 21st century design standards. Right now in Ontario there are more than 20,000 new and 15,000 upgraded beds under development. This is more than 60% of our goal.

But more beds aren't enough on their own. Between 2009 and 2019, the average total amount of care provided to residents increased by only 22 minutes. That's why our government is investing nearly \$5 billion over four years to hire more than 27,000 long-term-care staff, including nurses and personal support workers. This will allow us to provide our long-term-care-home residents with four hours of direct care each day.

Speaker, our government is leading the nation. We are the first province in Canada to commit to providing four hours of daily care to residents in long-term-care homes. Meeting this commitment will take time, as we need to recruit and train thousands of personal support workers and nurses. Our government is acting on the advice

received from the long-term-care commission, the Auditor General and everyday Ontarians who have seen first-hand the problems in long-term care.

On Tuesday, the provincial government announced that we're spending \$20 million this year to hire 193 new inspections staff and to launch a proactive inspection program in Ontario's long-term-care homes. This new spending will double the number of long-term-care inspectors in Ontario by the fall of 2022, with a ratio of one inspector for every two homes. This record number of inspectors will enable us to proactively visit each home every year while continuing inspections on a complaints basis. Speaker, this investment will give Ontarians the best long-term-care inspection regime in Canada.

We're also making significant progress in addressing the shortage of personal support workers in our hospitals, long-term-care facilities, seniors' residences and home care by adding 16,200 more PSWs to our health care system over the next six months.

But no province can solve these problems alone. Ontario currently funds \$76,000 a year, and growing, for every resident in long-term care. Unfortunately, the federal government's last proposal would provide just \$2,500 for each resident. Obviously, that's not enough. We owe Ontario seniors so much, and our government will continue to provide them with the supports they need to age and live with dignity.

Speaker, our government is also committed to protecting and preserving the environment for the benefit of people today and in the future. The Progressive Conservative Party has a long history of protecting the environment, as demonstrated by my colleague the honourable member for York-Simcoe, whose father, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, led majority governments that were arguably the most environmentally progressive in Canada's history. He was even honoured as Canada's greenest Prime Minister.

Speaker, in my riding of Burlington, I've implemented a free drop-off at my community office for rechargeable batteries, single-use batteries and cellphones. So far, we've collected 300 pounds of batteries and nearly 5,000 litres of household and aerosol paints.

And earlier this year, our Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks announced the transfer of Ontario's Blue Box Program to the producers of plastics and other packaging. Under the PC government of Bill Davis, some of the first curbside recycling programs were introduced by Ontario's municipalities. Thanks to these and other programs, our province has achieved a 62% recycling rate.

When it comes to recycling, here's what we know:

(1) The volume of packaging waste and the amount of litter in our communities has increased.

(2) What goes in our blue box for recycling depends on where in Ontario you live. Things you can recycle in one municipality are landfill just down the road.

(3) We know that recycling costs have skyrocketed and waste diversion rates have flatlined.

We recognized that Ontario's Blue Box Program needed to be improved. We needed a new approach to better meet today's waste diversion and recycling needs. We needed to take strong action to move Ontario into a modern era of better recycling, and to showcase the province as a global leader in environmental stewardship. That's why the Ontario Waste Management Association called for the implementation of a new blue box system that ensures the corporations who produce packaging are fully responsible for recycling of materials.

0920

I mentioned in the lead-off to my comments this morning the importance of having a plan. Someone once said that it's important to always plan ahead because it wasn't raining when Noah built the ark. Throughout the pandemic, our government has never hesitated to spend what is necessary to protect lives and support family and businesses. But unprecedented levels of spending have created new fiscal challenges. That's why our government remains steadfast in our commitment to an economic and fiscal recovery that is fueled by economic growth, not painful tax hikes or spending cuts.

We will create the conditions for long-term economic growth by building roads and highways; building and expanding transit to communities across this province; and building an economy that makes Ontario the best place in the world to do business, work and raise a family, no matter where you live in this province.

Speaker, the Ontario election is 217 days from today and the campaign ads have already started. The NDP leader would have you believe that if elected to government, they would spend more—more on health care and more on education, among other things. But the NDP's record doesn't match their rhetoric.

During their only time in government, the Ontario NDP boasted that they helped "hospitals, schools, municipalities, colleges and universities ... adjust to a 1% increase in funding—a big shift after years of increases averaging over 8%." The NDP bragged that they capped base funding for hospitals, schools and municipalities for two years "to reduce the spending trend lines in these sectors..." The Ontario NDP celebrated using their words: "We have cut program spending for two consecutive years, something that no Ontario government has achieved for more than 50 years."

Speaker, that's not all. Ontario's first and only NDP government implemented a wage freeze for all public sector workers. They went even further. The NDP cut 6,000 teaching positions in what the NDP finance minister described as a "major and permanent cost efficiency."

Isn't it ironic that today's NDP opposes any government's attempt to manage spending, yet during the NDP's only term in government they cut health care and education, implemented a public sector wage freeze, cut 6,000 teachers and forced nurses, educators and public servants to take twelve unpaid days off every year for three straight years?

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

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Early on in her presentation, my friend from Burlington talked about the leadership of Premier Ford. I've been watching television lately—a lot of television political ads. The Premier is on there saying, "I say yes to everything; I'm the yes man." Nothing wrong with that, but we're in a province where the vaccination rate is okay—it could be better.

My question under the leadership portion is, why hasn't the government spent money on ads encouraging the unvaccinated to become vaccinated and really push that as opposed to "I'm the yes man?" I would like to see the government spend money on meaningful things to improve the lives of everyone in Ontario, meaning get more people vaccinated so we can get rid of this COVID thing, instead of "I'm the yes man." Could the member comment on that, please?

Hon. Jane McKenna: Thank you so much to the member across. I first of all want to say that everyone, including I'm sure you people on that side, constantly reinforce, as I said in my speech, to everyone to get the vaccine. But as I said, there are exemptions for people.

As we are today, we're 88% of 12 and over vaccinated and 84% with second doses. We're the highest rate across North America. We've done a fabulous job over here, and I know the member across can also attest to the Minister of Health how many times she stands up in this House, how many times she's out talking in the papers, saying "please get vaccinated." She's done a phenomenal job, along with everybody in this House, making sure that we do the right thing to make sure that people get vaccinated.

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

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I was talking to John Tom in my riding. He owns Superior Home Care. He was talking about the care economy, which complements a big part of the file the minister has.

Could you tell us how this throne speech is going to help us recover from COVID and really embrace the care economy in both hiring more people, investing in health care, recognizing international credentials but also helping women in the workforce?

Hon. Jane McKenna: Thank you so much to the member from Barrie–Innisfil.

As you know, when we did the throne speech, we talked about what's facing us right now in Ontario and how we have to put the COVID-19 pandemic behind us. We also recognize that when you're talking about jobs, and obviously—with the CARE, that I was in Durham and Toronto, was a fabulous announcement that we put there for anti-human trafficking.

I just want to say that we had some very critical, challenging times left by the Liberals in our health care system.

As you know, we've invested in hospital ICU capacities. We now have one of the highest rates of intensive care beds in Canada.

And you look at all the things we've been doing with long-term care—I'll wait till the next question and talk about all that.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: There are a few things that are missing out of the throne speech. But I want to ask about the vaccine hesitancy that the member raised earlier. I have a constituent in London–Fanshawe who has a serious phobia to needles. It is a real thing. I don't know if anyone has come across that. There are articles about this actual phobia. People are physically opposed and mentally stressed to get the vaccine. He has been advocating for the Johnson and Johnson vaccine, which is one shot, and he said he can handle that.

We've been advocating with the Minister of Health to get the Johnson and Johnson vaccine. It is now something that has been approved. Other provinces have it.

Can you provide any information on where the Ministry of Health is on accessing the Johnson and Johnson vaccine so that I can give comfort to my constituent that he can get vaccinated and protected, as well, from COVID-19?

Hon. Jane McKenna: Thank you so much for that question.

As you know, that's Health Canada. To be quite honest with you—we all have our constituency offices—I have a wonderful constituent who's calling on that exact question to me constantly. I do reassure him that all the other vaccines are very safe, but I know he wants to wait for the Johnson and Johnson because it's one shot. Again, we have to wait for Health Canada to be able to okay that, moving forward. So I do respect what your constituent is saying, because I've been asked that exact same question. We are looking forward to the federal government coming forward.

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

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: We talk a lot about health care, but a lot of it is reliant on funding. Time and time again, Premier Ford, along with many other Premiers, has asked for more health care transfers.

Back in the day of Kathleen Wynne, we know that she did not use the full health care transfers that she received from the federal government. In fact, she only used 1.2%, when she was given over 5% of health care transfers.

Can the member talk about some of the advocacy we're doing at our level in order to get more health care funds so that we can improve our health care system in Ontario?

Hon. Jane McKenna: Thank you so much again to the member for Barrie–Innisfil. It's wonderful that you say that, because I get asked this all the time when we talk about health care. Obviously, this crisis put us in a terrible position, but people don't understand, like I said in my speech, that it used to be 50-50 with the federal government and us; it's now 22%—so trying to understand how we're going to be doing the exact same things when, over years and years, as I mentioned in my speech, it just depleted down to 22%. Our Premier, as you know, with other provinces and territories, has gone to the Prime Minister and said again and again, “At least put it up to 35%.” We cannot possibly function after this pandemic at 22%, considering that it has depleted so much over time,

as I've said, from 50-50. I do tell people that all the time who actually call me, because I don't think people understand where it was and where it has gone to.

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

Ms. Sandy Shaw: The member talked a lot about the environment, recycling and litter day, which is important, but, really, it's the CO₂ emissions that are the existential threat to us around the world. People are meeting in Glasgow to address this concern.

Your government's plans to increase gas-fired plants, fracking; to build Highway 413 through the greenbelt, through farmland; the MZOs that you are using to pave over farmlands and all of the things that are carbon sinks—that's taking us in the wrong direction.

What I want to know directly from the member is, what is the number that your government plans to reduce CO₂ emissions in the province of Ontario—and where is your plan?

Hon. Jane McKenna: Maybe you weren't here for my speech, because I didn't say all that.

We have said this time and time again: Before any other province, even the federal government, we're going to hit our Paris accord numbers. So we're grateful, on this side, for all the work we've done with climate change. I didn't say numerous things that we've done here. Obviously, the PA to environment has done a phenomenal job herself, with her day with picking up litter. I mentioned to you the things that I've done in my office. Maybe you've done them in your own office as well.

0930

But again, there isn't any other province or the federal government that is going to hit their Paris accord. We are, and we will.

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

Mr. Jim McDonell: I know, this month, the government announced the 2022 funding allocations for the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund, the province's main assistance program to grant municipalities help with their funding. I know that when I was mayor, we were receiving those announcements sometimes in April, and it made budgeting for the year very difficult; of course, the year was a quarter over by the time we had heard. So maybe you could just tell us why it's important that these announcements are being made in November versus being held—and that was a commitment we made to AMO. It was one of their main asks not only to our government but the previous government. I know that from 2012 to 2015, the former government also reduced the total OMPF funding, the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund, by \$100 million—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Response.

Mr. Jim McDonell: —so huge cuts.

Hon. Jane McKenna: Thank you so much for your leadership when you were mayor as well. I know we have a couple of previous mayors—obviously, with the minister from Leeds-Grenville as well, right?

I want to thank you very much for that question, because I know my mayor, Marianne Meed Ward, was so grateful for all that we've done at AMO, standing up and listening to what they have to say. She was thrilled about November, because it gives them an opportunity to look at their budgets and what they're doing moving forward, as opposed to getting things at the last minute.

I can say this: I have been three and a half years in this seat. I've never been more proud to be part of this government, because the people of Ontario—even Smokey Thomas made a comment yesterday, saying that the government is on the right track, and I think Doris Grinspun was the same. We all work together for the best outcomes for the people of Ontario, and that's our job sitting in this chamber, to be able to do that.

Again, thank you for bringing that up, because I know my mayor has, and she's very grateful for that coming out in November so she knows where she's going with her monies and our—

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

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: I would be remiss if I didn't take the time in addressing the throne speech to really thank the people of Thunder Bay–Atikokan, because they are amazing and have really worked so hard to work through the pandemic and work together as a community. It has been a real honour to represent them.

I was very unhappy when the government was prorogued, because I had a bill waiting to get into committee that both parties had approved at second reading, about improving the Northern Health Travel Grant, and that bill then was made null and void when the government was prorogued. That bill was very important to the people of northern Ontario, because they deserve equitable access to health care, like anyone in Ontario, and they shouldn't have to pay out of pocket and be financially penalized with an outdated Northern Health Travel Grant system.

The government did do one small improvement: They made direct deposits. That's the big improvement, but no increases, no better access to services. And actually, during the pandemic, they stopped the appeal processes, so people who were wanting to appeal the decision to deny their grants were actually stopped for one year. Again, I'm disappointed about that and wanted to put that on the record.

Health care in northern Ontario is something that I hear about at the doors all the time. We hear a lot of talk about wanting to develop our forestry industries, our mining industries in northern Ontario, which are so, so important to the economy of Ontario. We hear the numbers, we hear the job creation, but we can't have that kind of development if we don't have people and workers who are able to live and thrive in northern Ontario.

Sometimes, the workers who want to come and live in northern Ontario, to come to those jobs and to do that development, realize that they cannot get the health care they need and so will decide not to come to or stay in northern Ontario, and that is an issue.

I was very pleased to see the Ontario Medical Association address this this week, but I didn't see it in the throne speech. I didn't see anything about northern Ontario in the throne speech that would improve health care, which is something that many, many people have brought to the attention of the government.

The Ontario Medical Association had some recommendations. There are 12 of them, actually. They put a lot of effort into surveys, into discussions with their membership—the doctors, health care providers across the north—to get an idea of what needs to be done.

They recommend “that patients have equitable access to care in their own communities.” Whatever we can do to make sure that people get care where they live is important. It's also a right under the Canada Health Act.

“(02) Reviewing and updating incentives and supports for physicians and allied health-care workers to practise in northern Ontario and other communities that are chronically underserved.” We have communities that have lost their one doctor that they had, and it often takes months for them to find a replacement. What is cited by the doctors who are leaving is the mental health stress of being the only health professional in a community where you're often isolated by weather, by transportation restraints, by the lack of Internet or by the lack of other health professionals to support you, or where you're on call 24 hours a day. So those things are very important.

“Focusing on education, training, innovation and opportunities for collaborative care to address physician (health-provider) shortages in remote communities.” We have the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, with campuses in Thunder Bay and Sudbury. They have been asking to double the amount of seats. The new president has asked that the seats be doubled so that we train doctors in the north—they're more likely to stay in northern Ontario—and that we also train people at those schools who have family in northern Ontario. That is an important aspect, to make sure that the post-secondary institutions that really need our support have the support to train professionals who will stay in northern Ontario.

Number 4 is “creating resourced opportunities for specialist and subspecialist trainees to undertake electives and core rotations in the north.” Many of our specialists are people who are locums, who live in southern Ontario and may come to live part-time in our communities. But if we had specialists who were being trained and rotated into our small hospitals, we feel and the OMA feels there would be a better chance that those people would choose to live in northern Ontario. Why would you choose to live in northern Ontario? Because it is the most beautiful place, I would argue, in Canada, and it has affordable housing. It has clean air. It is amazing.

“(05) Giving medical students and residents the skills and opportunities they need to be confident in choosing rural and remote practices.” A person who has lived in an urban setting or in southern Ontario is sometimes intimidated by the north. There are specialized—higher rates of diabetes, higher rates of cardiovascular disease. There are accidents. So, many of them, when they are given the

opportunity to come to rural and northern Ontario, feel that they can handle that. But, again, you're very isolated, and so they don't have that community next door that they can send someone to.

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"Focusing on innovative culturally sensitive education and training opportunities addressing physician and other health-provider shortages in rural and remote communities." The cultural component of dealing with Indigenous communities' lack of resources, no roads—I mean, that's a huge thing—and airports that might be available part-time during the day: That is important. It's also important that we have doctors who are culturally sensitive to the realities of northern Ontario and Indigenous communities, who work in partnership, that we encourage Indigenous youth to take on these types of employment, and that we have those much-needed health care resources in northern Ontario and in Indigenous communities.

"Focusing on the profound and disproportionate impact of the opioid crisis and mental health issues in northern Ontario": Last weekend, I walked with hundreds of families—it was a five-kilometre walk—to raise awareness about the opioid crisis in our community and the shocking amount of overdoses and deaths of young people. In that walk, I walked beside mothers who had pictures of their children on their chests. It was something—I would walk with them, and I said that I can't believe how incredibly brave they were, that they were out there and trying desperately to get someone to listen to the need for detox beds, for treatment and for decriminalization so that people who are in trouble with the law who are addicted actually get help and not get worse. There was a mother who lost her son in a jail. There was something that was incredibly heartbreaking: a little girl who lost her mother, and she is now being raised by her grandmother—the story of that mother who went out one night and just happened upon some bad drugs.

We have on our radio the public health officers announcing that there's a load of bad drugs in the community and that people need to not use alone. We have harm reduction, but it's not sufficient. We have an app that was developed, Lifeguard, where people who are using can immediately call for help. Our paramedics see this on a daily basis, and it is a crisis across northern Ontario. That was the story from my community, but I know it's very much across northern Ontario.

We need "more social workers, mental health and addiction care providers and resources for children's mental health." Right before the pandemic, I did a press conference with children's health providers in our community and across northern Ontario and within Indigenous communities, and the shocking wait for care for children's mental health was years. You would have a child who would be in crisis and would not be able to access care unless their parent shipped them away to southern Ontario. We're talking about 10-year-olds, 11-year-olds, and they have to go and live in southern Ontario in a facility away from their families in order to access mental health supports. That's just not right. The OMA agrees with that.

"Enhancing Internet connectivity": Well, we all talk about that in this House, and I think we've agreed, but it's so, so important that that be put top of mind and also not a long-term kind of plan, because that virtual care piece that the Minister of Health has spoken about in this House is something that is wonderful if you can access it. But people cannot even access the Internet to provide—like, when all the apps are out and during COVID, the frustration from people when they had inadequate Internet is something we all know needs to be addressed, but needs to be addressed yesterday.

"A recognition of the specific need for local access to culturally safe and linguistically appropriate health care for northern Ontario's francophone population and Indigenous peoples": We have communities across northern Ontario that their main language is French. They will continually tell us that their access to health care is not in their language of choice. It's the language they want to be able to express themselves in, because that's how they are best understood. Many of us who have English as our second language know the comfort of being able to actually have your language spoken to you.

In remote First Nations, there are many elders, especially, but more and more young people who choose to speak their Indigenous languages. It is such a strong and vital component of their culture, and they feel it's so important that they are able to express themselves.

Many people who are later in life, who maybe are in the throes of dementia or just an aging process, go back to their original language. And so this access to language and linguistically appropriate health care is something that should be a right in our society.

And this is something that some people don't understand; I understand it. But it's a call for "a collaborative partnership with Indigenous Services Canada and Health Canada to address issues of safe drinking water and adequacy of health care facilities and resources in Indigenous communities." We've heard in this House many times, the jurisdiction—this is a federal government problem when it comes to Indigenous people, that that's where the money should come from. What the OMA is saying, and I think it's so vital, is that it's all our problem and that we need to work collaboratively across government lines—that includes First Nations government—to ensure that we have the basic needs of health in Indigenous communities, things like clean drinking water.

A friend of mine, she says, "Water is life." Water is a symbol in Indigenous culture. It is a strong symbol. But that people cannot even drink from their taps or even bathe in the water that they have in their community in this day and age is not something that any of us should ignore. No person in Ontario should ignore that. The OMA sees it as a vital piece. So they, as our health care professionals in Ontario, are recognizing that this is an essential piece that needs to be addressed by all of us.

And then number 12 is: "Using a harm-reduction, anti-oppressive lens, addressing the education gaps in Indigenous communities and non-Indigenous communities, as health is directly affected by education." When I was

speaking with family members and with people walking, many of them said that education was the key, that we need better education at a very young age to talk about what drug abuse is, what addiction is, why it occurs; to talk about the trauma; to talk about real-life experiences that people that live with addiction have.

0950

Children are exposed to so many things in our society. This is something that is a crisis in our society. People are dying. We need to ensure that we have a future generation that doesn't suffer through this, that is educated, that knows this is something that they hear not only at home from their parents, but also from their teachers, and it's done on a science basis; that they understand the science of addiction and why they should not be using drugs.

We're kidding ourselves if we think that our children are not being exposed to drugs at school. They are. They're in our schoolyards, in our high schools, in our colleges and universities. People are preying on the young people in our communities, and we're seeing the tragedy that's occurring.

So I commend the Ontario Medical Association. I look forward to having further discussions with them. But I didn't see that in our throne speech. I think that that really is so important, that we address the needs of health care in northern Ontario. I will continue to say that and to advocate for that for my time in this House, and I have through the years.

What I'd like to also address, in my brief time I have left, is two things. One is vaccinations for people who are older, the third vaccination. I have many seniors in my riding who are over 80, and they're saying, "What about me? I live in my home," or, "I live with my family. I would really like to be secure that I can get a vaccine." The other thing is home care. Many, many people are saying, "Why are home care workers not required to have a vaccine?" I could go on and on about home care, but my time is up. But those are two things I wanted to bring to the attention of the government.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

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

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Thank you to the member for her speech. I'm sure she's up to answering some very interesting questions. One of the questions that I'd like to ask her—this does include northern Ontario, so it's a question that certainly is something you would be quite interested in.

Ontario led the nation in investments to safely reopen schools by making \$1.3 billion in resources available to school boards. Further to these historic supports, the Ontario government provided an additional \$381 million through the federal Safe Return to Class Fund, including investments of \$50 million for HEPA filters and other immediate measures to optimize air quality and ventilation.

Why did the members opposite say no to protecting students and vote against this important initiative to protect Ontario students?

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: Thank you for the question. What I know about the preparation for education

in our community was that at the end of August, teachers, principals and school boards were unclear about what help they were going to get from the government. So in our school boards in our area, if that was the case, I just have to say that if you were giving away money, they weren't aware of it.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Thank you to the member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan for her presentation. She mentioned some things that obviously weren't in the throne speech. I want to talk about one of the things she started mentioning at the last item, which was home care.

Recently, I met with OCASI, and they said that they had a Campaign Research survey, and the results indicated that if someone was on a waiting list for a long-term-care facility, but they could have additional supports provided to them to keep them at home or living with a family member, 91% of seniors said that they would prefer to stay at home. On that result alone and what seniors are asking for, can the member speak to why home care was left out of the throne speech?

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: Home care is such an important piece. Recently, I was able to meet with the Finnish ambassador. They have an excellent reputation for providing great care for their seniors. I said, "What's the secret to your success?" And they said it is to maintain people in their homes as long as possible, providing that they felt that that was a more economical way of approaching it.

So in the throne speech, I think it was a missed opportunity. If we would have been able to see some commitment to home care and to actually refurbishing and fixing people's homes—I know that many seniors do not have the income to do that, and so that would have been a good step.

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

Hon. Jane McKenna: I just wanted to talk about what was just said there, to put it on the record that home care spending was about 6% of our health care budget. We revised the legislation to take in the home care act, so it's part of the health care system now. I just want to be clear with that, because we've been very clear, saying that we all had to get out of our silos and all work together. We've said this numerous times. Getting people from hospitals, whether they go home or into long-term care—we've worked extremely hard to make sure that happens. We did realize that the health care budget was only 6% of that, so that has been changed.

I guess my question is, do you not agree that we've all done a good job making sure that what you're talking about right now—that people get out of the hospitals and they are able to stay in their homes by doing what we've done?

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: My experience has been, when I talk to people who are struggling with home care, that they are calling my office because they are frustrated because there's no accountability. It's a private system. We do have the community care access, former

LHINs, sort of overseeing it, but it is a bureaucratic nightmare. If you have a concern, you are unable to get any kind of effective redress for that. So families feel that it needs to be more accountable, it needs to be out of the hands of these private caregiver organizations who only answer to the community care access and do not answer to the person receiving the care.

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

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you to the member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan for her thoughtful and caring remarks about how the lack of high-quality health care is impacting her constituents in Thunder Bay.

The whole purpose of a throne speech is to set the plan, the vision, for what this government wants to achieve in this upcoming session. From your perspective, when it comes to addressing the health care issues you face in your riding, what are some measures that you would have liked to have seen in this throne speech to address the health care shortages you're seeing?

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: In the throne speech, I would have liked to have seen—and it has been recommended by many, many organizations throughout the years. It's not for lack of studying the northern Ontario health problem. It has been studied to death. What we need is commitment and investment in education and a proper plan of action with real goals and guidelines, not something with long-term stretch goals. We needed this help yesterday, and it's only getting worse. So what I'd like to have seen is that in the throne speech.

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

Hon. Jane McKenna: I just want to go back to what you were saying there, because I do know that the Ontario health teams have done a phenomenal job. I think they're now covering 72% of the province with integrated care, hospital, long-term care and home care.

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When I look at the throne speech, and obviously I was here with everybody else who is here right now, it's to focus on the priorities facing Ontario right now. I'm just curious: Did you not feel, when we were talking about investing in hospitals, the ICU capacity—we now have one of the highest rates of intensive care beds in Canada. That's phenomenal. I would think you would agree with that, but I'll get you to answer that. And long-term care: We've talked about it and here's another announcement out here today about expanding careers and growth opportunities for PSWs and nurses in long-term care. It's \$100 million. Then the next day we're out here talking again about the 193 doubling of inspectors in long-term-care homes.

So I guess my question is, when you look at the throne speech, do you not recognize that it was about capitalizing what we needed to do to fix where we are and what we've done in this—

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

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: It's been over a year since we received the report from the military. In Thunder

Bay what happened was, when things were really bad here we didn't really get the impact on long-term care until December and January. What we see is a lot of announcements, but why haven't we passed legislation to ensure that families can access their loved ones? Why didn't we pass the four hours of long-term care last year? It could have been done immediately. Why didn't we do that sooner?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): We don't have enough time for another question and response. Further debate?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: It's a real pleasure to rise today to speak on our government's record and on our speech from the throne that was delivered earlier this month. When I look back on our three years in government I'm incredibly proud that when we took office we started immediately dealing with some of the fiscal situation that this province was facing—getting our deficit down—because we on this side of the aisle understand that being in a strong fiscal position allows us to deal with emerging crises.

