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Lundi
18 octobre 2021

Speaker: Honourable Ted Arnott
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 18 October 2021

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 18 octobre 2021

The House met at 1015.

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

Prayers.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ASSISTANCE TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Jill Andrew: According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, every child has the right to an education. Sadly, this right is not extended to all children. This government's underfunding of health services, like their Liberal predecessors who cut some 1,600 nurses during hospital budget freezes, has left schools with a chronic nurse shortage, which leaves kids with complex medical needs requiring in-class support from a registered nurse unable to attend school in person.

This government's Home and Community Care Support Services network is strapped for resources, and kids with disabilities in public schools are paying the ultimate price. We need a government that will invest in the recruitment and retention of nurses by permanently addressing burnout, understaffing and lower wages, so they can be readily available in our schools to support their families in need, because right now they aren't.

As one mom in my community of St. Paul's with a four-year-old son who uses a trach told me, "All the special-needs kids with tracheostomies are at home.... My heart breaks for the kids sitting at home—just forgotten about by our health care and education systems. It's just too sad to contemplate."

I remind this government: Kids with disabilities are not a budget item, nor is getting them into class to receive an education. It is a human right, Speaker. Education is a human right for all kids, and that includes kids with disabilities. It's high time that this government proves that.

OXFORD FRESH

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, we're almost a month into autumn and there are many clear signs of seasonal change. As I travel across my riding of Oxford, I see leaves turning colour and dropping from the trees. Farmers are out in their fields harvesting crops, and the extra fruits and vegetables grown since spring are being preserved in freezers or cellars for later use. Just a week ago, we celebrated Thanksgiving, a time when we can enjoy the bounty of the harvest. Pretty soon, people will

be spending more time indoors, but there's still time to see and learn about all that rural Oxford has to offer.

A perfect example is the Oxford Fresh program. This is a partnership between the Oxford County Federation of Agriculture and Tourism Oxford, two groups that are doing a great job promoting local. Oxford Fresh is a program that exposes people to all the wonderful offerings of our local producers. We've got everything we could want, including meats and fish, fruits and vegetables, honey and maple syrup, chocolate and beer, and of course there are plenty of cheese and dairy products, because, after all, Oxford is the dairy capital of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to support the local producers in Oxford at every chance. Many of them operate directly from their home farms, and when I'm out and about I enjoy meeting them and hearing what inspires them. These dedicated, hard-working people are putting money back into our local economy. It's important that we shop local to show our support for all they do. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for giving me this opportunity.

1020

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Mr. Ian Arthur: Every day my office gets calls from seniors who are worried about losing their vision. They get calls from parents who are worried that yet another school year will be lost because their children can't see the blackboard. Eye care is a critical, life-changing part of our health care system that has material impacts on opportunity and quality of life.

I myself have a complex eye condition called keratoconus. It was an optometrist who recognized the condition and got me the help I needed to keep my vision. I was lucky. Imagine how many are not because this government embraces inaction—children missing critical eye tests that can identify problems early and help them see for life.

Optometrist services continue to be unavailable because the government refuses to negotiate a new agreement with them. Optometrists are health care professionals. They are small business owners and they are forced to cover nearly half of the cost of a visit. Even with the newest offer, optometrists would still be getting less than those in BC and Alberta.

If I sound like a broken record it's because we've heard this again and again—petitions introduced, questions to the government and members' statements—for years, and still the problem persists. To a government that likes to tell the people they're in the habit of saying yes, I say this: You can't say yes if you don't even come to the table.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Mike Harris: This month we recognized Mental Illness Awareness Week and World Mental Health Day, times to raise the profile of health issues that over one million Ontarians struggle with every year. As we've said since day one, mental health is as important as physical health. It should be just as easy to seek out support for anxiety as it is to treat a broken bone.

We're lucky in Waterloo region to have organizations like CMHA Waterloo Wellington, Wilmot Family Resource Centre, Woolwich Counselling Centre and KW Counselling Services, just to name a few, that are dedicated to supporting our mental health.

I know I talk a lot about agriculture being the backbone of my riding, but behind every farm in Kitchener–Conestoga there is a farmer who works 365 days a year to keep the stores stocked. While that dedication is inspiring, it means working through fluctuating markets, unexpected weather and, of course, pandemics. We don't think often enough about the mental health of people who keep food on our tables, people like Trevor Herrle, a farmer in St. Agatha who has been open about the struggles he has faced.

Just a few weeks ago I was pleased to join Trevor and the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs at Herrle's Country Farm Market to announce a \$385,000 expansion of In the Know, a program developed by the University of Guelph and the Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario, that provides supports to farmers to help manage their unique stresses. One death in the farming community because the right supports weren't there is one too many. I hope all the members of this House will promote this great initiative to their constituents so that those struggling know where to find help when they need it most.

SCHOOL SAFETY

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: Last week, a school in Beaches–East York was targeted by a hate protest. For three days a notorious transphobe who had flown from the west coast for this express purpose stood outside the elementary/middle school and daycare, decrying the school's care and support for queer, trans and gender-questioning students and their families. The transphobe incited his Twitter followers to join him in his three-day protest, broadcasted the name of the school, harassed community members and photographed children. Today he has taken his hate to schools in Ottawa.

I want to thank the school's administration, teachers and community for stepping up and pushing back, for being clear that they will not stand for hate of any kind near their school. But Speaker, we need to go further to protect our schools. We wouldn't stand for anyone spewing anti-Semitism or anti-Black racism outside our schools and we can't stand for queerphobia, homophobia or transphobia either.

Hate and intolerance are growing in Canada, both on-line and in real life. Parents are frightened and furious. Our

children need to be safe from hate of any kind. They have the right to go to school in a safe and supportive environment. We have legislation to ensure that cannabis isn't sold within 150 metres of a school and we need legislation to keep hateful protests like this at least 150 metres away from schools, and for exactly the same reason: the health and well-being and safety of our kids. We need action and we need it now.

CLARK CENTRE FOR THE ARTS

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: This weekend I had the enormous pleasure of attending Scarborough's new Clark Centre for the Arts, located at 191 Guildwood Parkway, inside the picturesque Guild Park on the shores of Lake Ontario.

I'd like to recognize the hard work of local community leaders from my riding of Scarborough–Guildwood who brought this magnificent facility to life. The Clark Centre for the Arts is a new landmark, three-storey structure located at Guild Park and Gardens that will bring our community together and showcase local artists' talents.

This weekend's first tour was opened by an Indigenous blessing to acknowledge the land on which it stood and remarks by Councillor Paul Ainslie who championed this project. And we also learned from the lead architect, Charles Hazell, what it takes to pull off this magnificent feat.

This 1960s building was used as a storage facility before being renovated, and the new expanded building, which is now flooded with natural light, offers studio and gallery and event space and a cultural place for programming for our local artists.

Thank you to city councillor, Paul Ainslie, Karen Harkins, Julie Frost, Lila Karim, Jennifer Town, city of Toronto economic development and culture staff, architect Charles Hazell, Friends of Guild Park, the Guild Festival Theatre, the Guildwood Village Community Association, Native Child and Family Services, Scarborough Arts, as well as the students of Sir Wilfred Laurier Collegiate Institute and many, many others.

Please, I invite all of you to attend Fall for the Clark and experience this magnificent facility.

DAILY BREAD FOOD BANK

Ms. Christine Hogarth: It is always nice to rise in the House and speak about the great work that's done in my riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore. Today, I am delighted to speak about the Daily Bread Food Bank and their incredibly successful annual food drive that they've recently hosted.

Over the Thanksgiving weekend, while most of us were spending time with family and friends, the Daily Bread Food Bank staff and volunteers were working tirelessly to make sure that local residents in need would not have empty tables. I am so proud to announce that the food bank collected an astounding 30,459 pounds of non-perishable food items that weekend through this initiative—a remarkable achievement.

I had the honour of visiting the Daily Bread Food Bank, along with Premier Ford and the member for Scarborough–Rouge Park, just the day before the food drive and we were graciously hosted by Neil Hetherington and Talia Bronstein, both from the Daily Bread Food Bank. We were all blown away by the number of volunteers working so hard, sharing a smile, sharing a conversation while sorting food to help those in need. So many of them were there to assist with facilitating this enormous event taking place the next day. Not even the challenges of an ongoing pandemic could curb the dedication to help the most vulnerable in our communities, and this is the second year in a row that the food bank has transitioned into a contactless, drive-through donation process.

I'm humbled at their commitment and spirit of giving. Thank you.

CHILD CARE

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Ontario remains one of the few remaining provinces that has yet to sign the agreement with the federal government to lower child care fees to \$10 a day. This is a deal that families in London are counting on. I've heard from young London couples who are putting off starting a family because they simply can't afford additional child care costs. Londoners need an affordable child care plan so that families aren't pinching pennies each month just to make ends meet.

Kara Pihlak, executive director of the Oak Park Co-operative Children's Centre, has told the government that this deal is top of mind for London families. She has asked the government to sign this deal and seriously address the problems facing early childhood educators. The government needs to address the recruitment crisis in this sector by improving the working conditions of our ECEs so that Ontario can have plenty of high-quality child care spaces that London families can depend upon.

Signing this deal with the federal government is the first step in that direction, and frankly, Speaker, it should have been signed months ago. Now with the federal election completed, there's no reason not to help parents by getting this deal signed.

We need to listen to experts like Kara who know what our ECEs need to give our kids the care that they deserve. And we need to listen to the many parents who are banking on a \$10-a-day child care plan for their families. It's about time that Ontario had universal, high-quality, public and not-for-profit \$10-a-day child care. Let's get this deal done, Premier.

1030

CHINESE RAILROAD WORKERS MEMORIAL

Mr. Vincent Ke: As I work to eliminate anti-Asian racism, I'm encouraged that my nomination of the Chinese railroad workers memorial in Toronto was featured by the Ontario Association of Architects as a Queen's Park Pick in celebration of World Architecture Day.

Speaker, 17,000 Chinese immigrants were assigned the most dangerous task when building the Canadian Pacific railroad. It is estimated that as many as 4,000 Chinese men gave their lives for a united Canada. But, very unfortunately, these courageous Chinese workers were subjects of racism instead of recognition for their extraordinary efforts.

Between 1885 and 1923, after the railroad was built and the Chinese labour was no longer needed, Canada imposed a head tax on Chinese immigrants, for which Prime Minister Stephen Harper publicly apologized in 2006.

Speaker, I invite Ontarians to visit the Chinese railroad workers memorial in Toronto and the OAA website to learn about the significant contributions and sacrifices made by the Chinese railroad workers. Anti-Asian racism is rooted in our shared Canadian history. The past is a guide to inspire us to do better now and in the future.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Lorne Coe: Our government is providing up to \$270 million this year to long-term-care homes across the province to increase staffing levels, leading to more direct care for residents.

Now, in Whitby, this means that Fairview Lodge will receive up to \$705,000 for additional staff, and by the year 2024-25, the home will receive over \$4 million annually more than their current funding. Lakeridge Health will receive up to \$242,000 for additional staffing, and by the year 2024-25, the home will receive \$1,500,000 annually more than their current funding. Finally, the Village of Taunton Mills will receive up to \$427,000 for additional staffing, and by the year of 2024-25, the home will receive close to \$3 million annually more than their current funding.

Speaker, hiring more staff is part of our government's plan to fix long-term care and to improve the quality of long-term care that residents receive and the quality of life they experience. They deserve no less.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Before I ask for oral questions, I have some very good news for the House. I am delighted to have this opportunity, on behalf of all members, to welcome our new group of legislative pages to the first day of their term.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): It is wonderful to have all of you here at Queen's Park.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'd also like to extend a very warm welcome to the families of today's page captains. Joining us in the Speaker's gallery are Megan and Paul Lynch, parents of page Graden Lynch; and Norm Litchfield, father of page Fraser Litchfield. Welcome.

QUESTION PERIOD

HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My first question is to the Premier, but I think it's important to acknowledge that this past weekend almost 2,000 auto workers in Windsor probably had a pretty sleepless time, wondering about their futures. I hope that all members commit to fighting for those good auto jobs in Windsor.

But my question is about other workers. To the Premier: People are pretty frustrated with the big cuts and bad choices that this government has been making. On October 13, nurses in Binbrook literally were told by the Premier that they had to hand back negotiated wage increases. These nurses work with highly disabled folks, with very, very severely disabled folks, 24/7.

My question is, why does the Premier think it's okay to take away negotiated wages that these front-line nurses had negotiated with their employer?

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

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you for the question. Our government, of course, values the important contribution of nurses, who really are providing our patients with timely, safe and equitable access to really high-quality and appropriate care in a variety of settings. That's why we have acted swiftly with pandemic pay to make sure that they are recognized for their efforts. At the same time, the government is committed to protecting our public sector jobs, and that is why we've had our legislation, the protecting a sustainable public sector work act.

Our government's top priority, of course, is health and safety. We want to make sure that we continue to support our nurses and make sure that this premium, which is one of the largest ever in the province of Ontario, is out there, benefiting 375,000 employees from 2,000 employers.

I also want to point out to the member opposite that our hospital sector, and most of the other sectors, I believe, have all paid out those extra funds to nurses. We agree that they're playing a vital role in the delivery of health care and will be instrumental as we transform our health care system and emerge from this pandemic.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The fact of the matter is, a non-profit employer here called AbleLiving wants to do the right thing by these nurses, wants to pay them appropriate wages, but the Premier instead would rather claw them back. He always says no to front-line workers, to our front-line nurses, our health care heroes.

President of ONA Vicki McKenna says this, something the member was just speaking to: The reality is, "It's time for Premier Ford to honour these nurses, recognize their worth and do the right thing." I agree with Ms. McKenna.

Why does the Premier say no to our nurses, to our PSWs, to the front-line workers who helped us get through this pandemic, when he should be saying yes?

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you to the member opposite. Our Premier only says yes. He has invested so much

money, over \$52 million, to recruit, retain and support over 3,700 more front-line health care workers and caregivers through our COVID-19 fall preparedness plan, and we have the 27,000 employees—PSWs, nurses, RPNs—which we are recruiting as well. This is the largest recruiting campaign of nurses and PSWs and training initiatives as well in the province's history.

We've also acted swiftly to ensure that our health care workers are recognized, as I said, through pandemic pay, and our government has been working closely with the Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence at Ontario Health and a number of other hospitals to also provide specific supports during these difficult times for front-line workers in order to support them.

It's critical to remind the member opposite that as of March this year, more than 6,100 health care workers have been able to access supports that they needed, and we continue to support them in every way we can during what we know is a difficult time for all of them.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, I would submit that this Premier has no idea how unaffordable life is becoming. Inflation is up. The cost of everyday living is up. A 1% wage increase just doesn't cut it. Better wages will actually help our province. All you have to do is ask economist David Card, who very clearly identified that good wages actually help our economy.

Why can't the Premier say yes? Why can he say yes to his buddies but not say yes to PSWs, to front-line health care workers, to nurses, to those other front-line workers who were heroes during the pandemic and helped us get through? Why will he not say yes to them?

Mrs. Robin Martin: I think in my last answer in response to the member opposite I did go through a lot of ways in which this government and our Premier have been saying yes to nurses, PSWs and our RPNs, who are all working very hard to support us through the COVID-19 pandemic.

We've obviously made a decision to proceed with the protecting sustainable jobs act. We think it's important to protect those jobs, and we have a policy in place. But we've also recognized the incredible efforts that front-line health care workers, especially our nurses and RPNs and PSWs, have gone to through pandemic pay. And we're on an initiative which is the highest recruiting and training initiative in the province's history, recruiting and training more nurses, RPNs and PSWs across the board in this province so that we can make sure that we have all the health human resources we need and a great plan going forward.

1040

SMALL BUSINESS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. After about 19 months of struggling, small businesses like restaurants still do not have a level playing field here in our province. Big venues, on the one hand—

big event spaces like arenas and stadiums—are full of fans, and that’s a great thing, but on the other hand, we have restaurants that are still not getting a fair shake from this government.

My question is: Why does the Premier always say yes to his big buddies, to the big fish, but no to the little guy, like small local businesses?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: I appreciate the opportunity to answer that. The member, I’m sure, can well appreciate that the return-to-play protocols of the NHL, NBA and OHL far exceed the minimum standards that we are putting in place for our small or non-essential businesses.

Having said that, as the chief medical officer highlighted, caution is what has helped us get to where we’re at today. We’re very optimistic, but we remain, obviously, cautious. We are looking for that data which will come out in the two weeks following Thanksgiving and, as the Premier indicated last week, we are reviewing new opportunities to exit stage 3—again, cautiously optimistic thanks to the hard work of all Ontarians.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, it was a slap in the face last week when restaurateurs had a no-show of cabinet ministers at a prearranged meeting. In fact, the representative from Restaurants Canada said this: “The industry leaders on the call were angry and extremely frustrated,” because the government is simply not talking to them. And then, to add insult to injury, of course, Speaker, on Friday we had a show-and-tell by the Premier, and not a word was provided to give these restaurateurs some hope.

So my question is: When will the Premier treat small businesses like restaurants better, and treat them as he treats his big buddies?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Again, the member opposite might call it a show-and-tell, but the vaccination application that was brought forward by the Minister of Digital Government so far is showing to be a great success. I’m told that five or six million Ontarians have begun downloading the QR code. I know our small and medium businesses—the restaurants, the gyms—are looking forward to this. It will make it easier. It will give us the ability to keep these places open, which is what they want. They want stability. They want to know and the people who are attending restaurants or gyms want to know that it is safe to do so. The app and the QR code will continue to allow us to do that.

But we understand how frustrated small businesses have been. It’s why we have been pushing Ontarians to be vaccinated. I’m happy that Ontarians are vaccinated at the numbers that they’re at. Ultimately, Mr. Speaker, the QR code, the vaccine application that we brought forward and Ontarians’ overwhelming ability to get out there and get vaccinated will help us keep these small businesses open and stay open.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Small businesses have been doing their part, as we all know. They’ve been checking certificates. They’ve been implementing other protocols. What they need is for their government to be there for them.

Small mom-and-pops like restaurants have been struggling to stay afloat, but the Premier is always saying yes: He says yes to his lobbyists, he says yes to his insiders and his buddies, but he’s missing in action when it comes to small businesses. My question is: When will small businesses be invited onto the same playing field as the Premier’s big buddies?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Obviously, small, medium and large job creators are and remain the backbone of the economy of the province of Ontario. It is why we’ve made so many investments to ensure that jobs stay in Ontario, and that we bring back the jobs that the pandemic sent away.

But it’s not just about the pandemic. We are looking at making and continue to make investments: the type of investments that saw the Ontario economy lead the nation prior to the pandemic. We want, as we emerge from the pandemic, to ensure that we have an economy that is stable, that is growing, so that our small and medium job creators can stay open.

That is why we’re very encouraged by the numbers that we continue to see, but it doesn’t mean that we’re going to claim victory. It’s why we have increased ICU capacity, something that the previous Liberal government failed to do. That’s why we’ve increased and are making massive investments in our long-term-care sector.

But it’s also why we’re making investments in infrastructure: so that the economy will continue to grow post-pandemic the way it did before the pandemic, and we can continue to lead the nation and be the engine of the economy of this country.

CHILD CARE

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: My question is to the Minister of Education on early learning and child care. Amanda, a mom in my riding, reached out to me recently. At eight months pregnant, she’s already worried about the terrifying costs of child care. Like most Ontario parents, Amanda cannot afford to pay the equivalent of a mortgage in child care costs.

Most other provinces have a deal with the federal government, including those with Conservative governments, but Ontario has yet to sign on. Where is Ontario’s deal? What does the minister have to say to parents like Amanda, who need \$10-a-day child care?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: My message to Amanda is that this government is fighting for a better deal for her family and all families in this province who want affordable child care, who want accessible child care, but want it to be sustainable, so we don’t have a scenario where we have a funding program that reduces the cost per child and then, in three, four, five years, that price increases sharply for them. That’s not what we want. We want a sustainable deal that reduces costs for families.

Under the former Liberal government, child care rose by 40%—unacceptable, and a record that is indefensible. Our government has increased investment in child care by making it more affordable through a tax credit, the Ontario CARE tax credit, which is providing roughly \$1,500 of savings per child, which was enriched during the pandemic. Obviously, we have to continue—and we are, in good faith—with the federal government to get a good deal that includes recognition of the unique advantages Ontario provides and invests in, particularly when it comes to all-day kindergarten, as we continue to fight for a better deal for the people of this province.

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

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: Speaker, the child care sector in Ontario is in a state of crisis. Families in Ontario are paying up to \$2,000 a month in child care fees. They cannot afford the Ford government's endless delays. Workers are underpaid and leaving the sector, leading to severe understaffing.

We need to get to work on building a universal, affordable, quality child care system right away. Will the minister stop dragging his feet and start prioritizing families and child care workers and deliver \$10-a-day child care now?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Speaker, we're fighting to ensure that the people of this province and the taxpayers get the best possible deal that they deserve. I will not take the advice of the opposition parties, who would have accepted any deal instead of a better deal, with long-term, sustainable, increased investment that Ontario families deserve.

The only province worse than Ontario when it comes to child care and the former Liberal government is the NDP province of BC. We agree that both the former Liberals and the New Democrats of British Columbia are not examples or benchmarks to look to for inspiration.

We have a plan in place to reduce costs, to increase spaces—\$1 billion of investment by our Premier to create 30,000 new spaces, 10,000 of which will be in new schools. I recognize that the price of child care is too expensive to too many families. We knew this, which is why, in our first budget, we introduced a tax credit to make life a bit more affordable.

We're going to work with the federal government in good faith to land a deal that allows sustainable long-term funding that ensures child care is affordable and accessible to families right across Ontario.

RED TAPE REDUCTION

Mr. Lorne Coe: My question is for the Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction. I've had the opportunity to visit and meet with many types of businesses in Whitby, and I've been hearing a similar message from many of them: Red tape and burdensome overregulation have been a barrier to businesses as they look to expand their presence and build their business.

