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Service linguistique et des publications parlementaires
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

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THRONE SPEECH DEBATE DÉBAT SUR LE DISCOURS DU TRÔNE

Continuation of debate on the motion for an address in reply to the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

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

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

Speaker, I want to point out that this throne speech does very little to protect workers, to stand up for local businesses and invest in our health care system and our kids. The people of Ontario deserve better than this. The government states they will protect and offer support for business and people.

Speaker, we all know COVID-19 has been hard. Families and businesses were hit hard. This throne speech does nothing to help people get through the pandemic, and it does not do anything to help everyday people recover.

Malgré le fait que ce gouvernement dit avoir supporté les familles et les entreprises, je ne vois pas le même résultat qu'eux. Le gouvernement est fier de dire qu'ils ont fourni 3 milliards de dollars en prêts pour supporter les entreprises. Comme vous le savez, un prêt reste un prêt. Un prêt aide peut-être dans le moment même, mais n'aide certainement pas dans le long terme.

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Plusieurs petites entreprises de mon comté n'ont pas fait de demande pour votre prêt puisqu'elles ne voulaient pas être obligées de l'ajouter à leur longue liste de factures et de paiements.

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

Dites-moi pourquoi une petite entreprise de mon comté qui a appliqué pour une subvention en mars 2020 attend toujours pour une réponse à sa demande. Pourquoi, mais

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pourquoi, est-ce qu'elle attend encore? Ceci ne fait pas de sens et n'est certainement pas une façon de montrer du support à une petite entreprise.

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

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

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

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

Pourquoi est-ce que ce gouvernement n'offre pas une troisième vague de financement pour ces petites entreprises qui souffrent encore, ce qui pourrait potentiellement assurer leur survie? Je suis certain que plusieurs entreprises pourraient en bénéficier. Parlons des entreprises dans mon comté : je suis certain qu'une troisième vague de financement serait bénéfique pour les entreprises qui ont souffert énormément des fermetures liées à la COVID-19. Des entreprises comme les salons de coiffure, les spas : ces entreprises essaient encore de se remettre sur pied étant donné qu'elles ont été fermées le plus longtemps.

Dans mon comté, j'ai une propriétaire de salon de coiffure qui a fait demande pour le programme de subvention pour les petites entreprises. Elle a attendu des mois sans nouvelles de sa demande. Nous avons essayé de

communiquer avec le ministre et le ministère sans succès. Ça semble être l'histoire qui se répète : pas de réponse de ce gouvernement.

J'aimerais aussi me pencher sur les enjeux des restaurations, des restaurants et des petits motels. Ce gouvernement n'arrête pas de dire que les personnes, les entreprises ont su s'adapter durant les temps difficiles. « S'adapter » est un grand mot. Je sais bien que des restaurants dans mon comté ont dû fermer leurs portes parce que faire du « takeout » n'était pas rentable, monsieur le Président. Leur dire de s'ajuster n'est pas la façon de faire les choses.

La survie des petits motels : personne ne pensait à eux. Dans mon comté, il y a plusieurs motels, des non-affiliés. Si on dit que les grosses chaînes de motels en ont arraché, imaginez les petites. Celles-ci craient au loup pour survivre.

It seems to me that this government is just thinking about reducing red tape and not thinking about supporting business and people. If you want to “improve efficiencies,” you need to be able to understand underlying issues. Looking at the surface of issues and reducing red tape doesn't give you solutions and it does not solve issues.

Speaker, I would like to now turn my attention to another important issue that was not brought forth by this government's throne speech. Just like francophones, our First Nations have not been a priority under this government. I am not surprised to see the lack of commitment towards our First Nations communities. In fact, looking at this government's track record, again, it is clear they do not have their priorities in the right place.

I do not understand why this throne speech does not address the water crisis. The water crisis in our First Nations communities is not unheard of. Why is there nothing to address this urgent need? This government says they consult, but they do not listen. Families are suffering. Children are suffering, Mr. Speaker. Some First Nations communities have been without potable water for over 20 years—in fact, 25 years for some communities. This is a disgrace. Young adults have not drunk from tap water. They're in their twenties, and they've never drunk a glass of water from a faucet. How is that acceptable in Ontario? It's unacceptable. They don't even trust the water. They go out of their communities and they don't trust water from a faucet, it's so enshrined.

We are talking about basic human rights and needs. I am sure that if any city in Ontario had no potable water to drink, the Premier would react. Why don't our First Nations communities deserve the same reaction? Instead of giving \$1 billion to the 407, use that money and fix the water crisis. You would probably fix the whole water crisis—it comes very close. It's unacceptable that we give \$1 billion and yet we don't fix the water crisis in northern communities. Shame on you.

But again, like they say in French: “Loin des yeux, loin du cœur.”

It should not be this way. This government has to stop passing the buck and start putting action where their mouth is. After all, Ontario is a signatory to Treaty 9. Stop blaming the feds.

Let's talk about housing in our First Nations communities—again, no mention of this in the throne speech. We've spoken about this in the House many times. I've spoken; my colleague from Kiiwetinoong has spoken about this many times. There are people living in tents—in tents, in minus 40. And this government accepts that, because they're not fixing it. It's not in the throne speech. No investment, no concrete action, but again, I'm not surprised.

Mr. Speaker, although the Ford government is proud to make announcements about the Ring of Fire, they keep forgetting the important step of consultation. Of course, they might say they are consulting, but they pick and choose, once again, who they consult. They will consult with a few of our First Nations communities in the Ring of Fire but not all.

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Mr. Speaker, tell me: Are minerals more important than the water crisis or housing crisis? Are they, when you can save lives and you can avoid disease? It's unacceptable. Let's fix the water crisis, the housing crisis, and do the other things. Get that \$1 billion; fix that. What happens then? It's called colonialism. Like my friend from Kiiwetinoong says, it's by design, and it's working to a T.

Considering all of the above, it is clear that this government does not get it. It is also clear that they are not listening.

Monsieur le Président, j'aimerais maintenant porter mon attention vers la francophonie. Ce gouvernement nous a fait croire depuis les dernières élections qu'il moderniserait la Loi sur les services en français. Depuis des mois, les organismes de la communauté francophone attendent après celle-ci et suscitent beaucoup d'espoir. C'est pourquoi plusieurs étaient ravis de voir l'énoncé de la ministre des Affaires francophones qui disait avoir modernisé la Loi sur les services en français. Le problème, monsieur le Président, est que « l'excitement » et l'espoir se sont éteints assez rapidement. Considérant toutes les coupures que ce gouvernement avait faites dans ce dossier, on s'attendait à bien plus. Disons que c'était décevant.

En effet, ce gouvernement n'écoute pas les recommandations de la communauté francophone. Encore, on nous donne des miettes—les fameuses miettes. Ce gouvernement aime faire à sa manière et oublie les intérêts des francophones et des francophiles de partout en province.

J'aimerais d'ailleurs me pencher sur les sujets manquants de cette annexe. Si on veut parler de la modernisation, on doit parler d'un commissaire aux langues officielles indépendant. Ça, c'est le fameux—ils ont dit qu'ils ont coupé notre commissaire pour des raisons économiques, qu'ils ne nous ont jamais démontrées, puis ils l'ont envoyé à l'ombudsman. C'est notre chien de garde. La communauté le demande—puis je pense que c'est la demande numéro un qu'on entend toujours, et elle ne fait pas partie de la modernisation.

Modifier et voir une meilleure définition de la communauté, c'était une autre demande de la communauté. On va vous en parler—j'en ai déjà parlé en

Chambre : j'avais un assistant qui travaillait ici. Son origine, il était argentin. Sa femme était québécoise. Ses deux enfants parlaient français et allaient à l'école française. Ils parlaient toujours en français à la maison. Ici à Queen's Park, on se parlait toujours en français, notre langue que, lui, il parlait. Il s'identifiait comme francophone. Mais quand ça venait pour être recensé, s'il était francophone ou non, il n'était pas recensé parce que sa langue d'origine était l'espagnol. C'est pour ça que c'est important qu'on modernise, pour refléter que, à cause de l'immigration, la communauté franco-ontarienne a évoluée. Elle n'est plus ce qu'elle était.

La définition : j'ai déposé mon projet de loi, et il y avait une définition. Les libéraux en ont déposé une. L'AFO en avait mis une. Mais il n'y a aucune modernisation qui vient de la part du gouvernement. Pourtant, ils ont consulté le même monde. Ils ont consulté les mêmes entités francophones qui demandaient toutes de refléter une meilleure définition dans la modernisation, parce que—vous le savez, monsieur le Président, ce n'est pas compliqué—le plus qu'on a de francophones, le plus d'argent que les francophones vont avoir pour donner plus de services. Ils nous disent qu'ils sont là pour la communauté francophone; je m'excuse, on n'a pas la même définition de « aider ».

Le comité consultatif, la consultation avec les organismes avant de faire des modifications ou des changements : ils l'ont mis, mais il manque de dents. On a un devoir de consulter avant, et non de faire des changements et après ça consulter.

La désignation de toute la province : ils ne l'ont pas faite. C'était une demande aussi, monsieur le Président. C'était une autre demande des entités francophones. Pourquoi? Il y a des francophones partout en province qui méritent les mêmes services. Ils ont dit que la ministre « peut » désigner d'autres coins de la province pour donner des services, mais « peut »—les ministres changent. Le langage est vague—tout le temps, être vague. Justement, je viens de finir un comité, là. Je viens de parler, sur le comité, à l'AJEFO puis à l'AFO. Puis dans leurs recommandations, ils demandent de la clarté pour être capable de dire : « Quand allez-vous faire ça? Il faut rajouter ça. Il faut faire certain que les services soient là. » C'est bien beau, la désignation puis l'offre active, mais si le financement n'est pas là, ou si on ne met pas les règlements pour l'entourer, on va avoir des services pourris, pareils comme ceux qu'on a, comme c'est là, dans les cours, où les francophones attendent de deux à trois fois plus longtemps que les anglophones. Pourtant, la loi est claire : l'équivalent. Mais à cause qu'ils n'ont pas de juges francophones, qu'ils n'ont pas de personne qui font la traduction, ils ont une excuse. Fait que c'est repoussé, et c'est repoussé, et c'est repoussé. Et qui paye pour ça? C'est le francophone. Puis ça, ce n'est pas de l'assimilation? C'en est, pure laine. Pourquoi? Parce que le francophone s'écoeure, puis il s'en va où? Il s'en va dans les services anglophones. Mais, « on est là pour les francophones ». Je ne voudrais pas jouer au hockey contre vous autres; je n'aurais pas la puck souvent.

Une voix.

M. Guy Bourgouin: C'est effrayant. C'est effrayant.

Aussi, cette annexe ne mentionne pas non plus le financement des entités. Encore, on vient de vivre une pandémie, puis ils ne vont même pas assujettir le bureau de santé publique à la loi. Vous le savez : la santé publique n'est pas assujettie à la loi. On vient de vivre une pandémie et les francophones ne pouvaient pas aller pour des services parce que ce n'était pas assujetti. On n'a même pas fini la pandémie, et ils ne l'ont même pas mis dans la loi. C'est raisonnable? Une mautadine de chance qu'ils prennent soin de nos intérêts, hein? S'ils n'en prenaient pas soin, de nos intérêts francophones, moi, je serais perdu bien raide. Merci d'avoir fait certain que mes services en français étaient là.

Et la liste est longue, monsieur le Président. La liste est longue, et moi je suis après manquer de temps parce que je suis après de me crinquer et de me laisser m'emporter, mais je vais essayer de rester sur ce qu'il en est.

L'offre active : comme j'ai dit, dans l'offre active, ce qui est important c'est le règlement : il faut que ce soit là, il faut que ce soit clair—and le financement, aussi.

Si on regarde les tendances de ce gouvernement durant les trois dernières années, les belles paroles sont là; l'action ne l'est pas. Ce ne sont que des paroles vides.

Monsieur le Président, je veux mentionner aussi le prix du gaz dans le nord de l'Ontario. Il est rendu à 1,57 \$, 1,59 \$. Les belles promesses du gouvernement, qu'ils étaient supposés de le baisser : on attend toujours. Les prix des assurances d'autos : j'ai un M. Boardel de mon comté qui a été obligé de vendre son auto parce qu'il était sur un salaire fixe—pas capable de payer.

Le manque de docteurs, le manque de « nurses » dans le Nord, à Smooth Rock Falls, à Hearst : toujours, on attend. Puis ils ne l'ont même pas intégré pour dire d'accepter les immigrants qui pourraient venir nous aider. Il y a des docteurs qui pourraient venir nous aider. Bien, non, ils les ont exclus. Et la liste continue.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, as you can see, the throne speech has a lot of nothing. This government needs to start listening and investing in what matters: families, workers, business people, not just buddies. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member from Brantford–Brant has risen to ask his first question.

Mr. Will Bouma: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's always a pleasure to see you in the chair.

I appreciate a northern point of view brought to the House. I apologize for not being able to respond en français, but I don't have that capability, and I do appreciate the translation services that we have here in the House.

Northerners have known for a very, very long time that the future success of the rest of us here in the province of Ontario is dependent upon them, and especially development to the Ring of Fire, so that we can see wealth flowing into the north in order to do those. I was wondering if the member could comment on whether he's supportive of our agreements with First Nations people in the north and the

development of the Ring of Fire so that we can make green, clean new technology right here in the province of Ontario.

M. Guy Bourgouin: Je remercie le député de Brantford–Brant. Est-ce que je supporte le « Ring of Fire »? Est-ce que je supporte l'envergure? Je les supporte si toutes les communautés de Premières Nations ont été consultées. Je les supporte si les communautés de Premières Nations supportent le gouvernement—jusqu'à cette heure, il y a plusieurs Premières Nations qui ont mis des moratoires. Elles sont dans mon comté. Ce sont leurs territoires ancestraux, elles ont des moratoires, puis vous ne les avez pas consultées. Arrêtez de vous pêter les bretelles. Allez faire votre consultation, et reposez-moi la question.

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member for Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas wants to pose a question.

M^{me} Sandy Shaw: Oui. Je vais poser ma question en français, si ça marche?

M. Guy Bourgouin: Ça me ferait plaisir.

M^{me} Sandy Shaw: OK. Vraiment, pour le député de Mushkegowuk–James Bay, j'aime beaucoup ce que vous avez dit ici. Ce budget mérite un autre échec; ça, c'est vrai. On voit que les amis de ce gouvernement obtiennent tout ce qu'ils veulent, mais il n'y a rien ici pour rendre la vie plus abordable.

Mais surtout, ils ont échoué pour nos jeunes gens. La situation avec les jeunes gens autochtones est atroce. Et les jeunes gens, maintenant, craignent pour leur avenir. Ils ont beaucoup d'angoisse. Comme vous avez dit, il n'y a pas quelque chose ici pour aider les jeunes gens sauf des belles paroles. Est-ce qu'il y a quelque chose que vous pouvez dire pour donner à nos jeunes gens un peu d'espoir?

M. Guy Bourgouin: Merci à ma collègue. C'est une bonne question. On oublie souvent les jeunes. C'est notre avenir. Ce qui est encore plus—comment puis-je le dire? Notre ressource la plus grande n'est pas les minéraux, comme ils tentent de dire tout le temps; c'est la jeunesse. C'est eux autres, la relève. C'est là qu'on devrait investir.