Unfortunately, Speaker, that's just what we've seen. We've seen an emerging crisis, the likes of which we hadn't seen in Ontario, in Canada, or around the world for generations, through the COVID-19 pandemic. And because of the responsible decisions that our government made, we were able to react to that crisis and we were able to start making investments, to shore up our health system and make sure that Ontarians could get through the COVID-19 pandemic.

What I'd like to speak about a little bit today is our government's record of support for the Ottawa region, where I am proud to serve as a member of provincial Parliament for the wonderful riding of Ottawa West–Nepean. There have been significant investments over the past three years, particularly throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, to support health care throughout Ottawa, to support education throughout Ottawa and to support the creation of long-term, high-paying jobs throughout the Ottawa region.

I'm going to start by speaking a little bit on the health care front, because obviously this is an area that has been so vital and top of mind for Ontarians. During the COVID-19 pandemic I had the opportunity to attend, along with my colleagues in the Ottawa region, an event with Premier Ford at the Ottawa Hospital, the civic campus. I'll speak a little bit about the civic redevelopment a little later. I was there with Premier Ford and we got the chance to announce that Ottawa was receiving 254 more hospital beds—surge beds—to help get us through the COVID-19 pandemic. That included 56 more beds for the hospital in my riding, the Queensway Carleton Hospital, which has been doing phenomenal work throughout the pandemic and beyond. I was pleased to be able, two weeks ago, to host a pancake breakfast along with the member for Nepean to thank all of those health care heroes at the Queensway Carleton Hospital.

On top of those surge beds we also provided funding for hospital surge funding to support those hospitals in getting through this difficult time when their resources

have been stretched. In total, our government has invested \$778 million for hospital surge funding, and that included significant investments just this year in Ottawa.

In Ottawa, the Montfort Hospital in the east end of our city, which supports our vibrant francophone community, received an additional \$5.6 million in surge funding this year. That's a 2% increase in their funding from previous years. The Ottawa Hospital received \$16.8 million more this year in surge funding. The Ottawa heart institute, the best centre for heart health in Canada—arguably, one of the best in North America—received \$16.5 million more just this year. The Queensway Carleton Hospital in my riding received \$3.4 million more. CHEO received \$3.5 million more. And the Royal Ottawa hospital for mental health received \$2.2 million more. Those are dollars that are going to work right away in our health care system, supporting the good work that all of the folks are doing at our hospitals—again, tremendous investment across the province, but particularly in Ottawa.

Speaker, one of my top priorities when I got elected was to help support the expansion of good, reliable mental health services across the city of Ottawa—and one of those key pieces of expanding that service was that we needed to renovate and repair the Queensway Carleton Hospital's mental health unit, which services folks in the west end of Ottawa and a little bit beyond, up the valley. So I got to work after getting elected, speaking with the Minister of Health, speaking with the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. I'm incredibly proud that last March I was able to go to the Queensway Carleton Hospital and announce that our government had provided the \$10 million in funding to renovate and expand the Queensway Carleton mental health unit, which is going to be a real game changer for folks seeking mental health support in the west end of Ottawa. Construction is well under way on that project, and I can't wait to go and tour the new unit once it's up and going.

There are also other investments happening in health care. In my riding, we saw funding to completely renovate and overhaul the Carlington Community Health Centre. Just the other day, I had the chance, with Cam MacLeod, the executive director of the Carlington Community Health Centre, to tour the new facility. Renovations are almost complete. This transformation that has happened in my riding is quite incredible. They took an old school-house from the early 1900s and have totally transformed it, top to bottom, to serve the community and to make sure that those health needs are right there. There's a brand new building right there that is offering affordable housing for seniors and others in the community who need it, and then connected to that affordable housing centre is a community health centre that is offering mental health supports, maternity supports, daycare supports—the list goes on—at this fabulous new facility. So I'm incredibly proud that our government got that done and that that renovation is nearly complete, and that it's going to be serving folks across Ottawa West–Nepean.

We also have a couple of other major health care projects under way. One of them folks in this chamber have

heard me speak about a little bit before, and that's the CHEO 1Door4Care project.

Speaker, as you know, CHEO has been a part of my life for many years. When I was born, I had a cleft palate, and the doctors told my parents that I would probably never be able to speak, but now, as my parents say, they can't shut me up. So CHEO provided phenomenal support to me as I was growing up. Beyond that, they were there for my family when my brother needed them, when going through challenges with his autism, his special needs, as well as his epilepsy. One of the things that has always struck me is that for families with children with special needs, when they enter a crisis moment, sometimes they don't know where to turn. For us, where we turned was the CHEO emergency department, when we were in a crisis with my brother. We went there and, thankfully, we were able to access some support—but that was really on a whim. We needed a place in Ottawa that could provide dedicated support to children with special needs, mental health and rehabilitative care needs.

CHEO came forward to me during the election and said, "Jeremy, what we'd like to do is build a facility at CHEO called 1Door4Care so that families with children with special needs and mental health needs know exactly where to go. There is one door that they can go to at CHEO."

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So I got to work right after getting elected, meeting with all of the different players—the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Infrastructure—talking to them, lobbying them, saying we need to get this facility built in Ottawa. And Speaker, I'm proud to report that last year in our budget, budget 2021, our government fully funded the construction of this brand new facility.

CHEO 1Door4Care is going to be a more-than-\$300-million project for Ottawa, the largest infrastructure project since the LRT in Ottawa. It's going to be a 200,000-square-foot building on the CHEO campus that will support over 40,000 families with kids with special needs, mental health needs and rehabilitative care needs right across eastern Ontario. It will consolidate seven disparate facilities that are spread out across the city—providing an inadequate level of care, if we're being honest—as well as completely revamp an existing building at CHEO that was built in the 1970s and no longer serves the needs of our community. I am so excited to see this project built. This would have been a game-changer for my family, and it's going to be a game-changer for families in years to come in Ottawa.

On top of this, there is of course the new Ottawa Hospital which is going to be built in Ottawa. It's going to completely redevelop the civic campus in Ottawa.

Speaker, there's an interesting irony with the new Ottawa Hospital. The last civic campus was built in 1918, after the Spanish influenza, because the city desperately needed some new health care infrastructure. That old civic campus was built with lessons learned and internalized throughout that pandemic. Now, Speaker, to bookend it,

we have our new Ottawa Hospital that is going to be coming online in a couple of years. That's going to internalize the lessons that we've learned through COVID-19 and make sure that things like people-flow management and making sure that there are single-bed rooms throughout the hospital—all of these important pieces are coming together in this new state-of-the-art facility that's going to include three research towers, a tremendous amount of new beds, including transitory care beds, and is going to totally revitalize the health care system in Ottawa. Our Carling Avenue is going to become Ottawa's version of University Avenue. I expect that very soon we'll be going toe to toe with the folks down here in Toronto in terms of the best health care system in Ontario. So, tremendous, tremendous good news.

Speaker, I recognize I'm running low on time, but I'd like to pivot a little bit and also speak about long-term care, because, of course, making sure that we are getting our long-term-care system on track is a key priority of this government, and across Ottawa, we have seen some significant investment. Our government has committed to over 500 new long-term-care beds across the Ottawa region. That's on top of existing beds that are also being upgraded—but 500 new beds, Speaker. When you look back at the previous government that only built 611 new beds across seven years, this is remarkable that we have 500 under way in Ottawa already. Of those 500 new beds, I'm incredibly proud that around 200 of them will be going right in my riding in a partnership with the Perley and Rideau memorial veterans' hospital to build a long-term-care facility for folks in the west end.

We've also seen our government provide funding to ensure that air conditioning is provided to folks in long-term care. I had the chance recently to visit all of the long-term-care facilities in my riding and see first-hand those air conditioning units that have been installed into individual rooms, to make sure that our seniors are experiencing the comfort that any of us would expect if we were accessing that service. So I'm very pleased to see those upgrades have happened in Ottawa West—Nepean thanks to funding from our government.

We also saw surge funding for prevention and containment across the long-term-care sector—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I regret to interrupt the member—

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: I could go on, but thank you so much for indulging me to speak on this.

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

Debate deemed adjourned.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

MICHAEL RAY

Mr. Percy Hatfield: We lost a dear friend in early October. Mike Ray was a former member here; in fact, a

former presiding officer back in the days of the Peterson government. Mike was a lawyer. He taught at the law school and ran Legal Assistance of Windsor, a free clinic for those most in need of legal services. He served on Windsor city council for seven years. In fact, as a reporter, I was covering council the night some of his Liberal friends came in in the middle of the meeting to tell him Bernie Newman was retiring and they wanted Mike to run for the nomination. He was starting late. As a well-connected party insider, he had been signing up members, supposedly in support of Bernie, but Mike Ray won the Liberal nomination and the election.

Back in those days, there was a Speaker, a Deputy Speaker and a single Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House. Mike was the Deputy Chair and, when he stepped down, he was replaced by two people, a First and Second Deputy Chair, and it wasn't until 2004, as you know, that we added the Third Deputy Chair.

Mike Ray was a gentleman of the old school, always in a suit and tie. After Queen's Park, he ran the regional Family Responsibility Office and served on the board at Windsor Regional Hospital. He was also appointed a director of the Windsor Port Authority for nine years, he was on the Windsor Police Service board and a director at the YQG Windsor International Airport Authority.

He always put his community first. He was a principled advocate and fought hard for the issues he believed in. I know of no one who didn't respect Mike Ray. He was a mentor. Condolences to Joyce and his family from all of us here in Ontario's provincial Parliament.

IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Mr. Speaker, I hope you bear with me for an extra few seconds, because I'm talking about a subject which is very dear to my heart.

Just last week, the Minister of Labour announced changes that would make it easier for immigrants to get integrated into the Ontario workforce in professions that match their area of expertise. I myself was one of those immigrants. For many months, I had to work night shifts at Tim Hortons to make ends meet. I lived that challenge myself. While I managed to get back to my profession, I witnessed countless other immigrants giving up and abandoning their professions. I don't want anyone to go through that disappointment.

This is a well-known issue, at least since I landed in Canada—14 years of various government promises after promises with no real action to change it. These are lost opportunities not only for the new immigrants and their families, but for Ontario as well. That's why we are proposing this legislation. It is a win-win-win situation—yes, three wins. It's a win for the immigrants to establish their careers and find employment to integrate into the Canadian workforce faster than ever before, it's also a win for employers who are filling the need for jobs with skilled workers and expanding their businesses, and it's a win for

our government as we create a successful environment for new Canadians and grow our economy.

We are building a better Ontario for the people.

ROAD SAFETY

Ms. Jessica Bell: Last week, a young woman, Nadia Mozumder, was hit by a van as she crossed Danforth Avenue, by a driver who was later charged with careless driving. At her funeral, Nadia's father said, "I lost my everything." I want to recognize the lives of people who have died on our roads, including Miguel Escanan, John Offutt and Dalia Chako—people who have died on roads in University–Rosedale, including Bloor and Avenue. These people didn't have to die.

Do you know what happens to people who are charged with breaking a road rule when they kill and injure someone? Very little. They are charged, and then usually when they get to court, they have the option to plead down and walk away with a fine—a few hundred dollars for a life. The vast majority of these people never get to take a driver re-education course, they never have to hear impact statements, and the vast majority of them are never convicted.

As legislators, we have a responsibility to ensure tragedies like this never happen again. We can change the rules to make our roads safer, to bring in tougher penalties like the vulnerable road users law, to redesign our roads and our sidewalks and our intersections by bringing in a provincial Vision Zero plan and to enforce speed limits by expanding the use of safety cameras.

1020

We cannot bring these people back, but we can stop these tragedies from happening again so cyclists, seniors, transit users and pedestrians can walk our roads and streets safely and without fear. It is our job to make that happen here at Queen's Park, and I urge us to do so.

DAVE BARROW

Mrs. Daisy Wai: I rise this morning to pay tribute to former mayor of Richmond Hill Dave Barrow. He served Richmond Hill since 1978 and as our mayor for 15 years.

Mayor Barrow, thank you for all you have done for Richmond Hill. Under your leadership, the town of Richmond Hill has widely developed and is recognized as the city of Richmond Hill. The cultural plan and strategic plan you developed have laid the foundation for future growth.

I have been living in Richmond Hill for almost 30 years. It is a great place to raise my family and start my business. I was honoured serving with former mayor Barrow on the police services board when he was the chair. It is the best board I've ever served on. We also served on the Mackenzie Health board, where he always sought quality of health care for Richmond Hill. He was a role model for me when I served as chair for the Richmond Hill Chamber of Commerce, as he was the board chair, not only once, but twice.

Mayor Barrow, thank you for all you have done and all your contributions to the city of Richmond Hill.

WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: With winter weather already arriving across much of the north, many of us are turning our attention to winter road safety. In northern Ontario, roads are often the lifeblood of our communities. Highways 11 and 17 are critically important infrastructure. They are often the only way we can get in and out of our cities and towns. People rely on them to get to work, doctor's appointments, to go to school and to ship goods all over our country. However, every year, like clockwork, winter weather brings an increase in accidents and fatalities.

Injuries and fatalities are twice more likely to occur on a northern highway than on a highway in southern Ontario, per capita. Many believe, myself included, that this situation could have been prevented if the province improved winter road conditions in northern Ontario. My caucus colleagues and I are fighting for the north, and we believe that northerners should have the same safe roads that southern Ontario residents expect. We believe that the pavement on Highways 11 and 17 should be bare of snow within eight hours of the end of snowfall.

It just isn't right that our infrastructure needs don't seem important to this government. Where is the investment, and where are the increased safety standards?

ISLAMIC HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. John Fraser: October is Islamic Heritage Month here in Ontario. That was made possible in 2016 by the member from London–Fanshawe. It was also co-signed by the members from Scarborough North and Etobicoke North, so it was an initiative that was supported by all three parties in this Legislature. Since then, it has given Ontario's many Muslim faith communities a chance to celebrate and to share with all Ontarians their culture and traditions.

For the last few years, COVID-19 has made it hard for us to come together in the ways that we're used to. Many faith communities have done a lot to try to overcome that, virtually. It's been hard to celebrate with families. It's been a really challenging time.

I would like to say, in particular, a word of special thanks this Islamic Heritage Month to the Muslim faith communities in my riding of Ottawa South: the AMA Mosque of Mercy on Hunt Club Road; the Assalam Mosque on St. Laurent; the Ali Masjid mosque on Walkley; also the Ismaili community centre on Conroy Road. Thank you for all that you do to build community in Ottawa South, whether it's through opening your doors to the broader community, making sure families in need are supported, that youth have a place to go, or supporting our community's efforts to combat COVID-19. Thank you.

Now, as Islamic Heritage Month draws to a close, I think it's also important to acknowledge there's a lot more

work to do to fight Islamophobia. I just want to say to the Muslim communities in Ontario that every member of this Legislature stands with you in that battle and will continue to fight with you to ensure that hate has no place here in Ontario.

OXI DAY

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: Today is a special day for people of Hellenic descent in Ontario and for Hellenes across the world. Today is Oxi Day.

The word “oxi” translates from Greek into English as “no.” It’s a simple word, but one with great significance for people of Hellenic descent across the world—so much so that it is actually celebrated annually.

The significance of Oxi Day dates back to 1940 and the Second World War. Nazi Germany had been conquering Europe one country at a time. Their Italian allies attacked Greece, with the Nazis joining their attack soon after. On October 28, 1940, they demanded surrender from Prime Minister Metaxas. Metaxas’s response? “Oxi,” “No.”

The refusal of Greece to submit to fascism is considered by many to be a turning point in the war. Greece’s resistance delayed Hitler’s attack on Russia, leaving his soldiers fighting in the bitter Russian winter. The pivotal moment in history prompted Winston Churchill to state, “Hence, we will not say that Greeks fight like heroes, but that heroes fight like Greeks.” It’s an inspiration to Greeks and to others around the world fighting for freedom and human rights today.

Today, we remember the brave men and women in 1940 and people like them in many nations since then who said “oxi” and who say no to tyranny and oppression.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Speaker, everyone in Ontario knows that profiteering in long-term-care homes is wrong. Everyone in Ontario believes in their hearts that putting profits over the care of our seniors is wrong—everyone, apparently, except the Premier, because he’s now rewarding for-profit care homes, homes with the deadliest records.

These corporations are getting very lucrative multi-million-dollar, 30-year contracts—homes like Orchard Villa, where 78 people died and the Canadian Armed Forces witnessed these horrors; Sienna homes, where 471 people died across the province while at the same time paying \$16 million in dividends to their shareholders and taking more taxpayer dollars to build more beds so they will continue to profit. In fact, the FAO says that six billion taxpayer dollars will go to private long-term-care homes in the province. But the Premier continues to do what he has always done: reward his corporate buddies, putting the interests of large, for-profit corporations first.

Speaker, this profiteering has to stop. It’s time we put our mothers, our grandmothers, our grandfathers, our fathers first. We believe, and we insist, that this government needs to act now. We need to take the profits out of long-term-care homes. Protect our seniors first.

BRAIN CANCER AWARENESS DAY

Mr. Bill Walker: I rise today to recognize that October 24 was Brain Cancer Awareness Day.

This is something that hits very close to home for me. On May 8, 2015, my son Zach had brain tumour surgery. It’s a day my wife, Michaela, and I will never forget. We are eternally grateful to Dr. MacDougall and his team at University Hospital, London for their skill, dedication and care.

I also want to thank the Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada for all their work on the Hats for Hope campaign to raise awareness of brain cancer in Canada. I encourage everybody to visit hatsforhope.ca to get your toque and help raise funds to help those who are fighting this deadly disease.

Early detection, innovative treatment, more research and isotopes are vital to defeating brain cancer. I’m very proud to say that four of Bruce Power’s reactors produce cobalt-60, an isotope that is used to treat brain cancer. I commend Bruce Power for their continued commitment to the production of this life-saving isotope as, every day, 27 Canadians are diagnosed with a brain tumour.

I also want to thank James Scongack of the Canadian Nuclear Isotope Council for his hard work and leadership to raise awareness of the role isotopes play in helping to treat this deadly disease.

Mr. Speaker, I will introduce a PMB entitled Championing Ontario-made Medical Isotopes on November 2 in this House to applaud OPG, Bruce Power, McMaster University and the nuclear industry for their continued innovation and leadership around the world and to ensure we remain the leading isotope supplier in the world.

1030

It is critically important for us to show our support and let all those who are fighting brain cancer know they are not alone. We’re with them, we support them, and we will continue the fight with them.

MEMBER’S CONDUCT

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I understand the government House leader has a point of order he wishes to raise.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Speaker, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to move a motion without notice respecting the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston, and that the question of the motion be put immediately without debate or amendment.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to move a motion without notice respecting the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston, and that the question on the motion be put immediately without debate or amendment. Agreed? Agreed.

I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I move that this House expresses its disapproval of, and disassociates itself from, a string of disreputable conduct by the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston in the context of the pandemic and

COVID-19 vaccines, most specifically his use of social media to post photographs and false and hurtful information about identified individuals; and this House calls on the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston to publicly apologize for this behaviour and to desist from further conduct that is inappropriate and unbecoming of a member of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Calandra has moved that this House expresses its disapproval of—

Mr. John Fraser: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Dispense? Dispense.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm very pleased to inform the House that page Sujay Surya, from the riding of Oakville North–Burlington, is today's page captain. We have with us today at Queen's Park his mother, Shubha Narasimhan, and his father, Nanda Suryanarayana.

Welcome to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. We're delighted to have you here.

COVID-19 DEATHS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I understand the member for Brampton Centre has a point of order.

Ms. Sara Singh: Speaker, I seek unanimous consent for the House to observe a moment of silence for the 39 Ontarians who have succumbed to COVID-19 over the past week.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to observe a moment of silence for the 39 Ontarians who have succumbed to COVID-19 over the past week. Agreed? Agreed.

Members will please rise.

The House observed a moment's silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. Members will take their seats.

QUESTION PERIOD

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Sara Singh: My question is to the Premier. Speaker, despite all we've learned in this pandemic about for-profit care, this government continues to hand lucrative, multi-million-dollar contracts over to the worst operators in the private long-term-care sector. Families across Ontario experienced those horror stories that came from those homes in the pandemic. Seniors pleaded for support, residents died from neglect, and workers weren't given personal protective equipment.

No one in this province recommends giving these for-profit providers more contracts when they couldn't even deliver quality care to residents.

So to the Premier: Why is the Minister of Long-Term Care handing over more lucrative contracts to the worst players in private, for-profit long-term care after they failed to protect our vulnerable seniors?

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

Hon. Rod Phillips: I thank the member for her question. I always am pleased with the chance to talk about our government's plan to fix long-term care.

There are three principles in that plan. The first is making sure that we build 30,000 net new beds. By the way, we're also going to be redeveloping about 30,000 beds to make sure there are enough beds, something the previous government didn't do.

The second is to make sure that seniors receive four hours of care. That requires working to hire 27,000 new staff to support those seniors and create the highest level of care of any place in the country.

And third, our plan will make sure that there is accountability, that there is enforcement and that there is transparency. Later today, Mr. Speaker, I'll introduce legislation that will enact a new act around long-term care to make sure that that is in place.

Earlier this week, I announced the doubling of the number of inspectors and the increase in the power of those inspectors and the creation of an investigations team within that inspectorate, to ensure that while we are building more beds, while we are providing more staff, we are also making sure that there is the accountability and oversight that our seniors deserve.

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

Ms. Sara Singh: Speaker, Rykka Care owns both Eatonville Care Centre and Hawthorne Place Care. These for-profit homes saw 93 residents lose their lives in the pandemic. All of this is well-documented in years of critical incident reports that both the Liberals and Conservatives ignored from these homes.

At Hawthorne Place, for example, there were six inspections, uncovering serious problems in the two years preceding the pandemic. This government and the one before it didn't issue Rykka a single penalty. Instead, what they've done is offer them more multi-million-dollar contracts.

Why, just like the Liberals before them, would this Premier and this Minister of Long-Term Care ignore these scathing reports for years and continue to reward their buddies in the for-profit long-term-care sector?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, the member well knows that there were issues across the long-term-care sector, across all types of operators, during the pandemic. And the member knows that we have introduced changes, like doubling the number of inspectors, increasing the power of those inspectors.

But when the member—and the NDP have a plan. It's a plan to spend billions of dollars paying for the expropriation of private assets. It's a plan to stop over 100 projects.

They'd be stopping projects like the one that Rob Burton, the mayor of Oakville, talked about. Rob Burton said his heart was overflowing with gratitude and that for 15 years he'd been asking Ontario to deal with the deficit of long-term-care beds, and now, "in one fell swoop ... are you delivering." That's 640 beds that the member would stop from being developed. She would have to phone Mayor Burton and tell him that, I suppose.

Mayor Bevilacqua in Vaughan said that 256 beds are welcome. These are beds that are in Vaughan. Those are beds that are provided by private operators.

In North Bay-Nipissing, the member would have to call Elaine, the president of the residents' council of Waters Edge community, who said to the Minister of Economic Development, the Premier and I, "We are very excited to see this new building."

Mr. Speaker, residents want these homes; communities want these homes. We'll be—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. And the final supplementary.

Ms. Sara Singh: I think it's important to point out that doubling inspectors is important. But what's even more important is actually looking at those reports, acting on what those inspectors find and holding people accountable—something this government has failed to do.

When the military stepped into these two Rykka-operated homes last spring, what they found was appalling. A high-ranking official from the armed forces said that the seniors cried in agony for help for hours. The military said that the staff were scared they would get in trouble for using proper PPE because "it cost money."

Families are speaking out, and they are asking how this government can grant more money to this company. Well, Speaker, we all know the Liberals never fixed these for-profit homes, and coincidentally, actually, the CEO of Rykka was a big donor to the Liberal Party's coffers. And we know that the Conservatives have also accepted big-money donations from these folks.

When will this government do the right thing and start saying no to their buddies and start saying yes to protecting seniors and people with disabilities?

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Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, I find it hard to understand how the NDP feel they're saying yes to seniors by cancelling over 100 projects that are building beds for seniors.

Something important is going to happen tomorrow in Ontario—and this is happening almost every day across Ontario. In London, the new Elmwood Place will be opening, with an additional 50 beds for 120 residents. The mayor will be there. The community will be there. But the NDP would say no to those residents; they'd say no to those beds.

Mr. Speaker, tomorrow I'll be in Ottawa for the groundbreaking of 256 new beds in Stittsville, just outside Ottawa. The mayor will be there. The community will be there. They're welcoming those new beds. The NDP's plan would stop those beds in their tracks. We're not going to let that happen.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Sara Singh: My next question is also for the Premier. As we've shown time and time again, the for-profit model does not work in Ontario. It doesn't work for seniors and people with disabilities who live in these long-term-care homes. It has led to substandard care, a terrible rate of deaths throughout the pandemic, and profits being ripped out of the system that could have been deployed to ensure better care for residents. That's why last week it was so shocking to see the long-term-care minister continue to reward the for-profit providers with even more contracts.

Why is the government saying yes to big developers and their buddies in for-profit companies and no to better care for seniors and people with disabilities?

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

Hon. Rod Phillips: I'm happy to have this conversation all day long. We have a plan to fix long-term care. Generations of neglect have caused the system to be as it was, and we've all talked about the tragedy of what happened during the pandemic. We are a government that is here to fix it. We are a government that is saying yes to seniors. That means building new beds. That means adding new staff.

The members on the other side talked about four hours of care; we are delivering four hours of care, starting next month, with \$270 million to hire 4,000 new staff. We are delivering across the province.

I talked before about 611 net new beds that were delivered by the previous government, sometimes supported by the opposition. Zero of those beds were in Brampton—zero. We are delivering a total of 611 beds just in Brampton alone.