As we continue to combat the fourth wave of the pandemic and businesses plan ahead, they need to know that their government is behind them and creating an environment for businesses to succeed.

Speaker, my question for the minister is: Can you please share what work you're doing to reduce red tape and support small businesses in Ontario?

Hon. Nina Tangri: I'd really like to thank my colleague and the member for Whitby for his question and the great work that he's doing in his community.

When this government came into office, we inherited a regulatory system that was stifling business growth. We made a promise to reduce regulatory burden on businesses to grow our economy and create jobs, and we have followed through. We've reduced Ontario's total number of regulatory compliance requirements by 6.5% since June 2018 and achieved \$373 million in net annual savings to businesses, not-for-profits, municipalities, universities and colleges, school boards and hospitals in regulatory compliance costs.

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Last week, I announced Ontario's fall 2021 red tape reduction package, and I introduced the Supporting People and Businesses Act to this House. This bundle will build on the work that our government has already done through previous packages to support businesses and people right across our province. I look forward to sharing more details in the supplemental.

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

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you to the minister for her response. I'm encouraged to see the tremendous progress made so far, and I'm proud that our government has made this a priority. I also know that, like previous bills, the changes made here will have a positive impact on people and businesses across the province.

Now, while many changes to regulation and processes have been made to provide immediate support throughout the pandemic, we also need to ensure that we're planning towards the future. Would the minister provide more detail on what this bill means for Ontarians now and moving forward?

Hon. Nina Tangri: Thank you to the member for Whitby for another excellent question. This bill builds on the progress of previous bills introduced under the leadership of our Premier and my predecessor. It also applies lessons learned from temporary changes introduced during the pandemic that, if passed, will help modernize processes and reduce burdens and unnecessary costs.

These items are important, Speaker. Cutting costly red tape will help businesses and people rebuild and invest in safety measures, and reducing unnecessary and duplicative requirements for the public and private sectors will save time and streamline how government works.

Together, alongside digitization initiatives and modernizing regulations, these changes will make interacting with government easier, to support individuals and families and attract investment and job creation to support our economy now and in the future.

SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Jill Andrew: My question is to the Premier. I know a single parent mom in our community. She's the sole caregiver of her 28-year-old son with autism and developmental disabilities. He's been on the wait-list for supportive housing since he was 16. During COVID, his routine moved abruptly online, which threw him and his working mom off-course. In response, his behaviour became violent and, last weekend, reached the point where mom was forced to call the police. She called this call a nightmare. He's now in hospital. We spoke to DSO last week. They've said, upon his discharge, his living situation is likely to remain the same, without any other supports available—no housing, not even a caseworker.

Speaker, many people with disabilities and their families feel ignored by this Conservative government. Developmental services agencies are grossly under-resourced. My question is to the Premier. What is the Premier going to do between now, October 18, and June 2, 2022, to ensure families like this are not left behind?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply for the government, the parliamentary assistant, the member for Ottawa West–Nepean.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Thank you to the member opposite for this important question. Of course, making sure that individuals in our developmental services sector have received support throughout the COVID-19 pandemic has been a key priority of this government.

We recognize that every individual has different needs, which is why each case is reviewed on an individual basis. Those individuals who are assessed to be most in need are prioritized for the available resources. This is not a first-come, first-served system; it is needs-based.

We know that demand is growing in this sector. That's why we have invested \$13 million over three years through budget 2021 to assist more people with developmental disabilities in accessing community housing and to support their independent living through an expansion of the Adult Protective Service Worker Program. It's also important to note that adults who have requested residential supports are likely to be eligible for funding through both Passport and ODSP.

I'll speak more to the reforms that are under way in our developmental—

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

The supplementary question.

Ms. Jill Andrew: Again, my question is to the Premier. Let me be clear: The \$13 million over three years is a drop in the bucket. This is not going to address the human rights crisis that many people with disabilities and their families are facing.

This government's cuts to social services add more pressure on people with disabilities and their caregivers, who are providing unpaid work, I might add—in some cases 24/7—at the expense of their own income and mental health. This government's \$13 million over three

years—again, to put that into context, in 2019 the Conservative government handed \$12 million over to Loblaws to pay for fridges, to one of the wealthiest families in the world, for goodness' sakes. Why couldn't their profit pay for their own fridges?

To the Premier: How does this government explain that fridges are a higher priority than this mom and her son with developmental disabilities? Will this Premier ensure this mom's son has a safe place to live when he is discharged from the hospital, because home is no longer an option?

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development, come to order.

To reply for the government, the parliamentary assistant, the member for Ottawa West–Nepean.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: To be clear, over the past year our government has invested a record \$2.9 billion in developmental services, including more than \$1.8 billion for residential supports for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Further to that, Speaker, our government is taking action to do much-needed reforms to this sector, which has been neglected over the past 10 years. We are taking action through our Journey to Belonging reform efforts. I'm pleased to share that our long-term vision for developmental services in Ontario is under way as we speak. We are consulting with members of the community, with agencies and with individuals accessing these services. We are moving quickly to improve current supports and streamline processes for those accessing services by simplifying the assessment process, improving Passport to better address people's needs, reducing the administrative burden on service providers, building skilled staff capacity and introducing—

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

Next question.

GOVERNMENT FISCAL POLICIES

POLITIQUES FISCALES DU GOUVERNEMENT

Mr. Stephen Blais: My question is for the Premier. Mr. Speaker, Ontarians are hearing a lot about how the Premier is a yes man, and it's true. He said yes to appointing his friends and their families to plum positions. He said yes to killing the green economy. The Premier said yes to cutting public health funding and he said yes to returning kids to unsafe classrooms. Monsieur le Président, le premier ministre a dit oui à une attaque contre les francophones. He said yes to big box stores while saying no to mom-and-pop shops. The Premier continues to say yes to billion-dollar businesses opening to full capacity and to overpriced beer, while local restaurants and small businesses receive virtually no support from this government.

When will the Premier start saying yes to small businesses and stop saying yes to his friends on Bay Street?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Let's be very clear: Had the Liberals said yes at any point in the 15 years that they were in power we wouldn't be in the situation that we are in today. They said no to increasing ICU capacity. What was the result of that lack of investment in ICU capacity, Mr. Speaker? The province of Ontario—one of the largest and most important economic zones in North America—was brought to its knees because the Liberals failed to make those investments in ICU capacity. We have said that 800 people in an ICU will never bring down the province of Ontario again. Shame on the Liberals for not doing that.

We also knew that investments had to be made in long-term care. They didn't do it when in coalition with the NDP: 600 beds, I think, is the sum total. I have more than that being built in my own riding, on the way to 30,000.

Had the Liberals just said no to high energy prices, our small, medium and large job creators wouldn't have fled this province the way they did in the years that the Liberals were in office. What we have done is said yes to small job creators, yes to the economy and yes to—

Interjections.

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

Start the clock. The supplementary question.

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Mr. Stephen Blais: My supplemental is for the Premier. Of course, the government does like to say yes. They say yes to closing playgrounds, but say no to safer schools. They say yes to capacity stadiums while saying no to family restaurants. They said yes to an iron ring in long-term care—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Member for Kitchener–Conestoga, come to order. Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development, for the second time, come to order.

Restart the clock. Member?

Mr. Stephen Blais: They said yes to an iron ring around long-term care, but said no to the funding and the inspections to get it done. They said yes to celebrating front-line workers, but have said no to paying them a fair wage and guaranteeing their sick leave. On the issues that matter most to Ontarians, the Premier is saying yes on television while telling them no around the cabinet table.

Mr. Speaker, which is it? Is the Premier the yes man he's selling us on TV, or is he the Dr. No he's acting out behind closed doors?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, when the new Liberal leader had an opportunity to set down his platform for the next election, what did he say yes to? Well, maybe doing some reform of how we elect people. That's all that mattered to the Liberal leader.

What we have done is this: We took power in 2018, and we saw an economy that was driving away jobs because of red tape. We set immediately to change that. We looked at other areas of the economy, reducing taxes for our small, medium and large job creators. We looked at the

overwhelmingly high cost of energy in the province of Ontario and we tackled that immediately, getting rid of the high costs of contracts that the Liberals brought in for their friends. We made those changes. We made investments in health care. We made investments in long-term care. We're making investments in transit and transportation, Mr. Speaker. Unlike the Liberals, who talked about the north and talked about the Ring of Fire, we're actually making progress by working with our First Nations partners to make sure that the resources of the Ring of Fire can benefit the economy of tomorrow.

We are making great progress, the people of Ontario are making great progress, and this economy is well on its way.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mr. Mike Harris: My question is to the Attorney General. Speaker, organizations like Canada's Assaulted Women's Helpline have reported increased call volumes during the COVID-19 pandemic. The people of my riding need to know that their government is working to help victims of intimate partner violence.

Last week, the Attorney General announced a \$67,000 grant for the Brain Injury Association of Waterloo Wellington's intimate partner violence response program. This is an important program in my region that provides critical supports to those who have suffered a brain injury due to intimate partner violence. This investment, made through the Civil Remedies Grant Program, will make a big difference in the lives of victims of intimate partner violence in my riding.

Could the Attorney General please tell us how our government is working with local partners like the Brain Injury Association of Waterloo Wellington, police and prosecutors to support victims and fight back against crime?

Hon. Doug Downey: I want to thank the member from Kitchener–Conestoga for the question and for his insights and for his support in the region of Kitchener–Conestoga and Kitchener–Waterloo in general.

As the member knows and as we've talked about, the tremendous work the Brain Injury Association of Waterloo Wellington is doing is vital to one of the fastest-growing regions in our province. The supports that are provided there locally are tremendously important for victims as they are in the process of seeking justice and taking steps toward overcoming the terrible violence they've experienced.

This important project was one of 18 that our government supported this year through the Civil Remedies Grant Program. It's funded through cash and proceeds seized from criminals. After funding 33 projects that targeted human trafficking last year, this year's Civil Remedies Grant Program investments have been directed to help victims of crime and strengthen local capacity to prevent intimate partner, family, and gun and gang violence.

Mr. Speaker, we agree with Ontarians who say crime should not pay, and the Civil Remedies Grant Program is one more concrete action we're taking to make a lasting difference in Kitchener-Waterloo.

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

Mr. Mike Harris: Thank you very much, Minister. This funding is welcome news in my riding. I'm relieved to hear that after years of neglect and disinterest under NDP-supported Liberal governments, our government is focused on supporting victims of crime and dismantling the criminal networks that prey on our communities. My constituents need to know that our government is committed to supporting law enforcement, prosecutors and community organizations to help break the cycle of offending.

Could the Attorney General please tell us how this government is stepping up to support Ontario communities' fight against crime, and confront victimization?

Hon. Doug Downey: Our government is committed to strengthening every available tool, including civil forfeiture, to help police, prosecutors and local partners fight back against criminal networks. It's why we made changes to Ontario's civil forfeiture laws to help them catch up with the rest of the country, in the 2020 Smarter and Stronger Justice Act.

Crime should never pay, and the \$1.5-million investment of seized funds we've been discussing through that program tangibly strengthen local capacity to prevent intimate partner, family, and gun and gang violence. In addition to building the capacity and improving access to supports for victims of crime, this year's grants will also help community organizations do the vital work needed to help keep our youth safe on the streets and at home.

And that's only the beginning. The reinvestment of cash seized from criminals is also helping support people experiencing victimization due to crime through mental health services, specialized care and support and education and training opportunities. We're enhancing all of those, Mr. Speaker. We've also provided funds for the north to help with the drug crisis in rural and remote northern First Nation communities.

Our government has been clear. We will not allow criminal networks to prey on our communities.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Premier. The Windsor community is reeling from the shock of losing a shift at the Stellantis plant: 1,800 jobs lost by next April. The repercussions are widespread. The Premier to date hasn't said anything. When GM lost jobs, the Premier said, "The ship has ... left the dock."

What is this government going to do to save these jobs in Windsor? They deserve answers.

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

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you for the question. We are disappointed to learn of the Stellantis decision to reduce the Windsor assembly plant to a one-shift operation

in 2022. We want the employees at the Stellantis plant to know that our government stands with them and their families. We need to continue with the right supports to ensure long-term growth, to create stable and good-paying jobs in the sector. We're committed to the success of Ontario's auto manufacturing sector and the 100,000 people who were directly employed before COVID-19. That's why we developed Driving Prosperity, so the auto sector can remain resilient and adaptable now and in the future.

We encourage Stellantis to continue to work with their union to ensure that everything is being done to protect good jobs in Ontario.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: The people of Windsor, these workers in Windsor, they don't need your thoughts and prayers. They don't need your disappointment. They need leadership.

Ontario deserves an auto strategy, and we've needed it for years. And you know this, because you were on this side of the House asking for that same auto strategy. Instead of doing that, the Premier stands at the border and waves goodbye to these jobs.

Windsor needs a Premier that is going to fight for these jobs, not wave the white flag. What is this government going to do—tangible actions. What are you going to do to save these 1,800 jobs in the city of Windsor?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: The member asked about an auto strategy. Thankfully, when we put Driving Prosperity in place two years ago, after years of neglect, we saw an unprecedented \$5-billion announcement in auto investment in 30 days alone, followed two months later by a further \$1-billion investment. A \$6-billion investment in the last year: This is unprecedented, Speaker.

Today we continue to commit to look not only at those \$6 billion in auto investments, but we are looking at the electric vehicle battery plants that go with them. We've launched a critical minerals program to bring those minerals to Ontario. We're looking at everything we can be doing to enhance the future of auto in the province of Ontario, whether it's in the making of the automobiles, the making of the batteries, in the mining of the minerals that go into those batteries—that is driving prosperity.

LAND USE PLANNING

Mr. Mike Schreiner: My question is for the Premier. Two weeks ago, Ontarians celebrated Ontario Agriculture Week. A week ago today, Ontarians celebrated local food with their families.

The food and farming sector employs over 800,000 people, contributing \$50 billion to Ontario's GDP. But we learned over the weekend that the Premier is going to double down on his scheme to build a \$10-billion highway that will pave over 2,000 acres of farmland, parts of the greenbelt and unleash sprawl on thousands of acres of farmland. It makes no economic or financial sense.

1110

So will the Premier say yes to local food and farming jobs and say no to Highway 413, which will destroy farmland and food and farming jobs?

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

Hon. Stan Cho: I'm proud to be part of a government that is expanding the greenbelt and investing in the future.

Let's put this in perspective. This is a growing population—and I don't blame them. The secret is out: This is the best place to live in the world.

The GTA is expanding by three million people in 25 years. In fact, the greater Golden Horseshoe, by 2046, is going to hit almost 15 million people. That is incredible growth, and unlike the last government, this government is going to say yes to focusing on that growth, focusing on the future, so we can enjoy what this province has to offer, not just today, but for many generations to come.

Major highways are a crucial artery for the people in this province, not just to get to and from work and back to their loved ones, but to make sure that those food products from our local farmers reach the markets they need to reach and that we continue to be that economic engine that runs North America.

This government will continue to invest in transit today and tomorrow.

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Speaker, we need a history lesson here. The 401 was built to address congestion in the GTA, then the 407 was built to do it—unfortunately, it got sold off—and now they're saying the 413. When will this government learn? Building more highways leads to more congestion and more sprawl, and it directly threatens Ontario's food and farming economy.

It's a financial disaster to waste \$10 billion on a highway that will save people 30 seconds. It's an economic disaster to pave over the farmland that feeds us and creates jobs in the local food economy. And it's a climate disaster to be building more highways like this when we have to drastically and urgently reduce climate pollution.

So will the Premier say no to the land speculators who will benefit from this highway and say yes to the people and farmers who know we need this land to feed us and to protect us from flooding?

Hon. Stan Cho: I have a lot of respect for the member opposite. I'm sure he can agree that the last government did very little to protect our green space. In fact, under the Ontario Liberals, we lost 100 hectares of forests and 30 hectares of wetland that was removed for highway construction. Approximately 330 hectares of the greenbelt were impacted. The greenbelt was changed 17 times under the last government.

This government is doing things differently. We are working with our partners in Ottawa to make sure there is an EA conducted, to make sure that we are minimizing the impacts on our green space and our farmland. This is something Steven Del Duca never did or never supported. But we understand there's a balance here, to look forward

to the growing needs of our province, a growing population, and to keep commerce moving in this great province.

Speaker, I will reiterate: Those studies are continuing. We're going to make sure we do what's right for the people of this province. And as I said before, it's not just about today, it is for those generations to come.

WASTE REDUCTION

Mr. Robert Bailey: My question is for the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. Ontario has taken significant action to keep our neighbourhoods, parks, lakes, rivers and streams clean and free of litter and waste. Reducing the impacts of waste in our environment and communities has been a major focus of this government over the past three years.

Could the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks please share with this House some of the initiatives that they will be undertaking to educate Ontarians as part of this year's Waste Reduction Week?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, the member for Barrie–Innisfil.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Thank you to the member for Sarnia–Lambton for that excellent question and for all his advocacy in his community and everything he does stand up for.

This week marks Waste Reduction Week. That kicks off today and goes all the way until October 24. It's a nationally run campaign, and it's an opportunity to remind Ontarians about what they can do to help their environment.

We saw tremendous uptake this summer—that Ontarians really care about litter and waste reduction. Speaker, 3.1 million Ontarians reacted to our day of Provincial Day of Action on Litter and Waste-Free Wednesday campaigns. They know that we need to reduce plastic pollution in our waterways.

Right now, 22 million pounds of plastic end up in our Great Lakes. But thanks to the improvements that we're making in innovative plastic-capture technology, less plastic waste is now ending up in our lakes. This is great news.

But there is more. We're also improving our recycling program to increase the amount of things that are recyclable and much more, just so Ontarians can do a little bit more for their environment.

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

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you to the parliamentary assistant for answering that question. Waste Reduction Week sounds like a very important initiative to keep our community safe and clean.

I know that in my riding of Sarnia–Lambton, my constituents are always wondering what our government has done to reduce waste and ways to contribute to reducing litter in their communities. Could the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks please share with this House what the government is further doing to keep litter out of our communities, lakes and rivers?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Thank you to the member from Sarnia–Lambton. He knows that if you spend one hour each weekend cleaning up litter, you can collect up to four full bags of garbage. That is something that is tangible and something that each Ontarian can do. I want to thank those Ontarians and my colleagues who participated in Waste-Free Wednesdays this summer, where we collected over 150 bags of litter, which was 3,300 pounds if you equate it to weight, which is also the equivalent of a female hippo.

Speaker, the answer is clear: Ontarians want to do something about their environment. They want to join our government and the supports that we're offering when it comes to protecting our parks, our lakes, our rivers and our neighbourhoods, things like improving our recycling program, which will now see more things being able to be recycled and reused. For example, now more than 50% of our battery waste is now reused into other materials, something that was difficult for other governments to accomplish, and of course, we're reducing the amount of organic waste in our landfills as well.

Speaker, we are on it. Ontarians want to do something about it, and we are doing something about it. I hope the opposition actually joins us to do something about it for a change.

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: My question is to the Premier. The loss of OHIP-insured eye exams is a huge blow to families in London and across the province. Despite months of notice, the government stopped negotiating with optometrists, and kids, seniors and persons with disabilities are starting to miss their eye exams. They are not receiving their health care.

A London mom, Jessica, told me how increased screen time during the pandemic has hurt her children's eyes. She told me that her oldest daughter "has been complaining about her eyes since the amount of screen time drastically increased last year with online schooling ... she is now struggling on a daily basis, it's affecting her ability to learn."

Karen is another London mom who reached out to me to let me know her daughter was experiencing difficulty seeing the board. She wrote to me, saying, "Imagine my surprise when I called our optometrist and was told that I was unable to book her an eye exam."

Kids have had their learning disrupted for the past two school years, and now, the lack of eye care is making this new school year even harder for them.

Why isn't the minister putting proper funding in place to make sure kids get the eye care they need and deserve?

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

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you to the member opposite for this important question. We're extremely disappointed that at the urging of the Ontario optometrists' association some optometrists have chosen to withhold publicly funded services for our youth and seniors. It's really due to the fact that the OAO continues to decline an independent third-party mediator's invitation to come

back to the table and the conditions that have to be met for negotiations to resume. It's really concerning, because they continue to tell the public—and the member opposite seems to have adopted this—that they're at the table when, in fact, they are not.

The current impasse lies squarely at the feet of the OAO, which, instead of participating in these good-faith negotiations, is choosing to demand an outcome before allowing negotiations to start. The government has made a reasonable and fair offer, and it's the beginning of future negotiations. We would just like the OAO to come back to the table so that people such as the ones you have mentioned in your question can get the eye care services that they should get.

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

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Back to the Premier: The member's disappointment and concern should be about the underfunding on your watch. Optometrists and London families are ready for OHIP-funded eye care services, but this government keeps telling them no.

That's concerning for Londoners like Dennis, who relies on annual eye appointments to do his job. Dennis is a senior in my riding, who works as a crossing guard near his local school. Eye exams are a regular part of his job to ensure kids can get to school safely, but his appointment this year was postponed because this government refuses to negotiate with optometrists. Unless this issue is resolved by November, Dennis risks not being able to do his job.

I also think of persons with disabilities such as diabetes, like my constituent Mandy, who wrote to me: "I am unable to book or receive care from my optician due to the current government's unrealistic determination of fair pay to opticians. I will go blind and become a drain on the government if this does not get rectified as soon as possible."

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Speaker, when is this government going to stop saying no and make sure seniors like Dennis and people like Mandy can access the care they need to go about their daily lives?

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you to the member opposite. Obviously this is a very important issue, and anyone who has been denied an appointment, who needs to have an appointment and has had any harm or suffering as a result of any delay, should reach out to the College of Optometrists. Optometrists have professional obligations to fulfill, and if they don't do so, the College of Optometrists will help direct people to another provider.

I'll just say that our government has made a fair and reasonable offer: an immediate compensation increase of 8.48% retroactive to April 1, which is a catch-up fee of increases physicians got; a one-time payment of \$39 million to catch up for increases that they didn't have for the last decade under a former government; future fee increases aligned with physician fee increases; as well as a commitment to immediately establish a working group to look at the overhead costs they seem to want us to look at, and we're happy to do that; and finally, a commitment for ongoing monthly discussions through an optometry services review committee.