Je vais vous donner un exemple. J'étais à une conférence. J'arrive à la conférence des collèges de l'Ontario, puis il y avait un orateur des Premières Nations qui disait que les jeunes n'ont même pas de secondaire dans le Nord. Il faut qu'ils se déplacent pour aller à Thunder Bay, Timmins, Sudbury—ils sont obligés de se déplacer, des fois, plus loin. Imagine-toi, tu commences ton secondaire et tu t'éloignes de ta famille. Tu ne vas pas au collège; tu ne vas pas à l'université. Tu t'en vas au secondaire.

Comment peux-tu justifier ça? Pourquoi n'a-t-on pas de secondaire dans nos communautés autochtones? Pourquoi nous, on en a, mais pas les communautés autochtones? C'est un gros manque de ce gouvernement. Des belles paroles, là, ça ne va pas loin. Ce sont des paroles vides. Les Premières Nations sont tannées des paroles vides—

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

The member for Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill.

Mr. Michael Parsa: Thank you to my colleague for the presentation.

Speaker, our government recognizes the importance of supporting seniors living in long-term care, and that's why in the 2020 Ontario budget, we committed to increasing the average daily direct care from nurses and personal support workers to four hours of daily direct care. I'm wondering if my colleague across can explain why their party said no to seniors, and why they voted against this initiative.

M. Guy Bourgouin: Thank you for the question; merci pour la question. Je vais vous le répéter en français parce que je pense plus en français puis ça sort plus vite. Ce n'est pas que je ne veux pas vous répondre en anglais; c'est parce que c'est ma langue natale, puis je me sens plus confortable de vous donner la réponse que vous méritez, OK?

Ceci dit, pourquoi a-t-on voté contre? Parce que vous avez le don—votre gouvernement a le don d'y mettre une pilule empoisonnée. Vous en avez des bons. Certains projets de loi que vous déposez ont de bonnes choses, mais vous avez le don de les empoisonner. On vous apporte des amendements dans les comités. On vous apporte des amendements pour corriger ça, puis encore, vous les refusez.

Vous vous posez la question? Je vous réponds : arrêtez d'y mettre des pilules empoisonnées, puis travaillez avec l'opposition, à la place de faire de la confrontation puis de vous gonfler les bras, puis de dire : « C'est nous le gouvernement. On n'a pas besoin de votre opinion. » C'est de même qu'on se sent sur ce bord-ci—pourquoi? Parce que vous agissez exactement comme je viens de vous répondre là. C'est une attitude de « j'ai le droit, je suis majoritaire » à la place de consultations, puis de travailler ensemble pour régler les problèmes dans nos soins de longue durée.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member for Algoma–Manitoulin has a question.

M. Michael Mantha: Je me lève dans l'Assemblée, puis je regarde au coin, au bureau là-bas, où Hansard est en train de faire de la traduction. J'ai hâte de lire le Hansard demain, parce qu'il y a des phrases que mon chum vient de sortir là dont j'ai hâte de voir la traduction demain matin.

Ma question pour lui est la même. Beaucoup de nos communautés dans le nord de l'Ontario sont bâties sur des petites entreprises, des « mom-and-pop shops », comme on les appelle. On regarde ça, des gens—ils sont fondateurs dans toutes nos communautés. Et puis, on n'est pas encore sorti de la pandémie. On est en train de regarder un nouveau virus qui est en train de sortir, ce qui fait qu'il va y avoir plus de protocoles, encore plus de fermetures.

Comment est-ce qu'une troisième vague de support pour les petites entreprises—parce que moi, je le sais : dans le mien, mon comté d'Algoma–Manitoulin, les gens en demandent une. Ils ont besoin d'aide. Je veux savoir de lui comment ça pourrait aider, une troisième vague, pour les petites entreprises.

M. Guy Bourgouin: Merci à mon collègue d'Algoma-Manitoulin. Comme son comté, le mien est pareil. Nos petites et moyennes entreprises souffrent. Elles ont fait des applications et n'ont pas eu de réponse. Elles attendent toujours une réponse. Elles ont besoin de cette troisième vague-là pour survivre. Toute l'opposition vous l'ont dit, même les indépendants vous le disent : on a besoin d'une troisième vague. Ça tombe dans l'oreille d'un sourd.

Je traitais justement la semaine passée avec un camionneur, un « owner-operator », comme on les appelle. Il n'est pas capable d'avoir des chauffeurs. Pourtant, vous avez supporté ma motion—tout le monde a le même problème—mais vous avez fait zéro avec. Vous avez fait zéro avec. Puis on a des camionneurs, des « mom-and-pop shops »—ça, c'est des camionneurs qui passent de père en fils ou de père en fille—qui sont après mourir, et l'industrie en souffre. C'est pour ça que la troisième vague est importante pour aider ces petites et moyennes entreprises-là, y compris les camionneurs.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. And members not wearing their masks, please put them on.

Mr. Bill Walker: It's a pleasure to debate with the member from Mushkegowuk-James Bay. He brought up a lot of great situations that the former Liberal government really dropped the ball on—many, many things. For 15 years, they could have done what you were talking about with water, or at least moved the meter. They could have actually built schools instead of closing 600. They could have actually engaged with the business community to drive business rather than letting 350,000 jobs leave Ontario. They could have built more than 600 long-term-care beds in 15 years, which we then inherited during the pandemic. It was absolutely something that was a challenge and a concern for all of us, Mr. Speaker.

I want to assure him, everything we're doing is to try to move that meter forward, to try to make improvements. We're not going to be able to do it overnight. We're hiring a ton of new PSWs and nurses. We're trying to build more affordable housing. We hope, with members like him on the other side—I sat in opposition. I know we can work together. I know we can find common ground. Will you work with us to try to move the meter forward on all of those important issues rather than, like your leader, say no, no and more no?

M. Guy Bourgouin: Écoutez, vous pouvez accuser ma cheffe tant que vous voudrez, mais il y a une affaire qu'on sait : toutes les fois qu'on vous amène des recommandations, vous dites non. Oui, je suis assis sur ce bord-ci; je l'entends souvent, le « non », bien plus souvent qu'à votre tour. Je peux vous dire que ces personnes comptent [*inaudible*]. Puis toutes les fois qu'on pointe du doigt, on devrait regarder : les trois autres nous pointent.

C'est vrai que les libéraux—je suis le premier à reconnaître que les libéraux ont géré très mal. Ils sont coupables. Mais, là, vous êtes au pouvoir, puis vous faites la même chose, sinon pire. Venez pas nous chanter la chanson, parce qu'on la connaît.

Virer de bord puis dire que ma cheffe ne veut pas travailler avec vous, ce n'est pas vrai. On vous amène des

amendements à n'en plus finir. On vous demande de réparer certaines choses. On est dans une crise de pandémie. Vous n'avez rien fait pour la communauté francophone; au contraire, vous l'avez omise. J'en ai parlé dans mon discours. J'en ai parlé d'une troisième vague. Que faites-vous de la troisième vague? Vous nous dites non. Où est-ce qu'elle est, cette troisième vague-là?

Ce qui fait qu'avant de nous dire que c'est nous qui disons non, prenez un miroir et regardez-vous bien comme il faut. Vous allez peut-être rester surpris que la personne qui vous regarde va vous dire non.

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

Mr. Deepak Anand: Mr. Speaker, when I was asked to speak on the throne speech, I instantly thought, “Let me take some of the words from the throne speech said by our Lieutenant Governor.” And when I opened up the page, I read the first line, which sounded like this: ‘The last 20 “months have been some of the most difficult in modern life.”’ I instantly started thinking and I said, “Yes. The last 20 months have been most difficult for many, including me.”

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But the difficult times did not start 20 months back, Mr. Speaker. For me, the difficult times started many months before that. That is when I had to visit with my wife, Aruna, to India on January 23, 2019, to attend my father-in-law’s, Chander Kumar Mittal’s, funeral. This was the fourth time in the last three months Aruna or I had to visit India. Sometimes I believe that God is not always fair.

But before that, I want to talk about it—I still remember as if it happened yesterday. On November 25, 2019, my father, Sardar Lal Anand, a person full of life, dropped me to the airport. It was a wide three-lane road to the airport with barely any traffic. I was sitting next to him when he whispered to me that he was driving at a speed of 90 kilometres in a speed limit of 50 kilometres. He didn’t realize I was actually making a video of him saying this. That video is engraved in me, and I’ve watched it multiple times. Four days later, on November 29, 2019, he left us untimely, and, Mr. Speaker, today is November 29. It has been two years, but the void he created will never be filled.

Between my dad and my father-in-law—I called my dad “Papa” and my father-in-law “Dad.” I know he’s watching, so I want to tell him, “Papa, I’m sure you know this well, the person who has shown most strength in the last two years is no one but my mother, Santosh Anand.”

Mr. Speaker, I was not planning to speak today—not on this, at least—but thanks to tonight’s sitting, I got the opportunity to pay tribute to my father and convey my deepest gratitude and thanks to my mother for being so strong and providing strength to us. So I want to say thank you to, I guess, our House leader for providing me this opportunity. But going back, as my dad always said, “Life must go on.”

Mr. Speaker, I’m going to repeat what was said by the Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell:

The last 20 “months have been some of the most difficult in modern life.”

“Families separated, with many grieving the tragic loss of life. Jobs lost and businesses closed. Important life milestones 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.

“The pandemic has also not been equal. It is important that we acknowledge that it has significantly impacted some among us much more than others.

“But through it all, our people have come together and shown the true nature of the Ontario spirit....

“As your government took extraordinary measures to slow the spread of this virus, Ontarians have shown remarkable resolve. You have risen to the occasion and done what is necessary to protect our communities, our hospitals and” our “citizens.”

Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity today to give some of these shining examples of the Ontario spirit from my riding of Mississauga–Malton through this speech.

The first one is Share and Care Canada. Located in my riding of Mississauga–Malton, Share and Care Canada, a not-for-profit organization, has been distributing essential food supplies to over 280 families in the region of Peel. During the pandemic, they have utilized the grocery delivery service app Instacart to reach out to the most vulnerable in the community, ensuring they have essential food supplies like flour, rice and cooking oil. Volunteers at the food bank have also delivered food supplies directly to the families in need, including individuals self-isolating due to COVID-19.

Where there is a will, there is a way: This is the motto of Share and Care. I would like to say thank you to Shashi Puri, Sunita Gupta, Jasvir Hundal, Daljeet Reen, Arvinder Kurewal, Mira Banka and the nearly 50 women who are part of Share and Care Canada. They’ve also lent a hand to support communities across the globe. Volunteers have provided clothes and blankets to India; solar lights and 1,000 pounds of warm clothes to Nepal during the 2015 earthquake; and 200 blankets for refugees arriving in Canada from Syria in the winter months. While 30% of essential supplies are donated by community partners, services and overhead costs are all covered by members of the organization, driven by the passion to help the community in times of need. So I want to say thank you, Share and Care Canada, for your Ontario spirit.

The next one is Fueling Healthy Minds, a breakfast program making sure children and youth in the region of Peel learning remotely have access to fresh and nutritious food during the pandemic. As you know, Mr. Speaker, often hungry kids are unfocused. To ensure a student did not have to skip the most important meal of the day, volunteers stepped up to the plate. In the program’s first phase, from March 2020 to June 2020, they packed and delivered over 40,000 nutritious meals to the homes of children enrolled at schools across the region. Phase 2, which began in January 2021, delivered nearly 50,000 meals. Now in its phase 3, the Fueling Healthy Minds program is delivering meals to over 200 kids and their families every single week.

Speaker, the community effort cannot be understated. I would like to give a shout-out and thank-you to Aruna Anand, the co-founder and coordinator of the program, and the community partners: YMCA of Greater Toronto, General Mills foods, Sai Dham Food Bank, and Burnbrae Farms for their support. I would also like to thank all the teachers, principals, parents and volunteers, including the members of Ace Acumen Academy, Ismaili Civic Initiative, Malton Women Council, Royal Bank of Canada and the Association of Professional Driving Instructors of Ontario, who volunteered their time, rain or shine, to support the health and well-being of our kids. Thank you, Fueling Healthy Minds and community partners, for your Ontario spirit.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to add one more thing to the remarks. Three things that are very close to my heart: One is Alzheimer’s, the second one is blood donation and the third one is diabetes. So I just want to quickly talk about those three with respect to the Ontario spirit.

The first one is Alzheimer’s. I would like also to give a shout-out and a thank-you to Alzheimer Society Peel in the region of Peel. The society is supporting over 850 residents living with dementia, along with caregivers, loved ones and first responders. Through the pandemic, they have made virtual programs, information and resources accessible to clients and their loved ones as they navigate the tough life during COVID-19. I would like to also thank the caregivers for their patience, understanding and providing the support to ensure individuals experiencing the illness feel comfortable, and that they are safe and healthy.

I would like to reiterate the 10 golden rules for anyone caring for a loved one suffering from Alzheimer’s or dementia, Mr. Speaker:

- (1) Agree; never argue.
 - (2) Divert; never reason.
 - (3) Distract; never shame.
 - (4) Reassure; never lecture.
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- (5) Reminisce; never say, “Remember.”
 - (6) Repeat; never say, “I told you.”
 - (7) Do what they can do; never say, “You can’t.”
 - (8) Ask; never demand.
 - (9) Encourage; never condescend.
 - (10) Reinforce; never force.

These are the rules you should always remember.

Mr. Speaker, as I’ve mentioned in the past, Canada needs around 100,000 more donors every year to keep up with the growing demand for blood. However, the fact remains that while roughly half of all Canadians are eligible, only 2% donate blood. This means Ontario has to rely, for up to 83% of our plasma needs, on paid donors, and most of it comes from the US and some of it from across the globe.

As hospitals ramp up elective surgeries, it is clear that we need more and more neighbourhood heroes to roll up their sleeves and donate blood. I’m proud to share that the residents of Mississauga–Malton are helping fill this gap by donating blood for patients in need one community

blood drive at a time. On June 16 and on June 23, residents came together to donate blood at the Canadian Blood Services in my riding of Mississauga–Malton to support patients in need of blood and blood products. Next month, on December 18, the Mississauga–Malton community will come again to roll up their sleeves to give life-saving blood during the festive season.

I would like to acknowledge and thank staff and volunteers at Canadian Blood Services for their hard work and advocacy. Thank you for connecting patients with the gift of life. And to each and every single Ontarian who is able to donate blood, thank you for saving lives.

The next one that I want to talk about is diabetes. I had a statement, which I gave this morning, on diabetes. As I said earlier, 1.5 million people have diabetes in the region of Peel, often known as “the diabetes capital.” One in six residents is affected by diabetes.

I had the honour to join the chair of an all-party caucus, MP Sonia Sidhu, a representative from the federal government, along with community partners, on World Diabetes Day to raise a flag and recognize its impact. I would like to recognize MP Sidhu from Brampton South, along with community partners, including Diabetes Canada and Dynacare, for their hard work in raising awareness about diabetes and bringing the community together to take action. Speaker, pre-diabetes and diabetes can often show up without even knowing, so it is important to become aware of the risks and get tested. I want to say thank you to the front-line workers at Dynacare for all the work they’ve done.

These are a few of the countless examples of the Ontario spirit from local communities in Mississauga–Malton and across the province. Their generosity, selfless service and leadership has made all the difference in the lives of fellow neighbours during these tough times. Time and time again, Ontario has been asked to sacrifice so much, but the light at the end of the tunnel has never looked so bright, Mr. Speaker. Ontario cannot go backwards. After 20 months of fighting this pandemic, we owe residents stability and certainty. That is why our government has made investments to add thousands of new hospital beds and ensure that qualified nurses and doctors are by a patient’s side when they need care.