Mr. Speaker, we acknowledge the need for accountability, and we acknowledge the need for enforcement. That's why we're doubling inspectors, and that's why we're increasing their powers. And that's why the new law we'll put in place will protect seniors and make sure that they not only have the quality beds and level of care but—

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

Ms. Sara Singh: Speaker, the government is clearly too busy listening to their insider friends and buddies in the for-profit long-term-care sector to actually make the improvements needed in long-term care.

Yesterday, the non-profit group AdvantAge released a statement that all Ontarians should know about. They called on the government to move all new beds away from the for-profit delivery model. Lisa Levin, the CEO of AdvantAge Ontario, said, "The government is heading in the wrong direction." Levin said that not-for-profit homes actually provide better care for residents, and we agree.

Instead of always saying yes to their buddies—why would the government ignore the advice of experts in the not-for-profit sector, which has had better outcomes for residents in their homes?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, I know the member opposite understands the roles that the various advocates

play. I have met extensively with them and appreciate their perspectives.

She quoted Lisa Levin, and let me do that as well—when she was talking about the historic \$4.9 billion in funding. She said it was “a watershed moment for long-term care in Ontario.... It is putting dollars exactly where they need to be—increasing front-line staff to improve care for residents.”

We have a direct and positive impact on the quality of life and enjoyment of seniors living in their homes. More staff means more care. That’s what truly matters, and that’s what this government is committed to.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

The final supplementary.

Ms. Sara Singh: In her statement, Lisa said a number of other things. She believes this is not what taxpayers in this country want to see. “We don’t believe taxpayers want this. As Canadians, not-for-profit care most closely aligns with our belief in public health care.”

We know that the Conservatives don’t believe in or champion, frankly, universal public health care, but there is no reason why we have to continue with their plans for more privatization throughout our health care systems. Instead of funnelling billions into the hands of Conservative buddies and their shareholders, those funds could actually be better spent on deinstitutionalizing care in Ontario and creating livable spaces that feel like home.

Given the horrendous conditions in for-profit homes, why would this government hand out billions in contracts to for-profit companies instead of investing in community-based care and not-for-profit homes?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Just to be fair to Lisa Levin, Mr. Speaker, I’m pretty sure that last bit was the member, not Lisa Levin, because it reflects the NDP’s ideological perspective, which is that everything should be run by government, that there should be no private sector, that we should spend billions and billions of dollars to pay through the expropriation of the very corporate and business interests that they so decry instead of spending billions of dollars supporting the health of our seniors.

Mr. Speaker, we do believe that not every good idea originated out of a bureaucrat. We think that the broader society, including the private sector, including not-for-profits, including municipal homes, have an important role to play. That’s why we will continue to support all of them in our goal to fix long-term care, deliver the care that’s needed, deliver the homes that are needed and deliver the protections and accountability that are needed for long-term care in our communities.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Jennifer K. French: My question is to the Minister of Long-Term Care. People are terrified that a for-profit long-term-care home like Southbridge’s Orchard Villa in Pickering, a building where nearly 80 people died of COVID, could be awarded a 30-year licence extension—30 years of public money locked in—and 89 new

beds. Thirty years is a generation of seniors. A lot of folks in their fifties, sixties and seventies will be stuck with this profit-driven bad deal during their golden years, and that includes a lot of folks in this room.

Devastated families continue to come to Queen’s Park to beg and plead for long-term-care supports, resources and justice. There is no justice in rewarding a Southbridge home like Orchard Villa. So my question to you is: Does a home like Orchard Villa deserve a 30-year free pass and licence extension, and is it the official policy of this government to reward bad actors and turn its back on grieving families?

Hon. Rod Phillips: This government has been listening to families. This government has been listening to residents. This government has been listening to members of labour unions and leaders of labour unions when it comes to how we approach homes.

For the home that the member mentioned, that licence is currently under review by the independent director that looks at that. The government has also listened to some of the concerns from families about the fact of whether that process should be looked at constructively so that there can be an opportunity for appeal, but I’ll speak more about that later today.

Mr. Speaker, we are making sure that beds are being built. We are making sure that there’s accountability. In the region of Durham, where the member comes from, of the 611 net new beds that were built, less than 100 of them were built there. We have plans to build 1,097 beds in Durham, including in Oshawa, and upgrade 703 beds. That’s what we’re about: getting something done, protecting seniors, delivering quality care.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Minister, people have no faith in this government or its intentions where long-term care is concerned. Families of Orchard Villa report that things are just as bad as they ever were, and we all know what the Canadian Armed Forces reported. The horrors that happened behind those walls, and many others, must not be rewarded.

Speaker, this minister was interviewed recently on radio, and when asked specifically about Orchard Villa and public calls for action casually told the public on the air that hopefully people will see “the new building.” What new building? The new building awarded along with a 30-year licence for a for-profit, historically problematic long-term-care home? Has the minister already made the decision and is this, as seems clear by his own words, a done deal? Will Orchard Villa be rewarded with a 30-year licence renewal, a free pass and a shiny, new, expanded building with 89 new beds in the wake of such a terrible, ongoing nightmare?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, I don’t want to make any assumptions, but I might assume, and the member might correct me, that she may or may not have been to Orchard Villa. I have; myself and the Minister of Finance, whose riding it is, visited Orchard Villa at 6:30 one morning. One of the things about my unannounced visits is that I do them at different times of day because you learn more when you travel with an inspector then.

I know the member is a compassionate person, but what she may not appreciate is that with rhetoric like that and with talk like that, the people who hear that as well are the staff working there, the staff that are working hard to protect those residents—the staff that are there at 6:30 and 7 o'clock in the morning, there at 6:30 and 7 o'clock at night.

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Mr. Speaker, we're not going to throw them under the bus. We're not going to throw residents or families under the bus. We're going to make sure that they are protected. We're going to make sure that the rules are in place to make sure that there is accountability, and we're going to make sure that the facilities are new and state of the art.

NORTHERN ECONOMY

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The next question, the member for Perth–Wellington.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Thank you, Speaker. I get so deep into what—when the Minister of Long-Term Care speaks. I'm sorry, sir.

Mr. Speaker, the most recent job numbers were quite encouraging, with unemployment numbers declining. We know that our economy is recovering, but some areas of our province were hit harder than others. Doing business in the north poses a whole set of different challenges that don't exist in southern parts of the province. During the COVID-19 pandemic, our government made a commitment to supporting businesses in the north and the rural communities that depend on them.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry please tell us what these businesses can expect from the most recent round of NORP investments?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To respond, the member for Kitchener–Conestoga and parliamentary assistant.

Mr. Mike Harris: Thank you to the member for Perth–Wellington for the question. It's an important question. The north has been long forgotten by the previous Liberal government. It's time that our government actually stands up and recognizes them.

It's true: Doing business in the north is unique and it comes with its own set of challenges. Shipping issues, exacerbated by high fuel prices, added costs for business owners during a pandemic that affected us all. That's why our government responded quickly to these concerns by creating the Northern Ontario Recovery Program. Dozens of businesses across the north in Timmins, Kiiwetinoong, Mushkegowuk–James Bay, Nipissing, Sault Ste. Marie and Thunder Bay have all been successful in applying for the NORP. They have been able to make critical upgrades to their businesses that help keep customers safe.

More recently, our government announced that \$840,000 would be going to help 43 businesses adapt to COVID-19 public health guidelines in the Parry Sound region. These are exactly the types of investments we need

to make, and I'll be happy to talk a little bit more about those in the supplementary.

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

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: It's great to hear that the program has been such a success and that these funds will be going to help so many businesses across the north. For too long the previous Liberal government said no to the north: no to jobs in the north, no to investment in the north and no to economic prosperity in the north. It's refreshing to see a government that says yes to northern Ontario.

With that being said, Mr. Speaker, could the minister please tell us more about what types of businesses were eligible to receive assistance from the Northern Ontario Recovery Program?

Mr. Mike Harris: I will say, companies from a variety of sectors, including the tourism, food service and retail sectors, applied for the NORP for assistance with projects such as building renovations and new constructions; customer and employee safety installations; equipment purchases, including PPE; marketing for new business initiatives; and restructuring of business operations. I'll give you a couple of examples.

Zak's in Sundridge: They will be using the \$25,000 they received from the NORP to purchase personal protective equipment, develop a fully functional custom website and email marketing program, and renovate the staff kitchens and washrooms. Or how about The Cutter's Edge, a retailer of custom wood furnishings, home decor and fashion items in Burk's Falls? They will be using \$25,000 from the NORP to help restructure their business operations and develop new marketing strategies. The list goes on.

Our government is committed to making sure we continue to make these investments in the north. I'm really looking forward to a government that will stand up for the north, unlike the Liberals have done for 15 years.

GOVERNMENT INVESTMENTS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Premier. The Premier is quoted in today's Toronto Star about the millions he gave to the company Facedrive: "We look deeply into anything we invest in."

Apparently, that's not what happened, Speaker, because this Premier wasted \$2.5 million on Facedrive's contact tracing beeper bracelets that don't actually do anything. The company bought these bands off the shelf from an online store in China and former company staff tell the media they don't even really work. No one is using the products, no one is buying them and the company's stock has plummeted.

The grant didn't help create any jobs and it only helped the corporate executives at Facedrive sell off their stocks for millions in profits and buy things like mansions. Why hasn't the Premier torn up this contract with Facedrive and demanded that Ontarians get their money back?

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

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Think of where we were almost two years ago, in the depths of the pandemic. Ontario, we learned, made no PPE of our own—almost none—so the government launched the Ontario Together Fund to help companies retool their operations, produce the critical supplies that we need and develop technology-driven solutions. Like all submissions, this proposal was assessed by ministry officials using internal and external experts, independent experts, third-party institutions and, in this case, additionally two university professors provided their expertise to assess the proposal.

In order to ensure value for money, we do have safeguards against the company's performance. That includes a holdback of funding, which we did, covenants around project completion, and a requirement to have an independent auditor confirm that the investment was made in accordance to the agreement. If a company falls short in any of these areas, the ministry can and will take appropriate action to safeguard—

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Again to the Premier: Facedrive's stock has fallen while the company's executives cashed out—but not before they dumped thousands of dollars into Conservative Party coffers.

The grant this government claimed—and claims—was vigorously evaluated didn't create any jobs in Ontario. The technology doesn't work and no companies are apparently using those beeping devices anymore.

There is no excuse for this government wasting millions of dollars in a grant to their buddies while Ontarians lack the services they need in education, health care and more.

So, Speaker, to the Premier: Will he do the right thing? Will he call up his buddies at Facedrive and demand that they pay back the millions they got for this lucrative contract that didn't create a single job in Ontario?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: From day one, our government has been focused on keeping the people of Ontario safe. That's why we introduced programs to lower the hurdles for domestic companies to do this research and support our response to the pandemic.

The Ontario Together Fund program supported 45 projects in Ontario and leveraged more than \$187 million in private sector investments. That allowed us to reduce our dependence on unreliable supply chains.

In the beginning of the pandemic, like I said, very little PPE was made here. Now more than 74% of what the government purchases is domestically produced, mostly here in Ontario. It's unfortunate the member opposite and their party said no—no to the additional \$50,000,000 we put in the Ontario Together Fund. They said no to those medical diagnostic companies in Mississauga and no to PPE producers in Kitchener and Scarborough. Our government will continue to provide those resources.

COVID-19 IMMUNIZATION

Mr. Roman Baber: My question is to the Minister of Labour. Every day the minister claims to stand up for all

Ontario workers, but he is not standing up for thousands of Ontario workers who are losing their jobs daily because of their lawful choice not to take medication. Now, although the government did not mandate vaccines anywhere but long-term care, instead they have employers and institutions do the work for them. We're learning of health care workers being let go in Toronto, London, Windsor and Ottawa. According to the education minister, as many as 50,000 education workers may be at risk.

The minister's song and dance about how proud he is of Ontarians, and that we're all in this together, is becoming tiresome. Will the Minister of Labour acknowledge the human catastrophe unfolding under his watch, and will he lift a finger to protect hundreds of Ontario workers from termination? Yes or no?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: We're going to continue to protect the health and well-being of all of the people in this province. I'm proud of the legislation our government tabled this week. Premier Ford and our government tabled legislation called the Working for Workers Act. We're taking a number of steps to ensure that workers in this province have bigger paycheques, more take-home pay, more worker protections in workplaces. Our goal, always, is to continue to spread opportunity so people out there can get jobs with pensions and benefits. A number of components in our legislation include cracking down on those bad actors in the temporary help agency sector; recognizing foreign credentials for those immigrants who are here in Ontario—only 25% of them are working in fields that they studied and have experience in. We want them to have meaningful jobs and fill the labour shortage.

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Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to talk more about components of our bill in the supplementary.

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

Mr. Roman Baber: What bigger paycheques? People are losing their paycheques. What pensions and benefits? People are losing pensions and benefits because they're being fired for cause.

It's astonishing that the Minister of Labour has no mercy, no compassion to even acknowledge the human catastrophe caused by him and his government. Thousands of Ontarians who have done nothing wrong but to refuse to take medication are being fired for cause.

At the start of the pandemic, Chiara Elliott was working as a PSW at the London Health Sciences Centre and training to become a nurse. She worked in the COVID-19 ward at the height of the fear. She contracted COVID-19 and was sick for a month. She went back to the COVID-19 ward, and last April, she accomplished her dream of becoming a nurse. Last Friday, she was terminated for failing to vaccinate. This is despite testing negative three times a week and having a high antibody count, which is good enough for the government caucus but not good enough for LHSC. She is a single mother, and because she was dismissed for cause, she is not eligible for EI. Chiara cared for hundreds if not thousands of the minister's own constituents.

What does the Minister of Labour have to say to Chiara? And I hope that he speaks directly into the camera.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I'm proud of the people in this province. In fact, about 88% of eligible people have had a single dose, and we're at about 84% double-vaccinated, here in Ontario. The people of Ontario have done an incredible job in battling this global pandemic.

To the member opposite: Ontario is in a much better place than most other provinces and many jurisdictions around the world.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue working for workers. We're going to continue to ensure that they have bigger paycheques to support themselves and, most importantly, have a better standard of living for their families. We're bringing in workplace protections, things that the former Liberal government, with the support of the NDP, did not take any action on. We're going to continue to spread opportunity more widely and fairly to help people get into jobs with pensions and benefits, like the skilled trades. We'll work for workers every single day.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: Speaker, for years, the NDP-Liberal coalition made Ontario a hostile environment in which to do business. Ontario's economy was built on the strength of industries like our natural resources, manufacturing, farming, and food processing. But the Liberals' hydro mess, high taxes and failure to support our businesses and manufacturing community meant that Ontario could not compete for global jobs and investment. Unfortunately, communities like my riding of Oakville North–Burlington, which is well positioned for attracting investment, were neglected by the previous Liberal government.

Can the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade tell the House how our government is working to make Ontario investment-ready?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you to the member from Oakville North–Burlington for the question.

From day one, our government has made Ontario open for business, open for investment and open for jobs. That's why our government is launching the Site Readiness Program, to help municipalities and landowners prepare industrial sites for investments that will drive growth to the region and create jobs.

One of the missing pieces in the province's land inventory was the diversity of industrial sites to meet the need of a variety of industries. The launch of our Site Readiness Program will offer municipalities and industrial landowners across the province more flexibility to bring their sites online more quickly. This means that communities across Ontario will better be able to compete globally and provide more options to attract investments to the province.

Speaker, we encourage all local mayors and their partners to join us as we unleash Ontario.

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

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: We know that the COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically changed the way we do business. Site selectors and investors are working under shorter timelines and increased pressure. They are relying on new tools, data and digital resources such as websites, maps, drone video and reports for more of their site selection work than ever before. And site selectors and investors require immediate access to comprehensive site details to confirm the feasibility of a location.

Speaker, can the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade explain how property owners in my community of Oakville North–Burlington and across Ontario will benefit from the Site Readiness Program?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Our government recognizes that the pandemic has had a dramatic impact on the way we do business. The new Site Readiness Program responds to this new reality, and it provides site selection consultants and investors worldwide the information they need to quickly recognize a site's strengths and potentials. It will help communities make their properties investment-ready more quickly. It will expand Ontario's industrial land inventory and support a wider range of investment opportunities.

Our Site Readiness Program will build on the success of our two existing industrial land development programs. We've had a very successful Job Site Challenge, which identifies mega sites for Ontario for all of the great projects that are looking to come to Ontario. And the other is the Investment Ready: Certified Site Program, and that provides provincial certification and market support for sites once there's due diligence done.

Speaker, with all these programs in place, we're ready to market Ontario as the best place in the world to do business.

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Ms. Suze Morrison: My question is for the Premier. My office has been flooded with emails and calls from constituents who are angry that they're being denied access to essential vision care. Yesterday, I heard from Jennifer, who is an Indigenous parent in my riding. Jennifer's 14-year-old daughter, Autumn, has had headaches and burning eyes for almost two months now. Jennifer is concerned that her daughter has developed an eye issue.

But when she called her local optometrist to make an appointment, she was shocked to learn that no one under the age of 20 or over the age of 65 is able to visit an optometrist here in Ontario right now. She was told that if Autumn needed eye care, the only option would be to take her to the emergency room.

Jennifer wants to know why her daughter has to suffer because this government is refusing to negotiate a fair deal with optometrists.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the member for Eglinton–Lawrence, the parliamentary assistant.

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. I feel very much for Jennifer and her daughter, Autumn. I can tell you that we're certainly extremely disappointed that, at the urging of the Ontario optometrists' association, optometrists have chosen to withhold publicly funded services to children and seniors. It's due to the fact that the OAO has selected a mediator, refused to meet the mediator's conditions and has refused to come back to the table for negotiations, although there is a standing invitation to do so.

It's especially concerning because optometrists keep telling members of the public that they are ready to negotiate, but they do not come back to the table. The current impasse lies squarely at the feet of the Ontario optometrists' association.

We are more than anxious to get them to come back to the table to negotiate a fair deal. We've put an offer on the table. We've made an upfront good-faith payment of \$39 million, and we're really hoping that they will come back so we can make sure that residents get the care that they deserve.

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

Ms. Suze Morrison: Calls to my office from people unable to make an appointment with their optometrist are becoming more desperate. It has now been almost two months since seniors and kids in our province have been unable to access necessary vision care.

The previous Liberal government badly underfunded vision care for kids and seniors, letting this problem spiral out of control, but now, this government is refusing to pay for a fair plan with optometrists. They simply don't want to spend the money to ensure that children and seniors in this province have access to essential vision care.

When will this government get back to the table and negotiate in good faith with the optometrists?

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you again to the member opposite. We are at the table, ready, willing and able to negotiate every day. There is a standing invitation, as I said, from the mediator, who was chosen by the Ontario optometrists' association, and we are all ready to negotiate any time they will come back to the table. We encourage everybody out there to encourage optometrists to come back to the table. That is the place that a deal will happen.

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But I can tell you that this government is acting in good faith. We've already put a fair and reasonable offer on the table, including an immediate compensation increase of 8.48%, retroactive to April 1, to catch up increases that physicians had over the last 10 years or so since optometrists last had an agreement; also, a one-time payment of \$39 million which has already gone into the accounts of optometrists, again, to catch up; future fee increases to align with physician increases; and an immediate working group to go over their other concerns and continue to negotiate.

We are ready, willing and able. We hope they will come back to the table immediately so that people like that Jennifer and Autumn can get the care that they deserve.

LAND USE PLANNING

ELECTRIC VEHICLES

M^{me} Lucille Collard: My question is for the Premier. In 2017, an expert panel suggested that Highway 413 not be built. This project would destroy large sections of nature and farmland. When you build more infrastructure for cars, you encourage more people to drive. To fight the climate crisis, we should be encouraging people to choose greener transportation methods, yet instead of investing in public transit, the government plans to build a brand new highway.

My question is, does the government have a plan to reduce Ontario's reliance on cars, and, if so, how does building a \$6-billion highway play a part in this plan?

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

Hon. Stan Cho: I appreciate the question because it gives me an opportunity to address several important issues that the member raises, not least of which is protecting our environment, which is why I'm proud that our government has expanded the greenbelt, unlike her government that changed it 17 times. We're also building historic transit, \$28.5 billion towards that, to make sure, when possible, people who don't want to drive have the options to be able to get from point A to point B.

Speaker, though, when it comes to highways, today's population of Ontario is nearly 15 million people. In 30 years, 15 million people will be the population of the greater Golden Horseshoe alone. That's a lot more people in this province and a lot more people who have no choice but to drive. That's why our great Minister of Economic Development is investing into the electrification of vehicles. That's hugely important.

But also important, Speaker: We need to make sure these cars are moving, not idling. That actually contributes to 35% of greenhouse gas emissions from cars on the road. We're going to invest in the growing population here in Ontario and make sure we invest in highways and transit across the entire province.

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

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Mr. Speaker, this government claims to support electric car manufacturing and intends to make Ontario a hub for this industry, and that's great. Unfortunately, the government's past actions do not support this, as in 2018 they cancelled the rebate program which offered up to \$14,000 to those who purchased electric cars. This puts us behind other jurisdictions such as BC, Quebec and the United States, where governments are encouraging consumers to buy electric. The government is also not taking action to improve electric car infrastructure, having gone as far as to rip existing charging stations out of the ground.

If the government wants Ontario to be a hub for electric car manufacturing, what is the plan to make electric cars accessible to consumers and convenient to use?

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

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. When you think about where we were only a few years ago in the province of Ontario, with auto-makers questioning their own success or viability—or existence—here in Ontario, we lowered the cost of doing business for them and other businesses by \$7 billion a year. That brought Ford, General Motors and Stellantis to the table. They have made commitments and we have backed those commitments, starting with Ford at \$295 million. Our investments in the electric vehicle—you will see them outlined in the near future, but it began with \$295 million.

Our investments will be on the supply side, Speaker. We're looking at battery manufacturers. We're working with our critical minerals. We are going to make Ontario the electric vehicle hub of North America.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Jim McDonell: My question is to the Minister of Long-Term Care. Ensuring the health and safety of our residents in long-term care has been our government's top priority. We know that long-term-care residents have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, and when our government took office in 2018, the inspections backlog had grown to over 8,000 files. This backlog of complaints and critical incidents included allegations of sexual assault, physical abuse and negligence. This is something that our government cannot stand for.

To the minister: After decades of neglect, what investments are our government making to ensure that the days when bad actors could get away with anything less than quality care for our long-term-care residents are over?

Hon. Rod Phillips: I would like to thank the member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry for the great work he does and for this question.

Mr. Speaker, just this week, I announced \$20 million in funding to hire just under 200 more inspection staff. What does that mean? That means there will be double the number of inspectors, 344 on-the-ground inspectors—slightly more than double the inspectors—to be doing the important work of reviewing and inspecting our long-term-care homes. That means Ontario will have a ratio of one inspector for every two homes, the best ratio in Canada, which is what it should have.

It also means three things. It means that as we introduce proactive inspection programs, which were recommended by our long-term-care commission, inspectors will have the time to work with homes. It will also mean that the unannounced inspections that respond to critical incidents will take place and take place in a timely way. Third, it also means that among our new inspectors, we'll have an investigative team—a team that has the skills required in the extreme circumstances required to make sure that a more in-depth investigation is carried out.

Mr. Speaker, this is an investment that will protect our seniors.

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

Mr. Jim McDonell: Thank you to the minister for that answer. Speaker, we have heard from Ontario's Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission and the Auditor General that the inspection regime in long-term care needed to be improved. This investment will certainly go a long way to help us better identify and resolve problems, increase enforcement and ensure that our residents in long-term care are kept safe. Meanwhile, the Leader of the Opposition refers to this investment as “completely backwards.”

To the minister: The long-term-care sector's tireless advocates and stakeholders have been very vocal during this pandemic. Has the minister heard their voices?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Their feedback on this increase in inspectors has been strong and positive, Mr. Speaker. Donna Duncan from the Ontario Long-Term Care Association said, “Ontario's long-term care homes share the Ontario government's commitment to accountability and transparency, and remain steadfast in enshrining these principles in legislation...” As I talked about, that will come later today.

Smokey Thomas of OPSEU said, “Comprehensive and unannounced annual inspections are the only way to ensure homes operate to the highest standards of resident care. It's what our union has demanded for years, and I'm pleased to see that this government is listening and responding to the good work our union has done.”

We'll continue to listen. It took decades for the long-term-care situation to get to where it has been. We will work with all parties to make sure that we move forward in a progressive way, and the increase in inspectors, the doubling of inspectors is a good start.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: My question is for the Premier. On Saturday, I joined hundreds of family members who walked five kilometres to bring awareness and highlight the need for urgent action to address the addictions crisis in Thunder Bay. The family members there told me that the province needs to take action. So many lives could be saved, but it requires more than empty promises.

When will this government repair the years of neglect and finally provide the coordinated, wraparound services needed to save these lives?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Eglinton–Lawrence and parliamentary assistant.

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. The opioid crisis is an ongoing public health emergency that has certainly been intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic. This year alone, our government has made emergency COVID-19 investments of over \$194 million in mental health and addiction services because more people are in crisis and are dying from fatal overdoses.

We know that some communities, including northern, rural, francophone and Indigenous communities, have been disproportionately affected by the opioid crisis,

which is why through our opioid strategy, our government remains committed to addressing the opioid crisis and to supporting people who need help with this issue.

Last year, we made a historic \$98 million in investments for initiatives that address the opioid crisis and will be providing an additional \$91 million this year to sustain those programs to provide critical supports.

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

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: My question is for the Premier. Recently, we had 15 critical overdose calls in two days in my community. This weekend, I spoke to family members of those affected. They talked about the need for detox beds, treatment—which is not available in our community—after-care and supportive housing. They talked about the lives that were cut short and those that they left behind.

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Addiction shouldn't be a crime. We need to treat it as a medical issue. When will this government take action to support individuals and families in crisis?

Mrs. Robin Martin: As I said in my first answer, we're supporting a lot of initiatives to provide opioid supports, including in the north. Some of the investments include:

—consumption and treatment services: Currently, we're investing \$9.4 million for 16 of these sites in need across the province, and this includes a consumption and treatment site located in Thunder Bay;

—the Ontario Naloxone Program: \$22.7 million for that provides naloxone to Ontarians at risk of opioid overdose and their friends and families through eligible organizations. There are over 165 of those distribution sites for naloxone in the north;

—needle exchange and syringe programs: We continue to fund the 34 public health units to provide those elements of harm reduction. We also have harm reduction program enhancement for all 34 public health units, including those in northern Ontario;

—harm reduction outreach programs: We support 36 community-based organizations to deliver harm reduction outreach programs. Of these, eight programs are based solely in northern Ontario, including in Thunder Bay.