We are at the table, ready, willing and able. They need to come to the table, so that we can negotiate a fair and reasonable agreement, which all Ontarians want.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: My question is for the Premier. We've entered the hyper-partisan election season in Ontario. The people around the Premier want the people of Ontario to believe that this man is someone who indiscriminately and cheerfully says yes to every request of him. But when it comes to support for people, immediately upon his election, this Premier said no to an increased minimum wage, no to Indigenous curriculum-writing teams. He went on to say no to funding for smaller class sizes during COVID, no to a vaccine mandate for health and education workers, no to a logical reopening for small businesses and, for months and months, no to paid sick days.

Mr. Speaker, when there has been a prolonged outcry and the Premier caves on an issue such as sick days, the answer has been less like yes and more like "All right, all right; we'll do something." The government's response on sick days is a half measure, because it is temporary. Having come this far through the pandemic, will the Premier now actually say yes to 10 permanent paid sick days?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I can tell the former Premier that we will always say yes to workers in this province. We're going to continue every single day to have their backs, to support families in all of our communities. That's why I was proud today to announce that Ontario is going to be launching the most comprehensive system in the country when it comes to protecting workers who work through temp help agencies and recruiters.

Mr. Speaker, no worker in Ontario should fear going to work. No worker in this province should sleep on straw mattresses. No worker in Ontario should have their passport held by their employer. I was proud to join today with my parliamentary assistant to ensure that we're bringing forward, again, a comprehensive licensing system to ensure that workers in Ontario are protected—something the former government did not do.

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

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm pleased that the government is picking up on the work on temp agencies which was started under our government, but this government has said no to workers over and over and over. They cancelled sick days. They didn't raise the minimum wage. They changed the regulations around PSWs and the supports in long-term care and being able to work in one place. As soon as this government was elected, it repealed legislation that actually protected workers.

Mr. Speaker, I suppose it is part of the political game to praise reckless support of development of environmentally sensitive land, to behave as though slogans and back-slapping are actual responses to real-world problems, but it is a dangerous part of the political landscape.

The fact is that real people need the support of their government in this very trying time. Rather than sitting on billions of dollars, this government had the opportunity to invest in businesses, in communities, in schools and in people's lives. Post-pandemic, people will still get sick, and without paid sick days, they will still be at risk. Will the Premier commit to making 10 paid sick days permanent? And if not, why not?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: The former Premier brought forward two paid sick days. We are at three paid sick days today in the province of Ontario. But, Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the former Liberal Premier of this province that she and her government said no to more than 300,000 workers in this province who lost their jobs under you.

Mr. Speaker, we're continuing to build back a better province here as we come out of this pandemic. We will always be with working people in this province. We're going to continue to support them. That's one of the reasons, for example, that we're so passionate about getting more young people into the skilled trades. These are jobs that pay six figures, that have defined pensions and benefits.

I have to remind the member opposite that when she was the Premier of this province, there was a 40% reduction in apprenticeship registrations. We're going to build back a better province and not take advice from the Liberal Party.

CANCER TREATMENT

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé. Before the pandemic, Ontarians expected and received the best cancer care in all of Canada and beyond. While the minister claims that cancer surgeries and services continue during the pandemic, a study from the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network shows us that it is not so. Ontario cancer patients have the longest wait times in Canada. Specifically, cancer patients now wait 46 long days for their cancer surgery and 34 long days for their cancer care appointments. These delays have a profound impact on the health of cancer patients, including the mental health for themselves and their caregivers.

When will cancer patients in Ontario gain access to timely cancer surgery, and where is the minister's plan to bring down the long wait times for cancer care?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Eglinton–Lawrence, the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health.

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you to the member opposite for this important question. I also met with the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network and discussed some of those statistics. I don't remember them quite the way you have cited them. There were some statistics that we're doing well on and some we need to improve, obviously.

We have a \$1.8-billion investment into our hospital sector that we've made. We're dedicating \$300 million to reducing surgical backlogs for delayed or cancelled surgeries and procedures due to the pandemic. I want to be clear that this investment is in addition to over \$200 million that we announced last fall, and that means half a

billion dollars invested to reduce the backlog of surgeries and procedures.

The funding will ensure that hospitals can expand their hours and keep operating rooms open over the weekend. We don't want to have anyone waiting unnecessarily for their surgeries. I should also point out that we did complete an average of 88% of targeted surgical allocation at all hospitals across the province. Over 430,000 scheduled surgeries have taken place since the start of the pandemic. We're working very hard to clear the backlog and will continue to do so.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ontario used to have the best cancer care system. Now, 42% of cancer patients are not satisfied with the quality of their care. This is unheard of in Ontario. For people trying to get their cancer diagnosis it is even worse, with 66% of them not satisfied with the care, or lack thereof, they are receiving.

Minister, Ontarians' trust in our health care system, our cancer system, is being eroded. What is the Minister of Health going to do to address this unacceptable drop in the quality of our cancer care system and services? When is she going to acknowledge that these long delays are problematic and put forward an action plan to bring the quality of cancer care back to meet the good people of Ontario's expectations?

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. We are seeing improving trends obviously with COVID-19 indicators and vaccination rates, and Ontario Health has issued a memo to hospitals to safely resume non-urgent and non-emergent surgeries and procedures, including those requiring in-patient and critical care resources. That means that the hospitals that meet the criteria that Ontario Health has specified will be working closely to try to clear those backlogs.

So we do have a plan going forward to try to clear these backlogs. Since the start of this pandemic, our government has been really transparent, that we are sparing no expense when it comes to providing Ontarians with access to the high-quality care they know and expect, and that applies to our cancer system as well, which is obviously very important. We plan to catch up and make sure that those cases are dealt with as quickly and as compassionately as possible.

COVID-19 IMMUNIZATION

Mr. Roman Baber: Good morning, Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Labour. On Friday, I was visited by a constituent, initial L., an educator with the Toronto District School Board for 30 years. She teaches grade 5 and raised generations of North Yorkers. Five years ago, L. was diagnosed with serious cardiovascular disease. She has been steady since, but she fears inflammation of the heart. Like many Ontarians who are not members of the Ontario PC caucus, she is unable to get an exemption. The school board is threatening that unless she vaccinates by the end of the month, she may be terminated. Whether she is right or wrong on the science or cardiology, she fears inflammation of her precious heart.

1130

Speaker, the minister's office is denying that the government blocked my Jobs and Jabs Act, which means they understand the merit of it and because, if passed, L. will keep her job.

I know this minister purports to be a kind and faithful man; I know him. Will he do something to protect my constituent or will he sentence L. to unemployment?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: We continue to encourage everyone out there who's able to get vaccinated. I'm proud to say that more than 87% of the people of Ontario who are eligible are now vaccinated with one dose; more than 83% with a double dose. Of course, we always encourage everyone, if they need to, to consult with their doctor.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to protect the health and safety of everyone, the well-being of everyone in this province. Together, we've really come so far from when this pandemic hit back in March 2020. Let's just keep working together. Let's get through this. We're doing much better than many jurisdictions around the world. Let's keep that momentum going.

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

Mr. Roman Baber: Speaker, my follow-up is to the Solicitor General. The government is silent as thousands of Ontarians are losing their jobs daily because of their lawful medical choice.

According to the Premier, approximately 15% of Ontario's health care workers remain unvaccinated. After months of wilful blindness, the government realized on Friday that suspension or termination of 15% of health care workers may lead to the collapse of the health care system. They're now looking for ways to backpedal on their negligence.

But how about police, firefighters and EMS, who are also stretched thin? Are their jobs not worth preserving? Unless there is a serious crime, it's difficult to get a police officer in North York, while a record number of firefighters and paramedics are on stress leave. Can we afford to terminate first responders and risk that no one shows up when we call 911?

Will the Solicitor General protect our police, fire and EMS from suspension or termination, or will the government dither and flip-flop later, as it is about to finally do on Ontario's health care workers?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Again, my message to everyone in this province is to keep working together.

I've had an opportunity to speak with health care workers, with police, with firefighters.

The overwhelming majority of people in this province are getting vaccinated. That's important.

We've come so far as a province from back in those dark days when the pandemic hit Ontario. I'm proud of what we've been able to accomplish together—employers, employees, all of the people in this province working together. I know the Ontario spirit, the Premier does, and all of our government and all MPPs—or at least most MPPs—and we're going to continue getting through this together.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Faisal Hassan: My question is to the Premier. St. Bernard school in York South–Weston tries to provide excellent education, but it recently had classrooms closed and teachers displaced. The classes are at maximum capacity, and it can't accept any new students. This means the parents of young children from the newly built townhouses down the street would have to transport their youngsters elsewhere. How is this acceptable?

When will the government admit that classes need to be smaller and teachers should not be cut?

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

Hon. Stephen Lecce: We certainly agree with the member opposite. That's why we provided \$300 million, for the second year in a row, to hire more educators, to hire more staff, custodians, ECEs and principals.

We recognize part of the layered approach advised by the Ontario science table was to take a multitude of actions, one of which includes distancing within our schools, which we are achieving through the investments the provinces made, in addition to the enhancements of the indoor masking requirement, the screening before children enter a school and the massive improvement in ventilation at that school and in every one of the publicly funded schools in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of the fact that Ontario has one of the highest vaccination rates for youth in the country. We have one of the lowest case rates for youth in the country because we have followed the best expert advice of the Ontario science table, SickKids and the Chief Medical Officer of Health. We will continue to do so to ensure that our schools are safe, they remain open and kids continue to learn in this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes question period for this morning.

This House stands in recess until 1 p.m.
The House recessed from 1135 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

GENDER AFFIRMING HEALTH CARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT, 2021

LOI DE 2021 SUR LE COMITÉ CONSULTATIF DES SOINS DE SANTÉ AXÉS SUR L’AFFIRMATION DE GENRE

Ms. Morrison moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 17, An Act to establish the Gender Affirming Health Care Advisory Committee / Projet de loi 17, Loi créant le Comité consultatif des soins de santé axés sur l'affirmation de genre.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I will invite the member to briefly explain her bill.

Ms. Suze Morrison: The bill enacts the Gender Affirming Health Care Advisory Committee Act, 2021. The act provides that the Minister of Health shall, within 60 days of the act coming into force, establish a gender-affirming health care advisory committee. The advisory committee shall submit a report making recommendations to the minister for improving access to and coverage for gender-affirming health care. After receiving the advisory committee's report, the minister shall inform the assembly of the measures that the minister recommends that the government of Ontario implement.

I would like to thank all of the trans, two spirit, non-binary, intersex and gender-diverse folks who helped contribute to the development of this bill. Thank you. Meegwetch.

POLISH HERITAGE MONTH, 2021

LOI DE 2021 SUR LE MOIS DU PATRIMOINE POLONAIS

Ms. Hogarth moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 18, An Act to proclaim the month of May as Polish Heritage Month / Projet de loi 18, Loi proclamant le mois de mai Mois du patrimoine polonais.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do. I'm proud to introduce, along with my colleague the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, my private member's bill that seeks to proclaim the month of May in each year as Polish Heritage Month. This bill would be the first piece of legislation recognizing Polish heritage in the month of May.

Ontario is home to more than 523,000 Polish Canadians, who have immigrated to and lived in Ontario, beginning in the 19th century. Polish Heritage Month will help educate and help contribute to the education of Ontarians about the hardship that Polish Canadians endured to achieve their freedoms and help preserve our freedoms, underscoring the significance of the Polish Canadian community in Ontario's history.

MORE THAN A VISITOR ACT (CAREGIVING IN CONGREGATE CARE SETTINGS), 2021

LOI DE 2021 DÉCLARANT QUE LES AIDANTS NATURELS SONT PLUS QUE DE SIMPLES VISITEURS (PRESTATION DE SOINS DANS LES HABITATIONS COLLECTIVES)

Mrs. Gretzky moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 19, An Act respecting the rights of persons receiving care, support or services in congregate care settings and their caregivers / Projet de loi 19, Loi sur les

droits des personnes qui reçoivent des soins, un soutien ou des services dans les habitations collectives et de leurs aidants naturels.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll invite the member to explain her bill.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: The bill enacts the More Than a Visitor Act (Caregiving in Congregate Care Settings), 2021, which requires the minister to respect and promote certain rights for persons receiving care, supports or services in congregate care settings and their designated caregivers. The minister is also required to safely integrate designated caregivers that were excluded because of the COVID-19 pandemic back into congregate care settings. The minister is also required to improve respect for the role of the designated caregiver within congregate care settings and to develop and implement a caregiving strategy in consultation with specified stakeholders. An interim strategy that incorporates the rights of individuals receiving care, supports or services in congregate care settings to have meaningful access to their designated caregiver is to be in effect for the first year.

Speaker, the bill was introduced in 2020 and passed first and second readings but died on the order paper when the government prorogued. I am re-tabling it because there are still many residents in congregate care that are being denied meaningful access to their designated caregivers, and we need to have a strategy in place.

LOI DE 2021 SUR LA FRANCOPHONIE

LA FRANCOPHONIE ACT, 2021

M^{lle} Simard propose la première lecture du projet de loi suivant:

Projet de loi 20, Loi visant à promouvoir le maintien et l'épanouissement de la francophonie ontarienne / Bill 20, An Act to promote the maintenance and development of La Francophonie of Ontario.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll invite the member to briefly explain her bill.

M^{lle} Amanda Simard: Monsieur le Président, ce projet de loi remplace la Loi sur les services en français qui date de 1990. Ce projet de loi modernise le cadre juridique pour nos services en français. Il prévoit, entre autres, le retour d'un commissaire indépendant, donc la création d'un commissaire de la francophonie; l'offre active, donc que les entités gouvernementales offrent de manière active leurs services dans les deux langues; que les tribunaux judiciaires et administratifs doivent pouvoir fonctionner en français; et que l'Assemblée législative effectue ses travaux dans les deux langues.

J'espère que mes collègues vont considérer cet important projet de loi. Merci.

TAXATION AMENDMENT ACT (TRAVEL ONTARIO TAX CREDIT), 2021

LOI DE 2021 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES IMPÔTS (CRÉDIT D'IMPÔT POUR VOYAGER EN ONTARIO)

Mr. Gates moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 21, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to provide for a non-refundable tax credit to encourage tourism within Ontario / Projet de loi 21, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts pour prévoir un crédit d'impôt non remboursable afin d'encourager le tourisme en Ontario.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the member like to explain his bill?

Mr. Wayne Gates: The bill amends the Taxation Act, 2007, to provide for a non-refundable tax credit for up to \$1,000 for residents of Ontario for travel within Ontario for the purpose of tourism.

Tourism, as we all know, was hit first and was hit the hardest. In my riding of Niagara Falls, we lost 40,000 jobs almost immediately, including in Fort Erie and Niagara-on-the-Lake. Just today, I got a call from the Niagara-on-the-Lake chamber, asking for more help for businesses and tourism.

It's a very good bill. I'm hoping that everybody will support it as quick as possible.

1310

MAKING THE PATIENT OMBUDSMAN AN OFFICER OF THE ASSEMBLY ACT, 2021

LOI DE 2021 VISANT À FAIRE DE L'OMBUDSMAN DES PATIENTS UN HAUT FONCTIONNAIRE DE L'ASSEMBLÉE

Mr. Fraser moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 22, An Act to amend the Excellent Care for All Act, 2010 with respect to the patient ombudsman / Projet de loi 22, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2010 sur l'excellence des soins pour tous en ce qui concerne l'ombudsman des patients.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I would invite the member for Ottawa South to briefly explain his bill.

Mr. John Fraser: The bill amends the act so that the Patient Ombudsman is appointed by this assembly and so that that appointment is also—all the remuneration is handled by the Board of Internal Economy, and that the ombudsman report to you, Speaker, as opposed to the minister. It also provides that the current ombudsman would remain in place.

These are really important changes, given the kinds of changes that are happening in our health care system and governance. I want to say that I really appreciate the vocal support of all my colleagues by getting this past first reading.

PETITIONS

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Mr. Faisal Hassan: A “Petition to Save Eye Care in Ontario.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I support this petition, and I’m sending it to page Zada. I have to sign it, too, here.

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Mr. John Fraser: I have a “Petition to Save Eye Care in Ontario.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Whereas optometrists now subsidize the delivery of OHIP-covered eye care by \$173 million a year; and

“Whereas COVID-19 forced optometrists to close their doors, resulting in a 75%-plus drop in revenue; and

“Whereas optometrists will see patient volumes reduced between 40% and 60%, resulting in more than two million comprehensive eye exams being wiped out over the next 12 months; and

“Whereas communities across Ontario are in danger of losing access to optometric care;

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

“To instruct the Ontario government to immediately establish a timetable and a process for renewed negotiations concerning optometry fees.”

I agree with this petition. I am affixing my signature and giving it to page Graden.

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Mr. Jamie West: I want to thank Andrée Côté from my riding of Sudbury for helping collect this petition. The petition is called “Petition to Save Eye Care in Ontario.” It says:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I support this petition, I’ll affix my signature and I’ll provide it to Lamees, our legislative page.

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Mrs. Belinda C. Karahalios: Good afternoon. I’ve got a petition here to save eye care in Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHILD CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Steve Guinard from Dowling in my riding for this petition. It reads as follows:

“Demand \$10-Per-Day Child Care....”

“Whereas several provinces and territories, including British Columbia, Nova Scotia, Yukon, PEI and Newfoundland ... have implemented ... \$10-per-day child care...;

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

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

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

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

I support this petition, will affix my name to it and send it to the table with my good page Zada. It’s nice to have pages again.

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

M^{lle} Amanda Simard: I’d just like to present this “Petition to Save Eye Care in Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Whereas optometrists now subsidize the delivery of OHIP-covered eye care by \$173 million a year; and

“Whereas COVID-19 forced optometrists to close their doors, resulting in a 75%-plus drop in revenue; and

“Whereas optometrists will see patient volumes reduced between 40% and 60%, resulting in more than two million comprehensive eye exams being wiped out over the next 12 months; and

“Whereas communities across Ontario are in danger of losing access to optometric care;

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

“To instruct the Ontario government to immediately establish a timetable and a process for renewed negotiations concerning optometry fees.”

I agree with this petition and I affix my name to it.

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Mr. Ian Arthur: I have a petition here entitled “Petition to Save Eye Care in Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I fully support this petition. I’m affixing my name to it, and I’m giving it to page Emily to provide to the Clerks.

1320

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Ms. Catherine Fife: I would like to thank Pierce Family optometry, Grand River Eye Care, Waterloo Eye Care Centre, Waterloo Vision Care Clinic, Waterloo West Optometry and Louise Litwiller for collecting these almost 800 petitions.

“Petition to Save Eye Care in Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It is my pleasure to affix my signature to this petition and give it to page Fraser.

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Ms. Doly Begum: I have a petition here to save eye care in Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature to it and give it to the Clerks.

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Ms. Jill Andrew: On behalf of the Ontario Association of Optometrists and the fine residents of Toronto–St. Paul’s, this petition is called “Petition to Save Eye Care in Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I wholeheartedly support this petition. I have affixed my signature, and I will give it to Theo for the Clerks.

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It’s my honour to present these petitions on behalf of Dr. Wes McCann of Central Optometry and all the patients there. The petition reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I fully support this petition and will give it to the page to deliver to the Clerks.

FRONT-LINE WORKERS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Liana Holm from my riding, in Lively, for these petitions. They read as follows:

“Make PSW a Career....

“Whereas there has been a shortage of personal support workers (PSWs) in long-term care and home care in Ontario for many years;

“Whereas Ontario’s personal support workers are overworked, underpaid and underappreciated, leading to many of them leaving the profession;

“Whereas the lack of PSWs has created a crisis in LTC, a broken home care system, and poor-quality care for LTC home residents and home care clients;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“Tell Premier Ford to act now to make PSW jobs a career, with” permanent “full-time employment, good wages, paid sick days, benefits, a pension plan and a manageable workload in order to respect the important work of PSWs and improve patient care.”

I fully support this petition, and I will ask page Graden to bring it to the Clerk.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order, the member for Toronto–St. Paul’s.

Ms. Jill Andrew: I wish to correct my record from this morning. As it turns out, it was the federal government that bailed out Loblaws with the fridges.

OPPOSITION DAY

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I move opposition day motion number 1:

Whereas COVID-19 has tragically revealed the systemic failures of long-term care in Ontario; and

Whereas the previous Liberal government expanded privatization in long-term care, causing an erosion of care that now needs to be reversed; and

Whereas successive Conservative and Liberal governments failed to hold accountable for-profit long-term-care operators who prioritized profit over safety and quality of care; and

Whereas evidence suggests that COVID-19-related deaths in long-term care were more frequent in for-profit

long-term-care homes than those operated by municipalities or non-profit organizations, and research data from as far back as 2011 suggests for-profit facilities “are less likely to provide good care than non-profit or public facilities”; and

Whereas the Ford government acted faster to pass Bill 218, the Supporting Ontario’s Recovery and Municipal Elections Act, 2020, and shield negligent for-profit operators from accountability than it has to improve quality of care for our parents and grandparents or the working conditions of the PSWs and medical professionals who take care of them; and

Whereas some homes, such as Pickering’s Orchard Villa facility, are still being considered for licence renewal and expansion by the Ministry of Long-Term Care, despite the horrific conditions uncovered by the Canadian Armed Forces that resulted in 70 COVID-19 deaths in the home; and

Whereas investing in not-for-profit long-term care would mean that more money is available to improve the quality of care for our loved ones who call these facilities home, and multiple studies show that not-for-profit facilities provide, on average, more hours of care per resident and are better at retaining the qualified staff our loved ones depend on; and

Whereas the Ford government is preparing to reward some of the for-profit companies with the worst performance records during the first and second waves of the pandemic with 30-year licences and millions of dollars in public funds;

Therefore, the Legislative Assembly calls on the Ford government to place an indefinite moratorium on the issuing of new licences and the renewal of licences of for-profit long-term-care providers and prioritize the development of not-for-profit long-term care in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Ms. Horwath has moved opposition day number 1.