This pandemic has brought into sharp relief the long-standing requirements of the province’s long-term-care sector. That is why our government is investing \$2.68 billion to build 30,000 new, modern long-term-care beds. Ontario is investing \$5 billion over four years to hire more than 27,000 long-term-care staff, including nurses and PSWs. In doing so, Ontario will provide long-term-care-home residents with four hours of direct care per day.

Our province is making progress. While we should be proud of our progress, we cannot be lulled into a false sense of security, as we know we have a big challenge ahead. There is no question: Over the last 20 months, the people of Ontario have been tested like never before. Through it all, during what felt like our darkest days, we have also seen the best of what our province has to offer. These are the words of the Lieutenant Governor, Mr.

Speaker, when she talked about what we have shown: “Strength. Determination. Compassion. Generosity. Grit.” These are the qualities that have propelled Ontario’s progress through the COVID-19 pandemic. This is the Ontario spirit that will drive us as we work together to build a brighter and more prosperous Ontario. I want to assure the residents of Ontario that your government will be there to support you at every step of the way.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): We have questions. The member for Davenport has the first one.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I want to thank the member from Mississauga–Malton for his comments here today. I listened, and I thought he spoke quite eloquently, actually, about what our communities have gone through, what our country and our province have gone through. I also heard him say on a number of occasions his thankfulness for the devotion and the extraordinary hard work of our front-line health care heroes.

But, Mr. Speaker, we’ve said this to the government members opposite over and over again: You can’t call nurses or personal support care workers or public health workers “front-line health care heroes” and then suppress their wages.

I’m wondering if the member opposite could tell me what he’s been doing to advocate his own government to repeal the regressive legislation this government had put in place that freezes health care heroes’ wages.

Mr. Deepak Anand: Thank you to the member opposite for that question. Through you, Mr. Speaker, I said this earlier and I’m going to say this again: Our government knows that too many workers have been held back and are falling behind, so that’s why our government made sure that we came with PSW wage enhancements. That’s what we did, and we will continue to support our PSWs and everyone in Ontario. We said that earlier. We will be with them every step of the way. We are going to stick to that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member for Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill.

Mr. Michael Parsa: I want to thank my colleague for his presentation. In fact, they are, and we should never be shy of thanking our front-line heroes every day for all the work that they have done, Mr. Speaker.

I want to ask my colleague—he talked about the progress that has been made. That came as a result of many sacrifices by the people of Ontario, Ontarians from all walks: individuals, families and certainly small businesses. During these difficult times, our government made a commitment to all the businesses in this province that we will have their back.

I was wondering if my colleague can elaborate on some of the programs and some of the initiatives that our government put forward to make sure that we support our job creators and small businesses, but in particular, the work that he has done to support workers in this province as we recover from this global pandemic.

Mr. Deepak Anand: Thank you to the member for that wonderful question. Through you, Mr. Speaker, as we know, we continue to manage COVID-19 for the long-

term, and we're going to continue to support our residents in every best way possible. I'll give you some of the examples that the member asked me about that. That is why our government provided \$3 billion to 110,000 small businesses through the Ontario Small Business Support Grant, provided property tax and energy cost rebates to the small businesses, reduced small businesses corporate tax to 3.2%. Ontario's Main Street Relief Grant provided a one-time grant up to \$2,000 to help small businesses with the cost of PPE—and the list is long.

But I want to say that we understand that we've gone through the tough time, and that is why our government wants to make sure we are there for each and every Ontarian.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The next question comes from the member from Algoma-Manitoulin.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I'm happy to see that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing in the House, because I wanted to raise this question earlier. We're in the middle of a housing crisis in this province. I hear day in and day out how this government is looking at making announcements about where the dollars are going. I'm not seeing any of these dollars coming to northern Ontario, and that's frustrating, because I always come to the floor of the Legislature with a northern Ontario lens.

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I want to ask the member—just a while ago the opposition brought in on our opposition day a housing strategy in regard to how you could address the housing crisis. Not one single member of the government offered any comments during that debate. I'm wondering—I'm looking to the member—why not? Why wouldn't you have taken that as an opportunity to talk about how you're going to be addressing the housing crisis across this province?

Mr. Deepak Anand: Thank you to the member opposite for that question. I absolutely agree with you. Housing affordability is an extremely important issue. Many times when some people come to me and ask me, "Well, you're already living in a house, so why would you bother?" I always remind them, I have two children and soon they're going to be going to their own homes. That's why it is important for me. It's not about me alone. It's about Ontarians. That's why we need to make sure there is housing affordability, but we're thankful to our minister. As the minister actually said multiple times, we actually have seen more number of houses being built during the pandemic under this government's watch than the previous government. So we will continue to make sure that we will invest into the requirements and reduce the red tape so we can build more houses, and that will make housing affordability better in the future.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you very much. I'm losing my voice this afternoon. The member for Niagara West has a question.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: My thanks to the member for Mississauga–Malton for his contributions this evening. One of the areas that I think is so important is the member's and the government's heart for workers, and so

I'm wondering if you could speak a little bit about policies that our government has put in place to assist low-income families, specifically the low-income family tax credit, looking at increases to the minimum wage, looking at ways that we were able to keep hydro rates from soaring as they would have under the Liberals' Fair Hydro Plan.

Could you speak a little bit about some of the policies that our government has put in place in order to support low-income families? Because I know it's a demographic that had been neglected for a long time and one that we need to ensure is able to step forward and take the opportunities that present themselves in a meaningful way, and that's only with the support of a government such as ours. Could you speak to that more?

Mr. Deepak Anand: Thank you to the member for that wonderful question. As the Premier always says, we are for the people, and that's what our government has shown—through the FES, for example, the fall economic statement. I'm thankful to the minister, who is here, as well, and listening. For far too long, the hospitality workers were getting paid less. We actually have increased their minimum wages to be at par with the minimum wages of others. That's about a 19% jump to the hospitality workers and those who have been affected most.

Along with that, as the member himself talked about, some of the other benefits and the other programs have enhanced the lives of our most vulnerable. That is what the government has done, and we will continue to do that for our people of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member for Ottawa Centre has a question.

Mr. Joel Harden: I'm just going to pick up on a thread that my friend from Richmond Hill mentioned a moment ago about help for small businesses. It's something I know is important to the member for Mississauga–Malton.

Something I'm hearing about a lot is soaring commercial insurance rates for small businesses. There's one at home in Ottawa Centre. It's called Red Bird Live. It's a new entertainment venue trying to open up. They were just quoted on their commercial insurance \$24,000 a year, Speaker. That's more than twice what the original estimate was. And this is a place that is following public health guidelines to the letter, doing their best to keep it safe, but struggling to open because there is no effective regulation to make sure commercial insurance rates are affordable.

So my question to my friend from Mississauga–Malton: What can the government do? I've written the finance minister about this. I see the finance minister is here tonight. I would welcome any signal from this government about help they could offer to organizations like Red Bird Live and other enterprises that are trying to take advantage of the gaping gap we have right now: our struggling tourism sector. As this safely reopens, I'm wondering what the member can offer—

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

Back to the member to respond.

Mr. Deepak Anand: Thank you to the member opposite for that question. I absolutely agree with you again on

this, that we need to support our job creators in this province. As you know, 97% of the job creators are small businesses, and we need to support the small businesses.

But, Mr. Speaker, as we all know, the past 18 months—or actually, 20 months now—have been some of the most difficult in modern life. The pandemic has continued to challenge us in many, many unimaginable ways. That's why, after this, our government had made sure that we were with them at each and every step on the way. We will continue to be there to support Ontarians, and together we will not just defeat this deadly virus; together we will be with the residents, going forward, building a better Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): We have time for further debate.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Speaker, all of us in our community know that it's difficult times in Ontario right now. All across Ontario, in all of our communities, we're seeing this struggle. We see folks struggling through the pandemic, we see that the unaffordability of living in Ontario just continues to increase, and it's really disappointing to see this budget, because I'm really quite concerned that this government just shows that they have turned their backs on the people of Ontario, turned their backs on the struggles of the people of Ontario.

This bill just shows a huge disconnect between what's actually happening in our communities and what's reflected in this fall economic statement. We always talk about Queen's Park being a bubble, but this is ridiculous, Speaker. This budget does not reflect anything about the realities of people in the province. Honestly, this government is just so out of touch, it's unbelievable.

I would like to take this chance to share what's going on in my community of Hamilton. Maybe the government can reflect on what's happening in Hamilton, and maybe reflect on how severely this budget misses the mark. In Hamilton, small businesses, as has been said many times before, the ones that have managed to survive, are still struggling to keep their doors open, to keep people employed. They're desperately hoping that this government, never mind fixing the small business grants that some of them are still waiting for, will have a third round to help them keep the doors open because they've worked so hard to serve us all through the pandemic.

We see a general affordability crisis. Housing is so unaffordable in all of our communities, including in Hamilton. As we've heard today, there are so many people who are not only struggling to afford housing—they don't have housing. It is, in fact, the first snowfall in Ontario and people are living outside. People in all of our communities are living in tents right now. In Hamilton we have all kinds of people who are living in homelessness encampments. They have no place to go. The shelters are full. There's no options for them. They're doing the best that they can to try and survive, but they're facing eviction now. These homeless encampments are being evicted, and Hamilton is in turmoil right now trying to address this concern, this humanitarian crisis that's happening in Hamilton. But this budget doesn't reflect any of that.

It's called the Build Ontario plan, but it honestly could have just been as easily called "the rich and the rest of us," because this budget doesn't speak to any of the people who are struggling to afford a good life in Ontario. This is a budget that cuts basic services like health care, like education, while it allocates an uncosted almost \$11 billion on highways, on building concrete highways, while people are freezing and dying on the streets in Ontario.

It's clear, and the budget shows this, that the Premier doesn't want to spend the money on health care and education, the things that people deserve. It's been confirmed yet again by another report from the FAO, the Financial Accountability Officer, this afternoon. Every time we get a report from the Financial Accountability Officer, it shows that this government continues to sit on billions of dollars—billions of dollars that people need right now in this time of crisis. I mean, remember that this government sat on \$12 billion in the middle of COVID rather than spending it on the COVID response.

Now we have the Financial Accountability Officer revealing that this government spent \$4.3 billion less than planned in the first half of the 2021-22 fiscal year. That includes underspending, Speaker, in public health by \$600 million; underspending in education by almost three quarters of a billion dollars. That is happening while our kids in schools are trying to learn, are trying to deal with some of their mental health concerns, while teachers are at their wits' end. Teachers are also suffering from all kind of anxiety and mental health concerns because of the underfunding, because of the lack of empathy that this government is showing for our kids and our education workers.

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The FAO report shows that this government, as we all know, chose not to provide paid sick days. They choose not to give our kids smaller, safer classrooms with better air quality. They choose not to spend to speed up surgeries or procedures that people are waiting for. Thousands of people in this province are waiting for these life-saving surgeries. There's nothing there to hire for more workers in long-term care. Really, again, this money is budgeted. It's being underspent. So, where is that money going? I'm going to tell you: \$11 billion for a highway might be the first clue.

Absolutely, there's an affordability crisis in the province of Ontario. The cost of everything is going up. This budget does nothing to address those financial struggles. Inflation is at an 18-year high—an 18-year high. Inflation is running and causing the cost of everything to go up. This is a government that promised that they were going to reduce our hydro bills by 12%. But instead, what has happened? Those hydro bills are going up. The government said that they were going to get rid of the Liberal failed hydro plan. They said they were going to fix the hydro mess, but they've only made it messier, because they also contribute almost \$6 billion every year to prop up the failed Liberal hydro plan. It's their plan now. They just took the Liberal hydro plan and continue to prop it up with billions of dollars while our hydro bills continue to go up.

It's quite clear also that this government now wants to be the low-wage province of Canada, because that's what they're pursuing: low-wage policies. It's just so clear. It's so evident. It's evident in the budget and it's evident in everything that they have done. We know that the first thing that they did when they came to government was to cut a planned minimum wage increase. That was three and a half years ago—three and a half years of lost wages for minimum wage workers in the province. That's a lot of money. It's not \$11 billion, by the way, but it's \$5,300—minimum—in lost wages. Those people working at minimum wage could have used that money. They could have used that money over the last three and a half years to provide for their kids, to do something special for the kids: to order pizza, to take their kids out. But instead, this government held that money back from minimum wage worker families and their children.

We also know that this government slashed a planned increase to social assistance rates. The people in this province living on social assistance are living in the deepest poverty, Mr. Speaker. It's unbelievable what these people are trying to get by on. These are the most vulnerable people in our community and their families. There are also children who are living in these families, where they are living on social assistance rates that have been frozen in time.

We know that the last Conservative government, under Mike Harris, completely slashed social assistance rates. The Liberals were in power for 15 years. They did nothing, really, to try to make up for those losses, and now we have a government that just continues on to punish the most vulnerable people in our province. So yes, absolutely, we have a low-wage policy from this government: low wages, cheap labour. That's the policy of this government.

The Ontario Living Wage Network has come up with a bare minimum wage that's a livable wage all across different communities in our province. In Hamilton, they've estimated that \$17.20 is what people need to earn to have a basic minimum of life. And this government is now proposing a wage increase to \$15 three and a half years later than people needed it. It doesn't come close to helping people have a good life in Ontario.

Never mind what you've done to public health workers, nurses. How in any world can you justify capping wages of front-line workers, of nurses, during a health care crisis? You are capping, and you continue to cap, with Bill 124 the wages of nurses in the province. It's hard to imagine that the government can stand up and say that they're heroes. We say yes, say they're heroes, but pay them. That would be very helpful.

This gap between the rich and the rest of us is continuing to grow with this government's policies and with this government's failure to invest in the things that people in the province need. I mean, they're making things so much worse for ordinary Ontarians in this province. If you look at some of the areas that people rely on, the most important areas—as I said, education. This government is cutting the budget for our kids in schools. My kids are grown, but I have grandkids, and there's a lot of struggle

there. There's a lot of anxiety, a lot of tears. They're trying so hard. They're doing their part. Teachers are doing their part, parents are doing their part, but what is this government doing? Cutting the funding—unbelievable.

When it comes to our kids and when it comes to people trying to make a living, women particularly, this government can't make a deal. Why is it that this government can't make a deal when it comes to child care? It's missing from this budget entirely. If you had told me that Jason Kenney was going to get a deal long before this government was even at the table, I wouldn't have believed you. But \$10-a-day child care for this province is not even in the plans. The government hasn't even sent, apparently, their plan to the federal ministry.

People need this now. They've been waiting for it. Our kids deserve an opportunity to be in high-quality, affordable child care, not only so people can get back to work, women can get back to work, so families can try and earn a living in this province, but our kids deserve an opportunity for early learning. We all know that early learning is so vital to kids' outcomes later on in life, but this government just sits on their hands and cuts budgets when, in fact, they should be investing in our kids. I mean, really, it's embarrassing that we are a low-wage province and we are the last province—if we're not the last province, we're certainly pulling up the rear when it comes to getting a child care deal.

I would just like to take some time to actually look at the numbers in this budget, because I'd like to have a little shout-out to my predecessor in this role, a former MPP, Ted McMeekin. He always said, and he taught me to say, that a budget is a theological document. If you show me your budget, I'll show you where your values are, and nowhere is that clearer than in this budget. So—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): You won't be using that as a prop very much longer.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I'm going to read from it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): You can read from it, but don't be flashing it around while you speak about it.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I wouldn't flash anything around, Mr. Speaker.