We're doing a lot. We know we have to do more. That's why we continue to work on this important issue.

BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE

SMALL BUSINESS

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: My question is to the Minister of Infrastructure. In many pockets of Scarborough's business parks, broadband Internet performance is unreliable and far too slow to meet the needs of doing business and living well in the virtual post-pandemic age. It's an issue that has impacted small and local businesses in Scarborough because, while the infrastructure exists, the costs associated with connecting access to business parks amounts to tens of thousands of dollars, and this can be prohibitive.

The Scarborough Business Association and the Scarborough Community Renewal Organization wrote to the

minister's office over a year ago to advocate for those local employers whose viability and livelihoods, as well as their employees', are being impacted by insufficient Internet access in this digital age.

Speaker, through you to the minister: Are you committed to connecting Scarborough and eliminating those last-mile broadband issues? You have committed to connecting every Ontarian. Will you ensure that Scarborough is part of that? When will this government take the necessary steps to ensure that accessible and affordable broadband Internet is available to those small businesses in Scarborough?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: I thank the honourable member for the friendly question. It is very much appreciated. She will know, of course, that despite the fact that businesses in Scarborough—in fact, businesses and homeowners across the province of Ontario—have been demanding better access to the Internet; that was not forthcoming under 15 years of Liberal government.

But the good news for the people of Scarborough—Guildwood—a community I know quite well—is that not only are we going to connect Scarborough—Guildwood, but we are also going to connect King—Vaughan, we are going to connect Ottawa—Orléans, we are going to connect London West, we are going to connect Toronto Centre. Algoma—Manitoulin is going to be connected. Windsor is going to be connected. Thunder Bay is going to be connected. We are going to connect Oshawa, Mr. Speaker.

In fact, we are going to connect every single community in this province with broadband and the highest level of investment anywhere in this country.

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

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I will certainly take that back to the two organizations, non-profits in my community, that wrote to the minister in August 2020.

Speaker, yesterday, I hosted a small business round table, along with the leader of the Ontario Liberal Party, Steven Del Duca. One recurring theme from the hard-working business owners in Scarborough is that this government is not focused on small business issues and recovery. It wasn't even mentioned in their throne speech.

What we heard yesterday from small business owners is that the same issues this government heard months into the pandemic have remained unresolved. Small businesses need help to recover or they face bankruptcy or closure. The Ontario Small Business Support Grant was not broad enough, and it only reached one of every five small businesses. That leaves many businesses out in the cold. Businesses are still waiting for when this government will extend another round of relief.

So my question is, will the Minister of Finance, in next week's fall economic statement, include small businesses, renew the small business grant and expand the criteria so that more small businesses are eligible for the support they desperately need so that they—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. To reply, the associate minister.

Hon. Nina Tangri: I want to thank the member opposite for her question. Speaker, when the pandemic hit, it was our government that recognized right away that small businesses that were impacted by public health measures required immediate support so that they could continue serving their communities and employing people in Ontario, and to get those supplies on to the table that we desperately needed. Our goal was to get money to businesses quickly because we recognized the enormous economic outlook and the shock to employees affected by strengthening these public health measures.

To date, the small business grant has delivered nearly \$3 billion in urgent and unprecedented support to well over 110,000 small businesses right across our province. Through our 2020-21 budget, we also announced a doubling of the payments to eligible businesses so that they can receive up to \$40,000 in support through this program.

Our government was very disappointed to see that all the members opposite and their party, when they chose to vote against the \$1.4 billion in support—

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

Please stop the clock for a moment. I need to remind the House that during question period, a supplementary question has to follow logically from the initial question. It's not to raise an additional issue, a brand new issue in the supplementary. It's got to be consistent, to some degree at least, and have some relationship with the initial question. Thank you very much.

Start the clock. The next question.

TENANT PROTECTION

Ms. Jessica Bell: My question is to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services. I would like to tell you about Rani. She lives in a condo in University-Rosedale. Ever since she moved in, life has been nothing short of a nightmare. The AC broke down for two months over the summer and her property manager refused to fix it. The unit next to hers is constantly used as a short-term rental and she can't do anything about it. The unit above hers is empty and has caused major flooding, with extensive damage, three times in two years. She's now on the hook to pay for repairs and insurance hikes.

When Rani went to her condo board and asked for help, she was ignored. The only option Rani has left is to go to court and risk racking up thousands of dollars in legal fees.

The Condominium Authority of Ontario was created to provide a quick and inexpensive place for disputes just like this to be heard, but its scope is too small to hear genuine complaints like Rani's. This is my question to the minister: Can you commit to expanding the jurisdiction of the tribunal so condo residents have the rights and the protections that they deserve?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Sarnia-Lambton to reply on behalf of the government.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to thank the honourable member for that question. The Condominium Act is undergoing great review right at this time. And just some

facts: There are over 900,000 condo units in Ontario, and that's up from 200,000 in 2001, with over 11,000 condo operations. The condo operations are governed by the Condominium Act and have their own board of directors.

I'd like to add some more in the supplementary.

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

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you to the member opposite. I'm pleased to hear that you're aware of how many people live in condo dwellings—it's many—and that there is an opportunity right now for the Ontario government to do the right thing and expand the jurisdiction of the condo tribunal—just like you're currently doing, but you need to expand it.

My question is back to the minister. The Condominium Management Regulatory Authority of Ontario is one of those regulators. They regulate property managers. This is really important because many condo residents complain and have concerns about their property managers and the work they do to maintain the condo building. Issues like poor maintenance, wasted funds and allegations of kick-backs and fraud are common concerns.

Here's the problem: If you're a condo resident and you call the regulator to complain, nothing is done. The Auditor General found that the CMRAO—that's the regulator—is not doing its job. From 2017 to 2020, the authority inspected just 14 licensed condo managers and four condo management companies.

Minister, what is your plan to ensure these regulators do their job and provide good protections to condo residents across Ontario?

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Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you to the member for that question. I also sat through the Auditor General's report; I think it was Tuesday of this week. A lot of issues were highlighted by the Auditor General. She commented on the good things that were taking place under the Condominium Act but also pointed out, as the member just said, some of the failings in the condo operations and the governance of the condo authority.

I know this is being looked at right now by the ministry, by the staff. They were on the call as well. They understand the importance of condos. I live in one myself here, and I know a number of members in the House do as well, so it's something that we've taken under advisement. It's on our radar and we're going to try and fix it.

COVID-19 IMMUNIZATION

Mr. Roman Baber: Speaker, to the Minister of Health: This government has no compassion. When I asked the Minister of Labour what he would say to Chiara, a nurse who had COVID, a single mother dismissed for cause—when I asked what he would say to her and to look into the camera, the government members were laughing. That's the Ford government.

But if they don't care for the personal catastrophes unfolding before their eyes, will they at least take care to protect the integrity of the health care system? The Ontario Medical Association said a few days ago that we're facing

a tsunami of mental health patients. I've been warning about this since May 2020. Nearly 700,000 Ontarians are waiting for procedures, but the Minister of Health is standing by while the health care system, while institutions themselves, are purging health care workers out of the system.

Will the Minister of Health take a pragmatic approach and put an end to the termination of tens of thousands of health care workers—if not for compassionate reasons, but at least not to exacerbate the health care disaster this government created?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Eglinton–Lawrence to reply on behalf of the government.

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you very much for the question. I can tell you that this government is very compassionate toward our health care workers, toward all of our front-line heroes, and we are acting accordingly.

I want to thank the member for raising the Ontario Medical Association report the other day. We believe that our health care providers play an integral role, obviously, in our health care system, and we thank them for their tireless work. Our government is committed to building a modern, connected, sustainable, patient-centred health care system through historic investments, including in response to COVID-19. We're pleased to note that in their Prescription for Ontario, they've outlined a number of things that we already have under way, including, of course, our \$3.8-billion investment in mental health and addictions through Ontario's Roadmap to Wellness, which sets out a detailed plan to create a comprehensive and connected mental health and addictions system that provides consistent and evidence-based care to Ontarians when and where they need it. And, of course, we have special mental health supports for our front-line health care workers, because they have been working—

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

Mr. Roman Baber: My follow-up is to the Minister of Education. Two days ago, the minister said that up to 50,000 education workers may be at risk if the province was to mandate vaccination in schools. But while the government is sitting on its hands, the school boards themselves are about to do what the minister says that he's not doing and terminate close to 50,000 education workers.

I understand that the government has no compassion for the careers ruined or the 50,000 education families that will be destitute before Christmas. But the question I ask again: If the government is unwilling to show compassion, then how about the practical effect, the integrity of the system? Ontario's kids suffered enough from this government's lockdowns. The minister shut down the schools longer than anywhere on the planet. Our children are digressing.

Will the Minister of Education protect Ontario's children and prevent school boards across Ontario from purging up to 50,000—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. In response, Minister of Education.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: What I can confirm to all members of the Legislature is that the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Ontario Health, pediatric hospitals and the Children's Health Coalition have confirmed that our schools have been safe. Our commitment on this side of the Legislature is to keep them open and keep them safe for students and staff. It's why, Speaker, the Children's Health Coalition said just a week ago: "Data from Public Health Ontario suggests that the overall efforts to limit virus transmission, such as masking, distancing and vaccinations, have been successful."

Mr. Speaker, we're taking nothing for granted. It's why we have deployed a rapid antigen testing program on a risk basis. It's why we've stepped up our ventilation. It's why we require masking indoors. All of these efforts have led to one of the lowest case rates in Canada for our young people, supported by one of the highest vaccine rates for our youth.

We're proud of our record. We're going to continue to do everything possible to keep students, staff and families safe for the people of this province.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader on a point of order.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I am rising in accordance with standing order 59. Let me just thank all colleagues for what has been a very productive week here in the Legislature, and specifically thank the House leader for the official opposition, the House leader for the Liberal Party, the leader of the Green Party and of course all colleagues for unanimous support of that very important motion this morning. I appreciate everybody's assistance with that.

Next week, on Monday, November 1, in the afternoon, we will have opposition day number 3. Following that, we will move to Bill 27, the Working for Workers Act.

On Tuesday, November 2, in the morning, we will resume debate on the throne speech. In the afternoon, we will return to Bill 27. In the evening, we will move to PMB ballot item number 7, standing in the name of the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. It is private member's motion number 9.

On Wednesday, November 3, in the morning, we will resume debate on Bill 27. In the afternoon, we will begin debate on a bill to be introduced later that day; in the evening, PMB ballot item number 8, standing in the name of the member for Hamilton Centre, which is Bill 3, the Stopping Anti-Public Health Harassment Act.

On Thursday, November 4, in the morning, a bill to be introduced later today will be debated; and during routine proceedings, I remind colleagues, a ministerial statement, the fall economic statement, from the Minister of Finance. In the afternoon, we will resume debate on the bill which will be introduced later today, and in the evening, ballot item number 9, the members for Etobicoke–Lakeshore and Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, Bill 18, Polish Heritage Month.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): There being no further business this morning, this House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1137 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

LOI DE 2021 SUR LA COMMUNAUTÉ FRANCO-ONTARIENNE FRANCO-ONTARIAN COMMUNITY ACT, 2021

M. Bourgouin propose la première lecture du projet de loi suivant:

Projet de loi 36, Loi visant à promouvoir la préservation et l'épanouissement de la communauté franco-ontarienne / Bill 36, An Act to promote the preservation, growth and vitality of the Franco-Ontarian Community.

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 invite the member to briefly explain his bill.

M. Guy Bourgouin: Je suis très heureux et très fier de pouvoir réintroduire mon projet de loi visant à moderniser l'ancienne Loi sur les services en français, qui date depuis 30 ans.

La Loi de 2021 sur la communauté franco-ontarienne :

—met en avant une définition inclusive du terme « francophone »;

—demande au gouvernement de l'Ontario de consulter l'Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario et les chapitres régionaux de l'Association des communautés francophones de l'Ontario chaque fois qu'il développera ou modifiera des politiques affectant les droits linguistiques de la communauté franco-ontarienne;

—oblige les agences de paiements de transfert à respecter la loi qui garantit que les agences ayant été consolidées ou restructurées doivent offrir des services en français; et

—exige le rétablissement du Commissariat aux services en français comme entité indépendante.

PROVIDING MORE CARE, PROTECTING SENIORS, AND BUILDING MORE BEDS ACT, 2021

LOI DE 2021 VISANT À OFFRIR D'AVANTAGE DE SOINS, À PROTÉGER LES PERSONNES ÂGÉES ET À OUVRIR PLUS DE LITS

Mr. Phillips moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 37, An Act to enact the Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021 and amend or repeal various Acts / Projet de loi 37, Loi visant à édicter la Loi de 2021 sur le redressement

des soins de longue durée et à modifier ou à abroger diverses lois.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Long-Term Care, if he would like to briefly explain this bill.

Hon. Rod Phillips: I rise today to introduce the Providing More Care, Protecting Seniors and Building More Beds Act, 2021, which, if passed, would repeal the current Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007, create the Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021, and amend the Retirement Homes Act, 2010. If passed, the proposed legislation would establish in law the ambitious commitments our government has made to fix long-term care.

The proposed legislation would support all three pillars of our plan to fix long-term care: improving staffing and care; protecting residents through better accountability, enforcement and transparency; and building modern, safe and comfortable homes.

Supporting seniors in retirement homes is equally important to our government. If passed, the amendments to the Retirement Homes Act, 2010, would improve the safety and well-being of residents in retirement homes, and introduce new data collection measures to protect consumers and residents, and safeguard the collection of residents' data.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, so many Ontarians are connected to and care about long-term-care and retirement homes, whether the residents and staff are getting the care that they need—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. I must again remind the House that explanations of bills, when they're introduced at first reading, need to be short. Ideally, we'd ask members to simply read the explanatory note that's associated with the bill.

Introduction of bills?

Hon. Parm Gill: Mr. Speaker, let me just, first and foremost, say that it is an absolute honour for me to rise in this chamber, for the first time, as Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism.

REMEMBRANCE WEEK AMENDMENT ACT, 2021

LOI DE 2021 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA SEMAINE DU SOUVENIR

Mr. Gill moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 38, An Act to amend the Remembrance Week Act, 2016 / Projet de loi 38, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2016 sur la semaine du Souvenir.

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 invite the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism to briefly explain his bill.

Hon. Parm Gill: At present, the Remembrance Week Act does two things: First, it declares November 5 to 11 as Remembrance Week; second, the act directs Ontarians to pause and observe two minutes of silence on Remembrance Day, at 11 a.m. These are voluntary acts for Ontarians.

The amendments I bring before the House would support the right of every worker in Ontario to wear a poppy in the workplace during Remembrance Week, except if wearing a poppy poses a danger or a hazard to a person's health, safety or welfare. These changes I bring before you align with the act's purpose of remembering the extraordinary courage and profound sacrifice of Canada's veterans and serving members of Canada's Armed Forces.

CHANGE OF NAME AMENDMENT ACT, 2021

LOI DE 2021 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LE CHANGEMENT DE NOM

Miss Mitas moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 39, An Act to amend the Change of Name Act /
Projet de loi 39, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le changement de nom.

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 briefly explain her bill?

Miss Christina Maria Mitas: Thank you, Speaker. This bill amends the Change of Name Act to provide that certain offenders are ineligible to change their name. The offenders who are ineligible are those who are required to comply with Christopher's Law (Sex Offender Registry), 2000, and other criminal offenders who may be prescribed by regulation.

Consequential amendments are made to Christopher's Law (Sex Offender Registry), 2000.

PETITIONS

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Mr. Chris Glover: This petition is entitled "Demand Safe Schools.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the 2021-22 school year is the third school year impacted by COVID-19;

"Whereas attending school without disruption is vital for students' academic success and well-being;

"Whereas as of October 1, 2021, COVID-19 cases in schools represented 32% of all active COVID-19 cases in the province;

"Whereas parents and guardians need to be assured that their child is safe and healthy when at school, and that their child's school remains open to in-person instruction;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to open temporary classroom spaces and libraries, previously locked classrooms, and community centres, hire thousands of more teachers, education workers and custodians, and ensure proper sanitation and ventilation in classrooms with touchless faucets and effective HVAC systems."

1310

I fully support this petition. I will affix my signature and pass it to page Graden.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. Peter Tabuns: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas letting landlords raise rents before tenants have recovered from the pandemic is the wrong move; and

"Whereas Ontario should be freezing its rent increase guidelines at zero again in 2022 and providing rent subsidies to tenants who are still struggling from income and job losses caused by the pandemic; and

"Whereas Toronto's residential vacancy rate is 1.1%; and

"Whereas the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Toronto is over \$2,000 a month (highest in the country); and

"Whereas the wait-list for social housing in Ontario is nearing 200,000 households; and

"Whereas the Ford government eliminated rent control protections on new rental housing; and

"Whereas every person deserves access to safe, affordable, and livable housing;

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

"(1) Freeze rent increase guidelines at zero for 2022;

"(2) End vacancy decontrol: Landlords should not be able to increase rents to whatever they want when a tenant moves out;

"(3) End the above-the-guideline increases. Repairs and maintenance are a landlord's responsibility and they should pay for them;

"(4) Strengthen the Residential Tenancies Act to protect tenants from renovations and illegal evictions."

I agree with this petition and affix my signature to it. Page Theo will bring it to the table.

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I have hundreds and hundreds of petitions signed by people from my community, many of them delivered to me by East Riverside Optometry on Tecumseh Road East in my riding, from Dr. Todd Wilbee.

I'll put on my prescribed reading glasses.

"Petition to Save Eye Care in Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Speaker, I agree. I’ll be signing this and giving it to page Tanvi to bring down to the table.

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the government has been hard at work ensuring that patients have access to the care they need when they need it, which includes eye and vision care for Ontarians; and

“Whereas the government recognizes the valuable services that optometrists provide to people living in Ontario; and

“Whereas the government recognizes that compensation increases for optometrists have long been neglected by previous governments; and

“Whereas the government has made every possible effort to lay a foundation for a long-term relationship with the Ontario Association of Optometrists, including engaging a third-party mediator chosen by the OAO to assist them in reaching an agreement and offering a one-time lump sum payment as well as immediate OHIP fee increases; and

“Whereas any decision to withdraw services is the decision of individual optometrists under the direction of the OAO, despite the government continuing to fund these optometry services through OHIP;

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

“To petition the Ontario Association of Optometrists to immediately return to the bargaining table to work with the OAO’s chosen mediator to work out a long-term deal.”

I agree with this, will sign it and pass it off to page Theo.

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: My petition is entitled “Petition to Save Eye Care in Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I support this petition. I will be signing it and giving it to page Noor.

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Ms. Jessica Bell: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Whereas the government only covers an average of 55% of the cost of an OHIP-insured visit, the lowest rate in Canada; and

“Whereas optometrists must absorb the other 45% for the over four million services delivered annually under OHIP; and

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

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

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

I support this petition. I’m going to put my signature to it and give it to page Graden.

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am appalled that it is October 28 and MPPs are still presenting petitions to save eye care in Ontario.

I have a petition signed by many residents of London West.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Mr. Peter Tabuns: “Petition to Save Eye Care in Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I agree with this petition, affix my signature, and give it to page Zada to deliver.

1320

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Mr. Chris Glover: This petition is entitled, “Protect migratory birds.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas an estimated 25 million birds in Canada die each year due to collisions with windows on buildings, including many migratory and bird species at risk;

“Whereas materials to prevent the collision of birds into windows can proactively be incorporated into the designs of new buildings;

“Whereas the Canadian Standards Association has established a national standard for bird-friendly building design which has been adopted by some municipalities;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to incorporate the CSA 2019 bird-friendly building design standard into the Ontario building code, requiring bird-friendly materials to be used in new residential and commercial building windows.”

I pass it to page Sujay and have him take it to the table.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, it’s a real pleasure to rise on behalf of my constituents in the great riding of Davenport to table the following petition. It is entitled, “Save Our Health Care.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas under Bill 74 the Ford government has initiated a massive restructuring to the entire health system without any public consultation;

“Whereas this new system eliminates local planning and control of health care;

“Whereas the government has laid the groundwork for health care privatization and unprecedented levels of for-profit providers;

“Whereas the government has made significant cuts to vital health programs including cancer screening and care, public health, ambulance services, existing and planned overdose prevention sites, and autism programs;

“Whereas Ontario has the lowest per capita health spending in the country;

“Whereas Ford’s 2019 budget will see \$2.7 billion slashed from health care spending over the next two years;

“Whereas everyone in Ontario has the right to health care that is based on their health needs, not their ability to pay;

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

“Reverse Bill 74 and focus on improving our province’s not-for-profit and public delivery of universal health care;

“Reverse the cuts that have been made to vital health services and cancel planned cuts to health care spending;

“Support a universal provincial pharmacare and dental care plan for all Ontarians.”

I am pleased to support this petition. I will affix my signature and hand it to page Tanvi to table it with the Clerks.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. Chris Glover: This petition is entitled, “Affordable Housing.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas under Conservative and Liberal governments, rent prices have skyrocketed, home ownership is completely out of reach for many, and affordable housing and assisted living space wait-lists far outstrip availability;

“Whereas in Ontario, half of renters give more than 30% of their income to their landlords, and where 20% of renters give more than 50%;

“Whereas Ontario’s wait-list for affordable housing has grown to more than 185,000 families, and seniors now account for over 35% of the people waiting for affordable housing, putting Ontario on the brink of a homelessness humanitarian crisis;

“Whereas instead of tackling the housing problem, the Conservative government cancelled rent control on new units, forcing double-digit increases in rent, has refused any direct relief for renters during the COVID-19

pandemic, and abandoned Ontario's target of ending homelessness by 2025; and

"Whereas everyone deserves a home—a stable, decent, place they can afford;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to build 100,000 homes over the next decade consisting of 70,000 affordable housing units, as recommended by the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association and the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada, and 30,000 supportive housing units with wrap-around supports for people with mental health issues and addictions, as recommended by the Canadian Mental Health Association."

I fully support this petition. I will pass it to page Fraser and have him take it to the table.

ABUSE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION

Mr. Michael Mantha: I have a petition—and first, I want to thank Charmaine Loverin for her dedication towards this cause. The petition is entitled "Loverin's Law.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the government of Ontario does not provide direct use of education and real life skills language, nor prevention tools about abuse in elementary ... middle schools and high schools; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario does not provide direct use of education and real life skills language, nor prevention tools for five top abuse situations facing many Canadian and diverse families today: physical, neglect, emotional, verbal and sexual, grooming; and

"Whereas abuse affects ages younger than 5 and 93% of abuse happens in the hands of those that young people or youth are supposed to trust; and

"Whereas statistically two in five girls and one in six boys are currently abused in Canada today, not including unreported; and

"Whereas abuse has no culture, status nor religious divide and is a long-term injury that causes stigma, shame, guilt, anxiety, even isolation that can result in bullying, self-harming behaviours, depression, youth addiction and even suicide; and

"Whereas early education, including evidence-based and new community prevention programs, will greatly benefit intervention, awareness and empowerment for prevention of bullying, addiction and suicide for victims and early offenders;

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

"Request an act to designate an 'annual awareness of abuse prevention week' in all Ontario primary, middle and high schools, and to provide for abuse curricula for healthy families and safe community policies, administration and accountability" by year 2020.

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition. I affix my name and present it to page Theo to bring down to the Clerks' table.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUPPORTING PEOPLE AND BUSINESSES ACT, 2021

LOI DE 2021 VISANT À SOUTENIR LA POPULATION ET LES ENTREPRISES

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 27, 2021, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

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

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

Mr. Percy Hatfield: First, I want to put on the record that I'm all out of red tape. Back when the Liberals were in power, I think Brad Duguid was the first minister in charge of red tape reduction. I gave him a roll so he could practise. When I came here, a friend of mine gave me four, five, six rolls of red tape. I've given a roll of red tape to all of the Conservative ministers up till now who've had the file. I'm sorry I'm out; I'll look for some more if I can find it.

Who's not in favour of cutting government red tape? Well, no one, unless, of course, it impacts on health and safety or makes cuts to the environmental protections that we rely on. Ontario residents—our constituents, our friends and neighbours—tell us in survey after survey that the environment is very important to them. Be it climate change, clean air, clean water, wetlands, endangered species, urban sprawl or environmental impact studies—the list goes on and on—people don't like to see cuts made to rules and regulations and policies that protect what is important to us all.

That brings me to schedule 10 of the bill—changes to the Environmental Assessment Act.

Speaker, as you know, when you enter my office here at Queen's Park, one of the first things you may well notice on the wall is a big laminated poster of Ontario's Environmental Bill of Rights. It's right up there with a photograph of me and noted environmentalist David Suzuki. It was the NDP government led by Bob Rae that gave us the legislation needed to protect our environmental future. His Minister of the Environment was Bud Wildman, the member from Algoma, who served here in the House from 1975 to 1999. Bud was a tremendous member and a most excellent Minister of the Environment. He truly cared about the environment and the need to protect it well into the future. In fact, the subnote to the bill was, "A Beginning."

The Environmental Bill of Rights was proclaimed on the 15th of February in 1994. It recognized that Ontario's environment—its air, land, water, plant and animal life and ecological systems—has inherent value, and that the environment should be used wisely, protected and conserved and, where necessary, restored for the benefit of present and future generations, and that the people should have the means to ensure that this goal is achieved.

Speaker, Ontario's Environmental Bill of Rights gave us the right to information on policies and actions that

could significantly affect the environment. It gave us the right to have those policies and actions formally reviewed and publicly reported.

1330

It also made it possible to initiate investigations into situations or activities believed to be environmentally harmful, and to take court action to prevent or remedy such harm. Speaker, there was even what we would now call a whistle-blower clause that gave employees greater protection if and when they take action to protect the environment.

The bill of rights also included the right to have an Environmental Commissioner who shall act on their belief to scrutinize the government, to ensure that it meets its environmental responsibilities under this bill.