I look to the Leader of the Opposition to lead off the debate.

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Ms. Andrea Horwath: Thanks very much, Speaker. I really wish we didn’t have to file this opposition day motion. I really wish the current government would do the right thing by seniors in our community, their loved ones, families in Ontario, and take the profits out of long-term care and also ensure that the very same facilities, the very same long-term-care homes that we saw such tragedy unfold within are prevented from continuing to provide this important service and this important home for our seniors as they age here in Ontario.

We saw the disaster that was lurking in long-term care in Ontario when COVID-19 hit. That disaster is no doubt something that was in the making for many, many years. In fact, studies going back to 2011 and probably earlier have been saying for all of this time that for-profit long-term care is absolutely less likely to provide good care than not-for-profit long-term-care homes. Case after case of for-profit long-term-care homes prioritizing profits over the quality of care is what we’ve seen over the years.

We’ve seen a Liberal government that for 15 years failed to change course and instead swept under the carpet as many times as they possibly could the disaster that was in long-term care. I know this, Speaker. I spent at least three tours in the time since I’ve become leader travelling from community to community, meeting with family councils, meeting with folks who had loved ones in long-term care, trying to get the Liberal government to pay attention to the horrific conditions that people were living in in long-term care. But at every turn, they refused to do the right thing. They didn’t make the investments; in fact, quite the opposite. They made cuts, and as a result, that quality of care continued to decline while that government was in office. It was horrifying—pictures spread across newspapers of people who were emaciated from not having been fed, folks who were literally rotting in their own filth.

I can remember, in the first general election that I ran in back in 2009, our leader at that time, Howard Hampton, was trying to get the long-term-care issue on the radar for that entire campaign. He wasn’t successful. It didn’t really come to the forefront of that campaign. Back then, in 2009, he was talking about seniors literally being left in their incontinence products for days on end, bedsores—we’ve seen pictures of them in the newspapers—that literally ate away until they hit the bones of loved ones living in long-term care, of seniors who couldn’t defend themselves, who weren’t able to call out for help, and who were left literally to rot.

That’s what Ontario has offered to our senior citizens who live in long-term care for decades, and it has to stop. And when the public money that we plow into long-term care goes to the profit-making of private corporations, that has to stop. Every single dime of public money needs to go into the care of our seniors and the quality of their lives and the quality of the workplaces so that the people we pay to look after them and provide them with dignity and with community are able to make a decent living. It has been a horrifying number of years.

Of course, as we saw, the Ford government, when they came into office, started cutting long-term care as well. They got rid of the resident quality inspections that we, the opposition NDP, had forced the Liberals to put into place. They tried to scurry away from that obligation as well, and then the Ford government comes into place and does the exact same thing.

In April 2020, we will all remember that the Premier said this: He was going to put an iron ring of protection around the residents in long-term care. That’s what he said in the early summer of 2020. Everybody knows that iron ring didn’t ever show up. He said specifically, “We are fortifying an iron ring of protection around our most vulnerable and the people who care for them. Our new, three-point plan”—eye roll—“will strengthen our existing measures so that Ontarians remain best protected.”

Well, we all know it didn’t happen. While other provinces were doing exactly that, Ontario didn’t bother. They didn’t hire thousands of PSWs to shore up long-term care before the second wave, and the second wave was worse than the first wave. It was nothing short of absolutely

horrifying, and it was a preventable human disaster that this government allowed to unfold in our province.

We didn't see the government act on the moving of PSWs into single homes. BC did that weeks and weeks before Ontario got around to it. Quebec managed to hire 10,000 PSWs in the summer. The Premier of this province didn't want to spend the money. We saw what the result was: literally a humanitarian disaster here in the province of Ontario, which has so much wealth. We let these seniors die of COVID-19 because we couldn't bother to spend the money.

In fact, the report that this government generated from its own commission specifically said solution after solution after solution was provided to the government. Every single time, it was turned down, until such time as, finally, those people who were generating those solutions, those civil servants and health care leaders who were generating those solutions for the government, just stopped. That's in the documentation of that report. They stopped providing solutions because they knew they'd be turned down because the government didn't want to spend the money. That is exactly what that report says.

This is after the government, of course, refused to give that commission the time it wanted to complete its work, so it manipulated that process, and they did a document dump right before the report was due, a document dump where the commission had been looking for thousands and thousands and thousands of documents that the government refused to release until the very last minute.

That's what we got from this government when it comes to long-term care and COVID-19. Nearly 4,000—nearly 4,000—seniors lost their lives to COVID-19 in our long-term-care homes, and we know that the people who were living in for-profit long-term-care homes paid the highest price. The government's own science table verifies that, Speaker, and says that for-profit long-term-care homes had twice as many infections as not-for-profit and community-run, and 78% more deaths than non-profit or publicly run long-term-care homes.

Why is all this important? It's important because we have a chance to change the future. We have a chance now, right now, to prevent this debacle, this horrifying situation, from continuing to be the way that we treat our seniors here in this province.

Over the years, Conservatives and Liberals—Conservative governments and Liberal governments—have cut. They have underfunded. They have understaffed. They have privatized our long-term-care system. They've handed the care of our most vulnerable seniors, people who literally raised us all up, who built our province, and who are in the last years of their lives, expecting that the government would do the right thing and make sure that they are well taken care of in those declining years—instead, their care was handed over to corporations that kept, and still do keep, staffing levels low so that they can keep profits high. There is no excuse for that in our province.

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We know that health care is something that people value and we know that we cherish and protect avidly our

public health care system, where it's not driven by profits; it's driven by quality of care. That's what we should have in our long-term-care system as well, Speaker.

What did we see in these for-profit homes? People hospitalized for dehydration and malnourishment; residents literally neglected; people dying from lack of nourishment; people dying from lack of water. This is what the Canadian Armed Forces showed us. I once again want to thank them for the great work that they did, not only in trying to shore up some of the worst homes but also for the report they wrote that really did draw back the curtain on what was going on in long-term care in a way that none of us could avert our eyes from again.

Now none of us should avoid our responsibility to fix this system, to make sure it spends every public dollar on providing that quality of care and not on giving a return on investment to shareholders or profits into the profit margins of corporations.

People calling out for hours and hours, only to be ignored—maybe not only even to be ignored, but only to be unattended to because there weren't enough staff on the floors, because the system that was already broken was collapsing in upon itself. Residents left in beds for so long—I've already described this—that the painful bed sores that they developed were literally horrifying. Families not being informed, not being told what was happening to their loved ones, left worrying as they were trying to get any bit of information, any scrap of information possible, from those homes.

As I said, the Liberal government before this government was a problem, led by the member for Don Valley West. The former member from Vaughan was a part of that government, part of that cabinet. They made choices. They made choices not to get rid of the profits and instead to continue on with profit-making, private long-term-care homes. They cut the budgets. They cut the amount of money that we were investing in long-term care. They ensured that those private corporations were able to continue to line their pockets as they resisted at every possible turn.

Every time we brought a bill—and we brought it many times—to guarantee four hours of hands-on care, for 15 years the Liberals wouldn't do it. When those horrifying murders happened in Woodstock and London, we begged them to put a full public inquiry in place so that Ontarians could see what was really going on in long-term care. But they refused because they didn't want Ontarians to know that 15 years under the Liberals led to a system that was literally horrifying. The evidence that the Canadian Armed Forces brought forward in their report was horrifying, for sure, but the more horrifying thing is that people weren't surprised. People weren't surprised that that's what was found by the Canadian Armed Forces, because it was the dirty little secret that the Liberals kept for the whole time they were in office and that the Ford government tried to keep as well when they took office: They were cutting long-term care. They had gotten rid of the resident quality inspections, the one accountability tool that we forced the Liberals to put in place. The Conservatives got rid of it the moment they took power.

I don't know how many family members I've spoken to who said their loved ones begged them, "Don't put me there. Don't put me into a home." I've heard that over and over and over again.

The number of people who have told me they feel guilty that they had no other options for their loved ones—literally, they feel guilty because they couldn't do it anymore. A home care system that's broken and also run in a for-profit manner was never providing enough hours of care for those families.

Eventually, they just couldn't do it anymore, and they were feeling such guilt. They felt terrible that they had to put their loved ones into long-term care, not only because they would have wanted to be able to provide the care with supports that they weren't able to provide under the Liberals, but also because they knew. They had seen some of the stories. They knew that there were problems in long-term care, but eventually they had no choice.

Speaker, we have a chance to turn this around. We have a chance to get the profits out of our long-term-care system. We have a chance to make the care of our seniors, our elderly as they grow older, something that we can have some confidence in, that we don't fear, that we don't feel guilty about.

Massive, for-profit corporations make a business, as we know, out of cutting corners to make sure that their profits increase. The three largest corporations that provide long-term-care services here in our province paid \$171 million in shareholder dividends just nine months into COVID-19. The same three companies scored \$138 million in government pandemic funding. There's something seriously wrong with this, Speaker—seriously, seriously wrong.

And now, those same for-profit corporations are lining up to get new beds allocated to them by their buddies the Ford government, and they're also lining up to have their licences renewed. A lot of those licences are coming to the end of their current time frame, and they need to not be renewed. That's what this motion is about. It's about saying once and for all here in Ontario that we're not going to avert our eyes anymore, that we're going to acknowledge our long-term-care system is broken and that one of the biggest culprits in the problems—other than Liberal governments and Conservative governments—is the for-profit sector, people who are profiting from the care of our loved ones. They're applying for more beds, they're applying for 30-year licence extensions, and they should not be granted, end of story. Enough is enough.

This government can't just continue to pretend that it's taking the interests of their buddies who run these homes above the interests of the public, so we're calling on the government to place a moratorium on new and renewed licences for private operators until a government can be elected next year that actually fulfills the promise of getting profits out of long-term care and turning around the system of care for our loved ones, because doing things the same old way and allowing those profits to continue to be made is not going to make a difference for the people of Ontario. It's not going to make a difference for our loved ones.

Corporations should not be rewarded while they had 78% of all of the cases of COVID-19. What we should be doing is prioritizing the development of not-for-profit and municipally run homes. That's where the priority should be, and the government needs to start making sure that the funding is available for those kinds of priorities.

I can tell you this: We have a plan that we put out last October. As we watched this government sit on its hands and do squat to protect loved ones in long-term care, our seniors in long-term care, from the second wave of COVID-19, we were preparing our platform on long-term care. We were being responsible and thoughtful about how you actually change a system. Here's what it includes. Here are the things that we actually can do. That's the good news; we actually can turn it around. We can turn it around, and we've made that commitment.

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Overhauling home care to help people stay in their homes longer, which I've already touched on as being extremely important: People do better when they're in a familiar circumstance. They do better when they can stay at home. And it takes the pressure off of loved ones who don't want to make that horrifying decision.

We can build smaller, more family-like homes.

We can staff up with full-time, well-paid, well-trained caregivers. We've heard this so many times. The working conditions of a PSW or a dietary staff or a nurse are the living conditions of our loved ones. So let's do right by both. Let's do right by all and make sure they're well-paid, decent jobs, and that the homes that we have are places that we can trust and have confidence in.

Make family caregivers partners, not bar them from coming in and helping with their loved ones. Make them partners in the care of their loved ones.

Make people feel at home with culturally responsive, inclusive and affirming care. That can be done here in Ontario. It absolutely can be done.

Finally, clear the long-term-care wait-list. That can be done as well. But there's no point in clearing that wait-list by building homes so that the friends of the current government can get more beds allocated to them. That's not the way forward, Speaker.

Guarantee new, strong protections; inspections; a seniors' advocate; and more.

Our platform plank is very comprehensive. We know that we can do it. So let's do it. Let's not go down the same old path as the Liberals and Conservatives have taken us for so long, a path that has been horrifying for seniors and their loved ones and families. Let's build a long-term-care system where the profits are no longer a part of what our public money is going to, that shareholders and private owners are no longer making profits or investment returns on the care of our loved ones, and make sure, instead, it's about a dignified quality of life in a home that we can have confidence in, that our loved ones feel safe in, that we know they're well taken care of in and where the workers are respected, they have full-time work, they have decent benefits, they have a quality of work life that's equal to a

quality of home life for the people that they take care of on behalf of the rest of us.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, I really urge everybody to support this motion. It's really a watershed time for our province, and there's no way that the lessons that were shown to us during COVID-19, the tragedies that occurred, should be ignored. Now is a very pivotal time in the history of this province. Certainly it is in long-term care and our response to what we saw during the pandemic. Let's do the right thing. Let's turn it around.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Hon. Rod Phillips: It's my pleasure to speak to this motion today. I did listen closely to the Leader of the Opposition's comments, and I think through this debate and the debate that will follow in this House we'll find that many of the objectives that the Leader of the Opposition talked about are objectives that are shared by our government. After decades of neglect, we are the government that continues to put forward a plan to fix long-term care.

I've read and reviewed the plan that the Leader of the Opposition's party put forward. Again, I commend them for putting that into writing. Again, on areas like culturally specific and supportive care, on areas like inspection, on areas like accountability, I am certain that they will find, as our government proceeds to roll out our plan to fix long-term care, similarities and perhaps even some things that they can support—certainly, the objective of focusing on the quality of care and the objective of learning from the experience of COVID.

There are elements, though, of the opposition plan that we cannot support, Madam Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition talks about business interests and corporations, and their plan would have the government of Ontario pay billions and billions of dollars to expropriate the assets of those corporations, while our plan, as I'll articulate later, will put billions of dollars directly into care, directly into building new facilities. Were this motion to pass, 140 of the 220 construction projects—new homes, redeveloped homes, thousands of beds for our seniors—would stop tomorrow. There would not be new homes. I don't think that is the right answer. I don't think that is what the people of Ontario want.

Madam Speaker, our plan to fix long-term care is built on three pillars: staffing and care; accountability and enforcement; and building modern, safe and comfortable homes for our seniors. I'm going to speak on each of those pillars, the first one being staffing and care.

As the people in this place know, seniors entering long-term care today are older and have more complex medical needs than they did just a decade ago. In fact, I was speaking—as I've been visiting a number of homes, usually just going with an inspector and doing it on an impromptu basis—to one woman who had been a PSW for 35 years, and I said, "What's the biggest difference between the reality of your residents today as opposed to even 20 years ago?" She said, "Twenty years ago, most of our residents walked into the long-term-care home. Today, they don't.

Today, they come in with an assistive device." It's the reality of the acuity of the care of the individuals in those homes.

So the level of care residents need has increased dramatically, but over the last number of years, the amount of care they receive has not. In the nine years between 2009 and 2018, the amount of care each resident received on a daily basis increased by only 22 minutes. That's over nine years. As this Legislature will remember, in the 2020 budget, our government committed to ensuring residents receive an average of four hours of care per day, as far as direct care, over the next four years, and that being care by nurses and personal support workers. That's a 42% increase in care; a one-hour-and-22-minute increase over just four years. This will make Ontario the leader in quality long-term care.

Of course, the reality of that is that we need to hire tens of thousands of new staff to provide this care. That's why we're partnering with our publicly funded colleges to invest \$121 million to accelerate the training of 9,000 personal support workers. Additionally, we're partnering with private career colleges and district school boards to invest \$86 million to train 8,600 PSWs. This total investment of \$207 million to support the training of 17,600 new PSWs—these are people who are going to start new careers and are starting them today, and we very, very much need their energy and their talents.

As I mentioned, I've had the opportunity to speak to a number of these trainees. I visited about half a dozen of the colleges, including some of the private colleges where the training is undertaken. I remember particularly the conversation with one young woman at Algonquin College who talked about this not just being a job, although she was excited about that, but also about this being a real vocation, a career in health care that could lead to further advancement into nursing and other areas where so many PSWs are interested in advancing.

We've also invested \$35 million to increase the enrolment in our publicly assisted colleges and universities to introduce 2,000 new nurses into the health care system, and that is under way right now. Those nurses are getting that vital training right now.

We're not only supporting the training of front-line staff, but we need to provide more funds to allow for the hiring of those new staff to meet that objective of getting to four hours of care. That's why I recently announced an additional \$270 million, beginning next month, for long-term-care homes across the province to increase the number of personal support workers, registered practical nurses and registered nurses. This also includes \$42.8 million to help increase care provided by allied health professionals—that includes physiotherapists, dietitians and, very importantly, social workers—by 20% over the next two years. This investment will allow all homes to hire and retain the staff they need to increase daily direct care so that we can meet the annual goals set out in our staffing plan.

As I've commented in the Legislature before, there has been some quite positive feedback on the plan. Jerry Dias,

the president of Unifor, for example, said that it is “a step in the right direction in helping long-term-care workers provide residents the adequate care that they deserve.”

This new funding that was announced—the \$270 million—will support 4,050 new long-term-care staff for the province this year. That will allow residents who currently receive an average of two hours and 45 minutes of care from nurses and PSWs to have that increased to an average of three hours of care by the end of March.

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This commitment continues to grow. As we train the staff, the dollars flow into the system. In addition to this year’s \$270 million, we’ll be increasing investments each year so that by 2023-24 we’ll be investing an additional \$1.82 billion each and every year for staffing. Over the next four years, along with investments we’re making to train and educate more PSWs, that’s an additional \$4.9 billion for staffing and care. This increase in staffing, care and support has been championed by residents, families and advocates for decades, and I always take the opportunity to thank them for their passion and their advocacy. I have had the chance to speak to many of them, and they very much expect that this is something the government will follow through on. That is why, as I’ve said previously, we will include the requirement to provide four hours of care per resident per day when I introduce legislation for the reform of long-term care later this fall.

As I said, there are a number of people who have commented positively—and I don’t want to just focus on organized labour, but I’ll take one more example from that.

Smokey Thomas, the president of OPSEU, said, “We are glad to finally see a government that is following up on its words and doing something.” Madam Speaker, as you know, this is from a labour leader who represents thousands and thousands of the front-line workers we seek to support.

We’re also caring for seniors waiting for a long-term-care bed. Between 2015 and 2019, the wait-list for long-term care in Ontario grew by more than 11,000. In 2020, our government launched the Community Paramedicine for Long-Term Care program to help seniors live safely and comfortably in their homes while they wait for a bed. The program leverages the skills of local paramedics providing non-emergency support to seniors, such as home visits and remote monitoring 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Working with our partners across the health sector, the program was launched in October 2020 in five communities and was quickly expanded to 28 communities. I was saying to the member from Nipissing earlier that my first opportunity to ride along with some of the community paramedics was in his home community of North Bay and I got to see the value that these paramedics provide. This has been an enormously popular program and many, many other municipalities have been working with us across Ontario, and we look forward to further discussions and the potential to expand that valuable program. Again, people and advocates speak well of this program. AdvantAge Ontario said this program is a wonderful

initiative to support seniors in the community while they wait for a long-term-care bed.

Of course, Madam Speaker, that added care is needed. We also need new beds.

We have two other pillars to our program. The first is around safe and comfortable beds; the second is around strengthening accountability and enforcement. But first, I’m going to focus on those safe, comfortable, modern beds.

As the Legislature has heard me say before, between 2011 and 2018, only 611 net new beds were built in the province, at a time when the need for those beds was desperately obvious to everyone. The Leader of the Opposition commented on that.

As you heard in the throne speech, we’ve committed to building 30,000 net new beds this decade, and we’re making good progress. In total, we have 20,000 new and 15,000 upgraded beds in development, so that’s 60% of that 30,000 goal.

Last Tuesday, I was in Vaughan with the member from Vaughan–Woodbridge and the member from King–Vaughan to announce 256 new beds—and speaking of culturally specific services, those beds will service, in particular, the Italian community. We were there as well, I should say, with His Worship Mayor Bevilacqua, who spoke very positively about the impact on his community.

On Wednesday, I was joined by the member from Oakville North–Burlington and the member for Oakville to announce two 320-bed homes to be built in Oakville. These new homes will offer culturally appropriate services to the Hindu and Sikh communities. Again, we’ve had many, many people speak positively about our plan, but I want to particularly quote Mayor Rob Burton of Oakville. He said, “My heart is overflowing with gratitude. For 15 years, I have been asking Ontario to deal with the long-term-care-bed deficit in our town and in one fell swoop, man, are you delivering.” That’s the great work that the member for Oakville North–Burlington, the member for Oakville and members across the government have been doing for their communities. It’s no surprise that Mayor Burton feels that gratitude. Remember, only 611 net new beds were built in the whole province over seven years, and we’re building 640 just in the community of Oakville.

Building modern, safe and comfortable long-term-care homes is, of course, part of that plan to fix long-term care, but, as I mentioned as well, there are important initiatives that are required around strengthening accountability, enforcement and transparency in the long-term-care sector. Again, the leader of the opposition spoke to some of the reasons why that’s necessary.

Our plan will give us the tools that are needed to hold home leadership accountable. It’ll also address long-standing issues in the inspection regime. Improving the inspection regime has been a recommendation of both the Auditor General and the long-term-care commissioners. One of the commissioners’ recommendations talked about developing “a coordinated, comprehensive long-term care ... inspection regime” that ensures “that residents enjoy the quality of life and receive the quality of care promised in

the fundamental principle in the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007, and that a safe and healthy workplace is created for staff.”

I’ve had the pleasure of joining inspectors on impromptu tours of many homes. I joined them, for example, with the member from Whitby, where we dropped in with an inspector on one of the local homes. That has been very instructive. I dropped in with the finance minister on one of the homes in Pickering. This is a great way to find out what’s going on at different times of the day and get a better understanding of what goes on in our homes. It’s also a great way to get to know the inspectors, to watch what they do, and to learn from them and learn from their experience. I’ve done that through these informal visits but also through a series of round tables and getting their feedback to understand the resources that are necessary—and we will provide those resources—and the rules that are necessary so we can properly strengthen accountability and enforcement and make sure that the investments that we’re making in long-term care get to supporting the residents and the families that deserve them.