In the government's own document, under their watch, under three finance ministers—because we've had three finance ministers in three and a half years—this government's deficit has ballooned to over \$400 billion. That's a huge figure, and it's being watched carefully by Bay Street. That's a concern. Now it can be said that this ballooning deficit is \$27,000 that's owed by every person in the province of Ontario. How is this debt going up in this budget while they're cutting at the same time?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): I apologize for interrupting. Earlier today I should have said to you, "You're using that as a prop," and I didn't. You're using it again. If you're reading from it, that's perfectly fine; if you're speaking about it while you're holding it up, that is not perfectly fine. Thank you.

Back to the member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: How has this deficit ballooned to \$400 billion at the same time as they're cutting vital services? Where does that match up? How do you square that? This is a government that's spending \$11 billion on uncosted highways in this province; I mean, \$11 billion. It's unbelievable that that kind of money is being talked about when we have the kind of need that we have in the province of Ontario.

So, yeah, this government is spending big, but just not on you. They're spending it on developers, they're spending it on connected land speculators, they're spending it on highways—not on health care, not in our schools, not on seniors; they're spending it on highways.

I said earlier that this budget could have had an alternative title. I think another alternative title could have been "Highways R Us," because this government's betting big on highways. They think that that's what's going to deliver, not for the people of Ontario, but deliver for their connected interests, and this \$11 billion is being bank-rolled by the taxpayers of the province of Ontario. It's easy for this government to write a big cheque, because it's not their money; it's taxpayers' dollars that they're putting forward to spend \$11 billion on highways. It's easy to write a blank cheque with taxpayer dollars to build a highway that nobody wants. The only people who want it are the rich landowners, the land speculators, along the route of these unnecessary highways.

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Our Minister of the Environment went to COP26 in Glasgow. We didn't really hear a peep from him. I don't know what he could report on. But on this side of the ocean, while people are trying to address climate change, this government is building highways. The very fact that they are wanting to build the Bradford Bypass, a six-lane highway, through the Holland Marsh with taxpayer dollars—and the best part of all of this, Speaker, is that they've exempted themselves from any environmental assessment on this highway. This is a highway that cuts through farmland. It cuts through greenbelt. It cuts through waterways. This is a highway that will create all kinds of financial and economic disaster.

I'm going to read to you, Speaker, from an article entitled, "Will Doug Ford's Highway Gift to Developers Cost Him a Majority Government?" In part, this talks about the finances of this province. The article says, in part:

"In any good sleight of hand, the magic lies in what you don't see.

"Misdirection.

"It's the most popular trick in the magician's playbook—'look over there', while I slip a card up my sleeve.

"Government policy decisions that involve billions of taxpayer dollars and potentially devastating environmental consequences are not supposed to involve misdirection.

"But it is becoming very much the norm with the PC government and two pet projects: the Bradford Bypass and Highway 413, or the GTA West Highway."

That speaks to the finances, that this government is very comfortable with cutting funding when it comes to

services we need but has no remorse spending taxpayer dollars to build a highway in hopes that we won't notice, deflecting with their belles paroles, as he said, and hoping that nobody will notice. But people are noticing.

Our critic for finance wrote to the Auditor General, because it's unbelievable that this government would propose to spend \$11 billion but refuses to release the cost estimates. So our critic, the MPP for Waterloo, wrote a letter to the Auditor General requesting that they release total cost estimates or even budgets.

I would just like to read in part from this. This letter asked the Auditor General to look at specifically the "lack of fulsome planning and accounting, including the irregularities recently uncovered in the Bradford Bypass planning process, compounded by concerns I have about the nature of lobbying behind the scenes, which appears to be driving these proposed highways, including how the bypass was rerouted around a golf course."

We've heard that there was a meeting that happened at a golf course between the Minister of Transportation and the assistant minister of transportation at his father's golf course. That happened and then, two weeks later, the route miraculously changed so it didn't run through the golf course; it went through people's farms and homes instead. So, my question is, why does this government continue to do things behind closed doors when it comes to something as important as spending \$11 billion and when it comes to something as important as impacting our environment and our farmland?

The government continues to operate in this way. In fact, exempting themselves from an environmental assessment for the Bradford Bypass is just ludicrous. In the year 2021, when we see the flooding in BC, we know that the climate crisis is here. This government has used their majority power to exempt themselves from an environmental assessment for the Bradford Bypass.

I also took the opportunity to write to the federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change, and I requested this minister "designate the Bradford Bypass ... for a federal environmental assessment," because the "government has exempted the Bradford Bypass altogether from the Environmental Assessment Act," including the "conditions that were attached to the 2002 approval...." You know, Mr. Speaker, this government is now no longer required to file a public consultation process, which is mandated under the act, and so now they're free to ignore impacts on agriculture, fish and fish habitat, and property.

I just have to say, we need a government that works to protect workers, we need a government that stands up for local businesses; we need a government that wants to invest in health care and our kids, instead of cuts that we see in this budget. We deserve a much better government, one that works for the people and not just for their buddies.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): First question.

Mr. Norman Miller: Thank you to the member from Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas for those comments. I do take issue with some of the comments you've made.

Particularly, you started out talking about how education spending was being cut, how health care spending is being cut, and I take those comments to be factually incorrect.

I know in my riding, which I've represented now for 20 years, finally Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare, medium-sized hospitals, is predicting five years of balanced budgets. That's the first time in 20 years. Every year prior to that they've had to come looking for money. In education, there's \$1.6 billion in increased spending; just about every school in the province has had improvements in ventilation. My question is, why does the member say that spending in health care and education has decreased when that's factually not correct?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Well, let's clarify that. I turn back to the member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: To the member: You don't have to take my word for it. You don't listen to anything that the opposition proposes, you shoot down any amendments that we put forward to make your questionable legislation better, so I don't expect you to listen to anything that we have to say. I don't expect you to listen to the stories that I tell about people living on the streets, the housing problem, the homelessness problem that we have in the province. But how about you take the word of the FAO? Because the FAO has said quite clearly that you are cutting, that you've underspent in health care and you've also underspent in public health.

You know what? You can say what you want, but the people of Ontario know what's happening in their communities. These are difficult times for the people of Ontario. Spending \$11 billion on a highway is not what people expect.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The next question.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Thank you to the member for her comments on the throne speech. Education has been thrown around, and of course we all have kids that we know—our grandchildren, our children—who have gone to school, and there's a big concern. So I wanted to ask the member if she could comment on what it would have meant to education workers and kids in schools if we had actually taken some of the suggestions that the NDP put forward, like smaller class sizes and hiring more teachers and education workers. How would that have impacted the quality of education during such a horrific time, during COVID?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you for the question. I think that, to start with, it would have been a signal that this government cares about the kids in the province of Ontario, cares about what they've been going through. We talked about the young people having absolutely no hope. They have fear for their future. They struggle with anxiety. They struggle with mental health concerns. One out of five kids in my riding of Hamilton are not going to graduate high school on time. Rather than cutting the education budget by half a billion dollars, this government could have at least shown that they care—that they care about kids, that they care about teachers, that they understand

that they're struggling, that they are doing their part. Teachers and parents and kids are doing their part, but instead, rather than supporting them and showing that concern, they spend \$11 billion on highways.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The next question.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I appreciate the member opposite providing her commentary to the Legislature this evening, but I have to build off of my colleague from Parry Sound–Muskoka's comments, because if you look at the budget, if you look at the fall economic statement, we have increased spending substantially in health, in education, in infrastructure and in social services. So I'm wondering if the member opposite—because I know it's a line that the NDP likes to use. They like to say, "cuts, cuts, cuts," but when push comes to shove, they can't point, line and page number, to where those cuts are or how they claim those are cuts when actually they're increases year over year. So could the member opposite please point out to me exactly where this "cut," which I wouldn't acknowledge to be one at this point, in fact is? Because to me, it seems like it's speculation.

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Ms. Sandy Shaw: Speculation? Speaker, I don't want to use a prop, but this budget shows a year-over-year decrease by half a billion dollars in the education budget. It's in your own figures. So you can stick to the narrative that this government cares about kids, cares about education, cares about seniors in long-term care, but your budget shows otherwise. You have cut education in the province by half a billion dollars. People deserve so much better. So rather than a "gotcha" question, you should do better for the people in your riding and actually step up and advocate for smaller class sizes, for safer classrooms, for teachers, in fact, who are struggling under the kind of impositions that you've put on their budget. Thanks for the question, but no thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The next question.

Mr. Guy Bourguin: Thank you to my colleague for her presentation. My question is: You've talked about how important a third wave of funding would be for small and medium businesses, the same as in my riding. In my speech, I asked the same question: how it's important, that it would have saved, and would save, a lot of the businesses. How do you explain that this government says no to a third wave but says yes to \$1 billion to a 407?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you very much for the question. I can't explain it. I can't explain why this government would give a \$1-billion gift to the 407, a multinational-owned company that year over year has incredible profits, when small and medium-sized main street businesses in my riding, like in Dundas—some of the historic downtown ridings BIAs, like the Dundas BIA, the Westdale BIA, the Ancaster BIA, have members that not only are not going to get a third round; they haven't even had answers from the government for the first round. Some of them are still waiting for answers. They were denied support. They still struggled on. They came up with

all kinds of creative and innovative ways to keep the doors open, no thanks to this government. So I agree: We need a third round to support those small businesses that did so much during COVID and have been so remarkable in trying to serve us and keep our communities, our main streets, vibrant and thriving.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Questions?

Mr. Stephen Crawford: Thank you to the member opposite. My question is touching on child care, which you touched a little bit upon. Child care, I think, is an issue that we all know has gone up exceptionally in terms of cost in Ontario over the last 10, 15 years, and our government has made some progress in that direction. The federal government has stepped in and offered other provinces, including Ontario, to potentially develop a plan with the federal government. Now, we are in negotiation with the federal government. I would like to ask the member opposite, if they were in government right now, would they just have gone in there and signed that deal right away, or would they actually negotiate for the best interests of the people of Ontario to get the best possible deal?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you for the question. I'm going to say that if we were in government, people would not be languishing on autism wait-lists. There wouldn't be a ballooning wait for child care spaces in this province. So, no, that would not happen under an NDP government. And the other thing that we would make sure is that we just didn't open this up to for-profit big-box daycare corporations, which is who are lining up to get access to this. So you say you're in negotiations with the federal government. Where's the evidence of that? The federal minister says that they haven't received a plan from this government. So, the clock is ticking. While this government dithers and plays politics, families, children, women are waiting for child care. They need it now.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Time for one quick question.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I want to ask the member a very simple question: Were you surprised that there wasn't any mention of the environment or the priorities of this government in this throne speech?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you for the question. I wish I could say I was surprised, but it's just par for the course with this government. This government has an atrocious record when it comes to the environment. All they've done is assault the environment from the very minute they took office.

I did a press conference the other day on the Auditor General's scathing reports on this government's performance. I was asked by a member of the media, "Does this province even have a Minister of the Environment?" That's a remarkable question that I was asked. I would have to say no, given their performance, we do not have a minister that takes care of our environment in this—

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

Hon. Parm Gill: It is always an honour and a pleasure to rise in this House and speak to issues, obviously, that

are important to my community of Milton, and I'm proud to do that once again, Mr. Speaker.

As 2021 comes to an end, we reflect on the hard-won progress of this government and the people of Ontario to protect what mattered the most. But every step of the way, our government has been there, standing shoulder to shoulder with the people of Ontario.

We strengthened our sectors, transforming services for health care and long-term care. Our front-line heroes administered almost 23 million doses to date: about 90% with a first dose and about 88% now fully vaccinated. Our government introduced booster shots, of course, for seniors and vaccine rollout for children aged five to 11, expanding coverage against this ongoing threat, Mr. Speaker. We introduced vaccine mandates for government and essential workers, and vaccine certificates to return to the venues and activities that we all miss dearly.

Families reunited after time spent apart. Teachers and students returned to schools. Local businesses welcomed customers, and more people physically returned to their workplaces. In short, we saw a safe and cautious reopening of our province, thanks to the effective public health measures and strong leadership of our Premier and the government.

We saw Ontario's spirit this past year like no other time. That Ontario spirit, that collective strength, determination and compassion, will help us overcome any challenges before us.

Right now, the world is fighting a new variant of concern. Our government is doing everything we can to stop the spread, from calling on the federal government to protect our borders to accelerating the rollout of booster doses. We will remain vigilant in our pandemic response. And perhaps just as important, I know Ontarians will continue to take care of each other. That's the only way we can move forward, Mr. Speaker.

But I want to make something clear: We cannot move forward unless we do so together. As we rebuild our province, we must ensure everyone can fully participate in our economic recovery.

In my first months as minister, I met with communities across Ontario, learning first-hand how COVID-19 affected some of us more than others. We also saw a spike in racism and hate during the pandemic, especially towards the East Asian community. More than 600 incidents of anti-East Asian racism were reported in Canada since the emergence of COVID-19, and more than a quarter of those incidents, unfortunately, took place right here in Toronto. That is why we're investing in anti-racism and anti-hate initiatives in a big way. Our government will continue to support our communities, because our people and our Ontario spirit are our greatest resources. That means building on the province's anti-racism plan to create lasting change and advancing our collective anti-racism and anti-hate efforts across our great province. Together, we will create a stronger, more equitable and more inclusive province.

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In the 2021 fall economic statement, our government outlined our plan to fight the pandemic and promote

economic recovery. That includes strong measures for protecting Ontario's progress, building Ontario and working for workers. By placing social and economic inclusion at the heart of these efforts, we will unlock potential for our province.

Even last night, I had an opportunity to meet with some of our community's leaders within the Muslim community in Milton to discuss how we can work together to achieve our common goals. They were, of course, thankful that our government is finally listening to them and they're feeling heard. They know that under our government we've made progress in fighting this pandemic and made progress to build an inclusive Ontario for us all.

Speaker, let me talk a bit about what we mean when we say "protecting Ontario's progress." We are building health care, including long-term-care systems, that deliver the quality care that our loved ones deserve. I know it has been mentioned in this House many, many times: The previous Liberal government, unfortunately, was only able to build 611 long-term-care beds in over a decade. That's 611 beds. That is embarrassing.

Now let me share our record: Just in my riding of Milton we have announced 608 new long-term-care beds since 2018 alone. With the Liberal government you got 611 long-term-care beds in over a decade, and that's partially when the NDP was backing the Liberals and they held the balance of power. But our government, as I mentioned, has announced 608 long-term-care beds in our community, just one riding, the riding of Milton, which I have the honour of representing. This is what we mean when we say "progress."

The fall economic statement also outlined our path to building Ontario's future by putting shovels in the ground for critical infrastructure, attracting increased investments and restoring leadership. We are creating the conditions for long-term growth. We are building tomorrow's future today, Mr. Speaker.

Our future will be brighter if everyone can participate in our economic recovery, which brings us to a third pillar in our plan: working for workers. Our government is raising the minimum wage, investing in skills training opportunities and attracting investments—all to create good, well-paying jobs in every region of our province. We are also building an inclusive labour market where everyone has equitable access to jobs and opportunities.

Our plan includes nearly \$10 million over two years for new and enhanced initiatives to tackle racism and hate in communities and workplaces across our province. This includes doubling the funding to the Anti-Racism and Anti-Hate Grant program, which supports community-led solutions to fight racism and hate. It also includes programs to help employers eliminate barriers and increase representation in the workforce.

We're ensuring that racial equity is embedded into our COVID-19 recovery and plans for long-term economic growth. That is why our government is investing \$1.5 million for the creation of a new anti-racism business resource hub, to help ensure economic inclusion and career advancement for racialized communities, and also

help employers. By creating safe and inclusive workplaces, all Ontarians can be part of the province's economic engine.