Speaker, together, these rights would enable us and future generations to enjoy and value Ontario's natural environment.

Like I say, the bill was proclaimed into law on the 15th of February 1994, under an NDP government.

Now, fast-forward—or I guess now, I suppose, backward—to two years ago, in March, when this government did away with Ontario's Environmental Commissioner and folded her responsibilities under the Office of the Auditor General. I know you remember that, Speaker, because it happened at the same time as the government did away with Ontario's Child Advocate and the French services commissioner.

Schedule 10 of the Supporting People and Businesses Act makes further changes to the Environmental Assessment Act. It further expands the powers which enable the government to exempt certain types of projects from a full environmental assessment.

Speaker, when I started talking about cutting red tape this afternoon, I mentioned that survey after survey shows all political parties that people really care about the environment and environmental protections and that they don't wish to see them watered down.

Ontario citizens don't want to lose existing environmental protections, yet we have a government that fires our Environmental Commissioner, that continues to hack away at our environmental protections, that has used ministerial zoning orders to override the rights of municipal zoning plans, and our environment is in danger of suffering a death by a thousand cuts. Cut red tape, yes, but not at the expense of environmental protections or at the expense of health and safety.

The Supporting People and Businesses Act—if the government really wanted to have this bill live up to its name, it could have included provisions in here to launch a made-in-Ontario manufacturing strategy, an automotive strategy, that would guarantee good-paying jobs to support people and business.

Yesterday, I heard the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade talk about everything the government is doing in the automotive area. I was very impressed with what he said because he talked about the natural resources that we have in Ontario, be it cobalt, lithium, nickel, copper or whatever, the minerals that we

need to make computer chips—these tiny resistors and semiconductor chips that power computers and vehicles as well as any other number of high-tech devices. We can do it. We have the natural resources. We have the technology. It's not rocket science. We know how to do it. We can develop the strategy to make our own computer chips and have and protect our manufacturing base. That's how we can support people and businesses.

I know the Premier and the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade have an interest in the situation at Stellantis in Windsor; they've been there. We build minivans in Windsor, the best in the world. We used to build them in three shifts, and we lost one. A couple of weeks ago, they announced we're going to be losing another one.

We can't build minivans without the parts we need to put into them. These chips are essential, and we have been relying on offshore producers who use our natural resources to make them. That has to change. We need an automotive strategy and a manufacturing strategy now, in writing. And then maybe the federal government would follow suit and we would be well on our way in that regard.

Speaker, we can also support people by protecting their housing, as we've all recently heard from the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada. More than 260 co-ops and many more non-profits are near the end of their mortgage, but because of an outdated funding formula, the people living in these co-ops, who, for the most part, are people of low and modest incomes, have been asking the government to help them out. The federation claims that fixing the funding formula won't impact the provincial budget but that failing to update the formula by a provincial regulation could lead to the need for hundreds of millions of dollars more in capital grants for housing for many years to come. It could also put at risk tens of thousands of affordable co-op and non-profit homes. It has been costing more and more money to update and maintain these co-operative homes. The end of the mortgage agreement opens the door and provides a unique opportunity for co-ops and non-profits in Ontario to address long-standing and well-documented capital repair deficits, without government assistance.

Their bottom line—and I hope to learn more about this tomorrow, when I meet virtually with those who run the federation: Their ask of the government is that Ontario ensure that a new service agreement regulation fixes the funding formula for co-ops to ensure this housing is financially sustainable and protects the funding for rental assistance for households in need.

The Supporting People and Businesses Act is missing another key component: affordable child care. People in need of child care need support, and businesses—

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

Pursuant to standing order 50(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there have been six and a half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be

deemed adjourned unless the government House leader directs the debate to continue.

Mr. Michael Parsa: Speaker, continue.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Okay. I return to the member from Windsor–Tecumseh to continue his remarks.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you to the member from Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill for allowing the debate to continue, in his role as parliamentary assistant.

The Supporting People and Businesses Act is missing another key component, and that's affordable child care. People in need of child care need support, and businesses need more people willing to work—which could be a lot easier if parents had affordable child care. The federal government has an offer on the table that has been taken up by most other provinces, but, so far, here in Ontario we don't have a play date scheduled with the feds on this.

Speaker, last Sunday I was reading an op-ed piece in the Toronto Star on this very subject. The headline was “Stop dilly-dallying on child care, Ford”—I'm sure the editors meant to insert “Premier” before “Ford,” but maybe they were tight for space, just as we have a space shortage of affordable daycare here in Ontario. The author, Supriya Dwivedi, reminded us that just after the federal election, the Premier said he wanted a child care deal with the feds—since then, crickets. They have deals in Quebec, Manitoba, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, PEI, the Yukon, as well as Newfoundland and Labrador, but nothing yet here in this province. The only other province still on the sidelines is Mr. Kenney's Alberta. We hear a lot from the government on the jobs shortage and that Ontario remains open for business. So why, this article asks, is this government not jumping at the opportunity to do a sure thing that we all know would significantly boost female participation in the workforce? “Ensuring that women have affordable child care is key to our economic recovery, so that the women who were forced to leave the workforce during the pandemic to care for their children can return once again.”

Speaker, there's enough statistical data to show that providing a tax credit isn't nearly as beneficial as a steady supply of safe and affordable daycare.

I've seen the political ads running these days, and I've seen the Premier declare that he's the guy saying yes to everything. Well, I agree with those who say that what he should be saying yes to is the federal offer for a guaranteed plan for affordable daycare in Ontario, which would certainly support people and support businesses, which is what the government's bill, Bill 13, purports to be all about.

1340

Speaker, I'm just going to wrap up with a couple of points. It takes a village—our hospice village in Windsor and Essex county has just concluded its 19th annual Face to Face campaign and raised an astonishing \$106,737. Over the last 19 years, the campaign has raised almost \$1.5 million. Congratulations to John Fairley, who founded the campaign. It's very simple: You ask 10 of your friends to donate \$10 to their local hospice. It's a face-to-face

campaign, as you go out and you collect the money. We have amazing results in Windsor and Essex county.

Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't say to the government that I have a letter from the Greater Essex County District School Board. They have a number of points, but one of them is on special education funding.

“We would like to thank you for the continued investment in the area of special education,” they say to the government. “However, it is important to note that special education continues to experience underfunding. We would like to note that our board's special education deficit for 2021-22 is projected to be \$3.8 million. The largest grant within the special education funding model is the per pupil amount, which inadequately addresses the growing special education population in our system. The board is experiencing increased enrolment of students having increasingly complex needs.”

Speaker, I want to thank you for your time this afternoon. I had a couple of points I wanted to put on the record, and I'm glad I had the opportunity to do so.

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

Hon. Jane McKenna: I listened intently to what you had to say. [*Inaudible*] member opposite: Does the opposition believe that we should make businesses do the same approvals and studies, taking years to complete, instead of building new housing and other important infrastructure in the province?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I'm not sure of the point behind the question, because I think everyone in this House would agree—I would hope every member in this House would agree—that we're all in favour of building more affordable housing.

We all know the homelessness situation. We all know the price of housing is skyrocketing. We know we need more affordable housing. We know the federal government has announced plans to build a lot of housing. We want to tap into that, in partnership, and make sure that we have more homes in Ontario for people, especially the people who need them the most. We don't need more mansions. We don't need to cut in on farmland and take away all the farmland that is going to build new mansions in the suburbs. We need infill. We need affordable homes, and we need them now.

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

Mr. Chris Glover: I appreciate the words of the member. I fully agree with what you're saying about the need for affordable daycare in our province. It's something that we need.

This legislation also opens up the Education Act. If you had your say, if the government would actually listen to you, what recommendations would you make around education in this province?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: When it comes to education in the middle of a pandemic, we've heard from day one that we need smaller class sizes, we need better air filtration systems, we need to keep people wearing masks and to keep a safe distance, but we also need more educators and more special-ed educators.

On the radio the other day, there was an interview in the Windsor area. They need 100 more people to come into the schools at lunchtime to supervise the children so the teachers can do what they're supposed to be doing, getting ready for the afternoon, and the principal can do what she's supposed to be doing, making the school run. So we've got to get more people in to help to supervise the kids as they have lunch.

There's a lot that can be done in education, but so far we haven't seen a lot from the government that acknowledges this and wants to do something about it.

Thank you for the question.

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

Ms. Donna Skelly: Thank you to the member opposite.

I want to continue along the same line of questioning that the Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues was raising, and that is about building, not affordable housing, but homes that people can afford. You mentioned that, yes, some suburbs do build multi-million dollar homes, the mansions so to speak. But in my area, which is really exploding with young families, these are homes that are either attached or they're semi-detached, townhouses, row homes. One of the things that this bill does is try to expedite the process, because as we draw it out, as you know, the cost of building a home can increase. Builders do not absorb that cost; they pass it on to the homeowner.

Do you support the measures that we have brought forward as a government, some of which are in this act, some of which have been introduced earlier, to bring down the cost of homes in Ontario?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I think you can bring down the cost of homes a lot more if you start infilling in communities that are built up already and are serviced. You don't have to go into the greenfields and start building affordable homes. You can infill, and you can use inclusionary zoning, and you can make some of the condos, apartments, homes more readily available for the people who can't afford to pay the full price. That opens it up and makes living more affordable for everyone. We have too many people in this province paying way too much in rent or in mortgage payments such that they don't have enough money left over to feed their families adequately, healthily and so on.

I think there's lots we can do. If we get our heads together and work on it together, I think we can come up with some solutions.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My thanks to the member from Windsor–Tecumseh for his speech and for his response to these questions.

Since the matter of housing is before us—we've had a few questions from the government—I would appreciate it if the member could talk about what he sees as the obstacles to actually building the housing that people need that they can afford in this province.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: For too many years, housing has been in the hands of a small cadre of people who have

dictated terms to the government, be it on rent control or be it on developing lands that were environmentally protected. We know there are going to be more people moving into this province. We have to make sure they have homes that they can move into and homes that they can afford to move into. Not everybody coming here is going to be earning hundreds of thousands of dollars a year and can build or buy whatever is on the market. We need people coming with more modest incomes to work in the service industry or to keep our commercial buildings open. We have to make sure they have a place they can afford to live in that's within a little bit of distance to get to work and get back home.

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

Mr. Michael Parsa: I have to start off by thanking my colleague for the great presentation. I always enjoy listening to him.

Ontario has an outdated court system, and we've seen the results of it with the backlogs during the pandemic. The Attorney General has been making significant changes to bring our judicial system into the 21st century, with proceedings—and removing and updating the regulations.

One example of outdated legislation—to enhance our court system is to the changes that are proposed in this bill to the Barristers Act. I'm wondering if my honourable colleague agrees that modernizing our court system and judicial system will be good for Ontarians, especially having experienced what we've witnessed during the pandemic.

1350

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you to the member from Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill for that question.

Yes, overseeing and updating the judicial system is very important—and it's not just in the provincial courts; it's in the tribunal system. We've seen too many landlord and tenant hearings held virtually, where the adjudicators aren't ensuring that the landlord presented is actually the landlord, as opposed to somebody pretending to be the landlord or a member of the landlord's family and they are going along with whatever they say.

The people who need help at these tribunals, who need a little bit of guidance, are the tenants who are being kicked out of their affordable housing because the landlord has made stuff up or he has done \$20 worth of repairs and wants to increase the rent by much more than that.

We need a fair system, we need more adjudicators, and we need help for the people who go to these tribunal hearings.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I would say we don't have time for another back-and-forth. Further debate?

Ms. Donna Skelly: I'd like to take time right now to speak in more detail about how our government is and has been supporting people and businesses right across the province, and specifically how our policies are rebuilding economic stability while keeping Ontarians safe and healthy.

Our government continues to support our economy by introducing new measures to promote economic stability. These new measures are also encouraging new investment. We are introducing these measures while keeping families, workers and the environment in this province safe and healthy.

This is our seventh red tape reduction package to date since our government took office. Ontario had the most costly, numerous and onerous regulatory requirements of any province or territory in Canada. It was ranked among the worst jurisdictions in North America for bogging people and businesses down in red tape. It used to cost companies an average of \$33,000 a year simply to comply with these regulations, but our government has reduced these costs significantly. Businesses, not-for-profits, municipalities, universities, schools and hospitals are now saving about \$373 million in annual compliance costs since June 2018. This comprehensive red tape reduction package builds on three years of work to reduce the burden and lighten the load for people and businesses weighed down by the demands of the pandemic.

Our government has taken action to help businesses and organizations rebuild and prepare for the opportunities of the future in a number of different ways. For example, we are permitting 24/7 deliveries so retailers can keep the shelves stocked. We are increasing the diversity of products at the Ontario Food Terminal by expanding the promotion of local food. We are making it easier for businesses to submit hazardous waste reports by adopting a more efficient digital reporting service that will make reports timelier and less of a burden. We are providing land developers with online access to environmental information on properties and making it easier to get the environmental information they need. These are just a few examples of red tape reduction.

Why should Ontarians care about our government cutting red tape? Because red tape, such as needless, outdated and duplicative requirements, ties up time and costs money. Red tape slows down the pace of business and impedes economic and social progress. It is difficult to make changes, to start a business or simply go about your daily life when you are bogged down with paper and other unnecessary government requirements.

For the past three years, our government has been working to cut red tape and to modernize our regulatory system to help people and businesses meet the demands that they face today, and also to position them for a brighter tomorrow. We continue to take a thoughtful and targeted approach to eliminating red tape in Ontario. Each decision that we have made and continue to make is informed by the following five guiding principles: protecting health, safety and the environment; prioritizing the important issues, even if it's tough to do; harmonizing rules with the federal government and other jurisdictions where we can; listening to the public; and taking a whole-of-government approach.

Our Supporting People and Businesses package will offer support in five key ways.

First, we are making access to health services a priority across sectors. We are giving special-needs students better

access to health supports. We are proposing to make it easier for children with special needs to access the therapies that they require while in school. The barriers to accessing nursing, speech-language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy in school will be reduced. We will improve review and approval timelines for the designation of new CT machines, including streamlining approval requirements to replace CT scanners in hospitals. We are proposing to modernize the regulatory framework for laboratories, to ensure that people can continue to receive the high-quality health care they so desperately need. Ontarians will benefit from additional flexibility in laboratory operations and enjoy better access to laboratory services.

Speaker, since our government took office, we have been making businesses in Ontario much more competitive. We are reducing the time and costs involved in securing planning approvals. We are continuing to protect important employment lands through provincially significant employment zones, and we are consulting with stakeholders on how to best leverage the zones in support of future economic development. We are providing municipal councils with greater discretionary power to delegate certain additional planning decisions. This would empower municipalities to streamline and expedite development approvals by delegating decisions to council committees and municipal staff. We are enabling companies to make changes to their facility in a timely manner by reducing delays associated with the permission process. We are making it easier for businesses to improve compliance with environmental requirements by using clearer language on why conditions have been included. We are making it easier for employers to meet engineering requirements by amending the Occupational Health and Safety Act. We are making it easier for businesses to comply with provincial environmental regulations by proposing to allow businesses the option to consolidate environmental permissions for the same facility—an example of this: If a business needed a permit to take water, and it also needed environmental compliance approval for a given site, they could obtain both under one single approval. Businesses eligible for consolidated approval would still need to follow the same environmental protection rules and, of course, compliance conditions. We are modernizing the regulatory landscape by identifying and investing in technology and tools to improve inspections and increase compliance, which helps Ontario businesses grow. Smart regulations and a modern approach to compliance and inspections will improve existing standards to keep Ontario workers and families safe and healthy, while also protecting the environment and the public interest.

Speaker, if passed, this legislation will support businesses on the ground, and it will help government deliver clear and effective rules that protect public health and safeguard the environment, without sacrificing innovation, growth and opportunity.

Ontario families expect clean air, clean water, safe products and safe working conditions. Solid rules and

regulations are necessary to maintain these high standards. The changes we are making today will help us to do things better, safer and stronger in the future. We are reducing red tape to help support business recovery efforts, address long-term challenges and, of course, save taxpayer dollars. At the same time, we are maintaining our high standards, to keep our province healthy and to keep our province safe.

1400

Throughout the pandemic, our government has supported small business. We know how difficult it has been for restaurants, bars and other businesses in the hospitality sector. We are proposing changes that would establish the groundwork for the government to make it easier and faster for licensed restaurants, bars and other hospitality businesses to apply to create or extend their licensed outdoor patio spaces.

Jason Cassis is a restaurateur in my hometown of Hamilton. Jason has been a leader in proposing innovative ideas in the hospitality sector that would prevent restaurants from shuttering their businesses throughout the pandemic, and one of those proposals was to extend the outdoor patios into public spaces. Speaker, I'm proud that our government endorsed that proposal and it wants to make permanent changes to make it easier for hospitality businesses to create and extend their licensed outdoor patio spaces.

I want to focus now on some of the proposed changes in this act that would impact the Ministry of the Attorney General. Our government wants to modernize the Barristers Act to remove an outdated courtroom procedure that prioritizes cases of senior lawyers and does not recognize licensed paralegals. This would eliminate a provision that is inconsistently applied and could help improve efficiency in our courtrooms.

Our government wants to update the Crown Administration of Estates Act to reflect the migration of the Ministry of the Attorney General to the ontario.ca website.

Our government wants to update the Courts of Justice Act to reflect the updated judicial title of associate judge.

In response to the federal government's legalization of cannabis, our government is proposing to permanently allow cannabis retail stores to offer delivery and curbside pickup services which have been very popular with customers throughout the pandemic. This change would make it easier for retailers to comply with physical distancing and public health measures.

Our government is delivering on its commitment to modernize the Ontario Energy Board and strengthen public trust in its effective oversight of the natural gas and electricity sectors. Independent commissioners are central to the OEB's modernized structure, and attracting highly trained professionals with specialized skills ensures the OEB is able to best protect consumer interests—including rates that remain reasonable and, of course, affordable.

Our government is committed to reducing the amount of waste going to landfills. Advanced recycling and energy recovery technologies can help ensure valuable resources like hard-to-recycle plastics can be put to good use; for example, creating new products for fuel alternatives.

On October 19, our government launched the new Ontario Business Registry, which will cut red tape for small business. It will make it easier and faster for Ontarians to access government services, which will save time and save money. For the first time ever, businesses right across the province have direct, online access to over 90 services, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Ontarians will be able to complete electronic transactions immediately, rather than submitting forms through the mail which could take weeks to be processed. Speaker, this modern online service will make it easier and more affordable for millions of businesses and not-for-profit corporations to access government services in the province, and it will allow them to focus their time and energy on what they do best: growing the economy and creating new jobs.

We are finding ways to move businesses forward by giving them the flexibility they need to recover from this very challenging period. We're taking action to remove barriers for Ontario businesses that limit the use of virtual services such as calling and hosting meetings and voting. We're exploring changes that would enable more targeted and timely relief for businesses right now, and offering relief from the effects of potential emergency situations in the future.

Our government is making it simpler, easier and more convenient to access key government services during the pandemic and, of course, beyond. Customers can avoid long lines by renewing their documents through ServiceOntario's secure and easy-to-use online services any time of day, from the comfort and the safety of their home or their home office. We're looking at how we can further improve our digital platforms to increase online update and make the renewal process easier for ServiceOntario's highest-volume transactions, such as licence plate stickers, driver's licences and Ontario photo cards.

We are expanding the jurisdiction of the Condominium Authority Tribunal to include nuisance-related disputes. This will provide condo owners and corporations easier and cheaper access to dispute resolution for some of the most common types of condo conflicts.

We are strengthening the province's consumer protection on electrical safety by allowing the Electrical Safety Authority to redirect resources to public safety and education efforts. This will help address the underground economy of unlicensed contractors and the competitiveness of licensed contractors who are compliant with the regulations. Cracking down on illegal electrical installations strengthens Ontario's public safety and consumer protection mandates, and improves safety for everyone in the province.

We are modernizing government services by making it faster and more convenient for people and businesses to interact with government agencies. These changes include implementing digital productivity tools such as eSignatures, eApprovals, Binder Browser and OPSdocs. This suite of digital office business tools will make Ontario's back-office work more secure, cost-effective and efficient.

Our government is also modernizing the administration of transfer payments to improve service delivery.

We are making services for job seekers easier to use and more responsive to local needs in an effort to help more people, including those on social assistance, find good jobs. As part of this, we are integrating employment programs from social assistance, such as Ontario Works employment assistance and Ontario Disability Support Program employment supports, into Employment Ontario, and we are expanding these changes province-wide.

Our government is proposing to improve the financial supports and simplify the application process for the Second Career program. The Second Career program helps those who are unemployed and workers who are laid off train for occupations that are in high demand. The changes include increasing weekly basic living support for rent, mortgage and other expenses up to \$500 a week, and enhancing transportation and child care supports.

We are proposing to amend regulations under the Municipal Act and the City of Toronto Act to allow municipalities across the province to enter into special conditional long-term loan agreements with the Canada Infrastructure Bank. The bank could provide municipalities with low-interest loans that could be used to support revenue-generating projects that are in the public interest and will attract private capital—projects such as zero-emission buses.

We want to make it easier for the greater Toronto and Hamilton area to reduce emissions by supporting all of these funds—funds that have a mandate to invest in projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution in the GTHA by streamlining approval processes.

The proposals in the act will make it easier for people to become volunteers by allowing them to receive vulnerable sector police checks free of charge. Currently, the fee for a police record check for volunteers is \$20. With these changes, up to five copies of those results would also be available upon request at no charge. We recognize that volunteers enrich our communities in innumerable ways. Our government is reviewing other options as well, including regulatory changes to service standards, to support volunteers and help cut red tape for the volunteer sector. We will do whatever we can do to enable and encourage people to volunteer their time and to offer their skills for the betterment of their communities.

Our government wants to create better and greater access to veterinarians by developing a “one health” approach to veterinary facilities. These changes will benefit farms, the agri-food sector and the general public. Modernizing the accreditation for veterinary facilities will make it easier for a veterinary practice to offer services to a wider range of animals and clients. This change would provide owners of the animals access to a broader range of veterinary services. It would expand the availability of vet services in some areas, and it would increase innovation in the services that veterinarians offer to the public, including farmers.

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Speaker, we know that Ontarians are eager to get back to work and that businesses are looking to us to make processes more efficient so they can spend more of their

time rebuilding and rehiring staff. We continue working hard to ensure that businesses in Ontario have a competitive advantage, by providing them with the support they need to keep fuelling Canada’s economic engine in a modern and responsive way. The fall 2021 red tape reduction package is the next step in realizing these efforts.

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

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I say to my friend from Flam-
borough–Glanbrook, who was just talking about veterinarians and increasing veterinarian services: I heard on the CBC Windsor radio news this morning that there is a great need in the Chatham-Kent area for a 24-hour emergency vet service. A lady’s dog passed away because she couldn’t find a clinic that was open, and I think she had to go all the way up around Sarnia to find a 24-hour clinic; we have a couple in Windsor. I’m just wondering if, what you were just speaking about—is there anything in there that would enable the government and the veterinarians in Chatham-Kent to have at least one of them stay open 24 hours a day for emergency services?

Ms. Donna Skelly: One of the issues that we’re facing—and we’ve raised this in the Legislature so often—is the lack of skilled trades and, I would say, skilled professions, and veterinarian services fall under that umbrella. We have done almost everything we possibly can to encourage more and more people to enter into numerous professions, including veterinarian services.

When I was first elected—actually, even prior to getting elected, I spent a lot of time with members of my farming community in Guelph, at the university, and there was a clear lack of veterinarians for big animals. A lot of veterinarians are specializing in small breeds. There was a significant demand for veterinarians who could care for cattle and horses etc.

Our minister of skills and labour has been focusing on that issue, as has our Minister of Colleges and Universities. It’s a real issue, but we’re doing what we can to make sure more people enter these professions.

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

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I listened intently to the member’s speech. It’s very easy to do when she’s standing right beside me.

Ms. Donna Skelly: I was hitting him.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: The members opposite have raised concerns that the red tape package is mixed legislative and regulatory changes. They believe everything should be run through the House as legislation only. However, it is important to note that regulations are tools to consult with the public and implement the policy or legislation.

I wonder if the member can explain why some changes are legislative and some are regulatory in nature in the broader red tape package.

Ms. Donna Skelly: I’d love to answer that question.

Legislation is created to set out the principles and rules, whereas regulations are meant to implement that legislation.

Some of the fantastic regulatory changes in this package include:

- changes to modernize the licensing system for labs, which would allow for the ramping up of lab capacity, if needed, like we did during the pandemic;

- regulatory changes to the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act, or HARPA, that will allow for the purchasing and implementation of new technology in the health sector, which can help with the backlog that has been created because of the pandemic;

- regulatory changes like aligning Ontario's gasoline volatility regulations and timelines with those of the federal government, making it easier for petroleum facilities.

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

Mr. Michael Mantha: I thought I heard the member talk about streamlining processes under the Ontario Disability Support Program and the Ontario Works program. That's great, because the faster we can get those dollars, the more increases that individuals who are sitting at home, particularly during this pandemic, who are forgotten, who are hurting, who are suffering—some of the most horrid stories, that they're coming into my office in regard to making life-changing choices: "Do I buy my medication? Do I go to my appointment? I can't afford to go there. I only have so much. I'm going to be kicked out of my apartment because I can't afford the rent anymore, because of the increases."

We can streamline the processes all we want, but if we are not going to address the core issue of those actual rates to help these individuals—and I know you know. You get those same constituents who walk in to your office and ask for that same help.

When are we going to address the social assistance rates of ODSP and OW workers in this province?

Ms. Donna Skelly: Thank you for that question.

You mentioned housing, for example. One of the organizations in my hometown that I'm so proud to work with is Indwell. Indwell provides social housing for all different levels of care. Regardless of whether you're independent and need just a little guidance in mobility issues, or perhaps if you've never held a job or have an addictions issue and need that wraparound support, they are there. I would encourage all of you to reach out to this organization because they're one of the leaders in providing that type of housing.

We have done everything, with the city of Hamilton, for example, to eliminate barriers for our city to move forward with building more public housing so that people who are on social assistance, who are facing barriers to finding adequate affordable housing, can do so.