So, after decades of neglect, as I said, our government is moving to fix long-term care. We’re taking the steps that are necessary to make sure that the care and the staffing are in place. This is not something where we can just snap our fingers. It took decades to get to the place where we are, and it will take time—four years—for us to staff up. That’s why we’re investing in the training. That’s why we’re investing the resources. That’s why, for the first time ever, we’ve given the homes projections of what the dollars are that they will receive year over year for the four years so that they can plan for that staffing.

We’re also making sure that new beds are in place. We need to have those safe, comfortable, modern beds so that the residents can have that place to enjoy. I had the opportunity with the member from Renfrew to open one of the new homes in Arnprior. I have to tell you, Madam Speaker—and I know we would all feel this if you’d had the opportunity to be there with us—the effect when we see residents of homes seeing and about to move into their new home, about to move into that new facility that has been built to the most modern standards, that will have the staffing to give them the most modern care, that truly can allow for the kind of compassionate care that our seniors deserve.

As I said, with legislation that will be introduced later this fall, we will deal with the issues of accountability, we will deal with the issues of enforcement and we will deal with issues of transparency, so that, in total, we will have a plan to fix long-term care and a plan to address the concerns that have been raised, not just in COVID, but as the leader of the opposition said, for many, many years before that. We’ll know that our precious seniors, our precious elders will have safe places to live and we’ll know that the staff, our front-line heroes, will have safe places to work.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Ms. Doly Begum: Speaker, 3,823 seniors have died and 13 staff members have died over the past year and a

half. The cause of these deaths—I know it says “COVID,” but, Speaker, what I want to argue is that the cause was greed. It was the current state of long-term care that caused the death of these people.

We saw this in Scarborough, whether it was Tendercare, Midland Gardens or Craiglee. At the height of the crisis, families at Tendercare called on our office. They’re not even in Scarborough Southwest, but they called our office and we had an emergency town hall. We’ve had many town halls, but we had one emergency town hall just for Tendercare. I met with many of the families. We even called on the Minister of Long-Term Care to join us, but she did not show at that time.

We heard from family members like Reed. Reed told us about his grandmother, who cried on the phone asking for water—Speaker, water. That morning of our town hall, early in the new year, she died. Imagine having your loved one or yourself ending up in a place where you spend your last breath calling for water and there is no one to answer.

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Reed’s grandma’s story is not isolated. I have heard from so many families, hundreds and hundreds of family members. The problem is not COVID-19; it is the systemic problem of profit. For so many decades, we have prioritized profit over the care of our seniors. The problem is decades of underfunding, under-regulation, with the profit-oriented homes that prioritized their own dividends. They deliberately kept the staffing levels low. That’s why Reed’s grandmother, like so many others, died during this pandemic and prior. Meanwhile, three of the largest long-term-care corporations gave out dividends of \$171 million.

Speaker, here we are debating about the fact that we should not be giving away money to profit-oriented corporations that were the cause of the death of so many of our loved ones. So I’m calling on the government to listen to us, because what we’re asking for is a better system of quality care. Imagine having long-term care where it’s about seniors who can stay home and more PSWs and nurses can actually come and give them the care that they need. Imagine having non-profit care homes where we can have the care that our seniors need.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you for the opportunity to join the debate on the opposition day motion on long-term care. It’s an area that I’m well familiar with from my time as a civil servant at the Ontario Seniors’ Secretariat, as the past president of the Ontario Association of Local Public Health Agencies and from my time on regional council, where for eight years I chaired the health and social services committee. The region of Durham operates four long-term-care facilities. So I bring that background to today’s debate.

Speaker, while I don’t doubt the sincerity of the opposition members regarding care for seniors, in particular in the long-term-care sector, their lack of action truly does speak louder than words.

Our seniors—the same people who built this great province, the towns and cities we have the privilege of

representing—deserve safe, comfortable, modern long-term-care homes so they can continue to age with dignity and respect.

Speaker, what our seniors deserve is not what they received from the previous Liberal government—a long-term-care system that lacked capacity, was understaffed, had poor enforcement and, most importantly, an absence of overall accountability. It was absolutely shameful.

After decades of inaction, our government will be the one to fix long-term care. The Minister of Long-Term Care and my caucus colleagues have listened to residents, families and stakeholders to gain valuable feedback and insights into what needs to be done and, importantly, how.

The Minister of Long-Term Care spoke earlier about three pillars. I want to turn now to speak a little bit more broadly about the second pillar: accountability, enforcement and transparency.

Third-party reports from the long-term-care commission, the Auditor General, the Patient Ombudsman and others have been very consistent. The long-term-care sector needs a robust accountability framework that protects residents. An effective inspectorate is an empowered inspectorate, one that's properly staffed and equipped with a suite of tools to hold bad actors accountable and to motivate good operators to perform even better. This approach to accountability starts at the top, as it should.

Since serving in his portfolio, the Minister of Long-Term Care has accompanied his team of ministry inspectors on surprise inspections of long-term-care homes across the province. Why would he do that? Well, it's important to see what is happening first-hand, and he's doing that, and he's doing that across our province. Our government has been proud to have hired 32 new long-term-care inspectors, increasing their capacity by 21%.

In September, the minister and I joined one of those new inspectors, Julia, a former nurse, and her supervisor, Susan, on a surprise visit to the Village of Taunton Mills. It's a 100-bed long-term-care home in my riding of Whitby, in the top part of my riding. What struck me that day about the home is the true dedication and genuine care that the staff provide for the residents. I see that in other homes beyond Taunton Mills in my riding, and I know my colleagues do as well.

Speaker, let me be clear: When we bring forward our proposed legislative changes, coupled with other announcements, our seniors can be confident—absolutely confident—that they are protected by the most comprehensive and secure long-term-care enforcement regime in Canada. However, Speaker, that remains only part of the equation. We will also be ensuring that tools are in place for good homes to become even better, and for those that need improving to be able to access the resources they need to succeed. Clearly, residents deserve no less.

I'm going to use my remaining time by drawing attention to one element of long-term-care homes that is too often forgotten, and that is that a long-term-care home is fundamentally a home. In my conversations with long-term-care residents, whether at birthday celebrations when I was able to get into the long-term-care homes or on

Remembrance Day, they remind me that, like anyone's home, long-term care should be a place where residents feel cared for, comfortable and safe. By creating the tools and funding that staff need to protect our seniors, our government will fix long-term care so that seniors in Whitby and across Ontario can feel safe at home. They deserve no less.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I rise today to speak to the official opposition day motion calling for a moratorium on for-profit long-term-care licences. The hard-working residents of York South–Weston have been among the front-line heroes the Premier often speaks of. These are also those health care workers working in long-term care and retirement homes. These heroes are often working several part-time jobs with no benefits just to make ends meet.

I have spoke to many of those health care workers, and also families and residents in long-term-care living. The story I hear time and again is one of working short-staffed and bouncing from workplace to workplace. The pandemic only highlighted what we have known on this side of the House for years, and that is that long-term care is in a serious state of crisis. This government, throughout the pandemic, continues to be slow to react and never takes a proactive approach to dealing with COVID; long-term care is a perfect example of that neglect.

It is clear and a fact that for-profit long-term-care homes represented 13 of the 15 homes with the highest number of deaths from COVID. When it comes to quality of life in retirement and long-term-care living for our most vulnerable, when profit is part of the equation, then care suffers. I believe in our plan for removing profit from long-term care, and putting every dollar into quality care for residents and paying decent wages and benefits to health care workers.

Madam Speaker, when I hear of the government looking to reward the bad actors, the for-profit long-term-care corporations, with 30-year licence renewals, I'm outraged that no apparent lessons were learned and that the many former government staff who are now paid lobbyists for long-term-care corporations truly have the ear of this government. When will the government listen to the front-line workers and families of long-term-care residents when they call for better care for elders, better wages and working conditions to retain staff, and removing profit from seniors' care?

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Madam Speaker, these for-profit long-term-care corporations are raking in record profits and have benefited greatly from government subsidizing wages and investments in improvements. The record of neglect of residents to the point of high COVID death rates, along with the poor treatment of front-line staff, add up to a picture that shows for-profit care should not be rewarded with extended leases and no oversight or accountability to this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this important topic today. You heard the Minister of Long-Term Care talk about the three pillars of our government's plan to fix long-term care: accountability, enforcement and transparency, and building modern, safe and comfortable homes for our seniors. It is the staffing and care pillar on which I will be focusing my remarks, specifically, on how they positively impact the long-term-care residents in my riding of Sarnia–Lambton.

First, I would like to share the long-term-care landscape in my riding. There are eight different long-term-care homes, with 961 beds. I have visited many of them—in fact, all of them over the years—and I can tell you that I'm impressed with the administrators, the staff and their dedication to the residents.

As we all know, the previous government only built 611 net new beds from 2011 to 2018, this at a time when our population was aging, both across the province and in my riding. This was unconscionable. However, we also know that it is the front-line staff that truly provide a home-like atmosphere to provide residents quality of care and quality of life. We have committed to more staff in long-term-care homes because we know that more staff means more care.

Recently, our government announced an additional \$270 million this fiscal year to enable long-term-care homes to hire more staff. This is a down payment of the \$4.9 billion that we are committed to spending over the next four years to increase staffing to get to an average of four hours of direct care per resident per day.

In my riding of Sarnia–Lambton, this funding means that the eight long-term-care homes will receive an additional \$3.5 million this year alone to increase staffing. When the full funding comes into place, it is estimated those homes will receive some \$20 million more per year than they receive today. This will have a positive, long-lasting impact for the residents of homes in Sarnia–Lambton.

Fifteen years ago, the previous government was given expert advice that our residents in long-term care need more staff and more care, yet they chose to do nothing. Again, this was unconscionable.

To my friends on the other side of the aisle, I want them to know the homes—I guess it was the member from London–Fanshawe: that homes in her riding weren't left out, despite her trying to close many of them. The five homes in her riding will receive more than \$2.6 million this year for staffing and an estimated \$16 million more in current funding each and every year beyond 2024.

But don't take it from me, Madam Speaker. Jane Joris is Lambton county's general manager of long-term care. Here is what she had to say in the Sarnia Observer after we announced the additional funding for the local community: "This is more than I expected, so I'm very excited about it." Jane goes on: "It's good timing and it's good news. The challenge, of course, will be if we can find people to do the work."

She makes a good point. We all know that fundamentally long-term care is about people caring for people. So I would like to spend some of my remaining time

talking about the PSW programs that our government has introduced at Ontario's public colleges, private career colleges and many school boards.

We have funded the tuition for up to 16,000 new PSWs this fiscal year. Those are critically needed individuals across the health care spectrum, perhaps nowhere more than in long-term health care. In my riding, I'm fortunate to have both Lambton College and the Lambton Kent District School Board offer free tuition for PSW training programs. The folks that enter these programs are young people, individuals changing jobs, new Canadians, all looking for a new career in health care in their community.

Madam Speaker, as I wrap up, I would like to leave the House with one thought: The issues in long-term care have been recognized by residents, family, staff, advocates and experts for decades, yet no government has taken significant action. I'm proud to be part of a government—this government—that will be the one to fix long-term care. We are well on the way to doing so.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Today, as MPPs, as legislators, we have an opportunity to change things for the better for the 78,000 residents of our long-term-care homes. We have an opportunity to take the first step to make sure that every resource that we direct to long-term care goes to the bedside, not to the pockets of the big investors in our private long-term-care system. This is something we have to do today. Report after report for over a decade has shown us that private, for-profit long-term-care homes do not provide quality care for their residents. COVID just put it out on the front page of the paper for everybody to see, but everybody in long-term care knew that. We all know that.

We have to take the first step. It's not that hard. Look a little bit west of us, to Saskatchewan. The Saskatchewan Premier is having a meeting with Michael Guerriere, the CEO and president of Extencicare, to show him the door, to tell him that Extencicare is not welcome in Saskatchewan any more. Ontario can do the same. It's not that hard. It is being done. We know it is the right thing to do. Take the money that goes to the investors, take the money that goes in dividends and take the money that goes to the hundreds of thousands of salaries that are being paid to those big, for-profit corporations, and reinvest it in care. Make the number one objective of every long-term-care operator to have quality care, not to pay higher dividends to their shareholders, which is what we have in the majority of homes in Ontario right now.

I beg you to take your responsibility seriously. There are vulnerable people depending on the decisions that we're going to make this afternoon in this House. We can change their lives for the better. We can relieve the anxiety of thousands of families who worry about their loved ones by taking the first step. Put a moratorium on for-profit long-term care. It will go a long way. It's an easy step. Do it now.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Aris Babikian: It is my pleasure to stand up here today and to speak on the official opposition day motion. I rise this afternoon bewildered by the obfuscation of the opposition this afternoon. Although I am certain that opposition members do care about our seniors, they were for 15 years unable to deliver the help and support that those living in long-term care so richly deserve.

We on this side of the House are working day and night to ensure that we fix long-term care. This minister and this government have made a commitment to the people of Ontario to build 30,000 net new beds over the next 10 years, and we are delivering on that promise. Since our election in 2018, we have invested \$2.68 billion in the system. That is money going directly to ensure we have the best-quality homes and living conditions for those living in long-term care. We as a government have 20,161 new beds in the development pipeline, and we are working to upgrade 15,918 beds. This is part of our commitment to build 30,000 new beds over the next 10 years.

Speaker, let's compare the 30,000 new beds we are building to the record of the Liberal government that the NDP supported for 15 long years. They managed to build only 611 new beds. In my riding of Scarborough—Agincourt, the previous Liberal government and the MPP I defeated in the last election did not build any beds—zero beds—while this government is building or redeveloping 256 beds in my riding alone.

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To my friends in this House, the former MPP I speak about, who is planning to run again for the independent Liberal Party, is the former executive director of Bennett Village, a long-term-care home in Georgetown. The home had asked to develop and renovate their facilities well before the 2018 election, but the Liberal government refused to help support our seniors. This record of failure was rectified by this government when they were approved for 160 new beds.

What did the executive director and my Liberal opponent they say when our government approved their application? “This latest provincial announcement ensures Bennett Centre Long-Term Care will continue the tradition of excellence in care and being an active part of the community,” said Soo Wong, the executive director of Bennett Village. Speaker, our government is getting it done.

On that same note, in the riding of Scarborough Southwest, the previous government, supported by their NDP friends, did not build a single bed—zero beds—in the period from 2011 to 2018, while this government has been working hard to build 180 beds and we are continuing to ensure that Scarborough and our seniors are no longer neglected.

Speaker, we are also aware that the mental health and well-being of our seniors in long-term care is of extreme importance. As such, we are not only working to build new beds; we are working to ensure that seniors receive care appropriate to their culture and ethnic needs. Last week, the Minister of Long-Term Care was in Vaughan to announce a new 256-bed home that would serve the Italian

community. The following day, he was in Oakville to announce 640 new beds, a significant portion of which will serve the cultural needs of the Hindu and Sikh communities.

I would like to share what the minister said on that, because I think it will resonate with many members of the House: “The principle is, when it comes to our elders, language, food, music, faith,” these are all things that make the quality of life better. I couldn't agree more.

We have been working with ethnic and cultural communities to build homes and develop beds that cater to the linguistic and cultural needs of the diverse aging population of Ontario. In March alone, we announced 18 projects to serve cultural groups, including five projects that will serve Indigenous communities and seven that will serve Ontario's francophone population. This includes a new 256-bed francophone home in the riding of my friend from Don Valley West. We are getting things done.

But we didn't just stop there. The Guru Nanak Long-Term Care Centre in Brampton is a 160-bed home that will serve the Punjabi and Sikh communities. The new 128-bed Ivan Franko home in Mississauga will serve the Ukrainian community. In Scarborough, Mon Sheong will be building a 320-bed home to serve the Chinese community. These are but a few examples, Speaker.

I spent many years working with our ethnic communities in Scarborough. I have had the privilege to serve as a citizenship judge, and most importantly, I am now the primary caretaker to my own mother. I know that an ethnically and linguistically appropriate home is of extreme importance to the health and well-being of seniors like my mother. I am proud to be a member of a government that is delivering on its promises and is helping seniors in this province age with dignity and live with the respect they richly deserve.

Speaker, allow me to encourage members from all sides of the House to continue working with our government to support the extremely important work we are doing to fix long-term care in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Ms. Jill Andrew: I want to say that today is October 18 and it's Persons Day in Canada. It marks the day in 1929 when the historic decision to include women in the legal definition of “persons” was handed down by Canada's highest court of appeal. This was a significant step forward which further solidified women's rightful place as persons. It's incredibly important to note that this decision did not include all women, such as Indigenous and racialized women.

Today, I stand in full support of our Ontario NDP official opposition day motion calling on this Conservative government to place an indefinite moratorium on the issuing of new licences and the renewal of licences of for-profit long-term-care providers and prioritize the development of not-for-profit long-term care in Ontario.

Speaker, let me say that this motion is a motion that speaks to women. It speaks to the fact that women have been disproportionately impacted not only by the

pandemic but by the attacks against workers, our front-line health care heroes, by this government.

We need to fix long-term care, and to fix long-term care, that means taking profit out of long-term care and focusing on the quality of care that our loved ones need. And we cannot forget the people who are providing that quality of care. These are our front-line health care workers, our PSWs, our nurses, our friends like those at the Hillcrest hospital site in my riding, at Davenport and Bathurst, where we know that we have some of the lowest-paid PSWs in the province, who are working their butts off, overtime, understaffed, and in some cases missing the necessary PPE, as we've seen in many long-term-care situations—particularly for-profit here in this province, during this pandemic. Why is this happening? Because care is being contracted out to save a buck.

Our grandparents, our grandfathers, our loved ones are worth more than this. If we want to talk about a she-recovery, if we want to talk about creating an Ontario where women, PSWs and nurses will stay in the industry, we've got to pay them better and protect their working conditions.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It's an honour to rise to participate in today's opposition day motion debate.

Almost 4,000 of our elders died in long-term care during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is such an unspeakable tragedy. My heart goes out to the families who lost loved ones and the staff who cared for them.

Speaker, we've known for decades that our long-term-care system is broken. Report after report has talked about substandard care, about seniors not being properly changed, showered and taken care of, about food being completely substandard, and yet nothing has been done to address it.

Our elders deserve better. Our elders deserve dignity. Our elders deserve a system that prioritizes care over profits. Our elders deserve four hours of care now, not four years from now. And the people who care for our loved ones deserve respect, dignity and fair wages. They deserve a permanent wage increase. They deserve to have Bill 124 revoked. They deserve to have access to mental health supports. They deserve to have access to better working conditions with proper staffing and nursing ratios, because the quality of work determines the quality of care. Speaker, the system is broken. You know the system is broken when, during a pandemic, millions of taxpayer dollars went into a system to care for our loved ones and our elders and that system paid out \$170 million in dividends to shareholders, money that could have gone to caring for our elders, our loved ones, people who deserve respect.

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Speaker, I would argue that it is fiscally irresponsible for the government to pour more money into a broken system without fixing the system first. And so, yes, Speaker, we need more long-term-care beds—there is no doubt about it—but we need to make sure that the money

funding those long-term-care beds is going to beds that are going to prioritize care over profit.

That's what this motion is about. It's about making sure that when we make the investments that our seniors deserve, those investments go into the system that's going to care for our seniors. Speaker, I encourage the members opposite to make a commitment to say that we're going to invest in a system that prioritizes care over profit, that prioritizes the working conditions of the people who care for our loved ones, and that prioritizes dignity and respect for our elders, the dignity and respect they deserve.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: I'm pleased to join the debate today on the opposition motion on long-term care. We've all had the chance this afternoon to listen to the real contrast between our government's approach to long-term care and what the opposition parties would do. It's very clear to me that the NDP's priorities are ideological and not practical. Their goals are not more beds or better care. Their motion doesn't even mention creating more beds and barely mentions improving the quality of care.

Well, I can assure this House that our government sees things very differently. Our priorities are clear. After years of neglect, we will fix long-term care: more beds to shorten waiting lists, more direct care for every resident, more staff in every home. Our government puts residents first. We recognize that they are living in their homes, and we will be accountable to families and the public and make sure that these goals are met. We are not taking the ideological path of the NDP. Our government is focusing on getting things done.

The minister and my colleagues have spoken about the three pillars of our long-term care plan. They are our road map to make long-term care better. First, we must build modern, safe, high-quality homes for seniors. This includes new homes and redeveloped and improved facilities. Second, we will increase and improve staffing and care for residents. Third, we will ensure accountability, enforcement and transparency in long-term care.

We are fixing the system we inherited from the Liberals. In the 2018 election, we committed to thousands of new long-term-care beds. We knew the failure of the past Liberal government to create the beds seniors needed. Between 2011 and 2018, the Liberal government created only 611 net new beds across Ontario, across a province of more than 14 million people.

My colleagues have spoken of what this meant for their communities. I know that in my community of Oakville North-Burlington, there are hundreds waiting for long-term care. The province's waiting list rose to over 40,000 people. Let's look at this in human terms: A senior on a waiting list is someone waiting at home or in a hospital bed. Family members have to quit their jobs to provide complex care for their loved ones. This should be not taking place at home, but in a long-term care facility. This is not right, and it's why our government is acting and working to get things done.

Last Wednesday, in my community, the Minister of Long-Term Care and I announced two new long-term-care

homes to be built on a site beside the Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital. These two new homes will provide 640 beds, homes for seniors who need long-term care. They are being built by Schlegel Villages, a three-generation family business with a tremendous reputation for excellent care. The site will be a campus of care with a main street, stores, pharmacies, a health care centre, dining and other amenities. They will also offer culturally appropriate services to members of the South Asian communities. It's an example of our government working as a partner with the municipalities, meeting local needs for long-term care to benefit the whole community.

Here's what Oakville Mayor Rob Burton said about the two new homes: "For 15 years, I've been asking Ontario to deal with the deficit, the 800-bed long-term-care deficit in our town. And in one fell swoop, man, are you delivering." This is the kind of forward-looking, progressive project that we need to see more of. It's a symbol of how our government is looking at local needs in communities across the province to get homes built quickly.