We are also extending the Black Youth Action Plan for an additional two years, and creating a new economic empowerment stream that will strengthen Black communities and businesses and support Black youth in achieving their economic goals.

By removing barriers to economic opportunity, advancing racial equity and supporting local communities, we are building a stronger, more inclusive Ontario for everyone. Racialized communities across Ontario have an ally in this government, and a strong voice in our Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism.

Our government is also focusing on economic empowerment, a powerful tool for a positive change. One of our new anti-racism initiatives is the Racialized and Indigenous Support for Entrepreneurs Grant, also known as the RAISE grant, which will provide \$5 million in funding to innovative but under-represented business owners.

Speaker, as a former small business owner myself, I know the struggles that entrepreneurs encounter when starting their business. I have met with many small business owners who see this province as a place of opportunity. Many new immigrants are also looking for business opportunities, while smaller communities are looking for investment.

We will continue to listen to our communities, whether it's input from the public on the anti-racism plan or advice from Ontario's Task Force on Women and the Economy, the Premier's Council on Equality of Opportunity, or the Ontario Advocate for Community Opportunities. It's not only the right thing to do, Mr. Speaker, it's good for business and it is also good for the economy.

Lastly, we will celebrate our local heroes, from those receiving special awards like the Order of Ontario to individuals who stepped up during the pandemic. To harness their good will, we are investing \$1.6 million over three years to create an emergency volunteer program to help our province respond to emergencies and assist in times of need.

Mr. Speaker, our government will lead the way forward by protecting our progress, building our future, and working for workers, but we will not do it alone. We will empower communities across our province and celebrate the Ontario spirit, because their collective strength, determination and compassion is worth protecting. They are the key to a more prosperous, equitable and inclusive province.

Mr. Speaker, unlike the previous Liberal government, that was really good at making announcements leading up to an election, our government believes in delivering for the people of Ontario. Especially when it comes to my riding of Milton, of course, I can speak to that in great detail.

There was a need for our education village, Mr. Speaker. Our town of Milton had been pushing for one for over a decade with the previous Liberal government, but

the only thing we saw in the community was an announcement two months before the last provincial election. The community was frustrated, town officials were frustrated, and as soon as we got elected, we hit the ground running. We got to work and we've delivered on that.

Not only Laurier university is coming to Milton, Conestoga is coming to Milton, part of the Whole Education village. We have also have a long-term-care facility, Schlegel Villages, that's coming to Milton. We've also carved out a parcel of land to build a hospice for our community, which is also much needed.

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I also want to take this opportunity to thank the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for his contribution and for his help in delivering that with a ministerial zoning order, at the request of our municipality, of course. We know it is important for some of these MZOs to be issued, of course, at the request of the municipalities, and get the projects off and running and hit the ground running. With the help of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, we're hoping to get the shovels in the ground come spring.

As most people know, Milton is probably one of the fastest-growing communities in Ontario, if not the country. With that comes growth. We saw under the previous Liberal government, when they were shutting schools down, they shut schools down in our region of Halton. But, since 2018, I'm proud to share that we have been building school after school after school. I've personally announced six new schools since getting elected, two expansions, and there are more in the hopper that are coming down the pipe that I know my residents would be pleased to hear from the Minister of Education and us—making an announcement on a couple of more schools we're working on. All of these are much-needed investments in the community, especially a community like Milton, and we understand, and our government understands, and that's why we are delivering.

I just wanted to quickly touch on the new Highway 413 as well. Our government recently announced that. That's also an announcement that's very well received in our community of Milton, because we understand what the commute is like early in the morning every day. I myself obviously travel from Milton to Queen's Park and then back. On average, on a good day, it's about an hour and a half drive. During the initial parts of the pandemic, during lockdown when I had to drive down to Queen's Park, it would take me about 45 to 50 minutes. So you can imagine what it is like; especially now that we're heading into the winter months, that only adds to the commute—individuals, my constituents, sitting in the traffic gridlock on the 401. This new 413 is welcomed news by the community. We know that this is going to help eliminate the gridlock and it's also going to help people spend time with their families instead of sitting on the highway like a parking lot.

Mr. Speaker, I know I can go on and on, but I want to thank you and this Legislature and my constituents once again for allowing me the opportunity to speak to these important issues that matter to my community of Milton.

With that, I'd like to say thank you, and I'm happy to take any questions.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I now invite questions to the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism.

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: Thank you to the member from Milton for his statement. I like two things that you said. You said you'd like to include everyone in Ontario, and that people should have equitable access to jobs. But, in order for that to happen, people need a place to live—an affordable place to live—they need dental care, they need their medication, they need transportation, they need child care and they need affordable access to training.

Will the member answer this: Don't you believe that a throne speech that offers including everyone and equitable access to jobs should have had some of those components?

Hon. Parm Gill: I want to thank the member opposite for that important question. Obviously I think we can all agree that actions speak much louder than words. Our government has been delivering since taking office in June 2018, making record investments in areas that are much, much needed.

When it comes to creating the opportunities for all Ontarians to succeed, we all remember how life was under the previous Liberal government. Life was very, very unaffordable, and it continued to become more and more unaffordable.

You talk about energy rates, you talk about, obviously, hydro rates. The member talks about affordable housing. I want to thank the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and other members of our government who have been working day in and day out to create the environment to build more houses. It is common sense. Of course we need the supply; we need more houses. There are more people who are immigrating to this great country, and also our young ones, as they graduate. They're coming out of the school system. They need a place of their own. We need to do everything we can to support them, and we will continue to do that.

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

Hon. Jill Dunlop: Thank you to the member for your comments tonight. I was very interested in the education village. I think it is a great collaboration between Laurier, Conestoga and Schlegel Villages. I will give a shout-out to my aunt and uncle, Doug and Nell Reed, who live at Schlegel Villages in Guelph and are amazed by the exceptional care they provide there.

You had mentioned that the Liberals tossed this project aside for many years and it was our government who stepped up and saw its importance for the Milton area. Can you tell us how important this project is to recruiting, training and retaining nurses, registered practical nurses and PSWs in your area?

Hon. Parm Gill: I want to thank my colleague, the minister, for her question. This is a big, big deal, the education village in our town of Milton. As I mentioned in my speech, the town of Milton has been working on this project for well over a decade, Mr. Speaker. The community is now excited that, finally, this is happening.

Unlike the previous Liberal government that not only failed to deliver on that—but also just leading up to the last election, two months before, they made an announcement that they were going to do this, that they were going to work on this. Fifteen years before that had passed and they didn't get around to it, but finally they needed one more mandate to make that happen. Our government is delivering that on the first mandate. As I mentioned, not just the university, not just Laurier—but with Laurier, Conestoga College, which also does an amazing job in terms of training PSWs and other skills training in jobs that they offer. It will be great to have in our community along with Schlegel Villages and the long-term-care facility that is going to come, as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Member for Ottawa Centre.

Mr. Joel Harden: Thank you to the member from Milton for those comments. I wanted to pick up on the thread that my friend from Thunder Bay mentioned about housing affordability, Minister, because this is huge. You just mentioned it, but one of the things that the government has done is take rent controls off of any new buildings built after 2018. What I've seen in our city of Ottawa, what I've seen in the city of Toronto is that it led to a massive condo boom, but those are not affordable homes.

My question to the minister, a serious question: What is this government's plan to bring housing affordability back in check? We introduced a private member's bill that the government voted against today, on rental control for the rental market. What's your plan for the ownership market? What's your plan for the rental market? Because families, people, need an affordable place to live. I don't see the plan for that here.

Hon. Parm Gill: I thank my colleague opposite for that important question. As I mentioned, affordable housing is absolutely necessary. We understand the need out there. I really want to thank, again, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for the work that he has been doing on this file, including in my riding of Milton. I know he is out there every week, making announcements, breaking ground. He came out to my riding about a year and a half ago to break ground and make an announcement in my riding for an affordable housing unit project. Not just that, but I can tell you that, if you ever follow his social media, if you ever talk to him and you talk to his staff, that's the only thing he cares about. That's the only thing he worries about, issuing ministerial zoning orders, in some cases, to get projects off the ground, to get them built, get people moved into those units, because we understand it is absolutely needed. We will not shy away. We will continue to deliver for the people of Ontario.

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The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Questions?

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you to the minister for those wonderful comments. And also thank you for your engagement and outreach with the various cultural groups to understand the challenges they are facing during this difficult time, especially when it comes to the hate and racism, especially in York region—80%—the most

ethnically diverse city in all of Canada, which is Markham and Markham–Thornhill.

Could you elaborate—I know of your wonderful job about anti-racism and the Anti-Racism Directorate. Could you elaborate more about what else you are doing to alleviate the hate and racism in Ontario?

Hon. Parm Gill: I want to thank my colleague for that very, very important question. As I mentioned in my remarks, of course this is a serious, serious concern. We've seen a rise of racism and hate and the incidents, especially targeting the East Asian community during COVID-19. A significant number of those incidents happen to be right here in Toronto.

Not just that, but when it comes to anti-Semitism or when it comes to Islamophobia, we understand there is a lot of work that needs to be done. We're not afraid of that work. We, as a government, are making the necessary investments that are needed. We are committing to an additional over \$8 million just in the fall economic statement alone, Mr. Speaker.

I had announced \$1.6 million worth of an Anti-Racism and Anti-Hate Grant a couple of months ago. Then in the fall economic statement, I was able to talk to my colleagues, the Minister of Finance, the Premier and so forth, and said, "We need to double this; we need to figure this out." There is more money that's needed in that program alone, and we doubled it to \$3.2 million. That's all money that's going to community organizations to work with us to help find solutions, to help address this issue, Mr. Speaker.

That's just one of the programs. I can go on and on, Mr. Speaker. We recognize there is more work that needs to be done in this area and we will continue to do that.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Question?

Mr. Michael Parsa: I want to thank my colleague for his presentation. You can just feel care and compassion in his voice whenever he speaks in this House, Mr. Speaker.

A really important topic that I want to ask him about is our seniors, Mr. Speaker. He eloquently pointed out the fact that the previous government failed our seniors when it came to creating long-term-care beds. He alluded to the fact that, in his riding alone, he has at least the equivalent amount than the previous government was able to create in seven years.

So, can you please share with this House what our government is doing in comparison to the previous government for supports for our seniors, whether it's support for dental care or whether it's the LIFT credit, or any support that's being provided to our seniors, who are so important to every single one of us?

Hon. Parm Gill: I want to thank my colleague for that important question. As I pointed out, we saw the neglect under the previous Liberal government when it comes to long-term care, when it comes to health care, when it comes to education—and I can go on and on, Mr. Speaker.

It was really, really disturbing—and embarrassing, actually—to see that they were able to build just over 600 long-term-care beds in almost a decade, and part of that was when the NDP was supporting them. We created 608 beds just in Milton alone in three years.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek.

Mr. Paul Miller: As you know, Speaker, when we get near the end of debate time, things become a little repetitive. Of course, we do our job as the official opposition.

To start off, I'll try to get a couple of new aspects in here. The government's throne speech is, to quote my leader, "thin gruel."

But also, Mr. Speaker, sadly, it's a missed opportunity. It's a missed opportunity to lay out a real plan to help get us out of this pandemic and address the serious issues facing our province.

It's a missed opportunity, Speaker, to lay out a plan to hire more nurses and PSWs, nurses that would help to alleviate the worsening and, quite frankly, the frightening backlogs in our hospital surgical departments; more PSWs to assist in our long-term-care homes to protect our most vulnerable family members to ensure we never again experience the heartbreaking, unnecessary suffering and deaths in these homes. Instead, Mr. Speaker, the government plans to resume their reckless cuts to long-term care and to ensure their buddies continue to profit in for-profit long-term-care homes.

It's a missed opportunity to lay out a plan for safe schools for our kids and education workers. After over a year of stops and starts to in-person learning and the upheaval that it caused to our students and their families, such as mental health issues, poor grades and forcing parents, in particular, women, out of the workplace—nothing. In fact, the word "education" did not even warrant a mention in the government's throne speech. It's a little bit unbelievable.

Mr. Speaker, this government had a lengthy summer break, with enough time to prepare a plan for a safe return to school, such as proper HVAC systems as just one example. Instead, we see packed classrooms and rising COVID cases in our schools, with some classes again back to online learning and parents again being forced to leave their employment.

It's a missed opportunity to deal with the affordable housing crisis in Ontario and a homelessness and opioid emergency that is becoming a public health emergency. In fact, the lack of any mention or plan for affordable housing in the throne speech just proves again that this government has completely abandoned their promised target of ending homelessness by 2025. Many strong solutions have been offered to this government to assist our most vulnerable, the homeless population: supportive housing, supervised consumption sites, and immediate funding to contain any COVID outbreaks in the homeless population. Instead, again, we see nothing in the throne speech to address these crisis situations that have become exacerbated by the pandemic.

It's a missed opportunity to actually help small local businesses and those who work in the small business sector to get back on their feet properly. In Hamilton, a recent Vital Signs report from the Hamilton Community Foundation's survey of approximately 1,500 local businesses reported pandemic job losses of 14.5%, with

accommodation/food services and arts/recreation both responding with reported job losses of over 50%.

We know, Mr. Speaker, that not all these jobs have returned. A 2015 Hamilton Social Planning and Research Council report showed that 31% of the jobs in Hamilton were precarious, higher than the GTHA average. These are the gig workers, the artists, the musicians, the retail workers—those who were hardest hit by the pandemic job losses. Numbers like these make it all the more urgent to incorporate the needs of people precariously employed into Hamilton's and, I would argue, all of Ontario's recovery strategies. Instead of broadly focused and traditional public works projects, like environmentally destructive mega-highways that nobody, except some developers, want and which would largely help workers least impacted by the pandemic, we could include targeted measures to remove barriers to the labour market for those affected by the pandemic—for example, child care supports, such as a deal with the federal government for safe, affordable child care.

True targeted skills training is needed for the jobs that are going unfilled, and a third round of targeted small business grants and assistance for those who are self-employed must be part of any recovery plan.

Mr. Speaker, we can't ignore the fact that precariously employed workers lost thousands of dollars due to the government's mean-spirited cut to planned minimum wage increases. They now have to play catch up due to the pandemic and the unnecessary delay in bringing the increase. A just recovery that assists all must include a decent living wage.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I can say from past experience that I remember a campaign in Hamilton years ago, Fight for \$15 and Fairness, that the NDP spearheaded. That fell on deaf ears at the time, and the Liberals decided that they were going to, just before an election, finally raise it up to \$15 an hour. I think that was probably because they felt they might be in trouble. And then, as soon as the Conservatives won, with all due respect, they cut it back to \$14 and change.

Now, three years later, the Conservative government thinks they've done something magnificent to bring it to \$15. Well, that's right back where we were four years ago, and if they had done it four years ago, we might have been at \$17 or \$18, closer to the \$20 livable wage. But we did not get there. So I can safely say "Johnny-come-lately." I can't say, "Better late than never"; it's not the case. All it is is an instant replay for me from five years ago, which is pretty bad.

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True targeted skills training is needed for the jobs that are going unfilled, and a third round of targeted small business grants and assistance for those who are self-employed must be part of the recovery plan.

Speaker, as my colleague from Waterloo, Catherine Fife, pointed out recently, not only are this government's failed policies still harming small business and preventing them from their ability to recover from the pandemic, but this government's disastrous Ontario Business Registry is

actually stopping those who want to register their new business in Ontario. It's too much red tape—again, a missed opportunity in the government's throne speech to lay out a plan for recovery for small business owners and their employees, or self-employed individuals and those workers hardest hit by the pandemic.

Another missed opportunity is the plan for permanent paid sick days. Front-line workers should not have to choose between dragging themselves into work sick and putting their co-workers at risk or losing pay. When regular cold season hits this winter, when our kids get the January cold, their parents shouldn't have to miss out on a day's pay to do the right thing and stay at home with them. The government could have implemented the NDP plan to entrench paid sick days into law, with financial help for small businesses to cover employees who need to take a sick day when needed. Instead, the Premier is going to take away the hard-fought three paid sick days Ontarians temporarily won in April after applying months and months of pressure.

There's a missed opportunity to lay out a plan for raising revenue for these much-needed investments that I've just highlighted, by actually raising taxes on the wealthiest Ontarians and the most profitable corporations, which could do their share and help out in a time of need, instead of worrying about shareholders and profits—I think that's what happens. Instead, this government continues to subsidize the hydro bills of corporations that have made huge profits during the pandemic. The Weston family conglomerate, the Amazons and these types of outfits are not hurting, and they certainly don't pay their fair share.

Mr. Speaker, this government actually withheld—needed federal funding to the tune of \$5.6 billion. What is the government waiting for? Could it be that we are in an election year and these funds will magically reappear just in time for an election campaign, as they dole out to communities they feel threatened in?

With the potential for new variants and with winter upon us, it is critical that this government has an energetic and smooth vaccine rollout planned for children and adult third doses that truly makes it easy and convenient for everyone to get the shot they need. We cannot go back to the chaotic long lineups and relying on VaxHunters Twitter accounts.

Again, there is no plan in the throne speech for containing possible new variants of the COVID-19 virus. We have come through one of the most difficult periods in our province's history, and we are still fighting this hideous virus. Apparently, there's a new virus coming our way soon. Ontarians were rightfully looking for a way forward, some hope, some faith that their government has a plan to get us to the other side of the pandemic. Instead, the throne speech gives us the same old tired talking points from a tired government, that some magical worldwide economic recovery will solve all our problems and the government will be set free from this recovery for a long time—so many missed opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to touch on something that I've noticed in the last—well, even during the Liberal regime:

The committee work has certainly fallen off. The committees are where a lot of good work gets done by the opposition, by the independents. They go to committee and they make suggestions and comments to bring forward. I don't know why, but the government has shut down that system. They have gone in camera every time a committee gets into a situation where they might have to spread some of the credit to the opposition for their comments or their suggestions; they don't want it to get out. Everything is in camera.

For instance, today, I was quite shocked. I sat on council for many years in the city, and there were only three things that you had to go in camera for. They were land acquisitions, personnel problems or firings. Those are the only three that we ever went in camera for. Everything else was out there, accountable for the public to see and do and hear. That's not the case around this building anymore. Today, for example, we had some suggestions. The bills were one line. Usually a bill would have a few paragraphs and amendments and we could put in suggestions. They were not even dealt with. We don't have the votes on committee because there are always five government members and a couple of opposition members, so even if we have the vote, we won't win.

I remember, years ago, sometimes—just sometimes—the governing body would accept a small amendment or something we suggested and move in the right direction as a group, as a whole, to get things done around here that are going to benefit all of our residents, all our constituents. That's not the case anymore. It has come to a point now in this House where it's "my way or the highway." That really bothers me a lot, Speaker, that we've come to that point, because I do believe that everyone in this building is here and represents an area, and they should get the respect due to them.

But they also have to make sure that everything is dealt with, everything is heard, so that they can make an informed decision in this House. That's important for anything: new highways, you name it. The public gets to talk about it. The people who oppose it get to talk about it. It's public, and they get to hear about it, and they get to get their point out to the media. It's not happening anymore. The democracy in this building has gone out the front door, and it's unfortunate because it is so crucial for the workings of this province for the people of this province to have their day in court, to get their point across, to be able to speak to the people who make the decisions. If you've got a one-sided situation where they're not listening, that's not an informed decision; that's borderline control. And I don't think that's what the people sent us here for. That's why we have an opposition, that's why we have independents, and that's why we have the government.

We have our owl, which—we're supposed to ask questions of the government. And an eagle: They're soaring. They're leading. That's what those things mean. That's what they mean. To me, that's not happening anymore. It's, "Shut it down. Lessen the debate time. Push it through. Do everything you can—obstruct. Do everything you can do to shut down any opposition to the

curriculum or the views that you have.” That is not a good system. It’s a system that, actually, to me, is really sad.

If we don’t turn this around as MPPs and as government and opposition, if we don’t start representing the people fairly and openly and accountably, we’re going to lose a lot of respect. We already have lost some, but we’re going to lose a lot more in the coming years, because it becomes—throwing baseballs at each other is not what the public wants to see. I know it may sound corny, but the people out there want us to work together. They want to achieve things for the betterment of the province. They want to achieve things for the betterment of the people we represent. You can’t do that if you’re constantly shut down, if you’re constantly put on the back burner and ridiculed for your opinions. It may not suit the agenda of whatever the government—or even our side. It may not suit what they want us to do, but you certainly should discuss it. You should certainly debate it.

I know you want me to get back to where I was, about the throne speech, but the throne speech is one of the most important speeches of the whole session. It’s when the government lays out its plan for the next four years. It’s when the government comes forward and says, “This is what we’d like to achieve.” But if they don’t want to listen to the people that—it’s a sizable opposition over here, and not everyone in Ontario agrees with them. I think it’s only fair that they should listen and actually do something on committee, actually maybe take some of the things—I’m sure there are amendments that go to committee that they actually like, but they don’t want to do it because it’s partisan. They want their idea. I know, for one, I’ve been victimized a couple of times, with my great ideas ending up—somebody else over there brought the bill forward. I’m used to it. But it’s not about me; it’s about the people out there. Some people agreed with me or I wouldn’t have brought it forward, but they were squashed. People don’t like governments that are in complete control. The most work that ever got done here in the last 15 years, in my tenure, was in a minority government, because they have to play ball with someone on this side to stay in power.

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That’s when you get the Timbits. You don’t get the whole doughnut; you get the Timbits. But a Timbit is better than no doughnut. I think, right now, we’re in the no-doughnut stage, and we have been for a while. That’s unfortunate because the people out there are saying, “What is going on in Toronto? We don’t hear from our members anymore. It’s just what they want to do, and you be quiet and just do as you’re told.” I used to get sent to the principal’s office occasionally, and I knew I’d done something wrong, but I’m getting sent to the principal’s office and I’ve done nothing wrong.

It’s pretty scary the way things are going here. I hope the people who are listening in TV land out there are getting this truth about committee work in this building. Frankly, Speaker, the committee work in this building is a joke. It’s a joke right now. We go there, we sit there for hours at a time and it ends up that they do exactly what they want in a majority government, and we sit there,

twiddle our thumbs and hope we get to speak or maybe we get to say something that they aren’t going to use anyways.

The public needs more accountability, they need more say, and the sooner we get into a position where this House—and I’m telling all members, ours too—starts functioning in a normal, progressive, democratic way, we’re going to get a lot more done. That’s not what’s happening.

It boggles my mind—today was a perfect example. I was very upset; I just left. Even the committee wasn’t run properly. I mean, it was a mess. They didn’t even have the proper amendments out; they didn’t have the proper papers. I don’t know how these committees are even functioning. It’s not like it used to be. I remember some of the members I started with—and the young ones think they know because they’re going to heckle—

Interjection.

Mr. Paul Miller: —but they don’t know. He’s just been here a couple of years, but the members who have been here a long time know how committees used to work. They were effective to a certain level, not 100%, but a lot better than they are now.

So, the throne speech, fine. Has it got any of our stuff in there that will benefit the people of this province? No. Has it got what they want—everything? Yes. Is that the case? Yes. It’s borderline dictatorship.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Mr. Paul Miller: I personally—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Please stop the clock.

The member from Niagara West will come to order.

The member for Hamilton East-Stoney Creek has to withdraw.

Mr. Paul Miller: I withdraw, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): You can resume your remarks.

Mr. Paul Miller: I’ve got about a minute left. I’m ragging the puck now, Speaker.

The throne speech was so exciting—I’m ragging the puck now because there was a lack of content. You can only work with what you’ve got, and there wasn’t a heck of a lot in there. I probably could have read the Spectator—well, no, the Spectator’s too thin now. I probably could have probably read the Toronto Star and got more information out of it than I did in the budget.

I hope they all take a good, hard look at this situation, change the committee work and make it more effective, and I think it will be beneficial to all of us in this building. Thank you, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Questions for the member for Hamilton East-Stoney Creek?

Mr. Will Bouma: It’s always a pleasure to have a conversation with my friend from across the way. Even when we disagree on things, we keep smiling and have a conversation. I appreciate that very much, and I appreciate him here.

I was just wondering—we've committed and we're rolling out four hours of care in our long-term-care facilities to the people who are there. Obviously we have to ramp that up because we need to have the manpower and the labour force in order to do that work also. It's one of those great opportunities where it would have been really, really good to have all-party support on moving that forward. I was wondering, if he did not vote for that, why not?

Mr. Paul Miller: I thank the member from Brantford. He always has those stinger questions, but I'll tell you, as you know, in a budget, the member from Brant, a relatively new member—a budget has all the goodies in there, but it puts a couple of things in to box us into a position where we have to say no to it. That's what they do. In other words, they put things in there that they know we can't vote for and then they blame us for not voting for it, like you just did. That's what happens.

I know that game. It's an old game. It's "Three strikes, you're out."

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Questions?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Thank you to the member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek for his comments on the throne speech. He mentioned some good ideas that he's had in the past. I recall one of those ideas. It was a committee he wanted to form to review ODSP and OW rates. There have been a lot of people calling my office, more so than ever before, saying how difficult it is to survive when you're on ODSP and OW. They need the rates raised.

I just wanted to ask the member where his committee proposal is, how is that working and what would it mean if people were able to get that information and make a decision around that topic.

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd like to thank the member from London—Fanshawe. That was a very insightful question.

That bill I've had forward three or four times. I remember the last time I brought it forward was under the Liberal regime, and the Liberals all stood up, including the Premier at the time, and gave me a standing ovation on Bill 60, about creating a commission to study ODSP and OW rates throughout the province—and I had some other ideas in there. They all loved it. They sent it away to committee, and I thought, "Hey, this has got a shot." That was second reading. It went to committee and of course, it languished and languished and didn't happen.

I brought that bill forward four times. That bill could have been very effective to fight against the pandemic at this point, making people affordable housing at the time, making people have better health care, making people have better ODSP and OW payments to at least get them out of starvation level. That was then, years ago. I brought it to successive governments, the Liberals and the Conservatives, and they both shot it down.

That's what I mean about committee, why committees aren't working in this building. In the old days, they might take a couple of things they liked and move forward with them. They don't do that anymore, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Questions?

Hon. Paul Calandra: I didn't want to get up, but I felt so bad for the member, outlining all the ways that his leader has marginalized him in this House and the anti-democratic ways that he has been treated. I know he wouldn't be talking about this government, because the opposition did, of course, bring forward a motion of confidence in the government—that's the first time it has happened in Canadian political history—and that was supported unanimously.

I know the opposition House leader will recall that she also brought forward a motion in this House suggesting that I was being too bipartisan in how I was treating committees, that I was trying to be too open and too bipartisan.

I know that the member would also know that we've set a record number of private members' bills that have been passed by this House. He talks about working together; he would also recall that for four months at the outset of the pandemic, including a budget, the opposition voted unanimously for all of those pieces of legislation.

Look, I know on a number of opportunities, this House has become more democratic than it ever has been before. I would just like to say to the honourable gentleman, I know that he has been experiencing some challenges with his leadership and the anti-democratic way in which they have been treating their members. I can assure him, though—it's more of a comment than it is a question—that on this side of the House, we protect the rights of our members to act and do their democratic responsibility properly.

Mr. Paul Miller: Actually, the House leader went easy on me today. It was kind of nice. But I'm glad he's concerned about how I'm being treated. I'm not used to the House leader of the government coming and standing up for me. That's interesting. I'm not quite sure it was genuine; I think it may have been a little destructive to cause a little bit of havoc over here. I don't think it was a good way to go.

He mentioned this record number of bills, but all the bills he brought forward were their members'. We had very few. We've had maybe two or three. But they're all the members' over there, private members' bills. You either bring a private member's bill that you're not going to bring forward, or you make it a government bill and it goes forward.

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So with all due respect, his generosity is questionable, to say the least, and his caring about me—I'm not quite sure it's sincere. I appreciate the fact that he's worried about me, but I'm a big boy and I can take care of myself, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Questions?

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: It is always fun to hear the House leader speaking about how you're mistreated, but yet one MPP got up and questioned the Premier about his decision on the francophone situation, "le jeudi noir," and she's sitting on this side now.

But my question to you, my colleague: You talked about missed opportunities, how this government missed a lot of opportunities. Could you elaborate on that?

Because I think it's very important that people hear more of these missed opportunities, especially when it comes to small businesses.

Mr. Paul Miller: I think I spoke quite clearly on what I said about those missed opportunities. I haven't got enough time to go through them all. I would need about three hours; I don't think I can do it in two minutes. But I can essentially say to the member that I know there's not a heck of a lot being done in northern Ontario.

The House leader mentioned about—no, it was the member from Brant who mentioned, in long-term care, the four hours of care. Well, that's fine, but the four hours of care was mentioned, with all due respect, 10 years ago, and the four hours never happened. Why? Because they didn't have the personnel to enforce it. They didn't have the inspectors to make sure that the for-profit companies were doing it, and so it never happened. To say you're going to do four hours is great, but I hope you've got enough inspectors, I hope you can enforce it and I hope you're going to fine them heavily if they don't follow through.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Jill Dunlop: Thank you to the member for your comments today. I can't imagine that you were ever sent to the principal's office, but we had a good laugh over here.

You talked a lot about the missed opportunities, and you spoke specifically about nurses and PSWs. I have to say I was a little bit offended by that, because it's my ministry that is training all the wonderful PSWs, RPNs and nurses out there. I was recently with the Minister of Long-Term Care where we announced the new long-term-care pathway. This is for PSWs to move into RPN positions, and RPNs into RN positions, too—a \$35-million investment—as well as the funding that we've been doing for PSWs. We have a PSW challenge of 16,200 PSWs, as well as \$150 million for 8,200 PSWs funded through the accelerated training program.

I just wanted to know: How do you see this as being a missed opportunity? I think it's a great investment in health human resources across this province.

Mr. Paul Miller: I would like to thank the minister for her comments. I hate to burst your bubble, but last month there were several emergency wards that closed in London, Hamilton and other places in Ontario on the weekend. They shut the doors. They couldn't even take in the people who were having heart attacks or cancer issues because the emergencies were shut.

If everything is so hunky-dory—according to you, everything's great. My daughter is a nurse; I get it first-hand. She is in emergency; I get it first-hand. My cousin is a doctor; I get it first-hand. I am sure there are other people over here who have medical professionals in their families.

It looks good on paper, but the problem is that you're going to hire all these PSWs—but you're not going to hire them because they're not going to work for \$14 or \$15 an hour, because the jobs they do are horrendous. They should be making \$25 an hour. You are not going to get enough people applying for these jobs, just like you're

going to run out of politicians because they're getting attacked all over the place in the province, too. They're not going to work for these—the bottom line is, it looks good, it sounds good, but you have got to enforce it and you have got to make it happen.

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

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: It is always a privilege to rise. Today, I would like to speak on the speech from the throne. But before I do that, I would like to take an opportunity to respond to my friend from Mushkegowuk—James Bay to outline some of the wonderful accomplishments our government has done for the francophone community in Ontario.