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

Mr. Jim McDonell: As we all know, these past two years have been extraordinary. Living through a once-in-

a-century pandemic, through these past two years—this House has continued to sit to make important decisions to protect the people of Ontario, passing important legislation. Some of those bills included were various red tape packages to build infrastructure, support small and main street businesses in our community, and also to modernize certain government services, like ServiceOntario.

Can the member explain how these changes throughout the pandemic have had a positive impact on the people and businesses in this province?

Ms. Donna Skelly: Interestingly enough, I can answer that question.

One of the very successful changes that we have made was to allow that 24/7 truck deliveries to retailers, restaurants and distribution centres be permanent. Making this change permanent supports main street rebuilding efforts by helping much-needed goods reach businesses as efficiently as possible.

We expanded the mandate of the Ontario Food Terminal to allow it to promote local food, especially because thousands of small businesses, including independent shops and restaurants, rely on the Ontario Food Terminal for their success.

We have also modernized the court system in many, many ways.

In this House, we have made changes to safely do our job, as well.

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

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you to the member opposite, the member for Flamborough–Glanbrook.

I notice that in your presentation you raised the issue around the Condominium Authority Tribunal. This is an issue that is coming up in my riding. It's also coming up at the Standing Committee on Public Accounts right now. There are some concerns that the scope of the tribunal is not broad enough to deal with all the issues that residents are facing right now—so if you have a concern around your property manager maybe not doing as good a job as they could be, or if you have got a concern about an Airbnb that is running 24/7, like a party hotel, next to you, there's nowhere you can go.

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My question to you is, given that you raised it in your speech, are you open to expanding the jurisdiction of the tribunal so that if a condo resident has got a complaint, they've got somewhere to go to have their dispute heard and resolved?

Ms. Donna Skelly: Thank you for the question. This particular piece of legislation that is being proposed will expand the jurisdiction, as you mentioned, of the Condominium Authority Tribunal to include nuisance-related disputes. It will allow condo owners and corporations better access to faster and cheaper dispute resolution for nuisance-related disputes. And if approved, the ministry is proposing to proclaim legislative and regulatory amendments to the Condominium Act that would, among other things, prohibit activity in a condo that would result

in any unreasonable noise, nuisance, annoyance, disruption etc. that some of the people you were mentioning might be bringing forward.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): There isn't enough time for another go-round. Further debate?

Mr. Chris Glover: It's a pleasure to rise in the House today to speak to this Bill 13. I just want to start by acknowledging that this is 2021, and 60 years ago in 1961, the New Democratic Party of Canada was formed, and also in 1961, I was born.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Yay!

Mr. Chris Glover: Yes, just a month and a half ago, I celebrated my 60th birthday as well.

I want to start with a little anecdote about Tommy Douglas. It's told to me by a good friend, my brother-in-law, Art Peltomaa. His father ran for the NDP in the Niagara region in the 1960s, and he was at a rally in 1965. Tommy Douglas was the chief speaker there, and Tommy Douglas was getting heckled. This guy was heckling him, and Tommy went on with his speech. Then he heckled him again, and Tommy went on with his speech. Then the third time, Tommy stopped his speech and said, "To the heckler in the audience, I just want to relay a story, a lesson that I learned from the great M.J. Coldwell," who was another Saskatchewan NDPer and a colleague of Tommy Douglas. He said, "M.J. Coldwell was at a convention in Saskatchewan and a farmer who was angry with him threw a cabbage up on the stage. M.J. Coldwell went over and he picked up the cabbage and he's looking at the cabbage and he says, 'I have been speaking in politics now for decades and I've had many things thrown at me. I've had eggs thrown at me. I've had tomatoes thrown at me.' And he's looking at this head of lettuce and he says, 'But this is the first time that anyone has thrown the head of one of my Liberal opponents at me.'"

Anyway, I want to start with Bill 13 and what is missing from this bill, the urgent things. In this bill, there are a lot of housekeeping items, and most of them are okay. But the thing that's really missing here is the urgency of addressing the homelessness crisis that is a crisis not only in the city of Toronto; it's in cities and towns across this province. We have people sleeping on the streets and we really need to address it.

I had a meeting of residents in Spadina-Fort York a couple of days ago, and they're all deeply concerned about this homelessness crisis, about its impact, the humanitarian crisis that's happening, often in our parks, and also the impacts that it's having on the communities around.

One of the people I've been speaking with and working with through the pandemic is Kim Curry, who is the director of the program Seeds of Hope. She reported to me that 17 people experiencing homelessness died over the last month on the streets of Toronto. And winter is coming.

On Sundays, I volunteer with a food program and we serve food to seniors, to people in supportive housing and also to people experiencing homelessness. Last year, several of the people that I met who were experiencing homelessness had lost fingers and toes to frostbite because they were outside.

We've got a homelessness crisis, and this government's actions so far, to date, in the three and a half years that they've been in power, have actually just made it worse. They voted against declaring a state of emergency due to homelessness; they voted against my motion to build 100,000 affordable homes in Ontario; they dragged their feet on banning COVID evictions, leading to thousands of unnecessary evictions; and their rent freeze is going to expire on December 31, which is right in the middle of this winter season.

When I've asked the government before about the homelessness, they often talk about numbers. They talk about investments here and investments there. But the Financial Accountability Office of the government of Ontario has said that this government has cut \$160 million annually from housing programs and has abandoned the goal of ending homelessness in 2025. They said that an increase in demand for housing support and a longer wait-list for social housing is leading more and more people to experience homelessness. So this problem is growing worse and worse.

Everybody in this Legislature—some of you commute into the city, but many of you come from all parts of the province. You come here, you have a rental place in Toronto, and you have to walk from that place to the Legislature. When you're walking here, you have to pass the people who are sleeping on the streets. I'm hoping that you're thinking about those people and the suffering that they're going through, especially with winter coming.

We really need this crisis to be addressed. The crisis was bad under the previous Liberal government. It's gotten worse under the Conservative government. I would really ask that you support a motion to declare a state of emergency on the homelessness crisis in this province, because we really need to free up the resources so that there isn't another year, another winter of people suffering on the streets—not just of Toronto, but of cities and towns across this province—during this winter.

The next thing I wanted to talk about was schedule 1 of this bill. It's about the Barristers Act. They talk about cutting red tape in the court system. Cutting red tape: There are some systems in the courts that can be automated now, and that would make a lot of sense, but one of the things that's really holding up the courts—and I was speaking with a Family Court reporter. She said, "A lot of times, because of the cuts that this government made to legal aid"—they cut \$133 million, 30%, of the legal aid budget. Because of that, a lot of people go into the Family Court system and they don't have legal representation. They don't understand things like serving a subpoena. So they will arrive at the court and they'll have handed their ex-spouse a letter, and they don't understand that that is not actually serving a subpoena. So the court's time gets taken up with this person trying to understand what the court is talking about when they think they've served a subpoena, but the subpoena has not actually been served. This is a waste of the court's time and it delays the justice, it delays the decisions of the Family Court, not only for the people who are immediately involved, but for all the people who are in the queue to try to get through that.

If you're going to open up the Barristers Act, if you're going to make some legal changes to this province, for goodness' sake, please reverse your cut of \$133 million to the legal aid budget, because people need access to justice, and that access to justice shouldn't depend on their ability to pay. So that's one thing.

The other schedule that I would like to talk about is schedule 7, the Development Charges Act. What you're doing here is you're changing the Development Charges Act so that municipalities will be able to charge for the expansion of the Yonge subway line. That's an important thing to do. We need more transit. But we also need more schools. So if you're going to open up the Development Charges Act, the other thing that I would ask that you do is change the education development charges.

In 1998, a former Conservative government changed the education development charges so that they could only be used to purchase new property. What this has meant in the city of Toronto is that only the Catholic board, the TCDSB, is allowed to collect education development charges—which they need, because they need to build new properties because our population is growing and they have more students. But the TDSB, the public school board in Toronto, cannot collect education development charges. So for every unit that is built in the city of Toronto, the Catholic board gets about \$2,000 in education development charges and the public board gets nothing.

What this has meant is that there are not schools being built to deal with the growing number of students in our communities. I'll give you an example. In my area of Spadina–Fort York, in CityPlace, there is a 12-acre site that has a public school, a Catholic school, a community centre, a daycare, a children's drop-in and a large park. This was set up by Dan Leckie when he was a city councillor, and also Jack Layton when he was a city councillor. They got the developer to set aside the 12 acres of land and they forced the developer, under the regulations in the mid-1990s, to invest the money to build the community centres and the schools. That's what we should be doing in all of the places where we've got intensive growth.

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Further down the street, east of Yonge Street, on the east waterfront in downtown Toronto, we've got a rapid growth of condominium developments—I live in a condo near the waterfront; not on the east waterfront, but on the waterfront—and they desperately need a school. But there's no money to build a school because of the regulation changes that the former Conservative government made, that the Liberals refused to change and that so far this government has refused to change, which would allow the public school board in Toronto to collect education development charges so that they can purchase the property to build the kinds of schools that CityPlace has. I would ask for you to make these changes to the current act.

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

Hon. Jane McKenna: Speaker, I was listening to the member from Spadina–Fort York. As you know, Ontario

has an outdated court system that was made visible during the pandemic, with cases being backlogged, as we all know and hear. Our Attorney General has been making significant changes to bring our judicial system into the 21st century with court proceedings and removing or updating outdated regulations.

One example of outdated legislation to enhance our court system is the change proposed in this bill to the Barristers Act. Does the member support modernizing things like Ontario courts and judicial systems?

Mr. Chris Glover: It depends how you define “modernization.” The first thing that this government did to our court system is that you cut legal aid by \$133 million, 30% of the budget. What this has meant is that low-income Ontarians do not have access to lawyers. The cut-off for legal aid is \$17,731 a year. If you make more than that—if you make \$17,732 a year—you are not eligible for legal aid, and even if you are eligible, it's often unavailable because of the cuts.

I've got to thank organizations like Pro Bono Ontario and the legal aid lawyers who are actually volunteering their time to try to make up for some of the shortfalls that this government has imposed on low-income Ontarians.

If you want to modernize, I'm hoping that modernization means progress and that it means a greater access to justice in this province. Currently, with the actions of this government, there is less access to justice.

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

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: The question I would like to ask today is: I am always conflicted because everyone wants a system that works better than the government, and everyone can agree that there are areas of government that were bogged down or needed to be updated. Why that didn't happen under the previous Liberal government, I don't know.

But what I am very, very concerned about is that when we talk about modernization, we are talking about excluding some people. There is not equal access to the Internet. People don't have the financial resources, or sometimes the language, to actually get access to justice. We've seen a horrible Landlord and Tenant Board situation that is virtual. And so what I would like to hear from the member is, what is your experience with the Landlord and Tenant Board?

Mr. Chris Glover: During this pandemic, a lot of people have been evicted from their homes by these rushed eviction hearings at the Landlord and Tenant Board. Some of them are taking place by telephone, so during the middle of the lockdown, some people were trying to phone in, and some people did not have a cellphone, so some were actually phoning in on a pay phone and kept getting cut off, so they were not actually able to participate in their own hearing and make their own case.

The other thing that has happened with the Landlord and Tenant Board is that a lot of people who are being evicted—and some of these evictions are renoevictions; some of them are by really unscrupulous landlords who want to get people out. The people who are involved often

don't speak English as their first language, or they have other barriers that prevent them from actually being able to represent themselves, so it has been a real loss of access to justice under the changes that this government has made.

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

Ms. Donna Skelly: I wanted to continue along that line of questioning and the concerns that were raised about an inability to access online services. Our government is allocating \$4 billion to the expansion of broadband, and your party voted against it. It is something so critical. It's critical in my riding. It's probably critical in your own ridings. We've heard even in urban areas there are pockets where people have limited access to broadband. So it's really important that we get your support moving forward so we can see this equitability or this quality when it comes to access to broadband.

My question to you: We have introduced measures that are actually making it easier for people to see justice. We were forced with the pandemic—we had to go online. One of them is bail hearings online. Do you think that allowing people, for example, to have their bail hearing virtually was a step in the right direction to modernizing our court system?

Mr. Chris Glover: A bail hearing is a really important hearing for somebody, and if it can be conducted fairly online, that's a wonderful thing, especially during the pandemic. The challenge is that with the cuts to legal aid, people often don't have legal representation or adequate legal representation to make their case. What's happening is it's a grossly unfair system. Our justice system is a grossly unfair and inequitable system in this province, and access to justice in this province depends on how much money you have, not on your needs. It's unfair to those who are accused and it's unfair to the victims of crime as well.

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

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you to the member for Spadina–Fort York on your presentation on Bill 13. I was really moved by the concerns that you raised around homelessness. Your riding has a huge and growing homeless population. They are sleeping in streets; they're sleeping in friends' houses; they're really struggling to get by. That's an issue that also faces my riding of University–Rosedale. There are so many parks in my riding where tent cities, encampments, have been set up because these people have nowhere to go. There's literally nowhere to go.

What would you like this government to do in this bill to address the homelessness crisis in your riding?

Mr. Chris Glover: I thank the member from University–Rosedale for that question. It's absolutely a crucial question. It is a crisis, and not just in our ridings; it's a crisis across this province. The first couple of things that this government should do is declare a state of emergency on the issue of homelessness in this province so that you can free up the resources to address it, especially with

winter coming. People are going to be outside and freezing, and people are going to die. They're already dying on the streets. Please recognize this as a state of emergency.

Then the other thing is to start building the 100,000 homes that have been called for by the Ontario housing coalition and by the Canadian Mental Health Association. What they're asking for is 70,000 affordable homes and 30,000 supportive housing units.

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

Hon. Jane McKenna: I just wanted to ask you a quick question. The opposition constantly talks to us about broadband and how hugely important it is, so I have a question for you: If it's so important, when we had it in the budget for \$4 billion, why did you vote against it?

Mr. Chris Glover: This is one of the things and one of the issues that keeps coming up in the Legislature, and it's really just a political game. What you have is, the budget has all kinds of schedules. This current bill has 20 schedules on 20 different acts. You've got some good things in a bill and then you've got these poison pills that we cannot possibly support. So when we vote against the bill, it's often because we're voting against that poison pill element of it, and then you get the opportunity to get up and say, "Oh, you voted against the budget, and we were going to do this." The people at home, at least now they're getting an opportunity to understand that when you say, "The NDP voted against this," we probably didn't vote against that particular section of a bill; we voted against the poison pill that you put in the bill, because it was an omnibus bill.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): A quick back and forth—further question?

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Mr. Michael Mantha: Would the member be surprised if I informed him that during the previous government, when the Conservatives were sitting in opposition, they actually voted 50% of the time in favour of policies that the Liberal government proposed? Would the member be surprised that the Conservative government actually helped the previous Liberal government to expedite the sale and privatization of Hydro One? Would you be surprised if I told you about those things? Again, I would like to hear your comments on that.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): A very quick response, the member from Spadina–Fort York.

Mr. Chris Glover: You bring up something very important: The Conservatives voted with the former Liberal government 50% of the time. One of the things that they were supporting, and that they actually started—the privatization of Ontario Hydro started with the previous Conservative government. They broke up the pieces. They broke up Ontario Hydro into Hydro One and into Ontario Power Generation, and then they started selling off the pieces. They sold off the Bruce generating station to a private company.

They started the privatization process and then the Liberals finished it, and the shame of that is that when we

had Ontario Hydro from 1908 to 1995, our hydro rates in Ontario were four cents a kilowatt hour for that entire period. Once the former Conservative government started—

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

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Order, please.

Further debate?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I'm really excited this afternoon to speak to Bill 13, Supporting People and Businesses Act, 2021. I want to begin by paying tribute to the Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction, who has really quarterbacked this entire piece of legislation—lots of components to it that are going to make life easier for people out there and for small businesses.

Since I have a few minutes to speak this afternoon, I also want to take time to pay tribute to someone in my riding, a good friend of our family, a good friend of many people in our community, Ken Grover, who recently celebrated his 75th anniversary. Ken is a small business owner, an excavation business, and was involved for many, many years in Glencoe minor hockey and the OMHA. I also want to say thanks to my dad, my father, Gary, who presented him with a 75th birthday certificate on the weekend. He was filling in for me and did a great job.

I want to also take just a couple of moments—today really was an important day for the province of Ontario and for our government. Important steps were taken today to build back a stronger, safer province coming out of this pandemic. I want to congratulate Premier Ford, of course, who's been leading the rebuilding of the long-term-care sector, but also pay tribute to our colleague the Minister of Long-Term Care, Minister Phillips, for introducing his legislation today as well, and to the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism, Minister Gill, for introducing very important legislation, well timed with Remembrance Day coming on November 11, ensuring that people can wear poppies in workplaces safely. Thank you to Minister Gill.

Again, before I get into the details of Bill 13 from our ministry's perspective, I also want to really sincerely thank my former parliamentary assistant, who spearheaded a lot of the initiatives from our ministry in Bill 13 before she became the associate minister. I want to thank the MPP for Burlington for everything she did on this front.

And since we're taking a few moments to thank people, I also want to thank my current parliamentary assistant, the MPP for Mississauga–Malton, who has been working really, really hard as well.

Speaker, today and over the last week or so, we've detailed important steps we're proposing to help more businesses rehire and grow and also the steps we're taking, as I said, to make it easier for people to really go about their daily lives in communities right across our wonderful province. I thought I would take just some time to outline some of the actions that my ministry, the Ministry of

Labour, Training and Skills Development, is taking to reduce the burden on workers and businesses.

We've seen a rise in temporary workers as a result of COVID-19. Many workers and employers are turning to temporary help agencies and recruiters to find their next job opportunity or to fill a job vacancy.

Most sign up with upstanding agencies, but there are others who aren't so lucky. My ministry officers are uncovering more and more situations where workers are being exploited by temporary help agencies that aren't complying with the law. We all know that horrific situation, and it should have been dealt with many, many years ago. There are some people out there paying below Ontario's minimum wage, denying employment rights like public holiday pay, vacation pay or overtime pay, while also undercutting rates on agencies following the law.

To put it simply, this really is an injustice that cannot go on. That's why we also introduced changes earlier this week to, again, protect more workers across the province and support businesses by creating a licensing framework. If passed, temp help agencies and recruiters would be required to have a licence to operate in Ontario.

We know in this legislation there is talk about improvements to the Second Career program. Speaking of workers—I know the Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction hears about this all the time when she's on the road, about this labour shortage. It is a generational challenge that we face here in Ontario. I hear from the minister all the time and the Premier talks about it. There really is hardly a small business out there that doesn't have a "help wanted" sign on their front door or in their window. These are paycheques waiting to be collected, and we know that workers are obviously eager to learn the skills they need for in-demand jobs. Our government will not leave any worker behind here in Ontario. Every job left unfilled is a missed opportunity and another day that a family is going without.

Businesses need workers to prosper, grow and create more jobs. The Second Career program is one way that we're helping. It provides short, market-driven training to help workers quickly upgrade their skills and find jobs close to home in their own local communities. This summer, we made several improvements to cut through red tape and make it easier to apply. This includes eliminating the need for participants to provide extensive documentation and ongoing receipts for their living expenses, replacing two previous application forms with one form, as well as increasing support to up to \$500 per week to make it easier for workers to pay their mortgage, rent or other costs while they learn.

We've also increased supports for transportation and child care to better reflect the costs that people face while they get trained and learn. These changes could mean hundreds and in some cases thousands of additional dollars for workers who need our help. It means less stress time about paying for training and more time to focus on studies or spend with one's family.

The proposals that are in this legislation that we're talking about today really are common-sense changes that

aim to eliminate unnecessary hurdles, to make life easier for people, as I said, particularly small businesses in all of our communities.

I thought I would just conclude by touching again on a number of other initiatives.

Businesses with workplaces set out under the Occupational Health and Safety Act are required to report workplace illnesses and injuries. Not too long ago, this was easier said than done. Reporting requirements for workplace injuries were found in several different regulations under the act. They were not consistent, with different workplaces falling under different and sometimes multiple regulations. To make it easier, we consolidated reporting requirements into a single regulation. This new reg applies to all workplaces covered under the act.

As a next step, we are now proposing to further clarify workplace roles and processes after a serious injury happens. This will help ensure that health and safety hazards following a critical injury or death are quickly investigated and resolved. Every workplace death is obviously a tragedy, and we need to always continue doing everything we can to protect workers across Ontario.

To conclude, I would urge all members in this House to support Bill 13, the Supporting People and Businesses Act. Since taking office, our government has fought hard to remove unnecessary hurdles and make it easier to live and do business here in our province. These changes are needed now more than ever. As our economy continues to grow and rebound, we need to ensure we stay competitive to drive business and jobs to Ontario, not out of Ontario. If passed, this bill would cut through the red tape that is holding us back, positioning Ontario as the best place to invest, work, live and raise a family.

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With that, Speaker, I look forward to some questions and comments after, but again, I just really thank the associate minister for her leadership. The Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction has been out across the province in many of our communities, meeting with those mom-and-pop shops that are, and are going to be, leading the economic recovery here in Ontario. Thanks again for the opportunity to speak.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I listened with interest to the minister's comments and heard him talk about the importance of ensuring that workers are able to access the rights to which they are entitled under the Employment Standards Act, like minimum wage, overtime, vacation pay, paid holidays, severance etc. I ask the minister: Will he support my private member's bill, which implements the gold standard ABC test, which has been recognized in many different countries now as the best way to simplify and clarify the definition of "employees" in the Employment Standards Act so that all gig and contract and temp workers actually get the benefits to which they are entitled?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Thank you very much. It's completely unrelated to this legislation that we're debating

here today, but again, private members always have opportunities to bring legislation forward, and we look forward to debating that whenever that day comes.

The legislation today really makes life easier for businesses and for individuals and families across the province. Every single thing that we're doing, moving forward, as we rebuild a better economy for all people across the province, is to ensure that every worker has a bigger paycheque, that every worker has better workplace protections and that we continue to spread opportunity more widely and fairly. That's why the Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction is such a champion of getting more people into the skilled trades. These are great jobs, with defined pensions and benefits in many cases, something I would think the NDP would support.

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

Hon. Jane McKenna: First of all, I want to thank the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development. You've done so many things for employees and employers. It's over the moon. I know my partner constantly talks about all the hard work you've done with his business that he has. If he was here, he would thank you himself, but I'll thank you on his behalf.

I want to just ask you a question, because Second Career is just over the top, for myself, for what we've done with women, obviously, that were disproportionately affected with the pandemic. Could you give us a bit of an overview of Second Career?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: How could I ever say no to my former seatmate? Funny story, Speaker—I think we have a bit of leeway during the Q&As—I was just saying to the government House leader, when I was first elected in 2011, the MPP for Burlington was elected at the same time, and we were seatmates for many years here at Queen's Park, or at least the first several years. She really is a true champion for families and businesses in her community, and I congratulate her on her role as an associate minister in the government.

The Second Career program is so important, and vitally important. We've made a number of changes that I outlined in the speech. I think the most important changes that we've made since coming into government, in particular in the last couple of years, are really about connecting people, getting them the training, upskilling and retraining that they need for in-demand jobs. We don't need to be training people for jobs that don't exist; we need to train people for jobs that exist, and that's what we're focused on.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: My question is to the member opposite. I was listening carefully to his comments, and there were some references, again, to red tape reduction and supporting small business. We can probably argue about whether or not those efforts by this government through the pandemic have been adequate. But I did want to mention that, under schedule 2 of this legislation, the

Cannabis Licence Act is being opened up. This presents a real opportunity, I believe, for the government to do the right thing, to actually amend the legislation.

I have a bill that I have introduced, Bill 29, that would give municipalities more power in determining the distance and concentration between cannabis retail locations, because I think something the industry and communities around this province would really like to see is a fairer playing field. I want to ask the member opposite if he'll support either this bill, which I know some of his members have introduced petitions around, or perhaps just opening it up now that the Cannabis Licence Act is opened. Let's make this change together.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the member from Flamborough–Glanbrook on a point of order.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Madam Speaker, this has nothing to do with this particular bill, and this is the second question that has nothing to do with what's in the bill.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): That's not a valid point of order.

I turn, for a response, to the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: And the member for Lambton–Kent–Middlesex—either will do, Speaker, but thank you for that.

Thank you for the question. I believe you raised this during question period yesterday as well. Again, I look forward to debating the private member's legislation.

Speaker, we've been working really closely with municipalities. I think back to the days of the Liberal government here at Queen's Park. Of course, the NDP, the official opposition today, supported the Green Energy Act, which stripped all those municipalities, especially the municipalities in Lambton–Kent–Middlesex and rural Ontario, of any input into the planning process when it comes to placing those monstrous wind turbines. It was the NDP and the Liberals here that tripled hydro bills for families and businesses across the province.

I'm proud of our track record with municipalities. We'll continue to work with them every step of the way.

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

Ms. Donna Skelly: First of all, I want to applaud the minister. The work that you have done—bringing more and more people, attracting more and more people, to the skilled trades—is unbelievable. It's unprecedented. When we were first elected, and actually, a number of us were sitting on the finance committee and travelling across the province, it was the number one issue raised: "We cannot find people to work in our sector." I applaud you for everything you've done.

Can you speak and share with members in the House this afternoon what this bill will do to make it easier to attract people and to entice people not only into skilled trades but into working in businesses in Ontario?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I have to thank the member from Flamborough–Glanbrook for her advocacy. She

is one of the biggest champions in this Legislature for getting people into the skilled trades. I know we talk regularly about how we can encourage more young people in her riding and across the Hamilton area to get into the trades.

She's right: We have a massive shortage. This is a huge crisis facing Ontario. We have to get this right. That's why, quite frankly, I was so surprised to see opposition members vote against our skilled trades strategy.

We know that over the next number of years, just in construction alone, we're going to be short 100,000 workers. One in three journeypersons today is over the age of 55. Again, these are jobs with defined pensions, benefits and, in many cases, they pay six figures or more. We need more people in the skilled trades.

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

Mr. Percy Hatfield: To my friend the minister: As he well knows, we used to have three shifts at the minivan plant in Windsor. Last year, we lost one. We're going to lose another shift in the spring. And if there are 1,500 people on a shift, and the spinoff jobs of six or seven or eight or nine other people in the community for every job—we're in a crisis mode in my community. I'm just wondering what is in this bill and what are in your plans under your ministry to come up with some kind of a solution to help us out of the crisis that we're facing down in Windsor-Essex county?