And again, we are focusing on getting things done. We've already announced over 20,000 new beds and 15,000 upgraded long-term-care beds across the province toward our commitment of 30,000 new beds. But we know that new beds are only the start; fixing long-term care means training and hiring more staff and increasing care for residents.

For three years, I've had the honour to serve as parliamentary assistant for long-term care, both before and during COVID. During this time, I've met with families, residents and staff in long-term care across the province. They've told me about their concerns and provided thoughtful ways we can improve long-term care. Residents need more direct personal care, and for this to happen, each long-term-care home will need more staff. It's why our government will increase the amount of direct care residents will receive from the current 2.75 hours to an average of four hours per day over four years. This increase has been proposed for years, but it has taken our government to get it done. The Sharkey report in 2007 called for four hours of care, but the Liberal government did nothing.

Earlier this month, I joined the minister at George Brown College as he announced an additional \$270 million for homes across the province to increase staff by 4,000 this year alone. For my community, this means an increase of \$3.4 million this year for our six long-term-care homes.

We've also invested in training to make sure we have the personal support workers we need for this increase. This year, we funded tuition for 16,000 new PSWs, like the ones I was pleased to meet at George Brown College. We expect 11,000 to join the workforce by the end of this year.

Seniors in long-term care deserve a level of care which maintains their quality of life, their health and their dignity. Our government is making sure this happens. We are getting the job done. To make sure that long-term-care homes are providing the care residents need, each home

needs to be accountable. This means being accountable to its residents, to its families, to the public and to the government.

Here are some of the ways our government has been able to be accountable already: First, we just announced we will put four hours of direct personal care into law.

We appointed the long-term-care commission last year to study the government's response to COVID.

The staffing study I noted earlier was a response to the report of the Gillese inquiry.

Everything we are doing in long-term care, each of the three pillars, is dedicated to improving the lives of residents. We are getting the job done.

We've also put in programs such as community paramedicine for those eligible for long-term care to help keep them in their own homes longer.

I started my remarks by speaking about the NDP and its impractical and unrealistic priorities. Let's move over to our friends the Liberals. I've pointed out their record of failure: only 611 beds in seven years across Ontario. This is fewer beds than the 640 we announced in my own community of Oakville North-Burlington just last week. It's a shameful record.

And we shouldn't forget that Steven Del Duca, the leader of the Liberal Party, was an MPP for the last six years of their government and a minister for four. Where was he when the Liberals were doing nothing in long-term care?

I'm very happy to contrast our record with that of the Liberals. There is one party with a record of getting things done, and it's the Progressive Conservative government. We are fixing long-term care.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Ian Arthur: For-profit long-term-care facilities are failing seniors in Ontario. During COVID-19 outbreaks, for-profit homes saw nearly 10 times the number of fatal cases per bed than not-for-profit homes. If a car company released a model that was 10 times more likely to result in a fatality from a collision, could you imagine how quickly we would pull it off the roads? Yet there are countless stories of loved ones dying from COVID and neglect.

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The damning report from Canada's armed forces is all too fresh in our minds: seniors sitting in their own feces, deaths from lack of water. What province am I in, Speaker? The member from Whitby stressed that we need to think of these profit LTCs as homes. I guess if the home didn't have any water, he must have been thinking about homes in Indigenous communities.

Throughout all of this happening, the money kept coming in for for-profit long-term care. In 2020, Sienna Living and Extencicare paid out \$73 million to their shareholders. That's in the midst of a pandemic.

The members opposite will try and distance themselves from these practices, but they can't distance themselves from their own actions to protect those profits, actions like introducing Bill 218 that makes it harder for for-profit

LTCs to be deemed liable for what happened during the pandemic. QP Briefing reported that the chief investment officer for Chartwell stated that Bill 218 mitigates the risk of lawsuits against the company—nearly 4,000 dead, and this government moved to mitigate risk.

This negligence is not new; it has been going on, it has been a cycle for years. There are so many connections, like Philip Dewan, chief of staff for McGuinty, then lobbyist for the Ontario LTC Association, or Adrienne Spafford, public affairs director for the same association and then the senior policy adviser to former Premier Wynne. It's a cycle that has gone on and on and on, and it is time for it to stop.

This pandemic was on your watch, and, as you say, the buck stops at you. So, please, stop the bucks flowing to for-profit long-term care, do the right thing and pass this motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

M^{me} Lucille Collard: It's an honour to rise today on behalf of the people of Ottawa–Vanier to comment on this motion seeking to phase out for-profit long-term care in favour of more not-for-profit long-term care in Ontario. This issue has, in fact, raised a significant amount of interest in my riding.

Soon after being elected in February 2020, the province was placed in lockdown in reaction to the rapid spread of COVID-19, and that's when my work in the riding began. One of my first efforts at virtual outreach was to contact the long-term-care facilities and retirement residences in my riding to inquire about their well-being and to seek information about the challenges they were facing in the early stage of the soon-to-be-declared COVID-19 pandemic. I was very motivated to do that because I visited almost the totality of these institutions during my campaign and I had promised them that I would come back to visit them if I was elected, but then I couldn't, because of the lockdown.

As the situation evolved, I learned with dismay of some of the worrisome consequences the pandemic was having in some of the facilities. It became clear to me that intervention was urgently needed to repair and enhance all aspects of care being provided to the residents in long-term-care facilities in Ontario. My questions at the time were:

—How can the all-too-well-known deficiencies be addressed in a comprehensive and timely way?

—What are the new long-term-care models we should be promoting?

—How do we go about integrating those models into our existing care facilities?

—How do we design and deliver a continuum of health care services in the future that will incorporate long-term care into our overall health care approach?

I decided to consult well-known, respected experts who have written extensively about long-term-care deficiencies over the past several years. I did this with a view to engaging the community of interested participants as part of a long-term-care policy forum, which took place

virtually on September 9, 2020. The distinguished members of the expert panel were Melissa Donskov, executive director, Bruyère Continuing Care; Dr. Pat Armstrong, widely published scholar, researcher and professor of sociology and women's studies, York University; Dr. Jacqueline Choiniere, co-author, researcher, and associate professor and director, graduate program in the school of nursing, York University; and Natalie Mehra, executive director of the Ontario Health Coalition.

The conclusions and recommendations of this forum were delivered to the long-term-care commission in a comprehensive report. Out of the 13 recommendations, I will mention only two that relate specifically to the profit aspect of long-term care. They are: provide government funding to address urgent staffing and equipment needs—not to finance for-profit capital development funding; and discontinue public hospitals and long-term-care homes contracting out management and administrative duties to private for-profit chains.

Madam Speaker, long-term-care homes are necessary institutions in our society. Everyone wishes to keep their loved ones home and care for them as long as possible, but it's not always possible when the level of care they need requires professional care. Families have the right to expect that, put in the hands of those institutions, their loved ones will be cared for with compassion, dignity and professionalism. The mere concept of having long-term-care facilities that operate with the objective of making profits is simply contradictory to the moral imperative of their mission.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure to join the debate today. The problem with for-profit long-term care is that it is for profit. That is part of our point here today. Whenever an operator sees the human body as a profit centre, where a person's dementia, their diabetes, their frailty can generate money, can generate profit, this runs counter to our entire objective of a quality and ethical health care treatment. The profit agenda compromised and undermined compassion and, as we saw in the height of the pandemic, it was also deadly.

This is why we are asking for a moratorium today. That is what we are asking, because we should learn from the experience that we went through as a province. We would argue that we have a moral responsibility to pay attention to what happened in this province and act accordingly.

I concur with Dr. Naheed Dosani when he says, "When you think about for-profit homes, they're by design created to have one thing in mind and that's profits for shareholders. It's not care for our seniors."

In my short time today, I want to amplify the voices of those people who bore witness to what happened in these homes.

"Adam Baker, a 34-year-old lieutenant, was part of a relief team sent to Hawthorne Place Care Centre in North York in June. Before he'd arrived, it was bedlam. Nurses and PSWs regularly moved between resident rooms without changing their PPE, and thermometers and blood

pressure cuffs were shared without being disinfected. Rooms were spattered with feces, and there were ants and cockroaches in the halls. Patients cried out for help, unheeded, at times for hours. Some hadn't been bathed for weeks. By the time Baker arrived, the residents, battered and depleted, were in dire need of human contact." Compassion was lost in this home because profit was driving the agenda.

Let me remind the government that the Canadian soldiers who experienced these homes also experienced post-traumatic stress following their tour of duty in for-profit homes in the province of Ontario.

You cannot ignore this information. You have a duty to respect those experiences and to respect the people that were elected to serve. Do the right thing today. Listen to us. Put a moratorium on for-profit licences in the province of Ontario. Do the right thing for our seniors. Do the right thing for the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm glad to stand up today.

Four thousand people died in long-term care. I listened to the Conservative government for the last 40 minutes. Not one person offered condolences to their families as we discuss this motion. Those were our parents, our grandparents, our aunts, our uncles that died in these facilities. The Canadian military was called in and really peeled the orange away and said, "This is what's going on."

I want to talk to the minister, who I've had lots of dialogue with. While the minister was away in St. Barts last year, do you know what I was doing? I wasn't spending time with my family. I was watching people die at Oakwood Park Lodge, where 100% of the residents got COVID, 100% of the workers got COVID. Forty people died in that facility, a profit facility—not enough staffing, not enough PPE. They were preventable deaths. Those people didn't have to die. Those parents, those grandparents, didn't have to die.

1500

I was dealing with Millennium Trail Manor, another profit facility. It's not about care; it's about making money. Yet I listen to you guys talk—the one in the back there, I forget what she said, but she was basically saying it was the way we think. I'll tell you what I think: I think people who are my mom, my dad, who get older and who built this great province have the right to be taken care of with respect and dignity and not have to go into these places and beg for water, beg for food, beg for quality food. That's what I think should happen in long-term care. The reason why it's not happening across the province is because of profit, because profit is more important than care.

How can anybody over there—or even on this side, even the Liberals—not say, "Take the profit out. Take every single penny that we can afford in this province and give it those homes, give it to our seniors"?

They deserve it. They don't deserve to die because they're not getting water. They don't deserve to get terrible food in our long-term-care facilities. And it's

happening. I got a call this week from a family talking about food—I've got to sit down; my two minutes is up.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. John Fraser: I'm pleased to rise to speak to this motion. I'd like to thank the Leader of the Opposition for bringing this forward. I view it as a referendum on taking the profit out of long-term care and supporting the expansion of not-for-profit long-term-care homes in this province. It's a chance for all of us to say where we stand on that issue. I'll be supporting this motion. I'll have a little bit more to say about that later.

The pandemic has shown that building more for-profit homes is not the right thing to do—\$170 million in dividends is pretty hard to square with what we've seen. Even the government's own long-term-care commission has said, in recommendation number 60, "The government should separate the construction of long-term-care facilities from the care provided in those facilities." The commission also goes on to say that homes should be integrated "into the broader health and social services community."

In fact, the government refuses to report at all on their own long-term-care commission report, so I introduced a private member's bill—number 4—which requires the government to accept recommendation 85, which means they have to report back next year and then three years later on the progress they've made on those 85 recommendations from their own commission. If the government is claiming they want to fix long-term care, why will they not commit to reporting on their progress against the commission's recommendations? As it stands right now, the government is satisfied with the status quo. That's what it says.

The question is, how do we move forward from here? How do we actually get on a different path and put community back into long-term care? You can't just simply say, "No more for-profit in long-term care." That's a starting point. I think the Leader of the Opposition agrees that transformation in this sector—she said as much last year—is going to take some time. Instead of trying to put the toothpaste back in the tube—I know she agrees with this as well—we need to be focused on what's happening in the homes right now, while we're making plans to expand not-for-profit homes in Ontario.

That's going to mean that we have a plan. That means identifying partners, like municipalities, like hospitals, like faith communities, like community groups, like service organizations. Then, when we find these groups, we have to recognize that they're going to need supports. They're not for-profit corporations. They don't have the same capacities. They don't have the same access to capital. They don't have the same ability to plan the construction of new beds. They just don't have the same capacities as for-profit corporations. It's going to take more work and more support from government. They just don't have the same access to capital.

We need to rely on the advice of organizations like AdvantAge Ontario and other associations that deliver

not-for-profit care. That has to be part of the plan. The supports needed include access to capital, construction support and effective governance support.

If you want to put the community back into long-term care, you're going to have to partner with a wide variety of organizations, because each community is different. They have different capacities. They have different leadership. They have different organizations willing to step up.

Something we should all be able to agree on here is that we have to find a way to make the connection between the communities we live in and the long-term-care homes that are there. I think all of us agree on that. That's exactly what this pandemic has shown, and recommendation 61 of the LTC report speaks to that.

As I said, while I'm supporting this motion because I see it as a referendum on not-for-profit care and expanding it and where we all stand, I do have to say that I don't think the Leader of the Opposition wants anyone in this home to not have access to long-term care. She doesn't want the list to get any longer. When you propose a moratorium, I think what you're saying over there—and I think the government is overstating it—is that there are risks that are there.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It's an honour to speak in favour of this important opposition day motion. It comes down to the basic question: How can anyone profit while seniors have suffered and died? How we care for folks with no voice speaks to us as individuals; it speaks to our institutions; it speaks to this Ontario government. And yet this government wants to simply pile onto this disaster and fill yet more pockets.

I'm shocked that this government intends to hand out more 30-year licences to for-profit long-term-care homes. Nearly 4,000 seniors have died in these homes since the start of the pandemic. Residents in private homes were four times more likely to die from COVID-19 than those in public or non-profit homes. For-profit long-term-care homes saw the greatest number of deaths during the pandemic compared to homes operated by municipalities and not-for-profit organizations.

This was a humanitarian disaster that cannot be repeated. People at the beginning and end of their lives deserve more care than the rest of us in between, with some exceptions. This should not be a question of money; this is a question of our collective morality, of our ethics, of our basic humanity.

Successive Conservative and Liberal governments have cut, underfunded, understaffed and privatized our long-term-care homes. This financial destruction has led to human destruction.

We cannot reward the very corporations that hurt so many families and whose seniors paid the price for their negligence.

Our long-term-care homes should give our loved ones a better quality of life, not take it away. They must ensure that their priorities offer our loved ones the best quality of care, not boost corporate profits.

We can and we must build a long-term-care-home system in Ontario that respects the dignity of our most vulnerable—and that is with a not-for-profit system.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Jamie West: During COVID-19, nearly 4,000 seniors died, and we all know that. We've talked about that today a lot. Twice as many for-profit long-term-care centres—twice as many COVID-19 infections as there were in non-profit. They had 78% more deaths. Thirteen out of 15 long-term-care homes had the highest number of deaths—15 out of 16, where there were more than half the residents that contracted COVID-19, were for-profit.

With public long-term care, the priority is the public; they're accountable to the public.

With for-profit long-term care, their accountability is to make profit. They're accountable to the shareholders. In the first three quarters of 2020, the three largest for-profit long-term-care facilities gave their shareholders \$171 million. That is money that doesn't go to the clients, to the front line.

The problems with long-term care didn't start with the Conservative government. Mike Harris from the previous Conservative government certainly kicked the door open to for-profit, but the Liberals didn't close the door; they expanded it. They cut the inspections for long-term care. They blocked a public inquiry into long-term care, very similar to what this Conservative government did—by cutting inspections and blocking a public inquiry into long-term care.

The carnage that has happened with COVID-19 didn't start with this government, but it certainly put a magnifying glass on what happened. And what we should be doing is not rewarding for-profit long-term care for the mess they made out of this; not rewarding them by protecting them from legal liability, like the Conservative government already did; and not rewarding them by signing these contracts, where they get another 30 years to take care of abusing our seniors.

1510

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Kevin Yarde: At the beginning of the pandemic, the Premier promised an iron ring of protection around long-term care. Instead of this iron ring, our seniors in long-term care got loneliness, devastation, fear and hopelessness. This wasn't strictly due to COVID-19; this was due to the cuts and neglect by consecutive Conservative and Liberal governments.

Now this Ford government is also planning to privatize more long-term-care homes by handing out 30-year licences. Speaker, we know that for-profit long-term-care homes are not the answer for our seniors. We saw significantly worse outcomes in the for-profit homes than in their publicly run counterparts. At these privatized homes, COVID outbreaks and deaths were nearly twice as common than in the public sector, and we saw that as well in Brampton. So I'm shocked to hear that the Ford government is planning to hand out these 30-year licences to private long-term-care homes.

These for-profit homes keep staffing levels low and profits high. This led to hospitalizations and deaths from malnourishment and dehydration, and that is troubling. It is also sickening to hear that our vulnerable seniors were denied the necessities of life. These for-profit homes put their profits ahead of the seniors.

Also, let's not forget about our front-line heroes who have been working at these long-term care homes. These personal support workers have been stretched thin, having to work in multiple homes part-time, working multiple shifts and overtime. The for-profit long-term-care homes have paid out millions in executive compensation while personal support workers' wages have stagnated. The for-profit homes will continue to overwork and underpay our PSWs. Therefore, we need a moratorium on for-profit long-term-care licences.

I encourage this government to invest in public, not-for-profit homes for the sake of our heroes like Leonard Rodriques and Christine Mandegarian, who passed away on the front line for our seniors, who deserve a better quality of life.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm honoured to be able to stand today for this opposition motion that was put forward by our leader, Andrea Horwath, to ensure that we stop the profit when it comes to our long-term-care facilities and the care our seniors are given.

I want to take us back to Grace Villa in my community that's seen 234 cases, 44 deaths, 144 residents sick, 88 staff sick and two visitors sick within a two-month period. The letters I received from the staff who worked in that home were absolutely heartbreaking. I've read some of these pieces before in this House, but I want to take us back to a few places that really go to speak to the lack of money available, the lack of staff available, which put these seniors in this situation.

"This is not a Third World country, a war-torn country, but inside you'd have thought it was. The chaos, confusion and outright neglect that took place, all while we begged and cried for help, tried to advocate for our residents, was surreal to watch and to be a part of. It was heartbreaking, traumatizing and it was criminal."

"We had no leadership, no training or instruction on how to manage a full-blown COVID outbreak on a locked unit with over 60 Alzheimer's residents and we certainly didn't have the manpower to give them much of our time.

"We were no longer getting reports at the start of our shifts, we were just told that there were positive ... cases on both wings of the unit and to assume that everyone was positive. The three of us got right to doing a quick round and quickly realized that we had walked into a war zone. The previous shift had been just as short-staffed. We received nine residents laying in soiled and/or soaked briefs, wearing little or no clothing or bedding on bare mattresses that were saturated with urine. Two of them saturated with vomit and urine and it was obvious that many of them were suffering with fevers." There was no laundry, no linens. They were cutting up bedsheets to

make peri cloths to be able to do treatments for their residents. These are the types of things that we heard throughout this COVID-19 outbreak.

Once they came out of the outbreak, there were still concerns in the home. Most of the staff has left; now they're filled with temp staff. We have temp staff that have hit residents. They come in with no training. There was none of the proper procedures put in place.

These concerns are still happening in our long-term care. It's our responsibility to ensure that this doesn't happen again. This is the first step in that process in making sure that we're taking profit out of our seniors' homes.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate? Further debate?

I recognize the leader of the official opposition for right of reply.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I appreciate the opportunity to just wrap up this discussion. I can tell you, I am disappointed but not surprised because, once again, we have a government in office here in Ontario that's more interested in taking care of their friends. They're taking care of the big fish, the corporations that make profits off the care of our seniors that we saw lead to such devastation in our long-term-care homes through COVID-19.

We all watch the various polls that are done, the various columns that are written, and the various opportunities when everyday Ontarians are able to have an opportunity to be recognized in terms of their opinions. Over 80% of Ontarians want the profits out of long-term care. That's the reality. We hear it over and over again.

In fact, the minister talked about waiting lists that exist right now. Some 68% of the people on waiting lists for long-term care right now want a bed specifically in a not-for-profit or municipally run home. Why? Because everybody knows that the quality of care there is better.

Today, there's an opinion letter from Lisa Levin, who runs AdvantAge, which is a coalition of not-for-profit homes. What she says is that with higher staffing levels, it's apparent: The hospitalization rates of residents leaving the long-term-care home to go into hospital are much, much lower; there are much lower rates of hospital admissions in the not-for-profit homes. There's 20% more hands-on care for the residents, at a minimum, who are living in not-for-profit versus for-profit homes.

Speaker, it's really obvious that this government has an ideological preference for profit-making in our health care system. And who makes those profits? Their buddies, their friends, the people who the Premier of this province rubs elbows with. That should not be the priority of a government. A government should not prioritize, in our health care system and in our long-term-care system, padding the pockets of its friends. That ideological perspective isn't shared by 80% of the people of this province.

And so it's not the case that we have a government, unfortunately, that is preparing to listen to the people of Ontario. I guess the good news is, come next year, we will provide that leadership for the people of Ontario. We will provide not-for-profit care.

In his remarks, this minister was talking about the thousands of announcements they've made. The Liberals made thousands of announcements of beds as well. They made for-profit beds; they're going to put in place more for-profit beds. We won't do that. We'll listen to the people of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Ms. Horwath has moved opposition day number 1. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

A recorded vote being required, the bells will ring for 30 minutes, during which members may cast their votes.

Prepare the lobbies, please.

The division bells rang from 1521 to 1551.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 19; the nays are 35.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): I declare the motion lost.

Motion negatived.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Mr. Michael Parsa: I move that, pursuant to standing order 50 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 5, An Act respecting York Region Wastewater, when Bill 5 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill, without further debate or amendment, and, at such time, the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called that same day; and

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, one hour of debate shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill with 25 minutes apportioned to the government, 25 minutes to the official opposition and 10 minutes to the independent members as a group. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That, notwithstanding standing order 30(a), any division on the motions for second or third reading of the bill arising during afternoon orders of the day shall not be deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): The deputy House leader has moved government notice of motion number 4. Further debate?

Mr. Michael Parsa: Certainly, it's always a pleasure to rise in the House and in this case to speak to government motion number 4. As you can imagine, representing a riding in York region, this motion and the topic are quite important to me.