Monsieur le Président, les réalisations pour les francophones, gérées par notre gouvernement : par exemple, l'utilisation du programme de subventions à la communauté francophone pour fournir 2 millions de dollars en 2021-2022 pour renforcer les produits et services aux francophones de l'Ontario, promouvoir le recrutement et la formation de personnel francophone et offrir des occasions de favoriser la compréhension de la francophonie ontarienne.

Deuxièmement, un partenariat avec le gouvernement fédéral—un accord historique—pour investir 126 millions de dollars afin de soutenir la formation de l'Université de l'Ontario français, la première université francophone gérée par et pour les francophones : c'est notre gouvernement qui l'a accompli.

Dans notre énoncé économique, les entrepreneurs et entreprises francophones qui contribuent de façon importante à la prospérité et à l'économie de l'Ontario : pour soutenir ces entreprises, l'Ontario investit 1,5 million de dollars sur trois ans dans le Réseau francophone des affaires et élargit la gamme de services de soutien aux entreprises disponibles, notamment la création d'un incubateur d'entreprises francophones. Cet investissement appuiera de nouvelles entreprises en démarrage, fera la promotion des biens et services franco-ontariens, favorisera des partenariats stratégiques avec d'autres juridictions, comme le Québec, par exemple, et favorisera la prochaine génération d'entrepreneurs francophones, y compris les femmes et les nouveaux arrivants.

Et finalement, l'Ontario reconnaît également l'importance d'une main-d'œuvre francophone et bilingue forte. C'est pourquoi la province mettrait également en œuvre une stratégie de services en français, incluant une modernisation de la Loi sur les services en français, afin d'améliorer l'accès aux services en français.

Même aujourd'hui, monsieur le Président, j'ai eu le plaisir de rencontrer M. Daniel Giroux, qui est le PDG du Collège Boréal. On a discuté, et il a dit que notre gouvernement soutient vraiment les institutions d'apprentissage post-secondaire, comme le Collège Boréal, en fournissant des investissements, par exemple, dans la formation des préposés aux services de soutien personnel bilingues, francophones. Aussi, le Collège Boréal, par exemple, va ouvrir un nouveau campus ici à Toronto pour former, par exemple, les infirmières qui vont être bilingues, car on a vraiment, vraiment besoin de cette main-d'œuvre bilingue.

Having said that on our francophone accomplishments, I will now move on to the throne speech. Mr. Speaker, in the last year and a half, Ontarians have endured one of the most difficult periods in the history of our province. The COVID-19 pandemic has come to affect nearly every aspect of our lives in some way, and Ontarians were confronted with the fact that their lives had to change dramatically to curb this pressing threat to our collective health and safety. Important life milestones were postponed, such as weddings, for example. Families began to forgo in-person gatherings and chose to connect virtually. Businesses were made to rethink their business model or, tragically, made the choice to close their doors.

It goes without saying that each and every single Ontarian has sacrificed more than they ever thought possible. But it was their determination, their grit, their tenacity in the face of unprecedented adversity which has led us to the position our province finds itself in today. It was these sacrifices from Ontarians of all backgrounds and creeds that saved countless lives and saved our public health care system from a potential collapse.

As a registered nurse who was there on the front lines from the earliest days of this pandemic, I say a huge thank you to our health care heroes and to everyday Ontarians. Because of the sacrifice of each and every single Ontarian, front-line health care workers had the ability to do their jobs, saving lives in hospitals across the province.

Now, as we are looking more optimistically at the future of this province, we see an Ontario where the threat COVID-19 poses to our communities is far less, great thanks to the work of our vaccine rollout. We are a province positioned and ready to unleash our economic potential. I say “unleash” because I know it’s our Minister of Economic Development’s favourite word, so unleash our economic potential to get more people back to work.

However, this is optimism founded upon being cautious. This government understands that COVID-19 is an ongoing threat and we are not finished with the pandemic just yet. And so every step forward must be calculated and on the advice of the best and brightest minds in public health and medicine. We have and we will continue to prioritize the health and safety of all Ontarians according to the latest science and evidence, which guide the use of the tools that we have at our disposal.

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In continuing our vaccination efforts and continuing to balance effective public health measures with the reopening of the events and services that Ontarians have missed so much, this government is leading the province forward with a cautious optimism rooted in our conservative principals. No matter how the situation evolves, this government will always be there to support Ontarians every step of the way. Our trajectory continues to face forward, and we are leading with the goals and aspirations of the future in mind.

By titling this throne speech Protecting Ontario’s Progress, we are signalling and emphasizing the work that we have done thus far, as well as framing our vision for the future. I think vision is very important when it comes

to governing, and I have to say that the previous government had very little vision when it came to, for example, our long-term-care sector. But our government is different.

Speaker, one of the many highlights within the record of this government during the pandemic has been our work in the long-term-care sector. I know we’ve spoken about the long-term-care sector a lot, but frankly, it’s my favourite topic. This pandemic made very clear the long-standing vulnerabilities underlying our province’s long-term-care homes, uncovering unimaginable horrors that were decades in the making.

Governments that came before us long neglected our long-term-care sector, resulting in a system that failed the Ontarians who needed it the most. This government rejected inaction and said yes to ensure our long-term-care sector not only leads the country in access and quality of care, but also leads the world. We are investing \$2.68 billion to build 30,000 new and modern long-term-care beds within a decade while also upgrading thousands of existing beds to ensure they are modern and up to current design standards. With this increase in infrastructure, the core part of our care system, we are ensuring a sector built for the 21st century.

We are also making incredible strides in alleviating the long-term waiting list for beds, a result of inaction by past governments to get shovels in the ground and build the beds that vulnerable Ontarians needed and deserved. Currently, there are more than 20,000 new and 15,000 upgraded beds in development, representing more than 60% of our government’s commitment. And while we know beds are at the core of increasing the capabilities of our long-term-care sector, we know that there is more work to be done in ensuring those beds can be properly staffed.

For far too long, Mr. Speaker, Ontario has lagged in delivering quality, consistent care to residents of long-term care. This government understands that investing in long-term care means investing in the health care heroes who provide this critical care each and every day. When our staffing levels are sufficient and when our care providers have the tools and resources they need to do their jobs well, residents in long-term care can reap the benefits. But when governments neglect Ontario’s care providers and stretch resources too thin, it is our residents who suffer.

Between 2009 and 2019, the average total amount of care provided to long-term-care residents increased by only 22 minutes. The previous government never thought it important to address this critical issue in the lives of vulnerable residents. But we have made an unprecedented commitment to changing that reality.

This government is investing nearly \$5 billion over four years to hire more than 25,000 long-term-care staff, including nurses, personal support workers, registered practical nurses, nurse practitioners and so on, giving our care homes the human capital they need to provide a world-class experience for residents. With this, we will accomplish our ambitious goal of four hours of direct care

per day per resident, leading Canada in this important metric.

I think I am running out of time here, so I'm going to move forward in my remarks.

Mais notre gouvernement savait aussi que cet écart dans les dépenses de santé devait être immédiatement comblé. C'est pourquoi, tout au long de cette pandémie, nous avons continué à demander au gouvernement fédéral d'augmenter le Transfert canadien en matière de santé à 35 % des dépenses provinciales en santé.

Alors que la promesse initiale de l'assurance-maladie prévoyait un financement 50-50 entre le gouvernement provincial et le gouvernement fédéral pour les services de santé essentiels, nous en sommes maintenant à un point où le Transfert canadien en matière de santé ne finance en moyenne que 22 % des dépenses provinciales—juste 22 % des dépenses provinciales totales en soins de santé. Cet écart, qui s'élève continuellement à des milliards de dollars, représente la perte de la capacité de fournir de meilleurs soins aux Ontariens et Ontariennes qui en ont besoin.

Ce gouvernement sera toujours là pour travailler avec nos homologues fédéraux pour le soutien dont les Ontariens et Ontariennes ont besoin et pour s'assurer que notre système de santé demeure l'un des meilleurs au monde.

The integral part of protecting Ontario's progress is in positioning Ontario forward, and we on this side of the House will continue doing just that.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Questions?

M. Guy Bourgouin: Je remercie la députée de Mississauga–Malton d'avoir mentionné mon nom au début de son discours. C'est signe que je fais mon travail comme critique si on se fait remarquer de cette façon-là. Je la remercie de parler en français aussi en Chambre. C'est tout le temps apprécié.

Mais ma question n'est sûrement pas juste pour flatter du bon bord, comme on dit; c'est plutôt pour savoir certaines réponses du bord du gouvernement. Ma question est simple. On vit une pandémie. On est dans la quatrième vague. On sait qu'il y a un nouveau virus auquel on fait face. Puis toujours—toujours—les bureaux de santé publique ne sont pas assujettis à la Loi sur les services en français. C'était une des demandes de l'AFO, une des demandes de la communauté, une des demandes qui étaient dans le projet de loi, puis on n'a toujours pas eu de réponse. Ça ne fait pas partie de la modernisation. On ne modernise pas souvent la Loi sur les services en français. Ils proposent 10 ans, mais on n'a pas la chance.

On a la chance. On vit une crise. On vit une pandémie. Puis, on nous met ça et on dit qu'on représente la communauté franco-ontarienne? J'aimerais avoir une réponse de votre bord : pourquoi n'avez-vous pas assujetti les bureaux de santé publique à la loi pour donner des services en français quand on allait chercher de l'information et qu'on ne l'avait pas comme francophones? Pourquoi ne l'avez-vous pas fait?

Mme Natalia Kusendova: Merci beaucoup pour la question. Aujourd'hui, notre ministre de la Santé nous a

dit que presque 90 % des Ontariens ont reçu leur première dose du vaccin et 83 % sont vaccinés complètement. Je pense que nos efforts dans cette pandémie sont très importants.

Mais aussi, je voudrais parler au sujet de la modernisation de la Loi sur les services en français. Une des choses que la communauté a demandées, c'est au sujet de l'offre active. Alors on a écouté la communauté, et maintenant, dans notre modernisation, on va avoir l'offre active.

Deuxièmement, nous désirons renforcer l'imputabilité des ministères et de leurs agences en ce qui concerne la prestation des services, de sorte qu'ils s'acquittent de leurs responsabilités. Les francophones de la province ont le droit d'obtenir les services en français. Bien que nos collègues de l'opposition aient de la difficulté à comprendre cette réalité, l'offre active des services en français n'est pas un choix, mais une obligation.

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

Mr. Will Bouma: I appreciate hearing the member from Mississauga Centre and her point of view, especially as a health care provider in the nursing field. We've seen different areas in the world take different approaches. I see that the ICUs are overloaded in Michigan right now. We see jurisdictions in Europe back in lockdown right now.

We have a 90% vaccination rate. We see the Omicron variant now coming out and having a presence in Ontario. I was wondering if she could elaborate more to the House on why, for those who are not yet vaccinated, it's more important now than ever to get their vaccine.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: Thank you so much for the question. I think what's important to note is that we continue to listen to the public health advice that we receive. Of course, this virus is rapidly evolving and so is our public health information.

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What we know is a vaccine is the best protection we have against the virus. This can be attested by the rates of hospitalization we are seeing in our hospitals. What we know is that if you're vaccinated, you can still get sick and get the virus, but your health outcomes—meaning ending up hospitalized or, God forbid, ending up on a ventilator in the ICU—are much less. I believe it's seven times less for those who are vaccinated versus those who are not.

I know there are some people who are still vaccine-hesitant, and that's quite normal in any population we study. But I would like to urge all Ontarians who do not have a medical exemption to please do the right thing, roll up your sleeve and get vaccinated so that we can get over this pandemic.

M. Guy Bourgouin: Premièrement, je veux m'excuser à la députée. J'ai dit « Mississauga–Malton » mais son comté est Mississauga-Centre. Je m'excuse de ce côté-là.

Mais je vais repérer la même question. Puis, tu serais bonne au hockey parce que t'as patiné pas à peu près, là. Tu n'as pas répondu à ma question. Ma question était simple, pourtant; je la croyais simple. Pourquoi, dans la modernisation de la Loi sur les services en français, n'avez-vous pas assujetti—je le répète, puis je vais le dire

tranquillement, « assujetti »—les bureaux de santé publique à la loi? Parce que c'était une demande de la communauté. C'était dans le libellé de l'AFO. Ce n'est pas comme si vous ne le saviez pas.

Puis, je comprends que tu ne veux pas répondre à la question. Je respecte ça aussi. Mais la question est simple : c'est un oui ou c'est un non. Mais il y a des raisons pourquoi on ne fait pas ça—parce que la communauté allait aux bureaux de santé, puis ils ne pouvaient pas avoir de réponse. Imagine-toi : on est dans une pandémie, puis je ne peux pas avoir une réponse en français parce que, « Non, je ne suis pas obligé ». Ce n'était pas obligatoire. Ils ne sont pas assujettis à la loi.

Alors, vu qu'on modernisait la Loi sur les services en français, pourquoi est-ce que le gouvernement ne l'a pas fait? Ce n'est pas une question piège. C'est une question qui est simple. Qui va donner ces services à la communauté? On peut se péter les bretelles sur le reste. Ça, je le sais. On l'a lu, le projet de loi. Mais la question n'est pas ça. Je vous demande de ne pas patiner alentour. Donnez-moi une réponse. Ne vous pétez pas les bretelles. Répondez à la question.

M^{me} Natalia Kusendova: Merci pour la question. Comme le député le sait, les agences de santé publique sont des agences des gouvernements municipaux. Et, comme le député le sait, les municipalités ne sont pas assujetties à la Loi sur les services en français.

Mais je pense que c'est important de dire que pendant la pandémie, on a traduit les informations au sujet de la santé publique en français, de la rapidité la plus vite qu'on a pu. Aussi, notre nouveau docteur hygiéniste en chef, le Dr Kieran Moore, est bilingue et il parle français. Alors je pense que c'est un pas dans la bonne direction.

Notre gouvernement est le meilleur allié de la communauté francophone. C'est la raison pour laquelle, en plus de moderniser la Loi sur les services en français, notre gouvernement met en avant une stratégie plus large qui englobe la disponibilité d'une main-d'œuvre francophone et bilingue et l'adoption de modèles de services intégrés qui sont efficaces. Merci beaucoup pour la question.

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

M. Sam Oosterhoff: Je veux remercier aussi la députée pour Mississauga-Centre. Elle est une « avocate » pour la communauté franco-ontarienne ici en Ontario et dans la législature aussi. Elle travaille très fort pour les priorités, pour les chaleureux avancements de cette communauté, et maintenant, ce soir, elle a aussi déclaré et expliqué l'importance de cette communauté ici en Ontario.

Mais ma question pour la députée de Mississauga-Centre est simple. Peut-être qu'elle peut expliquer la raison pourquoi ce gouvernement promeut et supporte et aussi a amélioré l'accès aux centres de soins pour les personnes âgées ici en Ontario et pourquoi c'était une priorité très importante pour notre gouvernement.

M^{me} Natalia Kusendova: Merci pour la question. Vraiment, je suis fière de notre travail sur les soins de longue durée. Madame la ministre des Affaires francophones m'a donné le portfolio, si je peux le dire

comme ça, de soins de santé et de soins de longue durée francophones. J'étais fière d'avoir eu des consultations très larges. J'ai eu cinq tables rondes avec plus de 40 intervenants. Alors, j'ai parlé à beaucoup d'intervenants dans les soins de longue durée francophones—différents organismes, des patients et des familles—de comment notre gouvernement peut mieux servir la communauté franco-ontarienne quand il s'agit de soins de longue durée. En résultat, j'ai introduit une motion sur les soins linguistiquement appropriés auprès de cette Chambre pour vraiment prioriser les services de soins de longue durée pour les francophones.

Et je suis fière que notre gouvernement ait récemment lancé une stratégie où on a une allocation de plus de 500 lits francophones partout en Ontario, y compris ici à Toronto. Pour la première fois, on va avoir des lits francophones, et ils sont dans la circonscription de la première ministre Wynne—je sais que je ne peux pas dire son nom; je m'excuse. Ça va être 256 lits francophones ici à Toronto.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: It's an honour to stand in this place on behalf of my constituents of London-Fanshawe.

Before I start my debate, I want to congratulate Tonia Grannum on her retirement today. We're really working her hard today, though, Speaker, aren't we? We're getting every last cent out of her before she goes on retirement tomorrow. But just to say congratulations to her and what a wonderful experience that I've had interacting with Tonia during the time she has been here in the Legislature with us. All the best in her future endeavours going forward.

Speaker, I want to talk about the throne speech, of course. There are two items; I hope I can get to both. It's a very short time that we have to talk or debate or give our thoughts on this throne speech.

The first topic I want to talk about is housing. I want to illustrate the importance. I'm talking about London-Fanshawe, and I think when we talk about our own ridings or our own cities, many times, it resonates around to other cities inside this province. I find that once something starts happening in London, it has already been bursting at the seams, and I use the example of health care. Years ago, when we were talking about emergency rooms and the backlog and the wait times, once it hit London it felt like it was just out of control.

But back to the housing piece when we're talking about the throne speech: I didn't see a housing-specific reference in there. I did read the throne speech again, but I didn't see it in there.

I want to read some emails—three, I think—that have come into my office just recently. But we get them all the time. It's a son. He writes:

“My mother lives in your constituency and has been told (verbally) she will have to leave her rental unit by March. She lives at 35 Waterman Ave. and has been there for around 10 years.

"Is your office aware of these soft evictions? I know Peggy Sattler has taken action but wanted to see if anyone in your office could assist my mother and her neighbours. The CBC article below is exactly what is happening in this low-income rental area.

"Thanks for your time and help."

So, yes, absolutely, we're aware of that, and we reached out to him. I personally went out and delivered packages to the complex at Sandringham, as well as the complex at Waterman, to let people know what is happening when it comes to the sale of the unit that they're in.

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The other email we received was from a woman here. She says:

"Hi there Teresa. I hope you are my correct contact person. After reading this article this morning, I felt like I just needed to reach out to you. The situation sounded way too familiar. I am a resident of 355 Sandringham Crescent, a townhouse complex of about 50 or so units. I have been here for six years and have raised two young children, along with multiple other families, most being here way longer. I am almost certain that this complex was owned by the same previous owner and assuming it has also been bought by the same new owner as these Belmont ones. We have been dealing with this absolutely identical situation. Multiple times we have been approached (at our doors, unnotified) with the same one month's rent 'incentive' and felt very intimidated by their words. They are extremely devious and manipulative. We are all feeling very uncomfortable about the uncertainty of our living situations. We have been quoted the same \$450,000 to possibly own and all pay around \$1,000/month as well. We are all living in fear. My family, and most other units here cannot afford to move, relocate schools or buy. We are scared. On several occasions, multiple of us residents have talked about reaching out to you with our scenario and this finally felt like this is a perfect time. I'm not exactly sure what I am asking you to do, I just felt like I needed to express my concerns and make sure you are aware that this corporation is doing the exact same thing in our area as well. I know tons of other residents here would also love the chance to speak with you about this. Wondering if we would be able to attend a town hall meeting that Ms. Sattler is holding, or maybe we could arrange the same.

"Thanks a lot for your time."

The last email I'm going to share here, Speaker, just came in on the weekend:

"Hello. I am a resident at 35 Waterman Ave in your riding and have been told by our new landlord, along with the other tenants here, that we needed to move out because they are selling the rental units.

"This was verbally framed as 'we can ask you to move out in 60 days which would be February 1 or you can agree to move out by March or April 1 so that you have more time.' They will be selling almost 50 units for \$450,000/each. This landlord is from Toronto and recently took over the property management company Sterling Karamar, which owns another townhouse complex in the city. They are

offering people an extra free month of rent if they agree to a move-out date but all of this has been verbal so far.

"I recently read an article on CBC about another townhouse complex going through this in south London in which the MPP was able to send a letter to the tenants to inform them of their rights regarding the N12 in this situation and while I know that some of my neighbours have already signed this deal to move out because they were afraid of the idea that they would need to move out by February 1, 2022, I feel that it would be beneficial if they were provided that information.

"There are many families here paying anywhere between \$1,000-\$1,400 a month which is below market average in London for the size of home that they have. I completely understand why the landlord wants to sell but this is going to displace a large number of families and any information or help that you could provide for everyone would be much appreciated. I just want to make sure that no one feels coerced into anything because of their own lack of knowledge surrounding their rights.

"I would like to remain completely anonymous as I don't want to do anything that would further/faster compromise my own tenancy as my family and I will not be able to afford anything larger than a one-bedroom apartment in the school zone after losing our current home so if you can please keep this email including my email address completely private I would appreciate it."

Speaker, we have gone out to both the Waterman and the Sandringham complexes. We provided people with N12 information from the tenancy association, and we're going to be organizing information sessions. Of course, this is all legal as long as they do it legally, but tenants have every right to be concerned when they're told these things verbally and not in writing.

The other problem, I think, is that when someone moves out on the basis that the landlord's going to move a relative in or someone close to them, according to the definition of how they can exit someone out of an apartment under N12, it's very, very difficult for the tenant to actually confirm that that's going to happen and follow up if they stay the minimum of time. So there's a lot of questions, and these people are being evicted from their homes.

As they say, the rents are between \$1,000 and \$1,400, and we know what the rents are like in all of our cities now. They have gone up exponentially. We're talking now that if you're going to rent that three-bedroom townhouse—same, similar situation in London—at least \$1,800 to \$2,000. That is a huge increase. Most people don't get their salaries increased that way. Yeah, they don't get their increased salaries that way—not everywhere.

I want to also read some excerpts out of an article that was written in the London Free Press on November 11, and these are very things that I'm illustrating here. The article talks about homelessness in London.

"Homeless Londoners are dying at an unprecedented rate of one person a week this year, with the total number

of deaths so far already 50% higher than all of last year,” and this is on November 11, that the article was printed.

“In the 43 weeks from January to October of this year, at least 46 people experiencing homelessness died, according to records prepared by a group of organizations in London. Last year, 31 deaths were recorded by the group.

“With three more deaths so far this November, it appears the year’s toll could top 50, homeless advocates say....

“Not enough housing, precarious work, inadequate social” housing, “unsafe supplies of drugs and pandemic restrictions—even though they are easing—are all factors in the increase, front-line workers say.

“Every area of life has gotten harder for people who are impoverished. People who have been impoverished are finding it longer to get out, if it’s even possible.” Sanctuary London outreach worker Dan Oudshoorn said that.

Here’s another quote in this news article: “People who are dying are being treated as” though “they’re disposable. We” can’t “just let them keep dying, which is what we’ve been doing for the last few years, even as the rates go up and up.”

So, Speaker, “More than \$40 million in federal government funding is jump-starting massive repairs to public housing complexes in London and area, with another \$28.5 million coming from city hall.

“The work will repair or refresh more than 60% of the units run by the London Middlesex Community Housing with work to be completed by December 2027.

“But there” are “more than 6,000 households on a waiting list for public housing in London.”

So, Speaker, this is the housing crisis that’s happening in London. And it’s not just because of the pandemic; it’s been happening for years and it’s come to a head.

So I looked at the information here in—I’m not going to flash it because I know it might be a prop—the Ontario action plan. This is the government’s, last year, the budget. I was looking through it to find where the social housing number is for London specifically, but it’s not in there.

But there’s a total here. It says, “social housing agreement—payments to service managers.” So in 2021—and I know that all the government members like numbers and pages—page 193, table 3.13. It says, “social housing agreement—payments to service managers.” In 2020 to 2021, it’s “315.2,” right, so \$315,200,000. I’m glad the two ministers that I’m going to talk about in my throne speech—it’s great that I’ll be able to possibly get an answer from ministers, the ones for housing.

So that was one. My question to the minister would be, what portion of that amount is allocated to London for social housing repairs? Because it’s very important that we continue the stock that we have and that we keep building. I know in the throne speech, and I don’t think it’s in this fall economic statement—where is the program to build more geared-to-income housing?

I was at a meeting for the London Homeless Coalition and there were speakers presenting through city hall. They were on the homeless strategy program at city hall, and they said that there is a waiting list so long for people

earning less than \$39,000. They can’t even get on the waiting list—70% of the waiting list is people with low income for housing at a \$39,000 income. Then it was 20% for people who were medically compromised, had low incomes and they were homeless, right? Then the next 10% waiting for social housing, they said, was violence against women—so domestic violence, people who were escaping, and human trafficking. So that’s the way they have it: It’s 10% for the violence against women, human trafficking; 20% for people who are homeless or with medical conditions; and then 70% for people who are low-income. So it’s a real, real crisis.

The other thing I looked in—and, again, I won’t flash this book, because it’s a prop. I looked at the 2021 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review: Build Ontario. Again, I looked in there for housing because it wasn’t in the throne speech. I didn’t see it anywhere in the throne speech, so I looked in there for housing. I know the government likes page numbers—page 109, chapter 2, and it’s titled, “Housing.” I’m going to read what it says:

2020

“Strong demand for housing supported by low interest rates, higher overall disposable incomes, limited resale listings and shifting home preferences contributed to rising home resales and prices in Ontario over the last year. By March 2021, home resales reached a record high. Activity in the housing market subsequently moderated, with home resales declining 33.3% by September from the March peak. The average home resale price has increased strongly since the start of the pandemic. By September 2021, the average home resale price in Ontario was 31.4% higher than the February 2020 pre-pandemic level.”

So you see, Speaker, homes are becoming really unaffordable. What goes up 31%? And the wages—how do they follow those costs for homes? It’s a real problem.

We’ve got people who have low income waiting for geared-to-income, maybe co-operatives—people who couldn’t afford market rent. We have Sandringham and Waterman and Belmont—corporations wanting to get out and cash out on their investment. And then people being forced out of their units—that’s if the new landlord is going to move somebody in who is close to them, or a relative. It seems a little odd to me that every unit in those complexes will have—that new owner wants a person they’re related to move into that and use that N12.

So all these things happening—homelessness, women escaping violence.

In London, they’re doing the best they can. I don’t know what’s going on in other people’s cities, but they’ve actually got storage containers, and they revamped them and they put them on two golf courses in London in the winter for homeless people, because they cut the number of beds downtown. That’s their solution.

It seems that successive governments have forgotten that when we’re building all these homes, we have to have a formula to include social housing, geared to income, co-operative housing and affordable rents. We’ve forgotten that, and now we’re in a situation where—I just read the article; people are dying daily in London. That’s so wrong.

I know that it's happening in all kinds of other areas of the province—northern Ontario, rural Ontario, big cities, little cities.

So I ask this government—and I hope I can get an answer—for the social housing budget that was in the budget book last year, what is it this year and what is allocated to London? London needs help. We need to have stock remain in good repair, and then we need to build on that stock.

I think every city should be looking at, when we're building, it's just not new, big homes in the affluent part of the city—we need to have a mix. That's the other thing I want to raise. You don't build only affordable housing, social housing, co-operative housing in one part of a city. That is not good planning. When we're investing or when we're doing things, we don't put all our eggs in one basket; we diversify. So I ask cities and governments across this province, when we are building, that we're building these homes in a mix, throughout the city, so that we don't create another problem in the future.

There are many other things that weren't in the throne speech. I was going to talk about—and I'm pretty lucky, like I say, because today I've got two of my ministers here, and it's really a privilege to have them here.

The throne speech didn't have autism services in it either. Just today, the Financial Accountability Office released their report. It said, "In the children's and social services sector, major programs with the lowest relative spending include autism, supportive services and Ontario Works—financial assistance...."

"Children and social services spent \$0.6 billion (6.4%) less in the first two quarters of 2021-22 compared to 2020-21, including lower spending for Ontario Works (-\$369 million), the Ontario Disability Support Program (-\$83 million) and autism services (-\$137 million)."

So those are the kind of things I wanted to bring to the Legislature in hopes that I can maybe get some feedback from those ministers on those two topics. I have to say, I was disappointed when the throne speech was read that there weren't these two items in here because, as much as we need all the things that we're paying attention to that build this province, housing and my autism file, I find, are also key in making it a healthy, successful place to live and thrive.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Questions to the member for London—Fanshawe?

Hon. Steve Clark: I do want to thank the member. I could go through housing starts in London and say that 2020 was the highest on record and 2021 is on pace to be even higher, but I'm not going to talk about the private sector stats. I'll leave that for another day.

I will answer the member, through you, Speaker, that at the virtual AMO conference in London in August, I announced an additional \$307 million for our Ontario Social Services Relief Fund; it's now over a billion

dollars. In London, under the four phases of SSRF, they received over \$23 million; of that, \$5 million went to the 122 Baseline Road West project that provided another 30 affordable housing units as part of a 60-housing unit in London.

I guess my question to the member, through you, Speaker, is, should we make these funds flexible so that London can decide their priorities, or would you prescribe something as part of this project that would force them to build a particular type of—

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

The member for London—Fanshawe to reply.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I want to thank the minister for giving me those numbers because, before I started my debate, I went over and asked him that this is something that I wanted to know. So I do appreciate that he has given me that information, because I didn't know what the proportion out of the budget last year was for social housing for London.

I understand, also, that the government is going to have a housing summit, from my understanding, in January, so there's the question: You're asking me if there should be flexibility in what—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I apologize to the member for London—Fanshawe for interrupting her, but pursuant to standing order 44(a), there have now been 12 hours of debate on the motion for an address in reply to the speech from the throne. I am now required to put the question.

On October 19, 2021, Mr. Pettapiece moved, seconded by Ms. Skelly, that an humble address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

"To the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario:

"We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session."

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

Vote deferred.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Orders of the day? I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: No further business.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): There being no further business, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow, Tuesday, at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 2029.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Ted Arnott

Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Tonia Grannum, Valerie Quioc Lim, Peter Sibenik, Meghan Stenson, William Wong

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergente d'armes: Jacquelyn Gordon

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Arthur, Ian (NDP)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Baber, Roman (IND)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Berns-McGown, Rima (NDP)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins	
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	Minister of Legislative Affairs / Ministre des Affaires législatives Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)	Willowdale	Associate Minister of Transportation (Transit-Oriented Communities) / Ministre associé des Transports (Aménagement axé sur les transports en commun)
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
Elliott, Hon. / L'hon. Christine (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fee, Amy (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Fullerton, Hon. / L'hon. Merrilee (PC)	Kanata—Carleton	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Hon. / L'hon. Parm (PC)	Milton	Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiques et du Multiculturalisme
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gravelle, Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hassan, Faisal (NDP)	York South—Weston / York-Sud-Weston	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor—Tecumseh	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hillier, Randy (IND)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Solicitor General / Solliciteur générale
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karahalios, Belinda C. (NBP)	Cambridge	
Karpoche, Bhutila (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Kramp, Daryl (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Kusendova, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	
Leece, 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	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. Kaled (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, Amarjeet (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, Gurkaran (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 / Greffier: Michael Bushara

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 Bourguoin
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