1500

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Thank you to the member opposite, who is a strong, strong voice for workers in Windsor–Tecumseh. I'll tell you, we're all going to miss the member opposite in the Legislature, from all parties. Thank you for your service.

We will always stand with auto workers. I'm in regular contact with Dave Cassidy, the Local 444 president, as well as Jerry Dias. We speak on a regular basis to ensure that we'll always be there for the workers. There is hope on the horizon for all auto workers. The Premier has been clear; the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade has been crystal clear that there is a \$1.5-billion investment coming. The government is going to be at the table to partner with industry and labour.

One of the things I've done since this responsibility was given to me was to ensure there was a training centre there for those first-shift workers, and I'll make sure that that remains open for all the workers there.

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

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: It's always a pleasure and an honour to rise in the House for my lifelong home of Humber River–Black Creek as their representative. Today, I'm speaking to the large government omnibus Bill 13. They call it the Supporting People and Businesses Act.

There's so much to talk about when it comes to the recovery after this pandemic, but in the short time I have here today, I'm going to focus on three different issues.

The first one I'm going to begin with—and I think it has been ignored, and we're not hearing much from the

government on this—is autism funding. It cannot be swept under the rug; it cannot. The thing is, we've heard government members speak exhaustively about the fact that they inherited a mess. Certainly, autism advocates have said many times to all of us that the funding under the previous Liberal government was not enough. But unfortunately, the government's way of dealing with mess is usually to set it on fire. What they do is they take pre-existing problems and they create new problems. On the issue with regard to autism funding, what they did to address a long wait-list was to simply take money and spread it thinly amongst everybody. So if you had an ABA therapist you were paying \$60,000 for, this government would say to you, "Well, here's some money to buy a tablet, an Apple iPad or something." So this is something that we definitely need to hear more from the government on.

Now, you may all have heard of Stacy Kennedy. Most recently, she was camped out in front of the Premier's office for days in a van, asking for help to support her son. I went to visit her at the time, and it took almost a week for her to hear back from the Premier. This is what she told me: This government has figuratively firebombed core services when it comes to autism, for children on the autism spectrum.

Core services, of course, are where children on the autism spectrum work directly with clinicians and therapists, whereas foundational services are more informational sessions and parent training. As Stacy put it, they are the first step in your journey when you get a diagnosis. Stacy told me that this government's changes have put more money towards foundational services, while dismantling core services. She told me that, figuratively, this is the equivalent of the government saying, "We want to make health care better," but then closing every hospital, every walk-in clinic and every doctor's office. You can call those places to get information, but you're not allowed in the building unless you're already in the building. Can you imagine that?

I'd like to share some words from a strong autism advocate in the community and a friend of mine. His name is Jordan Glass. He wrote to me and he said, "As the parent of two children on the autism spectrum, one with particular intensive needs, the ... struggle during the pandemic has been the uncertainty. With access to services limited to online sessions not working for our child we have been left with zero support outside of what the school board is able to offer only in an in-class setting. I would remind that in-class settings have also been limited in the past two years. In the years since the government scrapped the Ontario Autism Program tens of thousands of families have been left behind. The story of our child is not unique. She joins the children in those families with two-plus years of developmental time that can never be brought back.

"Core services are a vital pillar of development for autistic children. Greater access to speech-language pathology, occupational therapy, and mental health services are absolutely necessary to help our children going forward. How many more years will families like ours have

to wait to access core services? We need answers. And we need them yesterday."

I bring this up because this is a major issue and I don't want to see this swept under the rug. We need to talk about autism funding and supporting individuals with autism and their families.

The next issue I want to talk about—and definitely, that's in the title of this bill—has to do with businesses. The first part of that I want to talk about is insurance, and I have been asking questions of members that have gotten up to speak to this bill: Where has the government been on the insurance issue? Where have they been? I just don't understand it. The auto insurance industry, over the course of the pandemic, pocketed over \$3.5 billion in profits.

Any time you reach out to insurance executives, what they always tell governments all the time—they say it to your government, they said it to the one before. They're crying poor. They say, "We have no money." But when it comes time to posting profits, they go back to their shareholders and they tell them, "Look at this. Look how much money we have. Invest with us." So I was hoping in a bill like this, talking about the recovery and talking about businesses—where is the support, when it comes to insurance?

When it comes to commercial insurance, I've heard from restaurants and other businesses in my communities that were shuttered. Their business insurance rates, their commercial rates, have doubled and tripled at a time when the insurance industry overall has been posting over \$4.5 billion in profit. This is something that I need to hear from the government, that businesses across this province need to hear from this government.

In fact, at the outset of the pandemic, we the NDP put forth a plan called Save Main Street and we've been hearing—because at the time the government rejected it; they didn't want to hear it. In bits and pieces, they've implemented parts of this great plan over the course, but certainly not enough. We need more rounds of support funding. The needs of businesses are being ignored.

I also want to focus on a specific sector of business, and that's the tourism industry and all of those who work within it. There is a great community advocate in my area named Lina. She runs Islington Travel. She has talked to me first-hand about what travel agents have had to go through as part of the tourism industry during this pandemic. Remember, the government came out and said, "We're going to have to lock down and we're going to lock you down." They needed to provide the necessary supports to keep businesses afloat. She has talked to me extensively about how difficult it's been for all of them and how they've been affected.

I also would like to take time to read out what the Association of Canadian Travel Agencies has said: "Travel agencies and independent travel agents are among the most deeply impacted businesses in the pandemic. In a member survey, the Association of Canadian Travel Agencies report that 91% of respondents have a 90% or greater revenue loss as compared to before the pandemic. Of all tourism industries, employment is most

impacted in travel agencies, with a 41.6% loss nationally. While there is some recovery in travel, international travel is still depressed 87.4% according to July 2021 data.”

And it goes on and on.

Certainly, I want to raise the issues of the tourism industry. We have a great private member’s bill by our NDP member from Niagara Falls to address that and to help, but I don’t want the government to turn their backs on travel agents in the tourism industry. They need to do more to support these businesses.

Finally, in the very limited time I have left, I would like to talk about the fact that the government has now opened up the cannabis act in this large omnibus bill. Very briefly I want to talk about the government’s plan to allow for the sale of cannabis in this province of Ontario. Essentially they’ve said almost anyone can sell it, and they’ve made it so easy. So it’s gone from a substance that was considered illegal to now legal. How are they doing that? A simple licence process, where essentially, when it all boils down to it, municipalities have one choice: Either you say you can allow for the legal sale of cannabis, or you don’t allow it at all. I’ll get into why that’s a problem as well. And I’d like to recognize that our excellent NDP member from Davenport has tabled legislation to deal with this issue, to give municipalities more of a say.

Certainly, this government is not one for consultation, I can tell you that. When it comes to pretty much every issue, they don’t seem to care much what communities have had to say. Finally, really what it all boils down to is, are you selling cannabis within 150 metres of a school? And that’s it. So as these retail locations pop up across the province, and certainly within the GTA and Toronto and within my community—I have gone and researched to find out where they are, and I will hand deliver notifications to people to let them know what’s going on and to have their say.

Ultimately, these go to the AGCO. And what does the AGCO do in the end? They essentially reject every letter that’s given to them and they allow everything. In fact, I’ve spoken to a member from the AGCO, one of the people who works there, and they’ve told me that, I believe, they have not rejected a single location or any application. At least at the time when I called some months ago, that was what their take was on it.

I’ve heard so much from different residents in the area. Here’s Grant. He says, “The AGCO may assume the position that the marketplace will take care of itself, with some retail cannabis stores eventually closing due to competition.” What’s he speaking about? He’s speaking about the fact that you will find places, commercial strip plazas, where there is a proliferation. They’re side by side. And where are these plazas located? This is the big concern: They are right in the heart of residential communities. That’s where they’re opening up.

He also pointed out that because Toronto is allowing the sale of legal cannabis, whereas Vaughan isn’t, you get all the traffic, especially in ridings like the Premier’s or my own that’s right on the border of Steeles. People coming from north of us are coming here to buy cannabis.

1510

I’ll go on. I’m going to talk about Zena, another resident in our area. She says that it’s bad enough that these cannabis stores are opening up in residential communities, but they’re opening up side by side, like it’s KFC and McDonald’s. Not only that, they’re actually putting up signs all over the place, illegally, on boulevards, to tell people to come and buy cannabis from them.

Another person, Osmundo, reached out and he talked to me extensively about the fact that a cannabis location literally a brief walk from his home, right next door, opened up. You have kids from a local high school every day, students that are there buying fast food, going to this plaza—there’s the cannabis location. There’s a park next door and people can purchase and walk straight there.

I am sure that each and every one of you have heard that communities want to have a say where the retail of cannabis is happening, especially when it comes to being right in the heart of residential communities next door. I hope that this government is listening and will give municipalities power and choice to be able to decide where these will be. And please, for the love of God, listen to residents. They have strong voices. They have an opinion. Listen to what they have to say. They know what they’re talking about.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I thank the member for Humber River–Black Creek for really getting into the weeds on this bill. Do we have questions?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: In terms of when we talk about reducing red tape and making things a bit easier, something I hear a lot from chambers across the province, especially mine, is the ease and the cost of paper burdens. In this bill, we’re reducing much of that paper burden. Not only is that great for the environment, it’s great for the businesses. The less time they spend on paperwork, the more they can focus on great things like innovation and how to improve their business.

On that note, do you not think that we should be striving to help businesses spend less time on paperwork and more time doing what they do best, which is to run their business and create more ideas and opportunities for their communities?

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I appreciate the question. I focused on a number of different issues. I’m glad that you’re bringing up the paper burden as part of this multi-schedule—over 20 schedules—omnibus that’s there.

Certainly, if you’re reducing paper burdens, it’s a good thing in many cases, although the last time I heard the paper burden come up was when I was speaking to a large auto insurance company. I was asking them why rates were through the roof, and they tried to say administrative costs and paper burdens were the reason that insurance was through the roof. So to me, when I heard that, it made me think that they’re certainly not hearing what residents in Ontario are looking for, and that certainly wasn’t a solution.

So sure, can it be a little benefit? Certainly. Is it going to solve all the problems in this province? Not even close.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan has a question.

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: Thank you to my colleague for his presentation and bringing up the important subject of autism, because in northern Ontario, the autism families are still reeling from the lack of services, their inability to operate during COVID and their inability to access behavioural training, and also their inability to even get on a wait-list. So that frustration is growing.

I'm asking you: What would you like to have seen in a bill to address those things, a bill that is supposed to be good for people?

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: This pandemic has certainly hit people very hard across Ontario, and certainly some families have been hit harder than others. Since the bill talks about supporting people and businesses, I think members of the autism community and their families would have wanted to hear something with detailed plans on how to support them financially and to move forward on funding. We're not hearing from this.

This is coming from a government that we've seen move lightening quick when it comes to things like reducing the size of Toronto council in the middle of an election.

But you have families—even before the pandemic, you would see autism advocates sitting here patiently, day after day, demanding the funding that they deserve to help their families. And yet, here we are. We're discussing the recovery after this pandemic and we're not talking about those families. It's very disappointing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member for Perth—Wellington has a question.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I would also agree with you, Speaker, about the marijuana issues that the member spoke of, and I'm sure it will weed itself out at some point.

Interjection: Wow.

Interjection: He's here all week.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Speaker, it's Thursday.

Our government is committed to the permanent protection of a system of provincial parks and conservation reserves that safeguard biodiversity and provide opportunities for sustainable outdoor recreation. They play an important part in our province's natural beauty and should be enjoyed by all members of the public. We are keeping lands in provincial parks and conservation reserves available for the public by proposing legislative changes that will prevent people from adverse possession on crown-owned land in our provincial parks and conservation reserves. Would you support keeping our provincial parks public and for the use of all residents of Ontario?

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: There's so much that I could deal with on this one. I mean, talking about keeping things public coming from a Conservative government member is one. Protecting parks when they're letting their developer friends go right in and eat up the greenbelt, and the fact that if there's anything that—let's bring up the TRCR or conservation authorities. If there's something they want, it's definitely to have a say in development in the greenbelt and everywhere else—something that the government took away.

I could go on and on about this. There's a lot of work that needs to come when it comes to protecting our parks and the environment. The Conservatives have really got to do their homework and do a lot better on that file.

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

Mr. Chris Glover: I want to thank the member from Humber River—Black Creek for raising the issue of business insurance. This has been a real issue coming out of the pandemic for many of the small businesses in Spadina—Fort York. They've been faced with the doubling and tripling of their insurance coming out of the pandemic, as they're starting to reopen. Some are not even able to get insurance.

This government talks about cutting red tape, but often what they're doing is they're cutting regulations that actually protect businesses or protect customers. The businesses that need some regulation right now would seem to be the small businesses that need some regulation on the insurance companies so they're not stiffed with these extraordinary increases in fees and so they can get the insurance they need to reopen.

Would you agree? What would you ask this government to do in terms of small business insurance to make sure that businesses can function?

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: When it comes to insurance and certainly developers, do you know what this government wants to give them? It's not even just red tape reduction; it's the red carpet. That's what they do when it comes to insurance.

I can't understand how a business—take a restaurant in my community. I had a restaurant owner reach out to me and say they were closed. All they were doing was takeout. It's not like people were jostling each other in the kitchen, bumping, risking a kitchen fire or that people were slipping and falling in a restaurant whose doors weren't open. He reaches out to me and he says that his commercial insurance rate has tripled—tripled. Can you imagine that? Not a word out of this government when it comes to insurance and holding them to task.

I simply want them, as a first step, to hold these insurance companies to account, get some answers out of them. They're fleecing this entire province. You guys are sitting around doing nothing.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I would remind all members to ensure their language is parliamentary.

Continuing with questions, the member from Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Our government is committed to the permanent protection of our system of provincial parks and conservation reserves to safeguard biodiversity and provide opportunities for sustainable outdoor recreation. They play an important role in our province's natural beauty and should be enjoyed by all members of the public. We are keeping lands in provincial parks and conservation reserves available for the public by proposing legislative changes that will prevent people from adverse possession of crown-owned land in our provincial parks and conservation reserves.

Do the members opposite support keeping provincial parks public and for the use for all residents of Ontario?

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I appreciate the rehashing of that question. I guess that's been circulated. Once again, I'm going to go through the same bullet points on this one. Again, it is rich to hear this government talk about keeping things public. This is a government that loves privatizing everything they can get their hands on.

Number two, when it comes to parks and recreation, when it comes to conservation authorities, why don't you listen to them? Why don't you restore the power they had when it came decision-making and protecting them? Finally, when it comes to protecting our green spaces, just stay away from the greenbelt when it comes to tearing it all apart and giving it over to developer friends in that way. Come on.

1520

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): We have time for a quick question.

Hon. Jane McKenna: First of all, we've grown the greenbelt. We've said this I don't know how many times, so I just want to get that on the record, that we've said this numerous times.

Many members in the opposition are from Toronto, including yourself, and know that the subway infrastructure is old and dated. They also know that we need to be able to bring more people through the city in a reliable manner. Does the member opposite support the building of subways, including the York subway extension?

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I can tell you most definitely that myself and the NDP certainly want to do everything we can to improve transit and to improve capital funds towards transit. But the one thing I do want to say is that we cannot forget operational funds. It's great to see new lines and new opportunities for people to be connected together, but there have been massive needs by transit operators throughout this province during this pandemic.

So if we're going to talk about that, smart transit, when you work with transit experts and planners to properly bring out good plans, we certainly support things like that. But don't forget operations when it comes to funding transit. It is absolutely imperative and it's something that's needed across this province and certainly in Toronto.

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

Mrs. Robin Martin: It's my pleasure to rise today, as it always is, in this House. I'm going to try to focus my comments on the bill, specifically on the Ministry of Health's contributions to this fall's red tape burden reduction package, our Supporting People and Businesses Act, 2021.

The proposed changes are built upon the foundation our government has created through previous legislation and are the result of collaboration with our sector leaders. These are common-sense changes that are designed to make life easier for people and for businesses in Ontario.

Our government's top priority has always been protecting the health and safety of Ontarians, but we want

to reduce the unnecessary burdens that exist, while improving our health care system.

We're certainly grateful for the extraordinary and continuing efforts of Public Health Ontario to protect the health and safety of Ontarians, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Public Health Ontario's efforts to prevent, monitor, detect and contain COVID-19 have helped to keep our communities safe. Even now, Public Health Ontario continues to help to guide our province through the ongoing crisis and the Delta-driven fourth wave. Thankfully, things have been going very well, and that is good news for all Ontarians.

Ontario's public health system continues to demonstrate remarkable responsiveness to COVID-19 as the pandemic evolves locally and globally. We have the resources in place—from nursing to testing and enhanced screening and cleaning—to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, coupled with a comprehensive plan to respond to any challenge immediately and decisively.

The Ministry of Health began a health system transformation journey in March 2019. With the introduction of The People's Health Care Act, 2019, the government brought forward changes to improve the quality of care, adopt and scale up technological advances and expand options for health care. However, we know that the ongoing and unpredictable nature of COVID-19 has had a significant impact province-wide. Modernizing the regulatory environment has taken on new urgency following the COVID-19 pandemic. While reducing red tape and improving services for people and businesses will help support recovery efforts, taking further steps to improve and keep Ontarians safe and healthy certainly remains a top priority.

Good rules and regulations are necessary to maintain the standards that Ontarians value. The changes that we're proposing through the Supporting People and Businesses Act—this government's seventh red tape reduction package to date—maintains our thoughtful, targeted approach to eliminating red tape here in Ontario. The Ministry of Health is just one of 13 partner ministries that are all working towards making sure our programs and services are as efficient as possible, which serves to benefit both the business community and our citizens.

As I said earlier, Public Health Ontario has certainly made extraordinary efforts during these historically extremely challenging times. To further support these incredible efforts, we're proposing legislative amendments to the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion Act. The act was first passed in 2007 to establish the board-governed agency known as the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion, which now operates as Public Health Ontario.

Public Health Ontario's mandate is to provide scientific and technical advice to Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, who has been very busy lately, also providing advice to the Minister of Health, the Minister of Long-Term Care, local public health units and health system providers, and organizations across the entire continuum of care.

Public Health Ontario has played an extraordinary role in the pandemic response, including:

- contributing to public health measures and reopening planning;

- COVID-19 laboratory testing and scientific support, including test development and validation and input into the testing strategy;

- COVID-19 data collection, monitoring, analysis and reporting;

- COVID-19 vaccine programming, including provincial monitoring and support for adverse events following immunization, and vaccine coverage monitoring and reporting; and

- developing evidence-informed products to inform government policy, also providing scientific and technical advice and guidance to public health units and other parts of our health care system, as well as other sectors, such as education.

The proposed legislative change in this legislation that we're bringing forward will align Public Health Ontario's board appointment process to make it consistent with the appointment process in place for all other Ministry of Health agencies. The legislative change will help to enhance accountability for Public Health Ontario, while at the same time retaining its scientific and technical independence.

Additionally, Public Health Ontario's partners for health include academic, research, not-for-profit, community-based and private sector organizations and government agencies working across sectors that contribute to Ontarians achieving the best health possible. The change will also help strengthen the relationship between Public Health Ontario, the Ministry of Health and the Chief Medical Officer of Health, and ensure further coordination across Public Health Ontario's many, many partners as we continue to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As things currently stand, Public Health Ontario is the only ministry board-governed operational agency that appoints its own board chair and vice-chairs. We believe that this should be aligned with the appointment process at other ministry board-governed operational agencies.

The past two years have been a testament to the valued partnership between Public Health Ontario, the Ministry of Health and the Chief Medical Officer of Health, and these legislative changes will ensure that Public Health Ontario is well positioned to support the continuing and ongoing evolution of public health and the broader public health system in Ontario.

Speaker, I'm just going to talk a little bit now about a concern for municipalities. Some changes in our act are to wading pool regulations. The ministry is proposing reducing regulatory burdens for pool owners and operators by changing the requirement for an attendant at certain public wading pools with less than 15 centimetres of water and setting water chemistry levels in line with current evidence. It allows for many municipalities that are hard hit by the pandemic to save on the cost of labour for pool attendants.

While cost-saving of course is important, it is also a matter of safety around recreational pools, so we take that very seriously. That's why, while addressing the significant municipal cost implications of having attendants at every splash pad, we have added strict safety measures to protect the kids and families who rely on them during the hot summer days. The Ministry of Health will also be supporting public health units to implement these safeguards, to increase awareness of risk and reduce health hazards at public wading pools.

In addition to the legislative changes I've already spoken to, the bill proposes updated safety requirements under the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act, the legislation that governs X-ray safety in Ontario, to align it with national guidance. This moves the bar forward in ensuring that the requirements reflect the best evidence available and evolving technology.

In tandem, we're taking action to modernize the regulatory framework for the laboratory sector. This includes introducing a streamlined process for licence approvals and renewals, so that Ontario's laboratories can continue to provide important health care services to Ontarians and support them in their health care decisions. Due to this action, Ontarians will benefit from additional flexibility in laboratory operations and will enjoy improved access to laboratory services in the province.

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The Ministry of Health is also advancing a discussion on designating colleges public service agencies under the French Language Services Act, and will bring greater consistency through this to the availability of French language services across colleges and improve access to care for francophones. These changes will strengthen our regulatory colleges' ability to respond to changes to the health care system and lead to a more coordinated regulatory system for health professions, while improving public trust and confidence in the colleges and Ontario's health system.

As we reflect on our response to the COVID-19 pandemic so far, it is really important to look ahead and to ensure that we are putting the focus on what is needed to be successful in the future. Our government does this by continuing to find ways to make life easier for the people and the businesses of Ontario. As the COVID-19 pandemic has made life harder, the government does not want to add to the burden that people are already experiencing. In fact, we want to do the opposite.

We look forward to continuing to work across government and with our health care partners as we respond to this global pandemic to ensure we can continue to protect the health and safety of all Ontarians.

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

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I thank the member from Eglinton–Lawrence, who serves as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health. She talked a lot about public health. As you know, before the pandemic the government had a plan to cut 42 public health units down to 12 or something. Jim Pine, a CAO from eastern Ontario,

was brought in to shepherd this through for them or do some research.

My question is: During the pandemic our public health units across the province have proven how valuable they are to public health and safety. I just want to know if the plan is still there: after they've proven beyond a doubt how valuable they are, whether the government, at the end of this, still intends to cut, looking for cost savings, cutting public health units. I think the one in Windsor and Essex county was going to stretch all the way to Tillsonburg or something as silly as that. What is the plan that the government has for the future of our public health units?

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. Public health units have played an extremely important role in the COVID-19 response, and we've been working with all of them. We have 34 public health units, as you know. My understanding is that we want to modernize and make our public health system work better. Certainly during COVID-19 we've seen lots of ways in which our public health system can be improved, including the replacement of the integrated public health information system database, which has had to happen during COVID-19 to make that work better.

As you mentioned, Mr. Jim Pine is still working with municipalities to try to find solutions for public health going forward. Our intention always was to make the public health system work better and make it more responsive to Ontarians so that when we need it, like in an emergency like we have now, it's able to do the work we need.

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

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Thank you to the member for all her work as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health. I really appreciate her always being accessible to answer many questions, including today in the House.

My question to her is: From day one, she was part of the ministry that created the family health teams and really tried to lift up our entire health care system. It was in the Dark Ages. Whether it was digital advancements, hiring or building hospitals, a lot of things had to be modernized to really put the patient first. We often talk about putting the patient at the heart of health care. That wasn't happening. It was just a bumper sticker under the Liberals. We're actually codifying it, putting it into the health care system.

How is this bill going to be complementing those things, so that we can increase things like home and community care, putting the patient at the core of the health care system?

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thanks to the member for Barrie–Innisfil for the question. Honestly, this is an important opportunity to make sure that we're valuing the time of everybody and making sure that the things that we're doing are helping the public health efforts across the board. Public health is a big part of this.

The member was mentioning our changes. Certainly Ontario health teams are a big part of our whole government's objectives and approach to the health care sector

and reform in the health care sector. There are a lot of great things to come out of those Ontario health teams as they get fully stood up. They are currently covering 92% of our province. I'm really looking forward to the day when they are going to be operating and fully stood up, because there is so much that they will bring to the table.

One thing we like to talk about a lot is home and community care and how important that is. The Ontario health teams are the key to making that a priority and pushing care out into the community. We really want to get there.

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

Mr. Michael Mantha: I just want to dovetail on what the member had been talking about: the Ontario health teams. It may work in other parts of the province, but there has to be serious consideration as far as the geographical challenges that exist in northern Ontario. To go to a point where we're going to have maybe five or six Ontario health teams across northern Ontario just doesn't make sense whatsoever. There are presently 15 that are being proposed right now. There is the Ontario health network that has been put in place in order to bring that group together and dwindle it down to the smallest possible amount. And then a recommendation is going to come in March, because that's when you're looking at implementing this pillar.

And these Ontario health teams—from there, maybe they will be able to dwindle it down to maybe eight, nine, or something like that, and then the bureaucratic decision is going to be made. We know what that means for northern Ontario: We're going to get the short end of the stick again and we're going to be shoved with a decision that is going to hurt our health care system, that is going to hurt the people across northern Ontario. We're going to regret it and we're going to have to fight this thing tooth and nail to see it through. We do not want to see this happen in northern Ontario.

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you to the member opposite, the member for Algoma–Manitoulin. He's very upset about something; I'm not quite sure what.

Our government is obviously trying to fix health care and we're doing it through these Ontario health teams. We understand that the north has distinct issues, needs and obviously challenges. We're certainly working to make sure that we address those and are sensitive to the various needs and challenges of various parts of the north. It isn't even just one entity; there are challenges in various parts of the north that differ. I think we can all work together to make that happen.

The idea here is to really build on the good work being done on the ground and to make sure that the resources are there for the north and for every other part of Ontario through these Ontario health teams.

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

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Speaker, as we all know, these past few years have been extraordinary, living through a once-in-a-century pandemic. Throughout these past few

years, this House has continued to sit to make important decisions to protect the people of Ontario, passing important legislation.

Some of those bills were various red tape packages to build infrastructure, support small and main street businesses in our communities, and also modernize government, like ServiceOntario. Can the member explain how the changes throughout the pandemic have had a positive impact for the people and businesses in this province?

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you to the member from Perth–Wellington for the question. Yes, I think we've all been working very hard to make changes that will help small businesses, particularly during the pandemic when they faced so many challenges, and to help business keep going in Ontario.

One area that I'm very familiar with is the court system; I practised law for 10 years downtown. Some of the changes made by the Attorney General, to me, are revolutionary. Law is a very traditional field and those kinds of changes do not come easily. But the Attorney General has really brought the legal system forward some 20 years in 20 months. It's quite extraordinary. As a person who has practised with a system that hadn't changed for so long, what he has done to really make things change—that's the place that I'm most excited about because it's my own personal experiences. But we've done a lot of other things in areas—

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

Question?

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I'm just so confused that this is called the Supporting People and Businesses Act. If there is anything I'm hearing from people in businesses, and I'll say it again, it's their concern over what appears to be a growing crisis in insurance costs. So the question I have to you is, do you believe that auto insurance and commercial insurance is being charged at a fair rate here in Ontario, and why is the government not taking any leadership on this important issue?

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thanks to the member from Humber River–Black Creek for the question. I'm finding you hard to follow today as well, so maybe the feeling is mutual.

1540

I understand you're focussed on insurance. Insurance is obviously very important. I certainly wish that the NDP government under former Premier Bob Rae had not messed the whole thing up and left us in this state, but here we are, in any event.

Our government is showing leadership on the insurance file. We're working very hard to try to bring down rates for people and we will continue to do so. These are very difficult and complicated problems because of the mess that was generated. It's very hard to unwind.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Unfortunately, there's not enough time for another back and forth.

Further debate?

Mrs. Daisy Wai: I rise today and speak to this bill, Supporting People and Businesses Act, 2021. We have heard many of our members speaking on this bill already, but I just want to focus on two areas. One is how this act is to going to support businesses, and the second thing is how this is affecting the subway that we look forward to very much up in my riding in Richmond Hill.

Allow me to start it off with how this will support the businesses. Through this bill, we will introduce changes that digitize, streamline and expedite how people and businesses interact with government. Smarter, modern regulations that use digital pathways where possible are easier and faster to comply with so people and businesses can focus on what matter most for them, especially during the pandemic time.

Now that the case numbers have come down a little bit or are quite under control, we are focusing more on the recovery of the economic development. The recovery of the economic development will not just happen overnight. We have been working on this since we started our government in 2018, and actually during the whole pandemic we have worked a lot, and this bill really speaks to it. With so many different areas and aspects that it covers, it really supports businesses' recovery, especially small businesses.

Small businesses are the backbone in my riding in Richmond Hill. We're proud to report that, thanks in large part to the work done over the past three years through legislation and our red tape packages, Ontario has reduced needless regulatory compliance requirements by 6.5% since June 2018. Since June 29, 2018, businesses, not-for-profits, municipalities, universities and colleges, school boards and hospitals have benefitted from \$373 million in net annual compliance cost savings. This is money that Ontario businesses and public service organizations can put to better use year after year. They have been working so hard and all these savings really contribute to building the businesses as well. As the minister said this morning, the bill we're discussing today is designed to reduce burden for people and businesses in a forward-thinking and responsible way, one that will maintain and enhance health, safety and environmental protections.

Currently, far too many regulatory requirements in Ontario are inefficient, inflexible and out of date, or duplicated at the federal or municipal levels. Those are precisely the ones that this bill is seeking to eliminate while protecting the health, safety and the environment. These extra processes are costly and burdensome. They squeeze people and business throughout the province and across different sectors and waste a lot of time, money and effort. Not only that, it will also make us feel very frustrated.

I'm so happy that we are making a lot of things digitized. I still remember—I've been running my business for the past 25 years. In the old ways, when we had to try to get a government project, when we submitted our proposal and everything, we had to make seven copies to individuals, and we had to meet a certain timeline, when we had all the information, develop a proposal and meet

the timeline and have those seven copies delivered right into the hands of—whether it is in York region or provincial or municipal. It is like beating the clock, meeting those deadlines. But now, these days, a lot of things can be done digitally. It saves money, saves time, saves effort and saves frustrations. When we do that, we can spend a lot more time running the business itself and doing things better for economic development.

Our government is continuing to implement measures to protect our economy and provide Ontario businesses with flexibility, especially in this challenging time. That is why, in May 2020, we took decisive action to give certain corporations the flexibility to hold virtual meetings and removed barriers to using virtual processes for voting, notices and records. Our government is committed to moving forward with consultations on changes that will support the province's economic recovery and help to protect the health of Ontarians by making it easier for businesses and corporations to conduct virtual meetings and avoid unnecessary in-person gatherings. We want businesses, as I said earlier, to focus time and energy on what they do best, which is growing the economy, creating new jobs and supporting Ontario's economic recovery.

On October 19, 2021, our government launched the new Ontario Business Registry, cutting red tape for small business and making it easier and quicker for Ontarians to access government services, saving time and money. For the first time ever, Ontarians have direct access to over 90 services 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and are able to complete electronic transactions immediately rather than taking weeks to do so through mail or by fax.

The previous system was built nearly 30 years ago, and for us to run it on outdated technology is not the best thing at all. In having everything digitized, we are catching up with what is in the latest era in technology. Not only are we doing this within government and for businesses to deal with government, this also encourages business to develop business among themselves as well as globally.

On October 19, 2021, the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, 2010, will come into force. The act will provide a modern legislative framework on Ontario's not-for-profit corporations and will reduce burden on our not-for-profit organizations. I know I've already covered a lot on not-for-profit organizations myself when I presented my private member's bill. I'm so happy that this is going to help not-for-profit organizations.

Let me take a little bit of time, with the little time that I still have left: I want to concentrate on the development charge changes and how they help the Yonge North subway extension. The Yonge North subway extension has been something that the city of Richmond Hill has been asking for for many years, and now, we're really seeing it coming to life. These development charge changes help to make it—faster transit is more important than ever for us, making it better and helping the different municipalities and everybody to work together.

1550

As I say, this bill is in support of many things that are happening, and we thank the minister for introducing this

bill and having it come to life. We cannot wait to see it happen.

I would be happy to receive any questions from the opposite side. I request everybody to support this act so that we can make business better and we can have better transit.

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

Mr. Chris Glover: This bill, Bill 13, is called the Supporting People and Businesses Act. The thing that I hear most commonly—we've talked about it this afternoon—from small business owners in my community is the rate of insurance. Their rates have doubled or tripled, and some businesses cannot even get insurance. I'm wondering, why is your government not taking action on this insurance fiasco for businesses? Why are you not providing businesses with the regulations that they need for insurance companies to get the insurance that they need to reopen?

Mrs. Daisy Wai: In fact, our member has just answered that question: how it evolved and what we're working on right now. We are to continue dealing with this, but right now, our focus is to support and make things easier and working faster for all businesses so that they can recover sooner and faster.

We heard you about the concerns you have in insurance. We will be working on that, and we're working on that.

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

Ms. Donna Skelly: I'd like, first of all, to congratulate the member from Richmond Hill for her private member's bill, which passed earlier this week, recognizing volunteers—I should say "workers"—in the not-for-profit sector, a sector that is actually included and addressed in this bill.

My question to the member is, could you share with members of the Legislature what this bill will do to help people who work and run and volunteer in the not-for-profit sector function work a little bit better and actually continue to exist, despite all of the challenges that they have faced through the pandemic?

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Thank you very much to the member from Flamborough—Glanbrook. I just want to say, yes, you must have seen that I was running out of time and I was not able to elaborate more. In fact, our government has listened to the needs of the not-for-profit operations and is finally bringing this bill to force, despite years of failed promises from the previous government.

The Ontario government is modernizing to make it faster and more convenient for people and business to interact with government. This modernization includes implementing digital productivity tools such as e-signatures, e-approvals and binder browsers. A lot of these digital enhancements help the not-for-profit organizations.

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

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I want to thank the member opposite for her excellent, detailed presentation and her hard work.

It's interesting. We've been raising, as the NDP, the issue of insurance throughout, not just the pandemic, but before the pandemic, in fact. And I must say this: Sometimes I wonder, and I think that if there's anybody that this Conservative government loves more than greenbelt developers, it's insurance company executives.

My question is, through you, I would like very much for you to ask your resident insurance expert, the member from Willowdale, how 30 years ago, Bob Rae is the reason now, during the pandemic, while businesses are closed, their commercial insurance rates are tripling. Please ask him this question and provide an answer, because I would love to hear it and understand that one.

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Thank you to the member opposite. I understand that you're really concerned about how the insurance is going to be affected. As I say, we're working on it. This is something that has already created a lot of problems, and we're resolving that as well. But right now, our focus is really on getting business going and supporting them, especially after the pandemic.

We heard your concern about the insurance. We're looking into that and we will get back to you later on.

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

Mr. Jim McDonell: I'm proud to be part of a government that has created an entire ministry dedicated to digital services. This shows our government's commitment to making life simpler for Ontarians who may prefer to do business online. Can the member expand on some of the initiatives our government is undertaking to make government more accessible?

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Our government is always looking for ways to make things easier for Ontarians. Providing digital options for services will help save people and businesses who may spend time in line or on the phone—it's easier. Digitizing government also means saving money through initiatives like removing fax machines or land lines not in use. As we expand broadband across the province, we should be ensuring that the government is expanding its online presence for those who would rather receive services online. We have done a lot of work on this and we will continue to work on this for our small businesses and big corporations.

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

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you to the member for Richmond Hill for your presentation on Bill 13. My question concerns schedule 2, the Cannabis Licence Act. This is an important schedule in my riding, because my riding has a lot of cannabis stores, in Kensington, along Bloor Street, along College Street, along Dundas Street. A lot of residents, comfortable with the idea of cannabis being sold, are concerned that there is a heavy concentration of these cannabis stores, that there's too many in the one area and there's too many overall.

My colleague the member for Davenport put forward a private member's bill to allow municipalities greater control over the spacing and the concentration of cannabis stores. I think that makes a lot of sense. It's certainly

something that BIAs and residents' associations and parents are asking for in my riding. Would you be interested in supporting my colleague's private member's bill and incorporating it into schedule 2 as an amendment?

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Thank you to the member opposite. Honestly, cannabis is not something that our province initiated and wanted to do. It was introduced down to us by the federal government and we've been taking it on, and that's why this has developed into today. Our focus right now is not on the cannabis businesses, but rather on supporting the overall business development and, especially after they have suffered from the pandemic times, how to help them in the recovery. This is our focus: how to cut the red tape, how to do things easier by having them in digital formats, or different, more efficient ways for businesses. This is what we want to achieve.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): We have time for a quick back-and-forth.

Mr. Michael Parsa: I want to, first, start off by thanking my honourable colleague, whom I have the pleasure of representing the city of Richmond Hill with. I have to tell you, Madam Speaker, she is an absolute champion in the city of Richmond Hill.

Initially, when I was elected, I was in the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, in charge of red tape reduction, helping the minister in that ministry. I joined the great member for Richmond Hill in hosting a round table where we heard from businesses how difficult it is to continue doing business because of all the duplicative restrictions that the previous government had in place. I'm wondering if the member can tell us exactly what we heard and why it's so important for us to remove red tape and make it easier—

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

A very quick response from the member from Richmond Hill.

1600

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Cutting red tape is something so important. Instead of having to do something a few times for different departments, things are done very quickly. It's less time-consuming and it's less frustration.

Thank you very much my members who have been working so hard, especially in cutting red tape for us.

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

Mr. Lorne Coe: Good afternoon, Speaker, and thank you for the opportunity to speak once again about how our government continues to support the region of Durham's economy through new measures to promote economic stability and encourage investment, while keeping hard-working Durham families, workers and the environment safe and healthy.

That is true with the recent introduction of the fall red tape reduction package as well as the Supporting People and Businesses Act. Overall, this comprehensive red tape reduction package builds on three years of work to reduce the burden and lighten the load for people and businesses

in Whitby and other parts of the region of Durham weighed down by the pandemic's demands.

This important piece of legislation is guided by five principles: protect public health, safety and the environment; prioritize important issues; harmonize rules with the federal government and other jurisdictions, where possible; listen to the people and businesses of Ontario; and take a whole-of-government approach, breaking down barriers and silos. Through this bill, our government would implement further changes that streamline, digitize and expedite the way in which people and businesses interact with the government.

There's a pressing need to continue the important work of reducing red tape. Our government was elected to deal with the disastrous outcome of 15 years of Liberal waste and mismanagement, all of which fell on the backs of hard-working families and businesses.

Since taking office, our government has been working diligently to remove the red tape and regulatory burdens that make growth for businesses more difficult and stifle opportunities for job creators, non-profit organizations and workers across the province. Through our work to modernize the regulatory system and ensure Ontario is poised for future investment and economic prosperity, we're making this province an even better and easier place for businesses to expand and thrive.

This is critical for the hard-working families and businesses in my Whitby riding. I want them to know that our government will never waver in its commitment to protect their safety and well-being. We will never waver in our efforts to support people, families and the economy.

That's why I'm proud to support this legislation. It's designed to reduce workload and burden for people and businesses in forward-thinking and responsible ways. Cutting red tape frees people and businesses from wasting time and resources filling out forms and going beyond what's necessary to achieve regulatory goals. It minimizes frustration, saves money and gives us more time—things we can all use a lot more of right now.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, our government took immediate action to help people and businesses by passing four high-impact burden reduction bills in the past year: the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act; the Main Street Recovery Act; the Better for People, Smarter for Business Act; and the Supporting Recovery and Competitiveness Act.

Speaker, the Supporting People and Businesses Act, 2021, is part of Ontario Onwards: Ontario's COVID-19 Action Plan for a People-Focused Government, which includes more than 30 projects that are changing the way people and businesses interact. To date, the government has taken over 300 actions to reduce burdens without compromising health, safety or the environment. All of those taken together, Speaker, you know has the effect of helping the region of Durham's economic recovery plan going forward.

As you may recall, the Legislature passed the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act in July 2020. This was to get infrastructure projects built faster by positioning Ontario

as a modern regulator in response to an evolving pandemic.

Cutting red tape and modernizing our regulatory systems will help the region of Durham and effect the implementation, as I just stated, of its recovery framework and action plan by meeting the demands of today while positioning them for a brighter tomorrow. If passed, the act will support businesses on the ground and help government deliver clear and effective rules that promote public health and safeguard the environment without sacrificing innovation, growth and opportunity.

Some of the proposed changes in the act include making it easier for people to become volunteers by providing free police record checks and also reducing the administrative burden for police services; proposing changes to set the groundwork for the government to allow licensed restaurants, bars and other hospitality businesses create or extend their outdoor patio spaces.

In my riding, as you know, in downtown Whitby, there are several small restaurants that fit within that particular category who now have patios but would like to expand them. This will allow that effect to take place.

It creates greater access to veterinarians by developing a one-health approach to veterinarian facilities that will benefit farmers, the agri-food sector and the general public. Again, the region of Durham's economic recovery framework has a key part in it that deals with agri-food and agri-business. This particular initiative speaks to that and helps to advance that going forward.

Also, it increases financial supports and simplifying the application process for the Second Career program to help those looking for employment train for occupations in high demand, and modernizes regulations under the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act to align with the current Health Canada safety codes to ensure they reflect the latest evidence in technology.

I'm pleased, Speaker, to support Ontario's colleges, like Durham College, which I share with you and your riding, with their advocacy for credential reform as part of the Supporting People and Businesses Act. Colleges can deliver graduates, as you know, Speaker, with the right credentials, if they're given the autonomy and flexibility to bring programs to market quickly and design the right credentials to meet labour market needs. Durham College has been a very strong advocate in this particular area, and our government has listened very carefully to that advocacy, as we have to Colleges Ontario, and today I stand in support of what we have in that particular bill that responds to Durham College and Colleges Ontario going forward.

It's also true that colleges can deliver graduates with the credentials that respond to the flexibility of programs overall as well. The Ontario government has already committed close to \$123,000 to develop and implement job site readiness micro-credentials in Durham College's Centre for Professional and Part-Time Learning. This program will prepare underrepresented individuals, primarily unemployed youth, both in my riding and your riding and other parts of Durham, for success in entry-

level jobs in the construction industry. This is a booming industry in the region of Durham.

Speaker, exploring options for expanding degree-granting authority for colleges offers greater opportunity to recruit international students and better meets employers' demands for graduates of degrees with technical skills. Again, this responds to some of the feedback and advocacy that we've received from the education sector in my riding and your riding and other parts of the region of Durham.

The 2021 Burden Reduction Report shows Ontario continues to make substantial progress. This is important in reducing regulatory burdens. In the past three years, our government has reduced its total number of regulatory compliance requirements by close to 10% and achieved \$373 million in net annual savings to businesses, not-for-profits and municipalities that you and I have the privilege of representing.

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Again, I'm pleased to support this critical piece of legislation, and I thank the minister for her leadership in this respect. What's clear in the totality of this legislation, when you step back and you look at it—it responds to ongoing consultations that inform this legislation. Through our work to modernize our regulatory system and make Ontario ripe for future investments and economic prosperity, we're making regions like the region of Durham and other parts of this great province an even better and easier place to expand and thrive.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: I listened carefully to the comments from the member for Whitby. This bill, Bill 13 that we're discussing, really is kind of a return to the old way that this government has done things: just tinkering around the edges, pretending these are major reforms when, in fact, there are real, significant needs out there in communities across this province for more than just these kinds of housekeeping provisions. It's very disappointing.

But I did want to ask the member, regarding schedule 20, where there are some changes made to police record checks and the measures around that—what was confusing to me, and I think to many other stakeholders, is why level 3 checks, the vulnerable sector checks, are excluded. That really relates to anybody working with children. I'm wondering if the member opposite would comment on whether or not the government is open to amendments to that to include those level 3 vulnerable sector checks.

Mr. Lorne Coe: I thank the member opposite for the question. The process for the record checks for volunteers is designed to make it easier for people to volunteer by providing free processing for police record checks. With over 600 million hours volunteered by Ontarians every year, they're true examples of the Ontario spirit. Our government will always support Ontario's dedicated volunteers.

Aspects related to this particular initiative are ongoing and discussions are ongoing, and we'll trust that organizations that have particular concerns in this area will continue to listen to their suggestions going forward.

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

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Thank you to the MPP for Whitby for his remarks today. Of course, COVID has required government to make many adjustments to how we provide services across many sectors. It has also shown us some major issues in legislation and regulation that were outdated and in need of modernization. Some sectors include our court system, which the Attorney General has been making major improvements to.

I'm wondering, Speaker, can the member talk about why it is so important to make these improvements to government-provided services?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you to my colleague for his question. About a year ago, I participated in a consultative process, including a cross-section of our legal community across the region of Durham. A prevailing message that I heard at the time was that governments should work for people, not make their life harder with outdated, hard-to-understand rules and regulations. Changes like those in the Barristers Act, which are reflected in this legislation, update legislation to create smoother processes across government, including the court system and updating a very archaic rule. This is something our government takes seriously and will continue to do as I work to make life easier for the people of Ontario.

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

Mr. Chris Glover: Thank you to the member from Whitby for your comments today. I want to talk about schedule 8. You're talking about making life easier for the people of Ontario. One of the things that makes life easier is having a local school. You've opened up the Education Act, you've opened up the Development Charges Act, and yet this bill does not modify the Education Development Charges Act so that all school boards in this province will be able to collect education development charges to pay for new schools where there are new developments. There are a lot of new developments in my riding of Spadina-Fort York; I imagine there are a lot of developments happening in Whitby. Do you not want new schools to go with those new developments, and should developers not be paying for that through a development charge?

Mr. Lorne Coe: I thank the member for his question. You're quite correct; there has been an opportunity, with the help of the Minister of Education and his leadership, to open up two schools in the Whitby area. In particular, one for the Catholic school board, St. Marguerite d'Youville, \$13.2 million, has opened up recently, and also another school in Whitby in the public school system, which is another \$11.2 million. And in the Speaker's riding, in the north part of Oshawa, in the very near future we'll be opening up a brand new high school, Monsignor Paul Dwyer Catholic High School, which has been long-awaited in that particular community and, in fact, in the region of Durham.

I thank the member opposite for his concerns with respect to what he's expressed and his ongoing consultations with all boards across the province in that area.

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

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Our government recognizes the important role that veterinarians play in the “one health” approach to protecting the public. This is even more true in the agricultural sector, where healthy animals are critical for successful farms. Can the member speak about how the proposed regulatory changes to modernize the accreditation model for veterinary facilities will benefit veterinarians and the agricultural sector?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you to my colleague for that question. This is a very important aspect of the region of Durham’s economic recovery framework going forward, because it affects the agribusiness sector as well as veterinarians in our area of the region of Durham. The region of Durham, for those members who don’t know, is the largest geographically in the province of Ontario. We will have close to one million people in the next year and a half.

But we’re committed. We’re absolutely committed to creating more economic opportunities for veterinarians in the region of Durham, for farmers and for the agri-food sector, by modernizing the way that veterinarians’ facilities are accredited in Ontario. This has been long-awaited.

Again, this government has listened carefully, and this government is responding. Proposed changes to the regulation would allow the College of Veterinarians of Ontario to implement a new model for accreditation. It’s been long-awaited, overall.

Again, Speaker, this response—

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

Question?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: It brings me great pleasure to ask my seat colleague a question. I know he was the critic for education and training, universities and colleges. He’s travelled the whole province, actually, talking to our colleges and universities. He touched in his speech on the conversations he had with Durham College when it comes to credential reforms, but could you elaborate on what you heard travelling across the province from other colleges and why this change is so important?

Mr. Lorne Coe: I appreciate the question from my seat mate here, because at the time she was working as a policy adviser in this particular area and has a vast amount of experience in this particular area, as well, going forward.

What I heard, whether it was in northern Ontario or western Ontario, this was a need, a long-awaited need, in the province of Ontario. Again, this government has listened. This government understands, as our labour

minister has pointed out, the value of credentials and its linking to job creation and the economy in the province of Ontario. It’s working. It will continue to work due to the leadership of our Premier Doug Ford and our cabinet ministers that are with us today.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): We have time for a super-quick back and forth. The member from Algoma–Manitoulin.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Schedule 1: Schedule 1 is where the Barristers Act is, where the government is looking at making some definition changes and streamlining the process and offering to remove the precedents from the courts.

My question to the member: It might work, it might be helpful, but if you’re not going to put in the investment and reverse the cuts done to legal aid, this will not help those who are absolutely in need. What will this government do to address those issues?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Well, what this government has demonstrated and continues to demonstrate is how well it listens and how broadly it consults with all sectors of the legal community. One aspect of that is modernizing the Barristers Act and then repealing a section of that act to remove outdated courtroom procedures that prioritize cases of senior lawyers and do not recognize licensed paralegals. This eliminates the provision. This is, again, long-awaited—a provision that is inconsistently applied and may help improve efficiency in courtrooms. But it also responds to hard-working families in Ontario.

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

Seeing none, Mrs. Tangri has moved second reading of Bill 13, An Act to amend various Acts.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I look to the minister: Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

Hon. Nina Tangri: General government, please.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): So ordered.

Orders of the day? I recognize the deputy government House leader.

Mr. Michael Parsa: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. If you seek it, you will find there’s unanimous consent to see the clock at 6.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mr. Parsa is seeking unanimous consent to see the clock at 6. Is it agreed? Agreed.

Report continues in volume B.

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Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Kramp, Daryl (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Kusendova, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga- Centre	
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
MacLeod, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa (PC)	Nepean	Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries / ministre des Industries du patrimoine, du sport, du tourisme et de la culture
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
McKenna, Hon. / L'hon. Jane (PC)	Burlington	Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues / Ministre associée déléguée au dossier de l'Enfance et à la Condition féminine
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Miller, Norman (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	
Mitas, Christina Maria (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough- Centre	
Monteith-Farrell, Judith (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Morrison, Suze (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (IND)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Park, Lindsey (IND)	Durham	
Parsa, Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Rod (PC)	Ajax	Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée
Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Hon. / L'hon. Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	Associate Minister of Digital Government / Ministre associé délégué de l'Action pour un gouvernement numérique
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines, des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Roberts, Jeremy (PC)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
Romano, Hon. / L'hon. Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Simard, Amanda (LIB)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Singh, Gurratan (NDP)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Singh, Sara (NDP)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction / Ministre associée déléguée aux Petites Entreprises et à la Réduction des formalités administratives
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Deputy Speaker / Vice-président

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Wilson, Jim (IND)	Simcoe—Grey	
Wynne, Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	
Vacant	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Randy Pettapiece
Teresa J. Armstrong, Toby Barrett
Lorne Coe, Rudy Cuzzetto
Goldie Ghamari, Randy Hillier
Christina Maria Mitas, Judith Monteith-Farrell
Michael Parsa, Randy Pettapiece
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Thushitha Kobikrishna

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Ian Arthur
Ian Arthur, Will Bouma
Stephen Crawford, Catherine Fife
Ernie Hardeman, Mitzie Hunter
Logan Kanapathi, Sol Mamakwa
Jeremy Roberts, Dave Smith
Vijay Thanigasalam
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Julia Douglas

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Logan Kanapathi
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Mike Schreiner
Jill Andrew, Robert Bailey
Will Bouma, Guy Bourgouin
Chris Glover, Mike Harris
Logan Kanapathi, Sheref Sabawy
Amarjot Sandhu, Mike Schreiner
Daisy Wai
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Isaiah Thorning

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Gilles Bisson
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Aris Babikian
Deepak Anand, Aris Babikian
Gilles Bisson, Lorne Coe
Wayne Gates, Robin Martin
Norman Miller, Billy Pang
Amanda Simard, Marit Stiles
John Yakabuski
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tanzima Khan

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Daryl Kramp
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lucille Collard
Lucille Collard, Christine Hogarth
Daryl Kramp, Natalia Kusendova
Jim McDonell, Suze Morrison
Randy Pettapiece, 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