York region is one of the fastest-growing large municipalities in Ontario, and our population is expected

to rise significantly in the next few decades. We're expecting a surge in the population of 1.5 million in the next decade and more than two million by 2051. Our water infrastructure needs to keep with that community growth, which is why this bill and this motion are so important.

We need to provide Ontarians with the service they need to grow, in both population and the economy. We began preparing for this expected population growth back in the late 1990s, with a proposed new infrastructure to connect the existing York-Durham sewage system. The Environmental Assessment Act, established in 1976, requires consideration to be given to the impact on the environment prior to beginning any developments. This process is essential, as it promotes good environmental planning by determining the benefits and potential effects of projects before they are implemented.

Getting back to the Upper York Sewage Solutions environmental assessment, the application for this project was submitted for approval in 2014. Following the environmental assessment that was conducted to determine the best ways to address waste water issues in York region, the recommended action involved a new waste water treatment plant that would discharge treated effluent into the East Holland River within the Lake Simcoe watershed. The purpose of this motion is to expedite Bill 5, which is supposed to develop a sustainable sewage solution to accommodate the population and economic growth expected to occur in the Upper York Sewage Solutions service area, including the towns of Aurora, East Gwillimbury and Newmarket. It's so important for this motion to move forward, because in passing this legislation our government can put a hold on any decision on the Upper York Sewage Solutions environmental assessment application. If passed, this bill will allow for the creation of an expert advisory panel which will enable the government to determine the best possible solution to increase waste water capability and accommodate for future growth in York region. Bill 5 will ensure the government works closely with the regional municipality of York, Durham region, and Indigenous communities to plan and implement this initiative, while protecting our vital water resources.

As a government, we need to be prepared to create solutions with our partners. This is exactly what we have done in the past and what we are looking to do with this bill, Speaker. The solution our government is looking at involves a new treatment facility that will have a sewage capacity of approximately four million litres per day. We call this the water reclamation centre, and it would be the very first waste water treatment plant in Canada that uses all four levels of treatment.

We identified a solution, but the problem we encountered was the delay between when the environmental assessment began and where we are now. Our government is focused on making an informed decision that takes into account the financial, environmental and social factors at play. We firmly believe that the best decisions are informed by science and are enacted with the guidance of experts. We need the technical information from our

experts to fully understand the significant environmental, social and financial implications of any waste water servicing solution. We know this strategy works, as we have used it in the past to focus on the greenbelt. On February 17 of this year, we launched a 61-day consultation through the Environmental Registry of Ontario. In doing so, we were able to hear directly from Ontarians on where and how to grow the greenbelt, which we committed to doing in our 2020 budget.

Speaker, the Premier and the previous Minister of the Environment were crystal clear from day one: Our government will do everything it can to protect the greenbelt for future generations. With this 61-day consultation, we focused on two priority areas: first, growing the greenbelt to include the Paris-Galt moraine—a significant geographical plan that runs from Caledon to Brantford; and second, expanding urban river valleys which connect the protected countryside of the greenbelt to the Great Lakes and inland lakes so that we can extend the greenbelt's footprint into cities and towns across southern Ontario. The former minister was very direct that this consultation was not going to consider the removal of any lands from the greenbelt. Instead, this was about a once-in-a-generation opportunity to grow the size of the greenbelt and make a positive impact on Ontario's environmental heritage. We will continue supporting existing greenbelt plan objectives and follow the current boundary amendment process, and this is exactly the same process this bill seeks to follow.

We want to work with stakeholders, partners and communities to create effective legislation that addresses York region's waste water. The advisory panel will collect information on key areas of consideration in our development of this project, including timing, possible alternatives, the cost of development and implementation, sustainability, and efficiency. By consulting with stakeholders and First Nations communities, we can determine the impact of this project on these groups who could potentially be directly affected.

Thanks to the work of our current Minister of the Environment, our province continues to lead by example and sets precedents that our communities rely on to grow and prosper. We're talking about an incredibly delicate environment that is especially susceptible to human activity, and we must do all we can to protect it.

1600

That's why it's so critical for our government to move forward with this motion and continue bringing legislation like this to the table. Most importantly, we need to continue listening to community leaders and environmental experts who can provide a road map to protecting our environment.

For example, as my colleague the PA to the Ministry of the Environment explained before, Ontario is home to 250,000 lakes. These are just a fraction of those located across Canada, as we have the most freshwater lakes out of any country in the world. These lakes are more than just a part of Ontario's environmental heritage, they have also played a fundamental role in the development of our

communities throughout history. Our Great Lakes influence the quality of life enjoyed by Ontarians across the province. In fact, more than 99% of residents of Ontario live by or near the Great Lakes.

Surrounding areas also hold approximately 50% of the manufacturing plants located in Canada. That's an incredibly significant part of our economy here in Ontario and, indeed, all of Canada. These surrounding regions employ more than half of the country's manufacturing jobs and make up a large share of our agriculture and food processing with most of this occurring in York region.

This alone is a strong reason for protecting our fresh water and managing waste water contamination. However, there's another reason why we must develop processes to manage the impacts of waste water, and that is to address the impacts of COVID-19. Of course, protecting our waterways is not only necessary for us to continue our day-to-day interactions but also as a preventive measure to protect all Ontarians.

Speaker, throughout this pandemic, we have used our freshwater ways to detect hot spots and prevent outbreaks before Ontarians show symptoms. As we continue to respond to this pandemic, the province has committed over \$22.8 million over two years to a COVID-19 Wastewater Surveillance Initiative that will test waste water samples taken from communities across Ontario. The province has partnered with 13 academic and research institutions in Ontario and in co-operation with various public health units and municipalities to expand waste water sampling and analysis province-wide, including First Nation communities, long-term-care homes, university campuses, homeless shelters and correctional facilities.

Water samples continue to be a useful strategy for protecting the health and well-being of Ontarians. The people of Ontario want to be confident in the protection of our water resources, and we can only provide them with this sense of security through the collection and consideration of research and data. Our government is committed to working with municipalities to ensure municipal sewage systems meet modern standards for health and safety.

Speaker, the only way we can improve the quality of our lake water is to consult with surrounding communities to implement a strategy that protects our Great Lakes and, of course, Ontarians. Some of the groups we must consult with include other Great Lakes ministers; municipalities and conservation authorities located in whole or in part in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin; First Nations and Métis communities who have a historic relationship with the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin; as well as environmental organizations, the scientific community and the industrial, agricultural, recreational and tourism sector in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin.

Implementing a strategy for protecting our Great Lakes will also focus on cleaning up plastic litter along shorelines, excess nutrients and contaminants in waterways, as well as reducing salt entering lakes, rivers and streams, which is why, Speaker, I am speaking to support this motion and also in support of Bill 5.

We have also taken the initiative to clean up the 22 million pounds of plastic pollution that end up in the Great Lakes every year. We must continue to take this issue seriously to protect the wildlife living in this environment and protect the surrounding habitats. Keeping our lakes free of plastic waste not only makes it safe for Ontarians to enjoy, but also ensures our businesses can continue to operate in the surrounding areas.

The funding we have allocated in the past to protect our Great Lakes and freshwater ways here in Ontario proves that we take this issue seriously, and we will continue to do so through Bill 5, which is why the approval of this motion, once again, is so important.

Just last year, the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks announced \$5.8 million for 65 Great Lakes projects run by communities, organizations, universities and Indigenous peoples across the province to address issues critical to the health of the Great Lakes.

I want to once again reiterate to Ontarians that there is no amount of money or resources that our government will not utilize when it comes to protecting the well-being of the people of this province.

I think in this day and age it's crucial for all levels of government to acknowledge that protecting the people means also protecting the environment. We must continue to develop solutions that address our waste demands and create processes that are environmentally friendly and safe for Ontarians.

Our commitment to evaluating and protecting the Great Lakes in the past proves that we want to continue making a difference for the future. Most importantly, it proves that we want to provide environmentally friendly waste water solutions. In my speech, I talked about the greenbelt and the lake cleanup initiatives, which are just a few of the many projects we are working on to protect our freshwater sources here in Ontario.

With this motion, we want to address York region's sewage capacity. Before we take any action, we must do our research, consult with surrounding communities and work with experts to find a solution. Any changes we make must be based on strong evidence and scientific facts. With this approach, the government has time to evaluate whether an increase in waste water services for upper York region is needed, when it can be implemented, how much it will cost, and the risks it poses to human health and the environment. We will continue to work closely with the regions of York and Durham, municipalities and Indigenous communities to plan and implement this important work while protecting our vital water resources.

Bill 5, An Act respecting York Region Wastewater, is another step we must take to protect our Great Lakes and freshwater systems, and I urge all members to support this motion as we continue to do everything we can to protect Ontario's environment. We must continue to make this a priority, as they provide drinking water for our communities, support our economy and are surrounded by many Ontarians who call these regions home.

I hope this common vision is shared by everyone in this Legislature and by Ontarians around the province.

Thank you very much, Speaker. I look forward to hearing the rest of the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm happy to be able to take my place in the Legislature. It has certainly seemed like a long time since we've had the opportunity to participate in this House, particularly when the government prorogued and extended the time away from this House when there were so many important issues to be dealt with.

Some of the first legislation coming back into this House is strong-holding, putting a hold on, prohibiting municipalities from doing the work that they've been doing for years. This bill that is being time-allocated today, now, as per the member, is Bill 5, An Act respecting York Region Wastewater.

A little history on this issue: York Region Wastewater is a proposed \$715-million municipal waste water project that would construct a new sewage treatment plant in East Gwillimbury, discharging treatment waste water into the Lake Simcoe watershed. It's proposed to enable development to accommodate 153,000 new residents—and the government plans for East Gwillimbury, Newmarket and Aurora. These are rural, suburban communities in and beside the greenbelt, currently serviced by lagoons that are near or at capacity.

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This area has been working on this project for, I believe, over 10 years, and they've been waiting since 2014, which would have been the previous Liberal government, to get an answer on this environmental assessment for a new sewage treatment plant. But now this government has come in and is stalling the process and at the same time protecting themselves in Bill 5—which is always fantastic, when we see the government continue to protect themselves instead of Ontarians.

Bill 5 is quite short. The explanatory note reads, "The minister's decision-making on the Upper York Sewage Solutions undertaking is suspended and all actions by the regional municipality of York related to that undertaking are prohibited."

I was looking at this very small bill—remember, this is English and French, so the bill is literally two pages long. It states, "No decision by minister."

"The minister shall not make any decision under sections 8 to 11.1 of the Environmental Assessment Act in respect of the application for the Upper York Sewage Solutions undertaking that was submitted for approval by the regional municipality of York."

They're telling the minister not to make a decision, yet an environmental assessment cannot happen without the minister okaying that. So they've completely stalled the work that was going on in York region.

They've also put in a clause that states, "Despite subsection 12.2(1) of the Environmental Assessment Act, the regional municipality of York shall not take any action in respect of the Upper York Sewage Solutions undertaking."

Then, "No cause of action."

“No cause of action arises against the crown, any current or former member of the executive council or any current or former employee or agent of or adviser to the crown as a direct or indirect result of,

“(a) the enactment, operation, amendment or repeal of any provision of this act....”

It goes on to continue to protect themselves against any torts or liabilities that could be brought against the government due to this stoppage of work that is so greatly necessary for the York region. This is quite concerning.

Then we see the government put forward a time allocation, which we're debating now, that states that after second reading—let me see; let's get the exact wording here—“the Speaker shall put any question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill, without further debate or amendment, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called” on the “same day.” That cuts out the committee process. That cuts out the consultation of all of the mayors, of all of the stakeholders, of all of the people who have shown interest in this bill. That is so concerning.

There are so many stakeholders that are interested in what's happening here: community groups living near Lake Simcoe; community groups living in Durham; groups that are speaking about the Duffins Creek facility; Environmental Defence; the Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition; Save the Maskinonge—I'm going to butcher that word, sorry; Pickering Ajax Citizens Together to Protect Our Water; the Simcoe County Greenbelt Coalition; politicians from York region, Newmarket, Aurora, and East Gwillimbury; politicians from Durham region. Chippewas of Georgina Island have not been consulted. The list continues to go on of people who are interested in what's happening here in York region.

And yet, this government is halting it. They're not putting any plan forward, not in this bill anyways. They're saving themselves from any liability and then telling people that they don't have the option to come and speak to the government in their Legislature. This is the people's House, which we have heard many times, which we know. We are all here representing our communities. And part of the process of passing legislation, as you know, Speaker, is first reading, second reading, committee, third reading, and then the bill passes. But by stopping the committee process, it is stopping the people's voice from coming into the Legislature and being able to speak on issues and topics and bills that are important to their communities.

Now, this is no small project whatsoever. The amount of money that has been spent by this region—over \$100 million to get a completed assessment. And the government will still not give York region an answer. Now they are not even in control of their own bill or their own region, and as per a letter that was sent from the Minister of the Environment in 2020, they informed York region that the provincial government was basically taking over the plan for this project. It remains unclear why they are doing that or under what authority they were doing that, to take over a municipal project that has been years in the making, over \$100 million spent just on the environmental

assessment, which they can't get any answer for and which is now squashed, null and void. The government has now decided that they're just going to stall the process and not give any clear answers to all of these people who have serious concerns, and regardless of whether they have serious concerns or not, they're not welcome here.

There's a “Closed” on the front door, saying York region residents are not welcome to talk about issues that are important to their community. All of those elected officials who have the right, and should have the right, to be able to speak on their residents' concerns are not welcome, closed signs on the front door. York region is not welcome to talk about things that are critically important to their lands, to the communities surrounding them, to Lake Simcoe and the environmental needs that we all know exist. And yet the closed sign has gone on the front door, prohibiting people from being able to come here to speak to this government and to tell them why it's important for them to be able to have a clear plan to be able to move forward. The ponds that are currently collecting these waters are full. They're ready to have the next step, and yet they have no clear plan, no clear direction of which way they're going to move forward.

The minister has clearly told them they're taking over, but they have not told them how they're taking over or what that means for the future of their community, the future of building in these rural and suburb areas. We know we have a major housing crisis happening in our communities right across the province, and now we have more houses being held up and no clear plan moving forward.

Time and time again, we've seen time allocation bills come throughout this House, whether it's the Conservatives, whether it's the Liberals, constantly truncating debate, stopping people from having the ability to properly debate these bills that we always know consistently have some type of poison pill. This bill, the whole thing, is a poison pill. There's nothing in here for the good of the people of this province. We know that there are so many issues that people need to be heard on, and yet the government has its own priorities, which typically are not in favour of the people of this province.

I'm going to leave some time for my colleagues to speak. But I wanted to be on the record with my concerns of a time allocation debate happening currently, about the closed sign that has been put on the front door of the Legislature of Ontario for the people of York and York region in not being able to talk about their communities and the waste water issues that they have and the plans that they thought they had moving forward, 10 years in the making—hundreds of millions of dollars spent on proposals, on assessments, with the government closing the door on them at the end of the day, swiping their plans out from underneath them and not providing any clear path forward.

1620

I'm happy to have the opportunity. I know that my colleagues will have a lot to say on this bill for the rest of this portion of the debate, which has also been truncated

and has stopped people from being able to truly have a voice when it comes to the things that this government does when it comes to the people of this province. Thank you for the opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: We're debating government motion number 4, and it pertains to Bill 5. I'll tell you why Bill 5 and this particular motion are so important to the people I represent. I know the member of the opposition said nothing is good in it for the rest of the province or for anyone, just to paraphrase her remarks. This bill has significance for my community.

I asked the members of the opposition, where were they when the terms of reference on this environmental assessment were changed and gerrymandered? She quoted the members of the Simcoe County Greenbelt Coalition, who were against the terms of reference that were changed in the beginning. It was not a fair game that we went into.

This government believes in fairness and transparency, which is why this pause is so important: to listen to the experts. The opposition often talk about listening to the experts, and here we are, listening to Indigenous communities. Frankly, for the community I represent, I want to hear their voices as well.

That's why, over the past year and a half, we've been undergoing a review of the Lake Simcoe Protection Act, which is very pertinent to what we're discussing today, because it has consequences on beautiful Lake Simcoe, which, we heard earlier in the debate, is a shallow lake, and there are huge consequences for it.

It's not to dismiss our other waterways in this province that are just as significant. Our government is doing a lot to change the landscape when we talk about protecting clean water resources, protecting more land and protecting it for future generations. So I certainly don't want to see that evidence thrown away.

I would like the expert panel that will be established to listen to the 10-year review that we underwent for this past year and a half with many stakeholders about the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan. One of the meetings that I was very lucky and fortunate to be a part of was when we met with the Williams Treaties First Nations. It was a great session. It was with the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation. Brandon Stiles was there, so I want to thank him for his input. The Williams Treaties First Nations and Ceyda Turan were there. I really want to thank them for their input. I know Donna Big Canoe couldn't make it to that particular meeting, but we had a great conversation about the needed direction of the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan. I would love that evidence to be considered by this panel. Certainly, representing my community, that's my goal. I would hope that the committee does hear that evidence.

The one thing out of the conversation we had with the Williams Treaties and the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nations—something they talked about were the pharmaceuticals, the personal care products and the microplastic pollution that were going into the waterways and into Lake Simcoe. That was very important to them. This government did look at an interesting technology,

which was plastic-capture technology, where you take these sea bins, and they soak up a lot of the microplastics. This is something that the government had partnered in with Pollution Probe. It was really interesting to see this project come to fruition in Georgian Bay, for instance. What we do know is there are about 22 million pounds of plastic that ends up in our Great Lakes every year. This particular project with Pollution Probe, with these floating trash bins, if you will, Speaker, also known as sea bins—they collect an average of eight and a half pounds of trash per year, grabbing up all the little microplastics. We're working on that, and that's certainly an issue that took off over the summers pre-COVID. We've seen it work. So that was something that they brought up.

Another thing they brought up was the need to go after our stormwater ponds. I will quote some of the feedback from that particular consultation we had, but they recommended continuing to retrofit existing stormwater ponds in the watershed and suggested more direction for municipalities regarding stormwater management. I mentioned it in my previous remarks, but we funded to a tune of over \$3 million a lot of infrastructure projects around Lake Simcoe, one of which included Kidds Creek stormwater upgrades. I was able to make that announcement with my colleague and the Attorney General for Ontario, and that's going to make an impact. These are first-hand things that we heard from the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation and the Williams Treaties First Nations, and I would love for that input to also be incorporated into that panel. I hope they consider these projects that these two nations had recommended.

We also met with stakeholders from the agriculture sector. I'll name a few of them, people that are involved in the Lake Simcoe review: ALUS Canada was there; Grain Farmers of Ontario; Holland Marsh Grower's Association; Lake Simcoe Coordinating Committee members, who are also farmers—members like Anne Kell, Avia Eek and John Hemsted; we had the Ontario Agri Business Association; Ontario Federation of Agriculture; Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association; Severn Sound Environmental Association; York Region Federation of Agriculture; and Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association, all of which gave really great and considerable feedback on Lake Simcoe. Again, that was really good feedback that we heard, and I would love at the end of this exercise that I had embarked on in the past almost two years for that to be incorporated into the panel so they can take that evidence and have evidence-based decision-making and not gerrymandering terms of reference like the previous government did on the previous environmental assessment.

When you talk to the agricultural folks, they talk a lot about the importance of learning from other strategies, like Lake Erie and the great things that happen there. A lot of the farmers were able to come up with different projects to help that watershed. That's something that we could learn from as well.

Just today, the Minister of the Environment announced \$2.5 million for 19 different projects as part of the Canada-Ontario Great Lakes agreement, which will help farmers

adopt green water infrastructure and best practices to reduce contaminants and improve water quality. Again, that's something that we've learned just with more evidence coming out in real time, and that's something I would love the panel to also consider.

Another group that we talked with for the Lake Simcoe protection review was the tourism and small business sector—very affected by quality of water. It affects their livelihood, like it does many people who live around the watershed. It included small businesses anywhere from Orillia to Georgina to someone who owns a splash pad in Barrie—a little shout-out to Brittany Gallagher; thank you for your input—Ontario hunters and anglers, Tourism Barrie and so many others, like our regional tourism office, who do such great work. They are in economic recovery now, post-COVID, but the water is such a big part of what they do. Without clean water, they can't run their businesses. Certainly, any sort of warning would affect them.

I would hope that this panel takes into account the financial side of things, because this bill, Bill 5, is not about the environmental effects, but it's about the economic effects of this decision. We can't take it lightly. We need to be transparent and we need to hear the evidence to know what is the right decision economically and environmentally, without what the previous government did, which was to base it on political boundaries, supported by yours truly, the opposition, who didn't make a peep when the terms of reference were changed, and here we are today, where we want to hear that evidence.

I'd like to hear from these members—again, all this evidence that I've been able to compile with them, thanks to the work of the folks at the Ministry of the Environment, like Ling Mark and Madhu—they've been with me every step of the way for this review—and Tim Krsul and Jennifer Mackey and Carolyn Switzer and all the folks at the land and water division. They heard, just as I did, over the summer and over the winter months about what we need to do for the Lake Simcoe watershed.

We also met with the development sector—really important because, of course, urbanization does have effects on waterways. What we're talking about here is a water treatment plant that is actually going to absorb bigger population growth for York region. I totally understand their growth predicaments and the promises that had been made in the past by former governments, sometimes stretch goals that were set. But Simcoe county also has growth, and you can't avoid those two factors of these two really rich, great communities who want to balance affordable housing with quality of living with great green space and quality water. And so again, they had really good feedback when it comes to the Lake Simcoe watershed and the Lake Simcoe Protection Act. I love that the key take-aways from what they told us at these round tables will also be put in front of this panel. So this panel could make these evidence-based decisions on feedback that we've received and the science.

1630

That brings me to, of course, the science. Another event that we had to do with the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan,

in addition to these other consultations, was a science event, and it was attended by 130 people. We had 17 science presentations. So there is some science that we have out there that this panel can take into account, but of course it's always emerging, it's always changing. This science was taken into account about the 10-year review and the 10-year plan under Lake Simcoe. It included science presentations from an environment lens, a natural resources lens, an agricultural lens. The regional Simcoe county conservation authority presented. We had academics from places like Guelph, the university of London, the St. Lawrence institute, and they talked about aquatic life, water quality, natural heritage and other threats like climate change and invasive species and how that impacts the water quality around Lake Simcoe—great evidence to begin with, but we need to consider how it impacts this EA, because, again, that was a snapshot of Lake Simcoe, its health, where we're going, what evidence we need.

Now we have this decision to make in terms of the growth of two different communities, Simcoe county and York region. It can't be taken lightly. It affects hundreds of thousands of people who live there today and who want to live there in the future and want affordable housing. Certainly, that can't happen without having your water capacity, as well. My goal as the representative for my community is to ensure that these voices are heard.

I have some faith and hope in this panel that they will be able to take a lot of this great evidence that we've received to date and compare that to evidence that they know from their professions and make recommendations on this decision that are based in science and not based on political boundaries like we saw in the past, and make it fair. It's not about a political group or political party changing their terms of reference to fit their particular needs.

I talked about the science town hall we had with 130 attendees and 17 science presentations, but we also had one that wasn't for those people who want to get into the nitty-gritty of science and talk about the different formulas etc. We had a general virtual town hall on the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan for anyone interested in going. Members of the Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition were there—and I know the members opposite were quoting that particular group. Members of Environmental Defence were there. It was really well attended, and the benefit of it was that it was accessible, because we did have it virtually due to COVID-19, so that was really great. We had presentations from Ryerson University. We had Boating Ontario. Environment and Climate Change Canada was in attendance, as well. Overall, we got some really good feedback in terms of next steps, water quality, what we need to do in terms of sewage treatment plants, septic systems, invasive species, engaging our Indigenous communities and much more. It was great because we were able to go through about 118 questions during that virtual town hall. So it wasn't just about listening and learning; it was about interacting with the residents in and around the watershed and those who really care about the future of Lake Simcoe. So with approximately 118

questions and many comments that were submitted through that process, we were able to make this an open, transparent, public process, something which—I hope that evidence also goes before this expert panel, so they can make a good scientific decision on the future of this particular environmental assessment once we have all that evidence.

Certainly, I would hope that all the work that this review and all the great folks at the Ministry of the Environment—all the great work that they've done on this particular review gets taken into consideration. We've heard that there have been a lot of great strides made into the Lake Simcoe watershed, but more work needs to be done. It is a shallow lake compared to other water basins, and every different species or water or any sort of quality thing you add changes the whole composition in the food web of that particular lake. We talked a lot about the food web in the last debate and the impact it has on the different water species and the water habitat.

Just recently, I met with a great lady, Lindsay, who lives around Lake Simcoe with her family and her husband. They've been there for many years, and they've seen the significant changes, and they know the impacts. So for them, it's prudent for a government to be able to pause and take considerations and science into effect, because they see it. They live on the water, and they don't have to be scientists to see what water levels happen, or what's happening with the water levels because it's connected to the Trent-Severn Waterway, or what's happening with the fish habitat, what's happening with all the different factoids that surround the water. This is not just particular to Lake Simcoe. This happens around all waterfronts, and a scientific approach is taken to all of them. I don't see why this would be any different.

So I really do hope—and again, my goal as a representative for local community is that all of these voices get taken into consideration. We work with our Indigenous partners who rely on the water for their livelihood and their habitat. Of course, in Lake Simcoe, we literally have our Chippewas First Nations, who rely on the water. It's a big part of their history and where they live today. All of that gets taken into consideration. I hope the opposition will come around and support this and not say that there's nothing good in this, because, frankly, there's a lot of good in this, and we need to listen to the evidence. I know the residents in my community of Lake Simcoe are counting on it. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch for the opportunity today to speak about motion number 4, time allocation on the York Region Wastewater Act. It is interesting for me to be able to speak on this matter relating to what we do with the millions of litres of greater Toronto area sewage. But it's also discouraging when we're back for the fall session, after we have prorogued, when there are other things happening in the communities. I mean, I come to this place time and time again, and as you know, in the riding of Kiiwetinoong, there are 14 First Nations that

have boil-water advisories in the communities. There's one First Nation that has had boil-water advisories since February 1, 1995, which is 26-plus years of boil-water advisories where you cannot actually drink the water. So what happens is people have to haul water from a reverse osmosis system, but also they have to fly in bottled water. This is the other Canada; this is the other Ontario, where you have to continue to live under these conditions.

The reason why I share those stories is that this is happening today in Ontario. When we talk about the economic effects of the work that this government wants to do, what about the basic human right to access to clean drinking water? You know, all these issues that we face, the things that we see in Ontario—I mean, I'm from Far Northern Ontario. The riding of Kiiwetinoong is 294 square kilometres. I have to fly to communities to get to the constituents of Kiiwetinoong. I see things that you don't see. I see the overcrowding: two, three bedrooms, 18 people there. People sleep in shifts to be able to have a good rest. I travelled to this community last month, and I had this young lady who sleeps in a truck with a three-year-old. They move house to house to cook and shower. That's what housing looks like.

1640

Over the last 18 months or so, in the riding of Kiiwetinoong, there were two people who died because of no dental service or because there's no access to dentists because of COVID. We're talking about vision as well, access to optometrists. Again, we do not have these issues. The reason why I'm talking about these things is sometimes the priorities of Ontario, the priorities of government—again, that's a different Ontario; that's a different Canada.

When you don't have access to clean drinking water, when you continue to live under those conditions, it does something to the mental wellness of the people who live in Kiiwetinoong, especially when you're under a boil-water advisory. I see young girls, 15 years old, die by suicide. They just give up hope. The reason I keep sharing this is because it's just so—I don't know. When you're focusing on economic effects, when we talk about southern Ontario, there are other people. Who are we? What are we? Ask First Nations people in the north. A lot of times this government plays jurisdictional Ping-Pong with the health and lives of the people of Kiiwetinoong, and that's not right.

Going back to the time allocation but also to the act itself, Bill 5, we also know that there's been a lot of local thought on this matter, and it looks like a lot of the plans to deal with the region's expanding sewage needs date back as far as 2009. But what I've heard from my colleagues on this matter makes me think about the idea of free, prior and informed consent, which is an idea that we talk about in reference to Indigenous people.

I bring this up because the waste water that this act refers to has to go somewhere. As you know, I've mentioned that previous studies have suggested Lake Simcoe, and others have said Lake Ontario through Duffins Creek. We also know that both of these places are traditional

territories of First Nations, and both of these bodies of water require planning to protect for the long term.

Free, prior and informed consent is a principle protected by international human rights standards that state that all peoples have the right to self-determination, and linked with the right to self-determination, all peoples have the right to freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development. Backing free, prior and informed consent is the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which is also known as UNDRIP; the UN Convention on Biological Diversity; and International Labour Organization Convention 169.

I want to refer to this document from 1958. This document was part of what was extracted from a talk given by a gentleman named Gerry Gambill, who was non-First Nations, who used to work for the Department of Indian Affairs as a community development officer in St. Regis and in Cornwall, Ontario. When he gave this talk, it talked about 22 points on how to steal Indian human rights. I use the word “Indian,” because by law that’s how we were referred to.

This document says, “The art of denying Indians their human rights has been refined to a science. The following list of commonly used techniques will be helpful in ‘burglar-proofing’ your reserves”—that’s talking to us. One of the things that it says in there: “Gain the Indians’ co-operation. It is much easier to steal someone’s human rights if you can do it with his own co-operation.”

There’s 22 points. I’m not going to go through all of them, but I’m going to read number 5: “Consult the Indian, but do not act on the basis of what you hear. Tell the Indian he has a voice and go through the motions of listening. Then interpret what you have heard to suit your own needs.” I read that because sometimes people go through the motions. Governments go through the motions. I say this because I live and experience oppression on a daily basis, I live and experience colonialism on a daily basis, and when non-Indigenous people—settlers—keep on saying that they’re engaging with First Nations, that line kind of brings back what happens, to be able to do whatever settlers and governments need to do on our traditional territories.

I spoke about the other things earlier: overcrowding, housing, dental, health, mental health, suicides, boil-water advisories. One of the things I didn’t talk about was treaties, but I think that within the systems that are here—I always talk about it when I come here, that I didn’t want to run as an MPP. I never wanted this. I knew this was a system of oppression. There’s a system of colonialism for Indigenous people. I knew that our people need respect as people. Our people, Indigenous people, deserve the dignity of being able to just drink the tap water. Today, there are 14 First Nations that cannot do that. That’s the other Ontario. That’s the other Canada.

And treaties—I’ve been thinking about treaties quite a bit since I’ve been here, over the last probably a year and a half or two years. Where I come from, there’s a small community. It’s a small community called Kingfisher Lake. That’s where I grew up. My parents and grandparents moved there in 1966. They built a school there, a

federal school, in 1973. We got our reserve status in 1976. We got our hydro in 1982. We got our airstrip, our airport, in 1987. And then Ontario Hydro came in, in 1994. Ontario Hydro came into Kingfisher Lake, my home community, because—what?—because that’s when we got our running water, 1994. We never had any running water before that time.

1650

I always wonder about why they wanted us. Because we were in different settlements, and they put us in this reserve. We got funding for roads; we got funding for education, health, housing. But as time went on, I started to understand how the chronic underfunding happens. I used to think that it was, like, “They won’t fund us.” We’re growing so fast, and you have this overcrowding, you have these boil-water advisories, you have these—up to grade eight, then we have to leave for high school when you’re 13 years old.

When I went to high school, I was 13 years old. I left my family. I left all my cousins. When I went to high school, I was living at somebody’s house, a stranger, in Thunder Bay, in Sioux Lookout. As you go back to the community once you’re done school, you’ll see how chronically underfunded we are. I used to think that the system was broken, but as you learn how your system is—colonial system—it’s not broken, when we talk about Indigenous people. It’s not broken, because it’s working exactly the way it’s designed to, which is to take away the rights of our people to the lands and resources that are there. I see it, because I grew up on the land as well. I spent half of my—up until high school, I grew up half of my time out on the land, hunting, fishing, trapping. That’s where I learned my language.

Remarks in Oji-Cree.

That’s where I learned it. That’s where I learned the history of my grandparents, the people, the bays, the islands. That’s where I learned it. The names of the animals in my language, that’s where I learned it.

And the teachings, identity, everything—without the land, who are we? We are the land. The land is us. And people don’t understand that. It’s not like I can go back to another country and say, “You know what? I’m going to go back over there and go relearn my history.” It’s not like that. This is our history.

I talk about the land because within the reserve, the province of Ontario—your government—will not fund any resources on infrastructure to fix the boil-water advisories that are happening. But I also know that they want our lands. Within where they removed us from, they want our resources; whatever minerals, whatever timber, they want it.

I was in the Treaty 9 territory two days ago. I was out there most of the day. I was there probably two years before that. I got lost. I got lost in the bush. I got lost in the forest. Well, actually, it’s not a forest. Do you know why I got lost? It’s because there’s a tree cut. There’s a lot of tree-cutting happening. I couldn’t tell which roads were which, because since I’d been there a couple years before that, there had been lots of logging. I got lost because it’s

open. That's why it's so important that when we talk about York region waste water and when we talk about northern Ontario—we have all these issues: young girls, young children dying by suicide at 13 years old because they've lost hope. And we don't even talk about it.

Treaties: Nobody ever talks about treaties in this place—never. I never hear people talk about treaties. I'm from Kingfisher Lake, part of Treaty 9. Treaty 9 is the only numbered treaty out of the one-to-11 numbered treaties that has the province's signature on it. To us, our ancestors signed a treaty because we're supposed to share the benefits of that agreement, Treaty 9. I try to bring that perspective here. But they also use that jurisdictional Ping-Pong, so they don't give us funding.

Many times, I've come to this House, I've gone to the committee, and said, "You know what? Fund things on reserve as well, such as water treatment plants." Do you know what they say? It's no. They just say no. Nothing is stopping the province of Ontario, this government, to fund a water and sewer system. I say that because when I got running water in my home community when I was still living in Kingfisher Lake, I didn't understand. I remember there was this big project happening in the community—all this blasting, all these water lines, sewer lines that were being built—and it wasn't until later that I found out it was the province of Ontario that was part of that project on paying for the infrastructure, which was from the main line to the house and all the plumbing that is needed in that house. That's what the province paid for. And so, I always say there's nothing stopping the government from funding these issues.

I want to go back to the rights to water but also the treaties. When our ancestors negotiated and concluded treaties with the crown, what we were doing is, we were exercising our right of self-determination as nations. Our treaties are recognized under international law and are a source of our rights. As treaty nations, Canada but also Ontario has a legal obligation to engage with First Nations in a dialogue to be able to determine their role in relation to the well-being of Mother Earth.

1700

As First Nations, I'm telling you today, the province of Ontario, but also Canada, who are not parties to the treaty, but entities who have inherited the obligations to implement the treaties: We are going to make decisions related to the waters, because we've been here for thousands and thousands of years. I'm not sure where everybody came from; I don't know. But we were here. We are here today. We will continue to be here.

It is very important that you understand, that you know and that you respect that First Nations in Ontario have the authority and the responsibility that's given to us by Gitchi Manitou or, you can say, the Creator. I think a time has come where, as First Nations, we are going to assert that authority. We have the legal rights recognized, again, by the laws given to us by the Creator, the Constitution of Canada and international law.

We also know that the crown has a duty to consult with treaty peoples and to accommodate our interests, and that

is grounded in the honour of the crown. The honour of the crown requires it to consult with and reasonably accommodate the interests of First Nations people across these territories.

Again, because we've been here for many, many years, many decades, thousands of years, we are the experts. We are the experts of the lands and the resources. We are the experts in the waters.

I'm going to go back to the way I grew up. I remember going in a canoe. I'd have this cup. I'd sit on the floor, because I was a pretty young guy. I remember being in a canoe: My dad's driving and my mom's at the front, and my brothers and sister, we were on the floor. I remember grabbing a cup, going like this and then drinking the water. That's how pure it was. Today, we cannot even do that. Today, because we are on reserves, we cannot even drink the water from—the tap water of the 14 First Nations that I met.

Oh, yes, I want to go back to this thing on how to steal someone's human rights or to gain the Indians' co-operation. There's point number four: "Get some Indian people to do the dirty work. There are always those who will act for you to the disadvantage of their own people. Just give them a little honour and praise. This is generally the function of band councils, chiefs and advisory councils: They have little legal power, but can handle the tough decisions such as welfare, allocation of housing"—that's another rule that still continues on today on how to oppress, how to colonize people, and this document is from 1958; I don't know—60 years old. I can't do the math.

I bring this up because we're talking about An Act respecting York region Wastewater. I think it's important for you guys, for whoever is here, it's important for the government—but there are a lot of people who are suffering today in the other Ontario, the other Canada. First Nations people are dying, Indigenous people are dying, and it sometimes just seems that we do not matter. The systems that are there do not care.

I was talking a little bit about the rights to water as Indigenous people but also the treaties, and I think it's important to consult with and, again, accommodate the interests of First Nations people. And people do not understand that the purpose of that duty to consult or, you can say, "free, prior and informed consent"—the purpose of that is to protect the lands. That's so critical. It is to protect them and that's it: It is to protect the lands because we've done it for thousands of years, but it's also to protect the lands and our relations critical to the exercising of our treaty rights.

We need to be able to engage in a process to determine how good-faith consultation is going to take place in relation to the waters. Water is so critical. We all need water. I'm sure every one of you has access to clean drinking water, but back where I come from, not everyone has access to clean drinking water.

I just thought I'd talk about these issues. I wish we were talking about other things such as what I'm talking about: suicide, youth mental health, vision and dental. Again, I

will go back over to programs and services that perpetuate the oppression, the colonialism to our peoples because we never talk about the fundamental changes that are needed. When we talk about self-determination, when we talk about treaties, when we talk about self-governance—we never talk about that in this place, but that's how oppression works. That's how colonialism works. I say that because I live it. I live it, I see it, and people die from it. Colonialism kills people. Oppression kills people.

I'll end it off there. Meegwetch.

1710

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 101(c), changes have been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business, such that Mr. Coe assumes ballot item number 21 and Mr. McDonnell assumes ballot number 50.

Further debate?

Mr. Gurratan Singh: I just want to start off by saying that this is my first time speaking in the House after a summer break, and then a Parliament prorogued. It's also an auspicious day on which I get to speak today, a day of a lot of power and a day of a lot of strength, in the sense that today is Persons Day.

On Persons Day, it's such a powerful notion to think that, because of their hard work, because of women organizing, coming together and fighting back, they were able to be included in such a basic and fundamental definition: the definition of what is a person. When we reflect on Persons Day today and the obligation that each and every one of us has, I think we must really understand that the work that started in 1929 is not finished until we start to address systemic racism towards racialized and Indigenous women, until we start addressing pay equity, gender-based violence and all the systemic inequities and differences that, still, women are subjected to in our society. That's something that I hope to stand alongside everyone in this House on: fighting to make sure we have more justice for women in this province.

When we look at the bill that's being put forth before us today, this time allocation motion to address Bill 306, we see once again a lot of the hallmarks we've seen from this government with respect to problems with the legislation that are going to keep opening up the door towards further potential problems. The two big things that jump out to me are this track record, this pattern we see amongst the Conservative government in which they're continually putting forth legislation which prevents them from being held accountable in the court of law. We see explicitly being stated in this piece of legislation that it's going to prohibit people from being able to carry lawsuits against the government. We saw this previously when we looked at the Crown Liability and Proceedings Act, which was another piece of legislation in which the government was putting forward protections to themselves from being held accountable to the public.

As I've said in the past, as I'll say again today and as other legal experts have said across the board, the ability

for the public to hold the government accountable through the court system is a good thing. It's an important thing. It's something that keeps the government accountable, and it makes sure that the interests of the people are being put forward, first and foremost. Whenever we see this kind of legislation coming forward that says, "We're going to pass this bill and you're not going to hold us accountable for it," that is a red flag. That is problematic. That's wrong. And it's a pattern we've seen time and again from this Conservative government—we're seeing it once again now—and that's something that should be raising alarms for all of us.

We're also seeing, when we're looking at the motion being put forward today—it seems that the committee process is being removed from this piece of legislation, and that's also really problematic. It's once again a pattern we're seeing from the Conservative government in which they are closing off this building when they should be opening it up. The committee process is so fundamental, so foundational towards laws being passed. To group it all together and to cut it off in this motion being put forward right now is problematic, and it's something we've seen, sadly, previously put forward by this Conservative government. Those are two things that speak to very large potential issues with this piece of legislation.

When we look at it in the context of everything, we see that this is a recipe for disaster, with this legislation that's being put forward by the Conservative government. And the recipe for disaster could ultimately be something that's not constitutional. The Conservative government has already been found to have lost—I think over a dozen of their bills have been found to be not constitutional. They've lost that battle in the courts already in these short four years.

When you start preventing people's ability to hold the government accountable or have this committee process, when you start taking those fundamental rights away from people, that obviously leaves the foundation for laws to be found unconstitutional. I would once again caution the Conservative government to say that it looks like you're going down that same path once again. When you take out the committee process, when you put yourself in a position in which you cannot be held accountable through the court process, all of these speak to a piece of legislation that is probably not being written and being passed in a way that's thoughtful and ultimately one that keeps people's rights in mind.

I see that I have limited time left on the clock. Other members in this House, in the opposition, describe how, given where we are right now in Ontario in 2021, given where we are, with the devastation economically, our health care system, the loss of lives over the past many, many months, we would think that the Conservative government would put forth pieces of legislation in this House that would address that urgent matter before us—be it the member of Kiiwetinoong talking about the tragic and devastating and unjust boil-water advisories that continue to plague his community, which is being

subjected to the jurisdictional Ping-Pong that he describes, between the provincial and federal government that ultimately results in Indigenous communities still not being able to drink water; be it the systemic racism and injustice that plagues our province; be it the affordability crisis that really has everyone right now in our province feeling uneasy and struggling to get by.

I talk about Brampton, about the fact that when I talk to folks, they're talking about the housing crisis, how people are genuinely afraid and worried about how they are going to afford a home or how their children are going to afford a home, or how life is getting tougher because of unfair auto insurance and the fact that people are paying some of the highest in this country despite the fact that they have clean driving records.

There is so much that needs to be addressed in this House, in this Legislative Assembly, that is not being done right now, and that is something that we should all be cautious of.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate? Further debate?

Mr. Parsa has moved government notice of motion number 4, relating to the allocation of time on Bill 5, An Act respecting York Region Wastewater. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed 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 Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Orders of the day? The deputy government House leader.

Mr. Michael Parsa: No further business.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): There being no further business, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1719.

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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	
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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
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Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
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Fee, Amy (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	

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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
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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 civiles 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 / Solliciteuse générale
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karahalios, Belinda C. (NBP)	Cambridge	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Kramp, Daryl (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Kusendova, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga- Centre	
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
MacLeod, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa (PC)	Nepean	Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries / ministre des Industries du patrimoine, du sport, du tourisme et de la culture
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
McKenna, Hon. / L'hon. Jane (PC)	Burlington	Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues / Ministre associée déléguée au dossier de l'Enfance et à la Condition féminine
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Miller, Norman (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	
Mitas, Christina Maria (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough- Centre	
Monteith-Farrell, Judith (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Morrison, Suze (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	

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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 (PC)	Durham	
Parsa, Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Rod (PC)	Ajax	Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée
Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Hon. / L'hon. Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	Associate Minister of Digital Government / Ministre associé délégué de l'Action pour un gouvernement numérique
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines, des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Roberts, Jeremy (PC)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
Romano, Hon. / L'hon. Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Simard, Amanda (LIB)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Singh, Gurratan (NDP)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Singh, Sara (NDP)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction / Ministre associée déléguée aux Petites Entreprises et à la Réduction des formalités administratives
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Deputy Speaker / Vice-président

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Wilson, Jim (IND)	Simcoe—Grey	
Wynne, Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	
Vacant	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	

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Tom Rakocevic, Sara Singh
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell