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Mercredi
2 mars 2022

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 2 March 2022

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 2 mars 2022

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

LEGISLATIVE REFORM

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 1, 2022, on the motion regarding amendments to the standing orders.

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: I appreciate the opportunity to finish debate on the standing order changes, Speaker. It's been a very good debate. I've been enjoying not only my own speech—given that I'm the only one who's actually been speaking, and I've had the opportunity to review it, and I thought it was a pretty darned good speech so far, colleagues. I'm almost hoping that I could get another hour to speak on it.

As we were debating Bill 84 yesterday, it dawned on me that I should maybe almost amend my own standing orders yet again because we heard yesterday, of course, that the opposition House leader and the Liberal House leader now think it's also the government's job to do their job. As you know, colleagues, Bill 84, which was another rare motion of confidence that is coming forward from the opposition, was expedited, as you probably know, so there will be no committee hearings on Bill 84, not at the request of the government but at the request of the NDP, the Liberals and the independents. They, then, suggested of course yesterday that, "Oh, well, but if we can't do our job, then surely you could do it for us."

I'm not sure how I would word that change, Speaker. How much more can we do? How much more can the Conservatives do? Not only are we charged with rebuilding the economy, not only are we charged with getting Ontario back on track, now the opposition is asking us to actually do their job as well. The standing order changes, of course, have made it easier for them to do their job. It is about us giving back to democracy, making this place better, giving them more tools to do their job, and now they actually want us to do their job. They want us to help them vote and they want us to actually send things to committee.

Now just to be clear on that issue, Speaker, it really only takes—Bill 84, in particular, when the vote came, was passed on division. So the opposition in its entirety passed it on division. They didn't want a standing vote on Bill 84; it went on division. And then when it came to send it to

committee, all you have to do is, a few of them have to stand up. So of the 50 opposition members, nobody stood up to suggest that it should go to committee. They didn't say anything. They wanted it expedited as quickly as possible.

I've made all of these changes to improve committees, to add people to committees, to make committees more powerful, and the opposition, when it comes to something so important like Bill 84, have decided that they didn't want to—you'll see how it comes around, Speaker. They've talked about it in Bill 84 that they're against the cuts—not even cuts—returning people's money from val tags. You know, you go and stick that stupid sticker on the back of your car. In 2022, we're still putting stickers on the backs of cars. But anyway, in giving the money back, they're against it, but they're going to vote in favour of it.

Having said all of that, this is a rare opportunity, yet again, Speaker, and it is probably another standing order change I should do. We have motions of non-confidence, but this is the first Parliament ever—and I would think that if you go back in the history of parliamentary democracy, or democracy in general, you will never find an instance where both opposition parties have brought forward motions of confidence in the government. It has never happened. First, it was the Liberals and the House unanimously voted to support this government. It wasn't just a vote of support. It was begging the government to continue until June 2, begging us to continue doing the work that we have done. Of course, we said, "Of course we're going to continue."

And now, through Bill 84—and I remind colleagues the NDP and the Liberals are the only ones who have ever put tolls on roads. We're the only ones who have ever taken them off and put the money back in people's pockets, Speaker.

But in Bill 84, what we're going to have tomorrow is a vote of confidence in the government. What do I mean by that? It's going to be a vote of confidence on whether cutting taxes and putting more money back in the pockets of people is good. We have said from the beginning that it is the right path to building jobs and economic growth. It will be a vote of confidence on whether our public infrastructure should be tolled—the NDP thought so when they had the one chance to be in government under Bob Rae, putting massive tolls on the 407. We said no. The people of Durham and the people of Ontario should have confidence that we, in building our economy, will make sure that we don't have to toll roads.

For the first time in their history, they are going to be voting with a Progressive Conservative government

whose foundation is about better government, leaner government, more money in the pockets of the people—our foundation, everything, the core of what we believe in—they will be rising in their seats tomorrow. I'm glad that there will be a public vote in this place, back post-COVID measures. They are going to be rising on a vote of confidence so close to an election. I bet you this House will be unanimous, with the exception of the leader of the Green Party who said he's not supportive of the measures, but almost unanimous, with the Liberals, the NDP and most of the independents voting a vote of confidence in the government.

Given these results, I may actually have to bring back another standing order change that is specific to allowing the opposition NDP and Liberals to bring forward additional motions of confidence. We have opposition day motions, but perhaps I should set aside time for motions of confidence that the NDP and the Liberals can bring forward. It might be another standing order change that I bring forward, Speaker, but by and large I think you will find this package really meets the test of time and modernizes the standing orders.

I am very confident that if you support democratic institutions, if you support a stronger Parliament and giving the tools to the opposition to do their job, then you will support these standing order changes out in front of you today.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It is my pleasure to rise today in this House on behalf of the official opposition to respond to the government House leader's motion regarding yet another set of standing order changes. I have to say at the outset, Speaker, that I'm not going to be nearly as entertaining as the government House leader because we are dealing with serious business here.

In a democratic system, there are really four key elements that have to be kept in mind. We need fair and free elections. We need the active participation of people and citizens in civic and public life. We need protection for the human rights of all citizens. And we need a rule of law in which the laws and the procedures that are passed apply equally to all citizens.

This is what we do in this chamber. We are charged with ensuring that the laws that we make, the laws that we pass, address the real issues and priorities that are facing the people in this province. The standing orders are the scaffolding that allows us to engage in that very vital obligation to make those laws and pass those laws and bring the concerns of the people that we represent to the floor of the Legislative Assembly.

0910

The standing orders are essential to the functioning of the Legislature. They dictate how the business is conducted at Queen's Park, how we consider bills, what are the rules of debate, how we elect the Speaker, when we are going to sit, what business we're going to be dealing with, how we conduct question period. The standing orders have to reflect a balance between the government's right to

implement its agenda and the opposition's responsibility to criticize what the government is doing, to scrutinize what the government is doing and to hold the government to account. Most of all, Speaker, the obligation that we all are entrusted with as a result of our election to this place is to represent the views of the people who sent us here.

So any reform, any changes to the standing orders, given that they represent that fundamental underpinning of the democratic process that unfolds in the Legislative Assembly, must be undertaken with the interests of the Legislative Assembly as a whole. We have to put the best interests of every member in this place front and centre as we're looking at changes to the standing orders, and that means the process by which standing order changes are made have to be as inclusive and democratic as possible. That requires a process of consultation, a process of negotiation, a process of discussion—processes that have been completely absent from any of the changes that this government has brought forward to the standing orders.

I know that this government House leader reflects fondly on his time at the federal Parliament. I know he was defeated as a federal member of Parliament back in 2015, and one of his great projects, one of his legacies, I think, in the Ontario Legislature is the changes he has made to the standing orders to more closely reflect what happens with the federal standing orders. That is his prerogative. He is the government House leader, and that has been, as he said in his opening comment, that the standing order changes that we have here today are the culmination of this four-year process that he has been engaged in to update, modernize and, as he says, improve the functions of this House to the benefit of the members—according to him, of course. He is the one who has decided what will benefit members, without any discussion or consultation with members across the way.

Now, I would draw the government House leader's attention to the third edition of the House of Commons Procedure and Practice and what it says about the standing orders and standing order changes. The document says that the standing orders are "The permanent written rules with which the House regulates its proceedings," and that the "'standing' nature of these rules means that they do not lapse at the end of a session or a Parliament. Rather, they remain in effect until the House itself—the House itself—'decides to suspend, change or repeal them.'"

It goes on to say that at the federal level there is a Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, which—at the conclusion of the debate on this motion and the passage of this motion, the changes that have been put in place by the government House leader, we will have, now, the new Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs here at the provincial level. But at the federal level, that Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs has a permanent mandate that "includes the review of and report on the standing orders, procedure and practice in the House and its committees." So, unlike what we see here happening in Ontario, where the government House leader takes it on himself to decide how the standing orders should be changed, at the federal level

there is a committee process that involves members from all parties in reviewing and reporting on the standing orders.

The House of Commons Procedure and Practice document goes on to state that, “On some occasions, a special committee has been established with a mandate to suggest revisions to the rules and to report its recommendations to the House.” Speaker, we did not see a special committee established here in this Legislature to guide this four-year project that the government House leader has undertaken, but it would have been nice to have a special committee in place so that all members across party lines could have participated in the debate.

Then the document goes on to state that on many occasions, procedural changes have been the “result of a broad consensus among members of all parties and have been readily adopted without debate.” Now, Speaker, that is quite unlike what we have experienced here in the provincial Legislature.

There were a couple of standing order changes, I think it was the previous—this is the seventh set of standing order changes we are considering, so I think it was the sixth set of standing order changes which involved the elimination of deferral slips, for example. It involved a couple of other minor changes: As I said, the elimination of deferral slips; a mechanism for committees to meet during an adjournment period; the government House leader having the ability to change the start time on Wednesday from 3 o'clock to 1 o'clock; and an amendment so that an opposition or independent Vice-Chair would be appointed to any committees chaired by the government. I have to say, Speaker, that those standing order changes were supported on this side of the House. That was an example of some standing order changes that we were able to agree that, yes, those changes make sense, they improve the functioning of this Legislature and they should go ahead.

Unfortunately, Speaker, the other standing order changes that this government has passed, the other six sets of standing order changes—this is the seventh set of standing order changes—were not as straightforward as those four previous amendments. When you reflect on what had happened in this Legislature prior to this government taking office—I quoted earlier from the House of Commons Procedure and Practice about the standing nature of standing orders. Well, in Ontario, in the 26 years from 1992 to 2018, there were five permanent amendments to the standing orders—over a period of a quarter of a century, five changes. And in the last four years here, we have seen, as I said, seven changes to the standing orders, all undertaken without any consultation or discussion in advance with the official opposition.

Many of those changes have focused on consolidating the power of the government to rush through its legislation in a fast-tracked fashion. That is a concern, Speaker, because when we see bills tabled—introduced on a Tuesday, for example, at 3 o'clock, under Introduction of bills in the afternoon routine. When we see a bill tabled at 3 o'clock and called for debate the next morning at 9

o'clock, it does not allow the opposition or the people of this province to have a say, to weigh in on what that legislation will mean for their ability to live their lives or do their business.

0920

The changes that have been made to fast-track legislation are highly problematic, not just for democracy but for the ability of this Legislature to respond appropriately to the issues that people are facing. We have all lived through an unprecedented two-year global pandemic that has really, I think, raised the stakes in terms of our acknowledgement, our recognition of the very serious challenges that people are facing in this province and the obligation of all of us to come to this place and try to work together to address those challenges. And we did that, Speaker. I don't want to pretend that it did not happen. We did have examples, at the very beginning of this pandemic, when the government came to our side and said, “We want to do this and can we agree on a process to fast-track this legislation, because it is so urgently needed?” And we said, “Of course. Of course we will agree to fast-track that legislation,” because we understood the urgency of getting measures in place to provide the support that people needed. So it can be done, and we have evidence. We have experience seeing that happen. But it has not happened in any consultation on the standing order changes.

Oh, before I forget, I did want to say, Speaker, that I will be sharing my time with the member from Algoma-Manitoulin.

Now, something that the government House leader said yesterday during his leadoff debate on this latest package of standing order changes really caught my attention. He referred to the “draconian measures that we have virtually eliminated in this Parliament with respect to the time allocations that you would get.” I'm quoting here from the Hansard from his speech yesterday. I thought to myself, “I'm pretty sure that this government has introduced quite a few time allocation motions to cut off debate and to fast-track legislation.” So I took a look at the record of this government in both the first and second sessions of the 42nd Parliament, and I'm just going to remind the government House leader of the bills that have been time-allocated since this government was elected in 2018.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Start with when I was appointed.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: The first bill, Bill 2, was time-allocated.

Bill 5 was time-allocated, and that, as everyone will recall, is the Better Local Government Act. That was the bill that the Premier introduced in order to get some payback on Toronto city councillors that he had a grudge against, and it was a bill to cut the size of Toronto city council in half. Interestingly enough, that was a bill that also did not go to committee.

Bill 36 was time-allocated.

Bill 4, the Cap and Trade Cancellation Act, was time-allocated, and I think that bill is pretty self-explanatory and really reflects the anti-environment philosophy of this government. Bill 4, one of the very first bills they introduced, was to cancel cap-and-trade. I can't remember if

that was before or after they eliminated the position of the environmental commissioner, but it certainly set this government on a four-year path to take actions to undermine environmental protections in Ontario.

Bill 47 was time-allocated. That was the Making Ontario Open for Business Act, and that, as everyone will recall, was the bill that eliminated the two paid sick days that workers in this province had fought so long and so hard to get in place—two paid sick days that would have made an incredible difference, a huge difference during the pandemic, so that people who were sick, who were experiencing symptoms of COVID, didn't have to make that choice between staying home and risking a day's pay, risking not being able to pay the rent, risking not being able to get the groceries because they didn't have paid sick days from their employer. That is also the bill, I will remind people, that cancelled the \$15 minimum wage, which, four years later, this government brought forward. But we all know that had that minimum wage been in place in 2018, it would be much higher than \$15 right now.

The Green Energy Repeal Act was time-allocated, another anti-environmental bill by this government.

The Access to Natural Gas Act was time-allocated—the government's first budget bill, which people may also recall included \$3.2 billion of cuts, putting our province in a much more vulnerable position when COVID hit so drastically.

The Labour Relations Amendment Act was time-allocated.

The Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act was time-allocated.

Bill 66, Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, was time-allocated. People may recall that that was basically a deregulation bill that scrapped regulated protections for children, for consumers, for workers and the environment.

Bill 48, the Safe and Supportive Classrooms Act, was time-allocated.

Bill 74, The People's Health Care Act, was time-allocated. That is the bill that really opened up Ontario's health care system to the prospect of privatized health care, which we are seeing again with the government's proposal to look at independent health facilities to offload some of the surgical backlog—which we know will actually not have an impact on the surgical backlog, because what it will do is siphon off health care workers from the public system into those private health facilities.

The government's budget measures bill, Bill 100, was time-allocated.

Fixing the Hydro Mess Act: That was also time-allocated in 2019. That's an interesting one, because we just heard from the Financial Accountability Officer how this government has completely failed to deliver on its promise to reduce hydro bills.

Bill 107, Getting Ontario Moving Act, was time-allocated.

Bill 115, Bringing Choice and Fairness to the People Act, was time-allocated.

Bill 117, OSPCA Amendment Act: time-allocated.

Bill 108, More Homes, More Choice Act, was time-allocated. I think that was one of the government's first housing bills. What that bill actually did, as people will recall—not only did it offer deregulation for developers, but it also included weakened protections for wetlands and prime farmland. That is again a pattern that this government has continued in subsequent bills on the Bradford Bypass and the 413.

Bill 124 was time-allocated, and that, as everyone will remember, was the bill that introduced a 1% wage cap for public sector workers, including, most notably, nurses. The impacts, the consequences of that bill have certainly come back to haunt us as we see the chronic shortage of nurses in this province, which has been significantly worsened by the 1% wage cap.

0930

Speaker, we are at a time in Ontario when inflation is running at over 5%. You don't have to really understand math to get that a 1% wage increase, at a time when inflation is higher than 5%, is a wage cut. It's a wage cut.

We have seen nurses and health care workers step up to the plate like never before. We have seen them take on huge personal risks for their own safety and the safety of their families in order to keep all of us safe. For that, they are being rewarded with words from this government about what heroes they are while they are facing a significant wage cut.

Bill 136, Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act: time-allocated.

Bill 138, Plan to Build Ontario Together Act: time-allocated.

Bill 132, Better for People, Smarter for Business Act: time-allocated.

Bill 116, Foundations for Promoting and Protecting Mental Health Act: time-allocated.

Bill 156, Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act: time-allocated.

Bill 161, Smarter and Stronger Justice Act: time-allocated—and to the government House leader, I would just point out that the bills that I am well into reading from this list—many of them, most of them, in fact, were time-allocated after he assumed the position of government House leader.

Bill 171, Building Transit Faster Act: time-allocated.

Bill 175, Connecting People to Home and Community Care Act: time-allocated.

Legislative Assembly Act: time-allocated.

Rebuilding Consumer Confidence Act: time-allocated.

Helping Tenants and Small Businesses Act: time-allocated.

Reopening Ontario act, a flexible response: Now, that's an interesting one, Speaker, because not only was that time-allocated, but in the time allocation motion, the government can direct whether or not a bill goes to committee. With that particular bill, the government bypassed committee altogether and went straight to third reading. As members will recall, Bill 195 was the bill that gave this government an extraordinary overreach of power. It gave

the government the ability to override collective agreements, which has really opened them up to a constitutional challenge, because of that overreach of power.

Bill 218, Supporting Ontario's Recovery and Municipal Elections Act: That bill was time-allocated as well, and that is the bill that the government introduced to prevent itself from being sued by families who had lost loved ones in long-term-care homes. In my capacity as democratic reform critic, that's also the bill that eliminated the ability of municipalities to conduct local elections by means of ranked ballots.

Actually, on the subject of ranked ballots, I have to say, it is interesting to have heard the Liberal leader commit that, if he becomes Premier, 2022 will be the last election under first-past-the-post. He has committed to running the next election, if he becomes Premier, as a ranked ballot election.

You know, ranked ballots work very well in municipal elections, where there is no party affiliation on the ballot. Ranked ballots also work very well at provincial and federal levels, where there is party affiliation. They work very well to help re-elect Liberals in perpetuity. We have seen this in other elections. We actually heard that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, when he was looking at electoral reform at the federal level, was considering ranked ballots. He admitted that he wasn't going to go there because he recognized that the people of Canada would see through this as a cynical ploy to enable Liberals to continually be elected. Because, let's face it, Speaker: Liberals are often the more likely second choice for people who would rank either the PCs or the NDP first, and so in a ranked ballot election, Liberals would be favoured.

Speaker, that is one of the reasons why Fair Vote Canada and Fair Vote Ontario are so opposed to Liberal leader Steven Del Duca's proposal to run the next election as a ranked ballot election in Ontario. It does nothing for democracy. It does everything for the Liberal Party. But that was just an aside, Speaker, and I'm going to go back to the time-allocated bills that this government says they have virtually eliminated in this place.

Bill 213, the Better For People, Smarter For Business Act: That is what we call the McVety bill. People will remember that that was the bill that allowed the notorious Islamophobe and bigot Charles McVety to achieve university status for the institution he heads up without going through the proper channels.

Then we have Bill 229, the Protect, Support and Recover from COVID-19 Act. That was the budget measures act. That was time-allocated—again, showing this government's vendetta against environmental protections, that was the bill that eliminated the funding for conservation authorities to engage in flood protection and flood mitigation efforts.

Bill 257, the Supporting Broadband and Infrastructure Expansion Act: time-allocated. I have to give a shout-out to my colleague the member for Timiskaming—Cochrane for all the work that he has done on getting broadband to rural Ontario.

Finally, we closed the first session of the 42nd Parliament with another midnight sitting, just as we had opened

it, with the debate on cutting Toronto city council in half. We closed the first session with a debate on Bill 307, another bill that was time-allocated, and in the time allocation motion it bypassed committee altogether and went straight to third reading. That was the bill that used the "notwithstanding" clause—the first time in Ontario—to silence critics of the government.

That was just in the first session of this Legislature, the number of time-allocated bills.

To the government's credit, in this second session, which started in the fall, we have only seen one time-allocated bill, the York Region Wastewater Act. Again, this was an opportunity for the government to use a time allocation motion to bypass committee on a bill that there was significant public interest in, but the government used time allocation to go straight to third reading.

Speaker, I didn't expect that I would end up taking as much time as I did on that, but I think it was important to challenge the government House leader's comments about having virtually eliminated time allocation motions in this Legislature.

I want to now take a little bit of time to talk about the package of standing order amendments that we see before us today. It is an extensive package of amendments. Anybody who was here yesterday will have seen that it took 20 minutes—20 minutes—for the government House leader just to read the motion into the record, outlining all of the changes to the standing orders that he is proposing to make for, as I remind people, the seventh time in this Legislature.

0940

So this package of amendments includes changes to 33 standing orders. In some cases, there are multiple clauses of a single standing order that are amended by this motion. We have 148 standing orders, so 33 out of 148 is a substantial number of changes that are being made. And I'm just going to talk about—I'm going to cluster the changes. I don't want to go through each one of those standing orders and talk about the specific change, because they really do group into three main themes.

The first set of changes deals with meetings of the House. These changes, curiously enough, take place the day after this motion is passed, which we expect will be next week, so these changes will come into effect immediately after the vote on this motion. There is a new standing order that will change the parliamentary calendar in an election year—which, of course, we are in right now—so that the last day of the winter-spring meeting period becomes the fifth Wednesday preceding the first Thursday in June.

The current standing orders say that the last day of the session is the first Thursday in June, which this year is—I'm not sure what day that is, but it moves it up to the fifth Wednesday preceding the first Thursday in June, which will be May 4. I think we all have May 4 circled on our calendars, because we know that that is the day that the Legislature must dissolve and the election writ must be issued, and that's because we have fixed election days and that is under the Election Act.

Now, that may make sense to some people on first glance. If the Legislature is dissolved, why would we have the standing order say or pretend that the Legislature is going to continue to sit until the first Thursday in June? But there's an implication to this change, Speaker, that is important to keep in mind, because there are other standing orders dealing with the government's ability to call night sittings and there is another standing order dealing with the opposition's ability to bring forward opposition day motions.

So the standing orders say that the government can call night sittings in the last 18 days of a session. By changing this session end date, it changes the day at which the government can call night sittings, and it further enables the government to use those night sittings to push through any legislation that it wants to. So with this change, night sittings could be called as early as Monday, March 28. And the current standing orders say that no opposition day motions can be brought forward in the last eight sessional days, so what this means is that the official opposition will not be able to bring forward opposition day motions as of Thursday, April 14.

It's a subtle change, Speaker, that people may not immediately see the connection to how this helps the government push forward legislation more quickly. But, clearly, it will have an impact because the government will be able to—when you have a night sitting, you can reach the time allocation mark, you can reach the closure mark in a single day on a bill. You could have a bill introduced on a Monday. If there's a night sitting on the Tuesday, it could be debated morning, afternoon and evening—done—and the vote next day; it happens. Speaker, that is a real problem for people in this province, when legislation moves forward as quickly as that.

Another change that is being put in place, dealing with meetings of the House, allows the government to begin the legislative day at 9 a.m. on a Monday. Normally, on Mondays we start immediately with members' statements at 10:15. We don't have a morning session of the House. Now, the government can add that extra hour and 15 minutes of debate time, once again to give it more opportunity to push through its legislative agenda.

The government has also made a change to the afternoon routine proceedings, dealing with the introduction of bills. Now, Speaker, as you will know, being in the chair, in the afternoon when Introduction of bills is called, members on this side of the House and members on that side of the House can all rise and hope to be recognized, hope to catch your eye, when we have bills to introduce. Sometimes, an opposition member may be introduced first, before the government minister has had a chance to rise. I think that this must have rankled with the government House leader, so there is now a new process under Introduction of bills where there's going to be a separation between—Introduction of government bills will be one proceeding, and then Introduction of bills will be another proceeding during which members on this side of the House or government members can rise to table legislation.

The next set of changes that I'm going to discuss concern private members' public business. Now, these changes take effect eight sessional days after the motion is passed. These are extensive changes that are proposed to be made to standing order 101. Under the current standing order 101, we can begin debating private members' public business as early as the first sessional day after the delivery of the throne speech and the start of a new session. The changes that are being proposed in standing order 101 would delay the start of private members' public business by 12 sessional days.

It is important to keep in mind that what this change does is it eliminates 12 sessional days when private members can be in that calendar rotation to get a ballot slot to bring forward their private members' bills. It will reduce the number of ballot slots, depending on when the House returns following prorogation. We just went through a prorogation, Speaker. This session that we're currently in followed a prorogation that happened in the fall. If this rule had been in place when we returned after that prorogation in October, the first ballot date would not have come until November 2. So all of those members who had opportunities to bring forward private members' bills that responded to the issues that they were hearing from constituents that they represent—all of those private members' bills—we wouldn't have had the opportunity to debate and consider those bills. The whole calendar would have been pushed back.

Another thing to consider about this change: If a throne speech took place on a Thursday prior to constituency week, it would be a full month before a private members' public business ballot item was considered in the House. Speaker, private members do not have a lot of opportunity to engage with other members in this place on legislative issues that are critical to their ridings or to the people of this province. To remove that ability of private members to bring forward legislative issues, to limit the number of opportunities, is directly counter to what this government House leader says that he's all about. He talks a good game about wanting to elevate the status of private members in this Legislature, but changes like this do not do that. They actually take away the ability of private members to bring forward issues of legislative significance.

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Other changes that are made in standing order 101 concern ballot date swaps. There is a draw, and members' names are selected randomly for a ballot date slot, as you know, Speaker, as a veteran in this place who has been through this process many times. Members have the opportunity to exchange ballot dates. Always, there is a good reason to exchange ballot dates. With a particular legislative item, there may be certain things that are happening in this province that make that bill more appropriately brought forward at an earlier time or a later time. So the ability for members to exchange ballot dates is also important when you want to elevate the status of individual members in this Legislature.

The current rules in place allow members to switch ballot dates up until the Thursday prior to their ballot date.

The new proposal is that the deadline for ballot date swaps is eight sessional days before the earliest of the two ballot dates that are being traded. What this means for members who have ballot dates in the second week of the fall and winter meeting periods is those members would have to make their trades in June for a September ballot date or in December for a February ballot date. Speaker, when we want members to be able to be as responsive as possible to the needs and the priorities of the people we represent, you shouldn't be tying members' hands like that. You shouldn't be locking members into determining their ballot date in June for a debate that's not going to happen until September.

On this, Speaker, I do have to comment that it's interesting that this government believes that eight sessional days' notice is needed when, on several occasions, most notably last week, we have seen them give members in this place, the official opposition and the independent members, less than 24 hours after a bill is tabled before they bring that bill forward for debate and consideration in this Legislature. I think I mentioned earlier, we saw that last week with Bill 84. It was introduced at 2 o'clock on a Tuesday. A ministry briefing was held at 4 o'clock on that same day. It's an omnibus bill, so there was a lot to digest in that bill. Many of the members on our side were not able attend that ministry briefing, and yet the next morning, 9 o'clock, that bill is up for debate in this place. And the government thinks that that's appropriate for government bills and yet wants to restrict private members' ability to determine the date when private members' bills will be brought forward.

Thirdly, there is a change to the designation deadline or the date by which members have to indicate which bill they're going to bring forward for their ballot date, because many members have multiple PMBs on the order paper. They may have a PMB and motions on the order paper, and the current rules give members the ability to select which of their bills on the order paper to bring forward for their ballot date debate. Once again, this new rule would require eight sessional days' notice for a member to designate the bill or motion that they plan to bring forward for their ballot date.

Again, Speaker, I have to say that this takes away the ability of members to be as responsive and nimble and flexible as possible in addressing the concerns and priorities of the people we represent.

Now, the third set of changes that I'm going to go over concern committees. This is also very interesting. These changes take effect on dissolution of the 42nd Parliament. As a parting gift, this government House leader is leaving the next government—the NDP government—this reorganized committee structure that is proposed by multiple changes to the standing orders dealing with committees.

What these changes do, Speaker, is really make a major reorganization of the committee structure in this place. Currently, we have nine committees in this Legislature; that is reduced to eight. With those eight committees, there is one new committee added. Two of the current committees are merged and one of our current committees is

renamed. The Standing Committee on Estimates is eliminated and a new estimates process, which borrows from the House of Commons model—which, as I have observed earlier, seems to be the driving purpose of this government House leader, to model the Legislative Assembly standing orders as closely as possible to the House of Commons standing orders. The Standing Committee on Estimates is eliminated and instead estimates are distributed among six policy field standing committees.

Now, one of the concerns that we have with that process is that, as we all know, the membership of committees mirrors the membership of this Legislature. In a majority government, government members have a majority on all of those policy field committees that will now be considering estimates. That means that each committee will decide how long the estimates from any specific ministry will be considered. And that means when the government has a majority of the members on those policy field committees, they can significantly reduce the amount of time that is given to the examination of estimates.

Currently, each recognized party has up to 15 hours per round that can be used to review up to two ministries. Under the new rules, as I said, the majority of the members on the policy field committees will have the final say over the length of time for a ministry review.

Certainly, we have found the estimates process to be incredibly useful to the opposition's responsibility to scrutinize the operations of government, when we're able to call ministers and ministry officials before the estimates committee and ask very pointed questions that the people of this province expect us to ask, because that is part of the official opposition's role. So we have a concern about the impact on the estimates process that is contemplated by this change.

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Another change that is proposed is to merge the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills with the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly, and that those two committees will come together to form a new Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, which, again, is a standing committee that is in place federally and will now be in place in Ontario.

The Standing Committee on General Government is renamed the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy, and the number of policy field committees is expanded from the three that we currently have, which are general government, justice policy and social policy. General government will become heritage, infrastructure and culture; there is justice policy, social policy, finance and economic affairs, the new Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs and the Standing Committee on the Interior. They will become the six new standing committees.

I have to say, Speaker, that clearly, this government House leader spent a lot of time on masterminding this complete reorganization of committees. It would have been nice, in his new role as Minister of Long-Term Care, if he were as committed to the long-term care file as he has obviously shown himself to be to the overhauling of the standing orders.

But, Speaker, now that I have flagged some of the concerns that we have with the standing order changes that are proposed, I would like to move an amendment—or actually move several amendments.

I move that the motion be amended by:

“(1) Adding the following amendment to standing order 3:

“‘The definition of a ‘substantive motion’ in standing order 3 is amended by inserting ‘eight (8) sessional days’ after ‘require’ in the second-last sentence.’

“(2) Deleting the amendment to standing order 63(d) and substituting the following:

“(d) The time for the consideration of the estimates of each ministry or office shall be determined by the members of the committee who selected such estimates for consideration, with a maximum of 15 hours allocated to the consideration of the estimates of that ministry or office.’

“(3) Adding the following amendment to standing order 73:

“Standing order 73 is deleted and the following substituted:

“‘73(a) Eight (8) sessional days’ notice is required for motions for second reading of government bills and hoist motions.

“(b) One (1) sessional day’s notice shall be required for motions of third reading of government bills and for a reasoned amendment to a motion for second or third reading of a government bill.’

“(4) Deleting the amendment to standing order 101(a) and substituting the following:

“‘Standing order 101(a) is amended by adding at the beginning “Except on the 12 sessional days immediately following the speech from the throne to open the first session of a Parliament or four sessional days immediately after any speeches from the throne following a prorogation of the House.”

“(5) Deleting the amendment to standing order 101(c) and substituting the following:

“‘Standing order 101(c) is deleted and the following substituted:

“‘Subject to clause (e), members may exchange places in the order of precedence on the ballot list by providing to the Clerk of the House written notice of their arrangement to this effect, such written notice to be duly signed by the House leaders of the affected members and to be provided four (4) sessional days prior to the earlier of the two dates on the order of precedence determined in clause (b).’

“(6) Deleting the amendment to standing order 101(e) and substituting the following:

“‘Standing order 101(e) is deleted and the following substituted:

“‘To be considered in private members’ time, the order for second reading, or notice of a motion, must appear on the Orders and Notices paper eight (8) sessional days in advance of the date that is determined by the ballot conducted under clause (b).’”

I will provide some copies of that motion to the page.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): The member from London West has moved the motion be amended by:

“(1) Adding the following amendment to standing order 3—

Interjection: Dispense.

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

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): “(1) Adding the following amendment to standing order 3:

“‘The definition of a ‘substantive motion’ in standing order 3 is amended by inserting ‘eight (8) sessional days’ after ‘require’ in the second-last sentence.’

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“‘To be considered in private members’ time, the order for second reading, or notice of a motion, must appear on the Orders and Notices paper eight (8) sessional days in advance of the date that is determined by the ballot conducted under clause (b).’”

I return the floor to the member from London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: As I had indicated earlier, I will be sharing my time with the member for Algoma–Manitoulin, and I am going to do that now.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I recognize the member from Algoma–Manitoulin.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Speaker, it's nice to be back after a couple of days of illness, and it's great to be here. Actually, yesterday, I thought it was the best thing since sliced bread that the House leader was proposing, but I'm glad I was here for the member for London West's comments.

You can't blame us for being suspicious when this government is changing the rules to the table. So on that note, I move that the amendment be amended by:

Deleting the number "15" in paragraph 2 and replacing it with the number "12".

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): The member for Algoma–Manitoulin has moved that the amendment be amended by:

Deleting the number "15" in paragraph 2 and replacing it with the number "12".

I return to the member from Algoma–Manitoulin.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Speaker, very shortly: What you see from this government is restriction on debate, restriction on stakeholder involvement and everything—

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

Hon. Steve Clark: It's a pleasure for me to speak this morning in the House on the standing order changes. I don't agree with the New Democrats' assessment of the work that the government House leader has done. I support the changes that he has made, and I want to take a few moments before members' statements to outline some of them.

1010

First of all, I want to congratulate my member of Parliament, Michael Barrett, for the great riding of Leeds–Grenville–Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes. He was named this week as shadow Minister of Health for the official opposition, and because he was shadow Minister of Health, he became the Vice-Chair of the health committee. So I want to thank him for that. I want to congratulate him on the great work he's done. Basically, what I've just finished saying verifies what the House leader has put in changes: It makes a lot of sense that when the shadow Minister of Health gets appointed, they become the Vice-Chair of that committee. So I like the changes the government House leader is making, so that people can be more expert in terms of the committees they're at.

I came here, Speaker, in—I was elected on March 4, 2010, in a by-election. I sat right in that corner; I think the member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan sits in the chair I was in. And actually, Speaker, my seatmate was your predecessor, Bill Murdoch. Although Bill was a student of the standing orders, I'm not sure he practised all the standing orders. I think there wasn't a standing order that he didn't try to bend or break, but he did teach me a lot. Later on, I was a seatmate with the member for Sarnia–Lambton. He taught me a lot as well.

That was the 39th Parliament. In the 40th Parliament, we had a minority Parliament, and one of the things that the Legislative Assembly committee did—and if Trevor Day were here, he would nod at me, because I spent the summer with him and the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. We sat all summer in that minority Parliament and reviewed the standing orders. The whole summer, the committee on the Legislative Assembly met and talked about standing orders, and many of those standing orders are the subject of the government House leader's changes.

But what did the Liberal government of the day do? Absolutely nothing. We spent the whole summer. The three parties sat down and we talked about changes that needed to be made. I can remember vividly a very robust conversation about broadcasts, about the fact many other Legislative Assemblies in our country, many state Legislatures televised all their committees, so that if you were in a committee debating a bill, it would be publicized. We only had capabilities in the Amethyst Room to do that. There was a lot of debate at the time. The Liberal government of the day did nothing. There was a lot of talk, a lot of consensus at the committee among the three parties—absolutely nothing was actually accomplished by the Liberal government of the day. There was a lot of talk; there was no action.

So some of the things that the government House leader is trying to mirror are issues around ensuring that committees specialize in a certain ministry or a certain case. I was looking today—first of all, I'm going to digress. I'm going to talk about these devices, and the fact that we're now able to use devices as part of a standing order change.

I was reviewing today two of my predecessors. When I first became a mayor in 1982, we had two MPPs who covered the riding I represent now in Leeds–Grenville. We had Norm Sterling, who was elected in 1977, and we had Bob Runciman, who was elected in 1981. When you go back on the OLA website and you see their first year in Parliament—Mr. Sterling's first Parliament was the 31st Parliament. He was on committees like the committee on company law, the committee on procedural affairs, the committee on the administration of justice. He was a lawyer. He then, in that same term, became parliamentary secretary for justice. So you can see some of these committees that were set up at the time were specialized in a—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I apologize for having to interrupt the member, but it is now time for members' statements.

Debate deemed adjourned.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

BEACH METRO NEWS

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: I want to congratulate Beach Metro News on its 50th anniversary. Beach Metro News is a little local paper that is a fixture of my community. It's a free paper delivered to our doors, paid for by the advertising of local small businesses, and it

punches well above its weight. Times are tough for print journalism, but Beach Metro continues to thrive, and in the close to 30 years that I've lived there, I've always been thrilled to see it arrive.

Yes, it features photos of local celebrities and events, but it does a good deal more than that. It goes out of its way to hire young, racialized reporters via grants to support local journalism and it gives them hard stories to write about—contentious issues like housing, climate and Metrolinx's destruction of Small's Creek.

Beach Metro did a fabulous job of covering all the tensions and pain that small businesses and precariously employed BEY residents experienced during COVID: the evictions, closures, lockdowns, grief and loss, but also the extraordinary compassion, kindness and volunteering of all our neighbours.

Sometimes the news can feel like an onslaught of bitterness, nastiness and horror. We in BEY are so lucky to have a ray of local sunshine as well as insight. Thank you so much to Alan Shackleton and all the staff at Beach Metro news. May you have a fabulous 50th birthday celebration. You have earned it. Thank you from all of us in Beaches–East York

PURIM

Mrs. Robin Martin: Purim, which occurs on March 16 and 17 this year, is an ancient Jewish holiday that commemorates the saving of the Jewish people from the wrath of a Persian official who was planning to kill all the Jews in the empire. The story on which it is based is recounted in the Book of Esther. The evil plans, however, were foiled by Mordecai and Esther, his cousin and adopted daughter, who had become the queen of Persia.

This day of deliverance for the Jewish people is commemorated with a day of feasting and rejoicing. Jews around the world celebrate Purim by exchanging gifts of food and drink, donating to the poor, eating a celebratory meal and public readings from the scroll of Esther, usually in a synagogue. Other Purim customs include wearing masks and costumes, and there are often public celebrations and parades.

I have had the opportunity and privilege to attend Purim celebrations in my community, including at Shaarei Shomayim synagogue, and have enjoyed the celebration and festive atmosphere. Purim is a great holiday for families and is especially embraced by the young and the young at heart. I had the privilege of enjoying Purim with the former rabbi of Shaarei Shomayim, Rabbi Strauchler, and his young family, along with all of the other congregants. For me, my favourite part of the event is always the costumes.

I want to say a happy Purim to everybody. Enjoy and celebrate as we all get together this year.

RICHARD KUSMIERCZYK

Mr. Percy Hatfield: More than 100 years ago, a song became an anthem for trade union activists. That song, of course, was Solidarity Forever.

In the early 1980s in Poland, a group of workers formed the Solidarity movement. They became the first free and independent trade union in the Soviet bloc and eventually led Poland towards democracy.

One of the leaders of that Solidarity movement lives in my riding. Richard Kusmierczyk was the union chair for 7,000 factory workers when the communist dictatorship in Poland declared martial law in early December 1981. Civil liberties were suspended. Thousands of tanks and armed soldiers poured into the streets. The police came to Richard's door and hauled him off to jail for two weeks. His family didn't know if he was dead or alive.

Thousands of Solidarity members were rounded up, and during the subsequent years of martial law, many were killed. Richard Kusmierczyk was declared an enemy of the state. In 1983, he brought his family to Canada and settled in Windsor. Two weeks ago, he was in Ottawa at the Polish embassy and awarded Poland's Cross of Freedom and Solidarity. Richard was recognized for his leadership within the Solidarity movement. His son Irek is the federal Liberal member for my riding.

On behalf of all of us here in Ontario's provincial Parliament, I congratulate Richard Kusmierczyk on his award. We thank him for his leadership.

Speaker, "Solidarity forever / For the union makes us strong."

KINSMEN CLUB OF PETERBOROUGH

Mr. Dave Smith: Throughout COVID, there were many adjustments made, and our service clubs were no exception. Because of those adjustments, they continued to serve.

One in particular in my riding is the Kinsmen Club of Peterborough. The Kinsmen's motto is "to serve our community's greatest needs," and they are living up to that motto.

Every Saturday night at 7 p.m. from October to May, the Kinsmen put on a TV bingo show on Global Oshawa, Global Peterborough and Global Kingston. A core of volunteers from Manitouwadge to Brockville and just about every community in between distribute bingo cards to convenience stores, gas stations and grocery stores. Then on Saturday nights, with the help of CHEX TV in Peterborough, a group of 10 volunteers put on the bingo show. It's been a staple now for almost three decades.

1020

Prior to COVID, about 6,500 bingo cards were sold each week, but last year, TV bingo exploded, with close to 30,000 bingo cards being sold each week by Christmas. Not only did this simple TV broadcast provide a needed distraction from the frustrations of COVID-19 for so many, but it also meant that the Kinsmen clubs could serve their communities' greatest needs that much more.

In Peterborough, \$50,000 from bingo went to the CMHA to help purchase one of the mobile mental health and addiction buses, and \$15,000 went to the Kawartha Food Share. In Lindsay, donations of \$20,000 to A Place Called Home and \$10,000 to Kawartha Lakes Food Source were made.

Who would have thought that playing something as simple as bingo during COVID-19 would have so much of a positive effect on our communities?

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Mr. Michael Mantha: They have arrived. These are FN95 masks that have been produced by First Nation partnerships with Dent-X Canada. I have them here available, and I want to get a page to provide this gift to the House leader for the governing party. I have some for everyone else here in the House. I've provided some for the Clerks; I gave some to the Speaker; I gave some to the pages.

These masks are produced in two communities in my riding: Sagamok First Nation and Wiikwemkoong First Nation. Both Ogimaa Ozawamimke and Chief Peltier are sitting in Vaughan today, strategizing about how they can approach this government about a procurement agreement to purchase some of these Ontario-made masks, instead of getting these masks produced from other jurisdictions. We have them available here in Ontario. You should be looking at what we have here in Ontario and making sure that they are provided with the security that they need in order to continue maintaining their jobs and employment.

In Wiikwemkoong, they have over 30 employees. In Sagamok, they have over 30 employees. They are looking at developing a recycling plant as well, which will create another 40 jobs. This is a good-news story.

If anybody wants to have a contact in regard to ordering your own mask, get a hold of me. Matthew Owl, who is the president of First Nations Procurement Inc., is looking forward to receiving your call and your orders.

MOIS DE LA FRANCOPHONIE

M. John Fraser: Mars est le Mois de la Francophonie. Les Franco-Ontariens se battent depuis longtemps pour ce qu'ils méritent. Je suis très fier d'avoir travaillé à leurs côtés au gouvernement et dans cette Chambre pour poursuivre ce combat.

La communauté francophone se défend toujours, que ce soit plus de 100 ans de lutte contre le règlement 17; la lutte victorieuse pour sauver l'Hôpital Montfort, SOS Montfort; ou en luttant contre ce gouvernement lorsqu'il a enlevé le commissaire indépendant aux services en français de l'Ontario. La communauté francophone ici en Ontario a poursuivi la lutte pour que ses droits linguistiques soient respectés et promus.

Je suis très fier de voir le drapeau franco-ontarien ici dans cette Chambre. Mes collègues et la députée d'Ottawa-Vanier ont travaillé fort pour s'assurer qu'il soit représenté ici à Queen's Park. Ce drapeau nous rappelle le travail qui a été fait et tout le travail qu'il nous reste à faire.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnett): I'm going to ask the members to please keep the volume of their private conversations to a minimum, please. Could we please be quiet?

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: International Women's Day is next week, on March 8. It's an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate women across Ontario for the incredible contributions women have made, are making and will continue to make in our communities.

Women have made many great strides to achieve equality in society, but more must be done to ensure women are protected from harassment, discrimination and violence. February 22 was Human Trafficking Awareness Day, and as we have learned, human trafficking is happening right here in our own backyards. About 66% of human trafficking cases in Canada occur in Ontario. To combat this, Ontario is investing \$307 million in its anti-human trafficking strategy. We're also increasing community-based services by \$96 million to support victims and survivors. This includes \$46 million for new community programs and Indigenous services and supports.

During the pandemic, we saw that cases of domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking increased. As we look forward to celebrating International Women's Day, let's recognize the community organizations across Ontario who provide supports to victims of sexual violence. In my own community, I want to thank organizations such as Halton Women's Place, the Women's Centre of Halton, SAVIS of Halton and Nina's Place for their critical work.

Let's continue to work together to end violence against women everywhere.

INVASION OF UKRAINE

Mr. Paul Miller: The world is watching and finally paying attention. In 2008, the Russian military invaded the sovereign country of Georgia in the Caucasus region of Europe. The world paid some heed, but little was done beyond condemnation and sanctions. This event was, in fact, the first war to be fought on European soil in the 21st century. Few people back then thought much more of the conflict other than just a border skirmish between a distant and little-thought region. While the world focused on the battles in Iraq and Afghanistan, nearly 92,000 people in Georgia were violently displaced, with roughly 20,000 people, mostly ethnic Georgians, remaining displaced nearly 10 years later.

In 2014, on another important date on the historical calendar in Eastern Europe—this was the year in which the sovereign nation of Ukraine was first violated by Russian troops and tanks. At that time, the United Nations General Assembly condemned the annexation of Crimea. They reaffirmed the condemnation in 2016 and opposed “the imposition of the legal system of the Russian federation and the negative impact on the human rights situation in Crimea.” Again, the world paid little attention to this act of war.

Now, with Russian tanks and troops currently pushing in on the capital of Ukraine, the international community is finally waking up. At a rally this weekend, amongst a

sea of blue and yellow, I saw the flags of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovakia and many other countries, all in front of Hamilton city hall—hundreds of people.

We need to do everything we can to support the free and brave people of Ukraine. The government and all Canadians need to stand in solidarity and show the dictator and the oligarchs of Russia that their acts of aggression will no longer be tolerated. War crimes are being committed as we speak, and it is absolutely outrageous.

SKILLED TRADES

Mr. John Yakabuski: After 15 years of the Liberals taking Ontario in the wrong direction, from day one our government made a commitment that we would increase opportunities and remove barriers in the skilled trades. Under the Liberal government, apprenticeship registrations fell by over 40%, which has led to a massive shortage of skilled labour here in Ontario. You can't build the Ontario of the future—you can't build the homes, the schools and the hospitals that people need, and the transportation routes that allow the efficient movement of people and goods—without the skilled tradespeople to build them.

As we move beyond the pandemic, Ontario is on the cusp of significant growth. I want to commend Minister McNaughton for launching the crown agency to improve training and simplify services for tradespeople, Skilled Trades Ontario, and also for streamlining the process that will allow tradespeople from other provinces to get their credentials approved for work here in Ontario.

My son is a skilled tradesperson, a Red Seal carpenter who gets up each and every day looking forward to get to work. It's a career that is challenging and rewarding at the same time.

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Our government is sending out a clear message: We want people to embark on a skilled trades career and we want them to do it right here in Ontario. Ontario is the place to be, a great place to live, work and raise your family, led by a government that values the important work you do and will always have your back.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Ms. Sara Singh: March 8 is International Women's Day. It's a day for us to celebrate and acknowledge the contributions of women across our country. I want to take a moment today to celebrate some phenomenal local leaders in the city of Brampton.

Women like Kathy McDonald, our local school board trustee for wards 3 and 4, who has been a fighter against anti-Black racism and oppression in education; our local city councillor for wards 1 and 5, Rowena Santos, who is the first Filipina woman elected to city council in Brampton; Dr. Kathleen Armitage, who was the Citizen of the Year in Brampton in 1993 and has been a long-time advocate for health care and health care services in our community; Doris Nketia, the executive director of

Families of Virtue, who has been servicing our Knights-bridge community and making sure that young people have all the resources they need to be successful; and, of course, I can't forget my mom and my grandma. Thank you so much for always inspiring and encouraging us to dream big and believe that women everywhere could accomplish anything.

This year's theme for International Women's Day is breaking barriers. Let's keep fighting for a gender-equal world, where we can ensure that supports and programs for women and girls are invested in and that we fight to end gender-based violence. Let's continue to inspire the next generation to #BreakTheBias and to be the best that they can.

Happy International Women's Day, everyone.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes our members' statements. I hesitated to interrupt the members who were giving their statements, but for the third time I'm going to ask the members to keep the volume of their private conversations to a minimum so that we can hear whoever has the floor.

REPORT, FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that the following document has been tabled: a report entitled Expenditure Monitor 2021-22: Q3 from the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm very pleased to inform the House that page Pania Ghaneian, from the riding of Barrie-Innisfil, is one of today's page captains, and we have with us today at Queen's Park her mother, Mojgan Ahmadi Nadooshan, and her father, Hamid Ghaneian.

We are also joined by the parents of our other page captain, Morgan Scholz, from the riding of Dufferin-Caledon, her mother, Rachel Scholz, and her father, Hubert Scholz. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. We are delighted to have you here.

QUESTION PERIOD

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My first question this morning is for the Premier. Patients in Ontario are suffering. They're suffering in pain. Their health outcomes are deteriorating. Their quality of life is deteriorating. They can't get the health care they need and wonder why it is that their government doesn't seem to care.

The surgical and diagnostic backlog, as we all know, has ballooned. The Ontario Medical Association says 21 million surgeries and procedures are backlogged. People are waiting. The FAO estimated last year, in May, that it

would take three and a half years to take that backlog away—to clear it—and that was before Omicron hit.

Why did this Premier fail to plan for and continues to fail to invest in addressing the backlog, even though he knows that the system has reached an unbelievable crisis and it's going to take years to fix?

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

Hon. Christine Elliott: I want to assure the people of Ontario that our government has planned for and has made those investments in dealing with the number of people who, unfortunately, have had to wait for orthopaedic procedures, in some cases, cardiac surgeries in others.

What we have done is we've invested \$5.1 billion into the hospital services system since the beginning of the pandemic, opening up another 3,100 beds, first to deal with COVID patients, but now to deal with the patients who have been waiting for those surgeries.

We've also invested \$500 million into allowing hospitals to operate on weekends and in the evenings so that people can have their surgeries done faster. I can advise that the actual number of people who are waiting for surgeries in the province of Ontario is 58,000. We have done extensive work in the ministry to determine this number; it's 58,000. Thanks to the significant investments that we've made, we are working on having those surgeries done faster for the people of Ontario who have been waiting so long to have them.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It appears that what the minister is saying is that there's nothing to see here, that it's all taken care of—that, in fact, there is no problem whatsoever.

But here's what the experts are saying, Speaker. The experts are saying this: We all know—yesterday I mentioned it—the Ontario Medical Association is saying it's going to take two and a half years to catch up on knee replacements alone, 16 months for heart bypass surgeries—16 months, Speaker—12 months for MRIs.

Doctors are also speaking out. Dr. David Gomez, a trauma surgeon at Toronto's St. Michael's Hospital said, "This is a catastrophic problem the health care system will face for at least the next five years."

Why is the government just writing off peoples' lives, writing off their well-being and letting them suffer for up to five years with pain, anxiety and lack of health care?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Our government is certainly very cognizant of the time that many people have had to wait for these surgeries. That's why we are making these significant investments: \$500 million in order to allow hospitals to operate on weekends and during the evenings. We're also making significant investments for MRI and CT imaging: another \$70 million to add 107,596 additional MRI hours and even more CT hours to the system.

We are working. We're making the investments. We're investing in the space in hospitals, in the equipment that people need, in the health human resources so that people can get the work done that they need to have done. And it's not going to take five years to do it.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, what's happening here in Ontario is downright cruel. But it wouldn't have to be this way if we had a government that believed in good, quality public health care, and we see that's not the case. We watched in long-term care, as that was evidenced with the virus.

The minister has to stop making excuses for the failures of her government. Dr. Gomez said, "Many, many Ontarians are not going to get their surgeries. There's going to be a significant impact to people's lives, but also to their mobility, fertility and quality of life."

Ontarians don't have five years to wait to get knee surgery to walk to work, to enjoy life again, or the fertility attention that they need to grow their family and their future. When is this Premier going to stop making excuses, show some care and compassion, prioritize the health and well-being of Ontarians and plan and make the investments necessary to clear the backlog?

Hon. Christine Elliott: The health and well-being of the people of Ontario has always been our government's top priority, especially during the last two years of dealing with this pandemic. I'd like to remind the member opposite that we have increased health care spending from \$59.3 billion in 2019-20 to an expected \$64.1 billion in 2021-22. That is a significant investment in health care. We've invested the \$5 billion in increasing hospital capacity. We also will be investing \$22 billion in the next 10 years in hospital infrastructure projects. That will lead to \$30 billion in capital investments.

We're building for the future as well as taking care of the situation as it exists now. We are putting in the money and making the investments that we need to make to make sure that we are helping the people who need our help with these procedures and surgeries that they have been waiting a long time for. We're going to make it happen. And again, it's not going to take five years.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier, but I have to say, people in Ontario have learned to listen to the experts, to listen to the people on the front lines, not the claims of this government.

My next question, however, is on a different topic. As we all know, people are feeling the pinch of the rising cost of living, no one more so than people who rent in Ontario. Rents have skyrocketed in our province. Ontarians pay some of the highest rental costs for their accommodations, for their homes, in the entire country—a one-bedroom apartment in Oshawa, \$1,800; \$2,000 in Toronto; a two-bedroom in Mississauga, almost \$2,200.

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Why did the Premier create this problem by ripping up rent controls as one of his first actions when he became Premier of this province?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To respond, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Steve Clark: The Leader of Opposition has got this all wrong again. When we made that decision, as part of our fall economic statement in 2018, New Democrats said that that wouldn't spur on new rental housing construction. They were wrong, Speaker—so, so very wrong. Today, we're now seeing a high in purpose-built rental construction, the likes that we haven't seen since the early 1990s.

We're building upon our policies. We're working very diligently on a consultation right now with municipalities, with the industry and with the public. We want to build upon the success. We know because of some of the reports out there, the Scotiabank report that shows that, when it comes to the G7, Canada is last. We need to build all types of housing. We need to build more purpose-built rental housing, more missing middle, more single-family. We're not going to go back to the days of no under New Democrats. Our government is going to continue to say yes to build housing.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: If people can't afford to live in the homes that this minister is claiming are being built, what use are they, Speaker—if people can't afford them?

But on another affordability issue, here's what the Premier huffed and puffed about in terms of gas-price gouging not so long ago. He said, "The gas companies—I'm putting you on notice. You're gonna start gouging the people of Ontario? It's not gonna happen." That's what this Premier said.

Last night, gas prices rose overnight by 4 cents a litre. By tomorrow, they're going to be going up another 11 cents. Now, imagine if you're a PSW providing home care and you have to drive to each and every patient in your car, how much that's costing you. Drivers are paying \$30 more a month. People can't afford it.

The Premier said he'd take on the big oil companies. He hasn't done so. He said he would take on overnight gouging. He hasn't done so. The oil companies are flush with money. They have billions of dollars in cash, and the drivers have record bills.

So my question to the Premier is, why hasn't he stopped these big oil companies from gouging Ontarians drivers like he promised he would do? Why is he saying no?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To respond, the Premier.

Hon. Doug Ford: I can't believe what I just heard from the other side of the aisle. This is a government—on the other side of the aisle—and I'm going to quote the member from Etobicoke Centre. They wanted an additional 35 cents. The leader wanted the largest carbon tax increase in the world, in the absolute world. It's increased gas prices by 11 cents.

Mr. Speaker, again, you can't talk out of both sides of your mouth here—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'd ask the Premier to take his seat. Stop the clock.

I ask the Premier to withdraw his unparliamentary comment—

Hon. Doug Ford: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):—and conclude his answer.

Hon. Doug Ford: We're putting money back into people's pockets. We're putting \$120—the licence plate sticker fee—that they aren't in favour of. They would never give back to the people of Ontario. We're making sure that we're cutting tolls on the 412 and 418; the leader of the Liberal Party said that would never happen, ever. We're making sure we put minimum wage at \$15 an hour, make it affordable for people to live. We're a government that has cut taxes, not increased taxes.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Actions are greater than words. The Premier didn't take on the gas companies like he said he was going to do. He did nothing on rents, except make sure that they were skyrocketing and got rid of rent control. He even raised hydro rates each and every year since he became the Premier of this province.

He stuck Ontarians with a high-cost and low-wage life here in this province, and it doesn't have to be this way, Speaker. When will this Premier realize that Ontarians need someone who will actually fix the crisis in affordability, instead of making it worse, as this government has done? When will he step aside and let us do that job?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. The government side will come to order. The government House leader will come to order.

I'll remind the House one more time, in case people have forgotten: We don't want to make reference to the absence of other members because, from time to time, each of us might have reason to be away.

Start the clock. The Premier can respond.

Hon. Doug Ford: Mr. Speaker, I just want to remind the people of Ontario, when we cut the gas tax by 4.5%—the only province to do that—the NDP and the Liberals voted against it. They voted for the carbon tax of 11 cents more.

Again, the member from Ottawa Centre wants it to increase 35 cents a litre. The Leader of the Opposition wants it to be the highest carbon tax anywhere in the world. They believe in gouging the taxpayers. We believe in putting money back into the taxpayers' pockets because they can spend it a lot wiser than we can.

When it came to the 412 and 418, the leader of the Liberals, Mr. Del Duca, said, "We'll never get rid of the tolls." That's their mentality—

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

The next question.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question to the Premier. A shocking new report this week from the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change confirmed that we are unprepared for the impacts of climate change itself. Ontario can't afford to dither, hoping to fix climate-related problems like flooding, droughts, fires or threats to food security after they arrive. We need to prepare now. But this

Premier has spent more money fighting federal climate action in court than he has spent on preparing Ontario for climate change. This year's budget for climate change and resilience is only \$15.8 million. Why won't this Premier make the necessary investments to make Ontario more resilient to the impacts of climate change?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

Hon. David Piccini: I appreciate the question from the member opposite—the first time since January 12, 2021. This government is taking action on climate change. We were the first province in Canada to make gas cleaner by increasing the renewable content in gasoline. That's the equivalent of taking over 300,000 cars off the road. We're partnering with industry, like Algoma and Dofasco: six megatonnes of greenhouse gas reductions. That's through the electrification of the arc furnace, making Ontario a global leader in clean steel production. That's the equivalent of 1.3 million cars off the road, or 245 million barbecue tanks, propane tanks, full of greenhouse gas emissions.

We're taking real action. We've put forward real ideas. All we're hearing is rhetoric on the other side.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Not a particularly useful answer.

Again, back to the Premier: Instead of fast-tracking developments on wetlands and flood plains, the Premier could restore the powers of conservation authorities to protect people and property from floods. Instead of putting food security at risk by paving over prime farmland with costly sprawl-enabling highways that benefit his friends, he could work with municipalities to encourage sustainable, transit-friendly growth within existing communities. Instead of cancelling programs to make homes energy-efficient, he could restore and expand them. Instead of ripping out electric vehicle chargers at GO stations, he could help local transit systems go all-electric.

Why has the Premier declared and carried on war against the environment instead of preparing Ontario for the impacts of climate change? Why?

Hon. David Piccini: You know, Speaker, I just gave tangible, massive reductions in greenhouse gas emissions under the leadership of this Premier—that's the difference. We're going to work with municipalities, and we're going to work with industry. All that member opposite has is a higher carbon tax. He wants to tax people to death. All they offer Ontarians is misery and poverty. That's all they offer them.

We've got a plan to build Ontario. We've got a plan to build a greener Ontario: the largest investment in transit; working with industry to be a leader in clean steel production. All they offer is negativity, rhetoric and misery. Ontarians can see right through that.

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MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Will Bouma: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. And if I

could just say, Mr. Speaker, the incredible work that the minister has been doing across the province to activate our job creators—I just wanted to say on behalf of the people in Brantford–Brant, thank you.

Regional economic development has been a priority for this government since we were elected in 2018. Under the previous Liberal government, supported by the NDP, rural and northern Ontario businesses were abandoned and left to fend for themselves. Can the minister please inform this House how our government is leveling the playing field for our rural and northern businesses?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: We heard from the business community and we put our plan in action. First, we focused on every area that a government has some control over, like WSIB, taxes and red tape. As a result, we lowered the cost of doing business in Ontario by \$7 billion every year.

Then we put business supports in place, like the \$100-million Regional Development Program. This has given our manufacturing sector the certainty they needed to reinvest in Ontario.

In St. Catharines, we saw Quick Plug invest \$3.2 million in an expansion to make peat moss plugs for greenhouses and hydroponics. This is an important addition to our agricultural sector, but, in addition to that, they added 30 jobs. Our government invested \$480,000 through our southwestern development fund. Speaker, this is one of the thousands of Ontario business success stories, showing that Ontario is getting stronger.

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

Mr. Will Bouma: Thank you, Minister. It is so great to hear that our government will continue to be there for our rural and northern businesses. We know that companies all across Ontario are ready to invest in the critical technologies needed to transform our automotive and manufacturing sectors. Now more than ever, especially as we recover from COVID, Ontarians need our government to support local manufacturers across the province, allowing companies to create good, local jobs.

Speaker, there is more to be done. Can the minister please tell this House what private sector investments is the ministry making and how will they create the conditions for long-term, regional economic growth?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: As a result of lowering the cost of doing business in Ontario by \$7 billion every year, we've seen our manufacturing sector take off. We were just in Welland and saw Valbruna, a manufacturer of specialty steel products, invest \$50 million in a new electric arc furnace. This will improve efficiency and productivity and reduce their environmental footprint. They will be the first in Canada to produce high nickel alloys and other clean specialty steels, and they are uniquely capable of producing stainless steel. Indeed, they're the only source in all of Canada for stainless steel. Our government invested \$4.4 million through the southwestern development fund. This fund supports regional priorities and challenges, and boosts the province's economic recovery. Speaker, this is yet another of the thousands of Ontario business success stories, showing that Ontario is getting stronger.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

FINANCEMENT DES SOINS DE SANTÉ

M. Guy Bourgouin: Ma question est pour le premier ministre.

We have heard repeatedly that this government would invest in health care. From what I'm hearing in my riding, investments have not been made. In fact, cuts have forced non-emergency transfers, which used to be done by paramedics, to be downloaded to private transportation, now handled by hospitals, which obviously have little operating budget for this.

The result: I have a senior in my riding, Madame Ouimette, who had to wait three days to get a non-emergency transfer. She was in the hospital, in pain, waiting for her transfer to get hip surgery.

Speaker, why are northerners, like Madame Ouimette, who have to wait and suffer, not seeing the result of your so-called investments?

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

Hon. Christine Elliott: I thank the member very much for the question.

First of all, we understand that culturally appropriate care is essential in supporting improved health outcomes, especially for Indigenous peoples in the north, as well as for all northerners. We want to make sure that everyone has the care that they need. That's why we have programmed and worked with Nishnawbe Aski Nation, NAN, on Operation Remote Immunity, working with Ornge. That Ornge assistance has continued throughout.

It's very important to make sure that everyone in Ontario, regardless of where they live, has access to the health services that they need. We know that many people in northern Ontario may need to be transported, either to Thunder Bay or sometimes further south. NAN is there to support that and will continue to be.

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

M. Guy Bourgouin: Je reviens sur le point que le gouvernement doit arrêter avec ses coupures dans le domaine de la santé. M^{me} Ouimette est un exemple parfait de victime de ces coupures. Non seulement a-t-elle attendu trois jours pour son transfert, mais même arrivée à Timmins, elle a été laissée seule dans le corridor, sans supervision, sans réponse, sans médicament.

Monsieur le Président, quand est-ce que ce gouvernement va arrêter de faire des coupures dans le système de santé et assurer le bien-être des patients? Assez, c'est assez.

Hon. Christine Elliott: Again, to the member opposite, our government has increased health care spending, as I've indicated previously, from \$59 billion before the pandemic to \$64 billion now. That also includes the creation of Ontario Health with the local Ontario health units to support patients wherever they are in the province and to make sure that people have that care wherever they need it within our health care system. That's why we created Ontario Health: in order to make sure that people, whether they need home care, whether they need surgical

care or long-term care, will get the assistance that they need, when they need it.

We are continuing with the creation of our local Ontario health units. We've got about 95% of the Ontario population covered now. But we're going to continue with the creation of the units and make sure that they have the supports that they need to provide safe and culturally appropriate health care services, but also to deal with the social determinants of health, which many governments have talked about but have not actually done anything about. We're going to do it with those local Ontario health units.

INVASION OF UKRAINE

INVASION DE L'UKRAINE

M^{lle} Amanda Simard: As we speak, Ukrainians are continuing to fight bravely and relentlessly against an unprovoked full-scale invasion by Russia. The Ukrainian forces and the civilians who have joined them are outmanned and outgunned, but they keep fighting. Their resilience is inspiring and remarkable.

Yes, Ukrainians are fighting for their freedom, but they're also fighting for us, for democracy. It is critical that we, our government and the international community do everything possible to ensure Putin does not win. Here at the provincial level, we're limited in things we can do within our jurisdiction, but it's important that anything we can do, we must do.

I want to sincerely thank the government for pledging \$300,000 and taking Russian vodka off the shelves at our LCBOs. Some of these measures are symbolic, but they're important. But things are escalating quickly and dramatically. Will the government take other measures to support our efforts in Ukraine?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: I appreciate the question from the honourable member, as we've been working across party lines on this. Let me thank all members of the House on that.

She did highlight some of the measures that the government took immediately. I know that the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism did convene a round table with a number of members with respect to what kind of supports we can provide. One of the things we did hear, of course, was that we should be in a better position to bring more Ukrainian refugees to Canada, and specifically to Ontario. I know the Premier was very quick to announce that, and the Minister of Labour is working on that.

But the other issue that we heard and have been hearing frequently is assistance in terms of lethal weaponry being sent to support the brave Ukrainian forces on the ground who have been doing an incredible job in the support of Ukraine and in the support of democracy. I know that the federal government has acted on that as well.

We're obviously not in a position, as the member has highlighted, to do that, but where we are in a position to

help, we will help. Again, I thank all members. It's a very important issue, and I thank all members for the unity that we've all expressed on that.

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

M^{lle} Amanda Simard: The Putin regime is targeting and killing civilians: bombing apartments, bombing kindergartens, shooting ambulances and much, much more, with absolutely no regard for international law, let alone human life.

Il est essentiel que nous, notre gouvernement et la communauté internationale, fassions tout notre possible pour que Poutine ne gagne pas. Ici au niveau provincial, nous sommes limités dans les choses que nous pouvons faire dans notre juridiction, mais il est important que, tout ce que nous pouvons faire, nous devons le faire.

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J'apprécie la réponse du ministre concernant les réfugiés. Je tiens à remercier sincèrement encore une fois le gouvernement d'avoir promis 300 000 \$ et d'avoir retiré la vodka russe des étagères de nos LCBO. Ce sont des importantes étapes—parfois symboliques, mais très importantes.

Comme nous pouvons le constater, la situation s'aggrave rapidement et de façon dramatique. Le gouvernement de l'Ontario va-t-il prendre d'autres mesures en plus de ce qu'on a discuté pour appuyer nos efforts en Ukraine, et est-il en discussion avec les organismes pour ajouter de l'aide pour l'aide humanitaire?

L'hon. Paul Calandra: Je remercie ma collègue pour cette question. Comme j'ai déjà dit, le ministre de la citoyenneté et du multiculturalisme, avec le ministre du Travail et le premier ministre ont annoncé immédiatement, oui, des aides financières pour la communauté. Mais, en même temps, nous avons dit que c'est très important que nous soyons prêts à inviter des réfugiés de l'Ukraine ici en Ontario. Nous allons continuer de travailler avec le gouvernement fédéral.

Vraiment, merci à tous mes collègues de chaque côté de cette Chambre. Nous avons travaillé ensemble. Nous avons travaillé avec la communauté dans toutes les régions et dans toutes nos circonscriptions, pour écouter la communauté et pour assurer que nous parlons ensemble contre les actions de la Russie en Ukraine.

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Ms. Christine Hogarth: My question is to the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development. Mr. Speaker, our government strongly believes that all workers deserve to come home safe after a hard day's work. There are currently over 500 field inspectors, the highest number in Ontario's history, who visit workplaces across the province every day and help businesses comply with health and safety regulations.

While the majority of businesses do everything they can to keep their workers safe, there are still some bad actors out there who pay fines and, unfortunately, continue to put workers at risk.

Will the minister tell us what his ministry is proposing to place stronger workplace protections for our everyday workers?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I want to thank the member for this very important question. Our government has worked and continues to work for Ontario workers. We're leaving no stone unturned to ensure their health and safety. They are our government's top priority. That's why I was pleased to announce stronger workplace protections in Bill 88. Our Working for Workers 2 continues our promise to all workers and their families that we have their backs.

Our bill, if passed, would increase health and safety fines for businesses that put workers at risk to the highest in Canada. If convicted, these lawbreakers, would face new maximum charges of up to \$1.5 million for a worker being severely injured or killed on the job. Our message to those who treat injuries as a cost of doing business here in Ontario: No more.

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

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Thank you very much, Minister.

Mr. Speaker, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected us all, but it has also highlighted the impact of the ongoing public health concerns. Between March 2020 and January 2021, there were just under 25,000 opioid-related deaths in Ontario. These include deaths that occurred in the workplace. As the ongoing public health crisis of opioid overdoses and deaths in Ontario continues, additional action is needed to save lives.

Will the minister please tell us what our government is doing to address this public health crisis in the workplace?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Again, to the member, thank you for this very important question.

Speaker, first, I want to offer my condolences to the families of all of those who have died of an opioid overdose. One life lost is obviously one too many.

Yesterday, Speaker, I joined my colleague, the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, to announce legislation that would require life-saving naloxone kits in any workplace where there is a risk of an opioid overdose. Our new policy is the very first in all of Canada and it will be matched with support from our government to train workers and help employers get the kits that they need. We have to be ambitious in fighting this epidemic, because everyone should come home safe after a hard day's work.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Ms. Marit Stiles: This question is for the Premier. The independent Financial Accountability Office released its review of quarterly spending today and has found that, once again, the government is withholding money it promised to spend. This time, it's an astonishing \$5.5 billion that's being held back by this government.

Ontario is only just starting to reopen after another devastating wave, a very painful lockdown, and the cost of everything from rent to groceries to gas are all soaring. If

there has ever been a time we needed this government to step in and shore up our health care, our housing, our public infrastructure, it's now.

Speaker, through you to the Premier: Why is this government putting Ontario's recovery at risk by withholding billions of dollars it promised to spend?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: We want to take an opportunity to thank the FAO for his report and all the work that he has been doing.

As the member opposite will know, the FAO's methodology does not take into consideration the full impact of the government's investments, as it excludes consolidated entities as school boards, hospitals and agencies.

What I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, is on February 14, the Minister of Finance tabled the Q3 financial reports in which this government invested an additional \$2.3 billion into this province. That included \$1.3 billion in additional funding to support our hospitals during the COVID-19 pandemic. That included over \$300 million for the Ontario Business Costs Rebate Program and over \$293 million for the Ontario small business relief grant.

Our government will continue to support the people of this province.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: The minister doesn't even sound convinced, and those words are cold comfort, I'll tell you, for those waiting right now for backlogged surgeries, who believed this Premier's promise to clear them. Instead, they find out today that this government held back \$1.3 billion in health care spending.

But it gets even worse: Ontarians have been subjected to a flashy new taxpayer-funded ad campaign trumpeting this government's claims at success, like building bridges and highways and other infrastructure, but we know today from the FAO that they spent just 15% of their promised infrastructure spending. It's smoke and mirrors.

Is this government's plan to put people back to work limited to advertising or will they actually spend the money they promised to get our economy moving again?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: There's no government in the history of this province that has spent more to keep its residents safe than this government. As our public accounts showed last year, over \$19 billion was spent to support the people of this province. As I mentioned earlier, the Minister of Finance, in his Q3 report in which we are being transparent with the public on all the spending that we are doing as a government, we committed to an additional \$2.3 billion in spending. That's supporting hospitals that need it during the COVID-19 pandemic. That includes supporting Ontario's small businesses across this province. That includes making sure that our long-term-care homes have money for prevention and containment of COVID-19. It also means that we're investing in additional funds to support electricity cost relief for eligible businesses and residents—

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

The next question.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Mr. Roman Baber: To the Minister of Health: For two years, our pandemic policy was based on gauging and preserving Ontario's hospital capacity. We were told that we must go into lockdown, keep kids out of school, close businesses, delay surgeries and disrupt normal life because COVID will overwhelm our hospitals. The most important metric was the effect of COVID on our hospitals.

For two years, this government and this minister were not telling Ontarians the actual toll of COVID on our hospitals. Instead, they were inflating COVID hospitalizations by combining patients hospitalized as a result of COVID with patients tested for COVID but hospitalized for a whole other reason. Finally, in late December, the minister acknowledged the distinction. It turns out that about half the patients straining our hospitals were actually there because of COVID, but the number given to us was double. The minister was knowingly inflating the numbers used to lock down and hurt 15 million Ontarians.

1110

Question: Why did it take two years for the minister to differentiate the numbers, and will the minister apologize to all Ontarians?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The House will come to order.

The government House leader to reply.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Well, Speaker, everything in that question was wrong. So what I'll do is, I'll take the opportunity to explain what we actually have done.

He was right in the sense that when we took office, there was so little investment done to prepare Ontario for something like COVID that we had to move very, very quickly. That's why, even before a pandemic hit, we started investing in Ontario health teams. We started investing in hospitals. We started investing in long-term care. All of these things had to happen because, as we've said constantly, this province was brought to its knees and had to have the longest and largest lockdowns because 800 people were in ICUs.

Why, Mr. Speaker? Because the previous Liberal government refused to make those important investments in health care. They refused to make the investments in health human resources. This government knew that that could not be the case. That's why we're investing in 3,100 additional beds, a massive investment to bring on new nurses, a massive investment in long-term care, new hospitals in Niagara, new hospitals in Mississauga and new hospitals in smaller communities. We understand that health care leads to economic growth, and that's what we're—

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

The supplementary question.

Mr. Roman Baber: Speaker, it's regretful that the Minister of Health did not have the courage to answer one of most important policy questions. Why did the government mislead Ontarians about the number of patients—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. The member will withdraw his unparliamentary comment.

Mr. Roman Baber: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): And conclude his question.

Mr. Roman Baber: The 3,100 beds that the government House leader speaks of are the same 3,100 beds we've had here in the first wave and the second wave and the third wave, but they're triple-counting them. Most importantly, we'd like to understand, why weren't the numbers given to Ontarians as they were? Why did it take two years on the single most important metric that was used to lock down Ontarians, close schools, close places of worship, close businesses? Why did it take two years to tell us that the burden of COVID that we thought we were dealing with was not the burden that we were dealing with?

Could the Minister of Health please tell us why it took her two years to differentiate between "with COVID" and "from COVID" and apologize to all Ontarians?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Again, I'm not sure that anybody understood that question, but what I will tell you is this, Mr. Speaker: It's because of the work of this Minister of Health that we are adding health human resource capacity. It's because of the work of this Minister of Health that Ontario has done better than almost any other jurisdiction in the world in fighting COVID.

We have almost 90% of our population that has received two doses—I think it's actually three doses; we are doing better than almost any other jurisdiction—over 31 million. Ontarians have been vaccinated in this province, Mr. Speaker. We have kept people safe, and because of the fact that the previous Liberal government under Del Duca, Wynne and all of that crew refused to make important investments, not only in our large urban areas but in smaller communities across this province, we are forced to do that.

We like to do that because we understand how important health care is to a vibrant economy, and that is why we are making the investments that the previous Liberal government didn't do. Thanks to this Minister of Health, those investments are happening now, and in the future we will have the health care—

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

GOVERNMENT ASSETS

Mrs. Robin Martin: My question is for the Minister of Government and Consumer Services. Speaker, on this side of the House, we understand that in order to improve the quality of life for all Ontarians, we must use every tool at our disposal. While real estate is one of our greatest resources, historically, past governments haven't always gotten the greatest possible value from our properties, especially not under the Liberals.

Speaker, through you, could the minister tell us what our government is doing to ensure that Ontarians are able

to reap the greatest benefits from the many valuable public real estate assets at our disposal?

Hon. Ross Romano: Thank you to the great member from Eglinton–Lawrence for her question. Unlike the Wynne-Del Duca Liberal-led government of the past that mismanaged our properties and squandered our tax dollars, this government is finding innovative ways to generate additional value for the people of this province. Through the Ontario centre of realty excellence, CORE, we are going to unlock value and bring additional revenue into our coffers from a pool of approximately 20,000 real estate assets that are currently held by public entities within the province of Ontario. This means that we're going to be able to invest this money back into programs that matter most for Ontarians, like health care and education.

Not only that, Mr. Speaker, but CORE is going to help us to sell unused properties, reducing operating costs for the government and, most importantly, putting money directly back into the pockets of Ontarians and workers to help make life more affordable.

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

Mrs. Robin Martin: I want to thank the minister for his answer. This new proposed initiative certainly presents a fantastic opportunity for our province's not-so-distant future. Many Ontarians, including my constituents, want to learn more about how this will benefit them and what will happen to government properties in their community.

Through you, Speaker: Could the minister please explain how our government is able to leverage our public real estate assets toward helping Ontarians, strengthening our communities and protecting our most vulnerable?

Hon. Ross Romano: Thank you, again, to the member for her question.

This is really a game-changer for Ontario's realty market. When we look at the centre of realty excellence, we're presenting Ontarians with an exciting opportunity for our government to not only save the people of this province money but also to revitalize our individual communities and expand access to critical services.

Properties that are underused or sit empty in our communities will be transformed to meet our government's vital priorities, such as building more affordable housing or creating more long-term-care beds. Mr. Speaker, this is a win-win for the people of this province, who are going to see savings while taking advantage of new supports that are happening right in their very own neighbourhoods. This is all thanks to CORE.

I'm proud that this is just one of the ways that we're building a stronger Ontario, Mr. Speaker. We're doing this by having one lens on realty for the first time ever in the province of Ontario, one eye seeing all of our realty initiatives and being able to monitor those moving forward.

ANTI-RACISM ACTIVITIES

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, CBC asked the director of education of the

Waterloo Catholic District School Board about an incident where police were called to de-escalate a Black four-year-old child. Stating that all ministry-approved policies were followed, the director explained that she “would take umbrage to the allegation that there is systemic racism in our board.”

The Minister of Education committed to an internal review, yet has not spoken about the pattern of racism in Peel, York, Windsor, Toronto, Simcoe—the list goes on.

Speaker, these incidents are not isolated. Educational experts understand how racism operates, and they are calling on this government to do better. Through you to the Premier: Will the Premier commit today to implementing an independent equity audit across all Ontario schools?

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

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I want to thank the member opposite for the question. I think we would both agree that there is no scenario in this province where a four-year-old child should have police called on them—absolutely unacceptable. I appreciate the member opposite’s advocacy on this issue. As noted by the Parents of Black Children, who commented following the ministry’s decision last Friday to call a third-party review, deploying a Ministry of Education review of the handling of that board. The Parents of Black Children said, “We are pleased that the ministry has heeded the calls of the community to conduct a third-party investigation.”

We are committed to fighting racism in schools, in Peel specifically. As the member noted, we were the first government in the history of this province to call in a supervisor because of anti-Black racism—the first in this country. I accept there’s more to do. We appreciate the member’s bill specifically to help combat racism in schools, and I am prepared to work with her and all members to fight the scourge of racism and hate that’s happening in our schools, in our society.

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

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: Back to the Premier: Education is a continuum, and recognizing the patterns of racism in the different boards is important as we try to address this. Reports of anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and the harsher discipline of Black, brown and Indigenous students continue to push them out of school. What happens in K-to-12 is reflected on college and university campuses. When people speak out, the punishment is severe. York University professor Dr. Aimé Avolonto is a perfect example. After raising issues of racism in his home faculty, he’s now had to spend five years navigating never-ending investigations. The Racial Equity in the Education System Act provides us with the tools to build anti-racist educational systems that aren’t scared to address the patterns of racism.

1120

Through you, Mr. Speaker, and back to the Premier, will this government commit today to making Bill 67 law?

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

Hon. Parm Gill: I want to thank the member opposite for that question. I think we all agree in this House that racism over the last couple of years, especially during the pandemic, has been on the rise. Since taking a role in my ministry this last June, I’ve been working with all of our stakeholders, all of the community leaders and organizations, to find ways to address them.

Our government is absolutely committed to working with every single Ontarian, Mr. Speaker, on this important issue. We’re committed to making the necessary resources available, and investments, and we have been, to the tune of over \$30 million, including the doubling of our Anti-Racism and Anti-Hate Grant Program from \$1.6 million to \$3.2 million. Recently, we announced another \$25-million historic investment when it comes to protecting our places of worship and other cultural organizations.

We know our work isn’t done; there’s more to do. We’re committed to doing it until this issue is absolutely addressed.

ASSISTANCE TO BUSINESSES

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Mr. Speaker, I didn’t think I would have to rise again this week in this House to ask the same question that I asked twice last week. The government has had weeks to prepare a financial support package for Ottawa. Where is it?

I’ve been talking daily with BIAs during the occupation and again last night to talk about the lasting effects of the loss of revenues. The BIA in our downtown core in Ottawa noted that “from a landlord perspective, our level of non-payment of rent is dangerously high. I have a large concern if the money does not flow quickly, we will end up with landlords defaulting as well.”

So I’m asking the government, will the government commit to matching the money given by the federal government to these struggling businesses?

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

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you for that important question from the member opposite. There’s no question that our government recognizes that the health measures have come at a cost, and particularly for businesses in the Ottawa region that have faced unique circumstances with the occupation in that city.

Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the member opposite that we have been there for not only businesses in Ottawa, we’ve been there for businesses right across this province, not the least of which were highlighted by the President of the Treasury Board: over \$3 billion of supports for small business grants to over 100,000 businesses, including the third round highlighted by the President of the Treasury Board, including the property tax and the electricity relief, including the deferral of \$7.5 billion of provincially administered taxes. I’ll have more to say in the supplementary.

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

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Mr. Speaker, I can’t believe that there are no announcements for financial support. Business is struggling. Ottawa is the second-biggest city in

Ontario. Ottawa workers are Ontario workers, and the government should be supporting all Ontarians, not only in the areas in which the government wishes to win seats. Some 1,000 businesses in my riding could not operate and that took away the paycheques of thousands of workers. It has already been too long for workers who are barely getting by.

Would the Minister of Finance please tell me when Ottawa will receive desperately needed financial support from this government?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: It's a very important question from the member opposite—and as I look straight across here, I see a number of members from the Ottawa region, and we have many on our side of the aisle here as well. It's a very important question.

As I mentioned in the scrum yesterday, we've been having conversations with those BIAs, with the people affected in the region. We're working with many counterparts, and I'll have some more to say in the coming days, as I said yesterday.

And it hasn't been years, by the way; you mentioned years. You meant in the past few weeks.

But we recognize the struggle of many businesses in Ontario, not least of which is Ottawa, given the unique situation there. We'll continue to work with businesses right across this province, because, you know what? We're getting stronger every day. This province is getting stronger. We're building back this province. We look forward to the economic recovery that all families, workers and businesses will look forward to in this province.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is for the Premier. Sherwood Secondary School in my riding of Hamilton Mountain is home to over 1,200 students, countless education staff and is the centre of the Sherwood Heights community. Sherwood is one of two secondary schools to offer an excellent French immersion program. Eight elementary schools feed into Sherwood for this program alone. Sherwood is at risk of closing, as this government recently denied the eighth funding proposal request for repairs that is needed to make this school safe. The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board set aside \$9 million to contribute to these repairs, but this government couldn't even meet them halfway. Schools in Ontario need to be repaired, not closed.

Can the Premier commit to providing the funding that Sherwood Secondary School needs to complete these repairs so their school can remain open?

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

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. I am proud that, since 2018, over \$100 million in capital investments in Hamilton alone have been completed to improve the standards after 15 years of school closures and of the deferred maintenance backlog increasing to \$16 billion—absolutely unacceptable. That is the record of the Kathleen Wynne-Del Duca Liberals.

Having said that, there is \$75 million in active projects under way to improve the state of those schools, to modernize and improve ventilation, expand spaces and child care. And I look forward to receiving the applications from all school boards—submitted to the ministry just days ago—as we work to approve another round of \$500 million of capital investment so that we can provide the best learning spaces for children in Hamilton and right across Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Miss Monique Taylor: The school repair backlog has ballooned under this government. It has grown by \$1 billion since this Premier took office. There needs to be real investment into our schools so staff and students have an environment they can thrive in. School boards must be given the tools that they need to support their communities, yet all this government seems to do when it comes to education is cut.

Sherwood Secondary is a fundamental part of our community in Hamilton Mountain. Our community made a decision to save this school during the ARC process in 2012. I encourage the Premier and his government to actually listen to our community on this matter and to save Sherwood.

Will the Premier respect the community's decision and save Sherwood Secondary School?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: We appreciate the advocacy from the member opposite. We're going to continue to invest over \$75 million in active construction in Hamilton schools.

I will challenge the member opposite, though, because we just announced a plan, an investment in public education, increasing by \$580 million more under this Progressive Conservative government, the highest investment in public education ever recorded in the history of Ontario: \$90 million, a 420% increase in mental health funding from the former Liberal government; the highest investment in special education, \$3.2 billion; over \$90 million more to help children with exceptionalities. We announced Ontario's learning recovery action plan, \$175 million, a net investment to provide publicly funded tutoring in small groups, averaging five, to all children in all parts of Ontario. This is a responsible plan to get our kids back on track. Count on our Premier to continue to invest in public education.

COVID-19 IMMUNIZATION

Mrs. Belinda C. Karahalios: My question is for the Premier. Recently, the Premier said the province is ready to receive Ukrainian refugees seeking to escape their country's war zone. But most Ukrainians are not double-vaccinated against COVID-19—66%, in fact. The government is also allowing employers in Ontario, which is likely the vast majority, to continue using discriminatory vaccine passport requirements on employees.

1130

So what is the government's plan? Are they going to screen Ukrainians coming here to ensure they are all

double-vaccinated against COVID-19? Or is the government having Ukrainians come here facing the prospects of it being harder to find a job because of their decision not to disclose their vaccine status? Or will the government consider a measure like legislating a ban on the discriminatory practice of allowing employers to voluntarily continue using vaccine proof or passport measures?

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

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I do want to thank the member for this very important question. I want to begin to let the people of Ukraine know that we are thinking of them. We're working every single day to ensure that when many of them arrive here in Ontario, we're going to have the supports to be there in place for them.

Mr. Speaker, I speak on a regular basis with the Minister of Immigration federally, Sean Fraser. We've offered Ontario's full support to ensure that we help these people leave the crisis that they're facing. I can commit to all members of this House and to all people of Ontario, to all of the people in Ukraine that we will be there for them, to work with the federal government to ensure that they have better lives when they get to Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mrs. Belinda C. Karahalios: In their announcement, the Premier and his Minister of Labour said that we have a labour shortage in Ontario, and Ukrainian refugees can help fill those positions that number more than 300,000.

But the labour shortage in Ontario has been exacerbated by this government's policies, including their decision to allow employers to fire thousands of people for the last year because those people refused to use a vaccine passport or had some personal reason for not taking the COVID-19 vaccine. In fact, for a year, people were losing their jobs, and this government wasn't even protecting those who recovered from COVID from the discriminatory practice of employers mandating COVID-19 vaccination. And of course, none of these policies made a difference; there was no "COVID zero."

What has this government done to look into having employers rehire Ontario workers who lost their job because of discriminatory policies and fill the labour shortage? What's the solution for these people?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Mr. Speaker, we live in the greatest province in the greatest country on the face of this Earth. I'm proud to say, under the leadership of Premier Ford, working with our labour partners, working with business, companies have stepped up. More than 20,000 jobs are waiting for the people of Ukraine when they get here. That is a great story. That is the Canadian and Ontario spirit.

But I would argue with the member opposite. There has been a skilled trades shortage in this province long before COVID-19 hit Ontario. For far too long in Ontario, under successive governments of all different stripes, they told every single young person that they must go to university to be successful. What we're doing is levelling the playing field. We're beginning skilled trades training much younger in the education system. We're sending dozens of recruiters into every high school across the province to recruit people into these amazing careers. We all know

people in the skilled trades making six figures, with defined pensions and benefits—

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

The next question?

LAND USE PLANNING

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: My question is for the Premier. Last year, the city of Toronto announced a supportive housing project in my riding of Beaches–East York, and the Ford government immediately passed a ministerial zoning order to ensure it would happen quickly. By the way, every elected official in Beaches–East York stood shoulder to shoulder and supported it. We need that housing.

This year, the government declined to pass a similar MZO in Willowdale, the riding of the Associate of Minister of Transportation, presumably to avoid annoying those voters who don't want a supportive housing project near them right before an election. Now those housing units are sitting empty in a parking lot, and people are literally freezing to death on the streets of Toronto.

When will the government build the deeply affordable housing that Ontario desperately needs?

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

Hon. Steve Clark: You know, Speaker, I'll ask that member of that party a question: Why won't they support our call for the federal government for another \$490 million that we're owed to help those people who are at risk of being homeless?

We've worked with Toronto city council over the last year. They have requested seven housing or long-term-care-related MZOs. We've delivered on six of those seven. We've accelerated the creation of over 54,000 housing units across the province, and another 600 supportive housing units.

We're working with the council. The minister has been engaged with Mayor Tory to look at this project and to try to find a way to move it forward. But to have this member categorize that we haven't been coordinating, haven't been co-operating with Toronto council, is absolutely incorrect. In fact, Mayor Tory supports our fair share campaign to the federal government—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. That concludes our question period for this morning.

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

The House recessed from 1135 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

GROVES MEMORIAL COMMUNITY HOSPITAL ACT, 2022

Mr. Pettapiece moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr62, An Act respecting Groves Memorial Community Hospital

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 89, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

FAIRNESS IN PETROLEUM PRODUCTS
PRICING ACT, 2022

LOI DE 2022 SUR L'ÉQUITÉ
EN MATIÈRE D'ÉTABLISSEMENT
DU PRIX DES PRODUITS PÉTROLIERS

Mr. Bisson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 91, An Act to regulate the price of petroleum products / Projet de loi 91, Loi réglementant le prix des produits pétroliers.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the member for Timmins briefly explain his bill?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: The bill regulates the price of petroleum products. The Ontario Energy Board is given the power to regulate the retail price and wholesale markup with respect to the sale of petroleum products in the province. The Lieutenant Governor in Council is given the power to govern the board's powers. The board and the Lieutenant Governor in Council are guided by the following objectives:

(1) To protect the interests of consumers with respect to the predictable and consistent retail pricing of petroleum products;

(2) To prevent pricing practices that undermine the stability and the competitiveness of retail markets for petroleum products, including retail markets in remote, rural and northern areas; and

(3) To ensure transparency and reasonableness with respect to the price of petroleum products.

MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY
AND SOCIAL SERVICES
AMENDMENT ACT
(SOCIAL ASSISTANCE
RESEARCH COMMISSION), 2022
LOI DE 2022 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LE MINISTÈRE DES SERVICES
SOCIAUX ET COMMUNAUTAIRES
(COMMISSION DE RECHERCHE
SUR L'AIDE SOCIALE)

Mr. Paul Miller moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 92, An Act to amend the Ministry of Community and Social Services Act to establish the Social Assistance

Research Commission / Projet de loi 92, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le ministère des Services sociaux et communautaires afin de créer la Commission de recherche sur l'aide sociale.

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 Hamilton East–Stoney Creek care to explain his bill?

Mr. Paul Miller: This bill amends the Ministry of Community and Social Services Act to establish the Social Assistance Research Commission. The commission recommends social assistance rates and makes other recommendations about social assistance policies. The commission consists of people with expertise relevant to the commission's work.

PETITIONS

ANTI-RACISM ACTIVITIES

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

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the recent occurrences of violence against racialized children at Alpine Public School (Waterloo Region District School Board) has left communities and families traumatized;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature to it and send it with page Julia.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Mr. Dave Smith: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the government of Ontario believes that money is better served in the pockets of taxpayers rather than the government; and

“Whereas Ontarians have seen the cost of living increase—whether it is hydro rates, income taxes, or fees—under the Wynne-Del Duca Liberals; and

“Whereas students, municipalities, seniors, and workers have made it clear that they want accessible and affordable travel throughout the Durham region; and

“Whereas reducing red tape, barriers to growth, and unnecessary costs to hard-working entrepreneurs is a promise we made to the people of Ontario; and

“Whereas all of these measures, including the pro-growth/pro-jobs initiatives of the last few years by this government, lay the foundation for a robust, long-term economic recovery;

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

“To urge all members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to vote in favour of Bill 84, the Fewer Fees, Better Services Act...”

I fully endorse this petition, will sign my name to it and give it to page Daunte.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Chris Glover: This petition is from Mothers for Mental Health Care Reform.

“A Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario for Improvements to Services for Schizophrenia.

“Whereas each citizen of Ontario has a legal right to necessary health care, there are legal obstacles and a dearth of psychiatrists impeding the treatment of schizophrenia, a complex, serious brain disorder;

“Whereas access to hospital care is the greatest challenge, there are numerous obstacles getting to ER, getting a thorough assessment and being admitted for treatment;

“Whereas Ontario lags as the only province restricting involuntary admission to a maximum of 14 days, the 2020 Ontario Psychiatric Association’s ... mental health law reform working group recommends extending Form 3 from 14 days to 30 days consistent with other Canadian provinces;

“Whereas many of our families are desperate to have access to a psychiatrist;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to act on care for patients with schizophrenia by:

“—extending the 72-hour initial hospitalization to allow time for a comprehensive and thorough initial assessment and to avoid premature discharge;

“—adjusting the hospital time of Form 3 from 14 days to 30 days...;

“—investing in mental health care supports, to ensure timely access to a psychiatrist, eliminate appalling wait times and improve the quality of community supports, so that reliable community care is available upon discharge from hospital;

“—recognizing the important role families play in supporting those who suffer from schizophrenia by having doctors consult with families about treatment.”

I will pass this petition to page Owen to take to the table.

1510

ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Mr. Robert Bailey: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the government of Ontario believes that money is better served in the pockets of taxpayers rather than the government; and

“Whereas Ontarians have seen the cost of living increase—whether it is hydro rates, income taxes, or fees—under the Wynne-Del Duca Liberals; and

“Whereas students, municipalities, seniors, and workers have made it clear that they want accessible and affordable travel throughout the Durham region” and other parts of Ontario; “and

“Whereas reducing red tape, barriers to growth, and unnecessary costs to hard-working entrepreneurs is a promise we made to the people of Ontario; and

“Whereas all of these measures, including the pro-growth/pro-jobs initiatives over the last few years by this government, lay the foundation for a robust, long-term economic recovery;

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

“To urge all members of the Legislative Assembly ... to vote in favour of Bill 84, the Fewer Fees, Better Services Act, 2022.”

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Ms. Marit Stiles: I’m very pleased to present this petition on behalf of my constituent Erin Cameron and almost 10,000 other people who’ve signed online.

“Pass Teddy’s Law to Ban Declawing in Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the practice of declawing, also known as partial digital amputation, is painful and debilitating for cats; and

“Whereas the procedure can cause lasting discomfort, complications and behavioural issues in cats; and

“Whereas there are many more effective, safe, non-surgical alternatives to declawing to protect furniture and people from being scratched by cats;

“Whereas the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association and the Ontario Veterinary Medical Association have said that non-therapeutic partial digital amputation is ethically unacceptable;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 53, Teddy’s Law, to ban the declawing of cats in Ontario.”

I’m very pleased to support this petition in support of my bill, and I’m going to pass it over to page Kristian to table it with the Clerks.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Mrs. Robin Martin: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the government of Ontario believes that money is better served in the pockets of taxpayers rather than the government; and

“Whereas Ontarians have seen the cost of living increase—whether it is hydro rates, income taxes, or fees—under the Wynne-Del Duca Liberals; and

“Whereas students, municipalities, seniors, and workers have made it clear that they want accessible and affordable travel throughout the Durham region” and other parts of Ontario; “and

“Whereas reducing red tape, barriers to growth, and unnecessary costs to hard-working entrepreneurs is a promise we made to the people of Ontario; and

“Whereas all of these measures, including the pro-growth/pro-jobs initiatives over the last few years by this government, lay the foundation for a robust, long-term economic recovery;

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

“To urge all members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to vote in favour of Bill 84, the Fewer Fees, Better Services Act, 2022.”

I support this petition, will affix my signature and hand it to page Benjamin.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I have a petition entitled “A Just Recovery Means Decent Work for All.

“Whereas COVID-19 has exposed the way in which low wages, temporary jobs, unstable work and unsafe working conditions are a health threat not only to workers themselves but also to our communities;

“Whereas systemic racism in the labour market means Black workers, Indigenous workers, workers of colour and newcomer workers are overrepresented in low-wage, precarious and dangerous employment and more likely to be without paid sick days, supplemental benefits or working part-time involuntarily;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to change employment and labour laws to:

“—provide at least 10 permanent, employer-paid emergency leave days each year and an additional 14 during public health outbreaks;

“—ensure all workers are paid at least \$20 per hour, no exemptions;

“—promote full-time work by offering additional hours to existing part-time workers before hiring new employees;

“—provide set minimum hours of work each week, and provide schedules at least two weeks in advance;

“—legislate equal pay and benefits for equal work regardless of race, gender, employment status or immigration status;

“—protect all workers from unjust firing (stop wrongful dismissal) and ensure migrant and undocumented workers can assert labour rights;

“—ensure all workers are protected by ending misclassification of gig workers, and end all exemptions to employment laws;

“—make companies responsible for working conditions and collective bargaining, when they use temp agencies, franchises and subcontractors; make companies financially responsible under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act for deaths and injuries of temp agency workers;

“—end the practice of using temporary agency workers indefinitely by ensuring temp workers are hired directly by the client company after three months on assignment;

“—make it easier for all workers to join unions by signing cards, allowing workers to form unions across franchises, subcontractors, regions or sectors of work...;

“—enforce all laws proactively through adequate public staffing and meaningful penalties for employers who violate the laws.”

I want to thank Justice for Workers for collecting signatures. I’m proud to affix my signature and will send it to the table with page Pania.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Mr. Deepak Anand: Speaker, through you, to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the government of Ontario believes that money is better served in the pockets of taxpayers rather than the government; and

“Whereas Ontarians have seen the cost of living increase—whether it is hydro rates, income taxes, or fees—under the Wynne-Del Duca Liberals; and

“Whereas students, municipalities, seniors, and workers have made it clear that they want accessible and affordable travel throughout the Durham region; and

“Whereas reducing red tape, barriers to growth, and unnecessary costs to hard-working entrepreneurs is a promise we made to the people of Ontario; and

“Whereas all of these measures, including the pro-growth/pro-jobs initiatives over the last few years by this

government, lay the foundation for a robust, long-term economic recovery;

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

“To urge all members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to vote in favour of Bill 84, the Fewer Fees, Better Services Act, 2022.”

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Chris Glover: This petition is entitled “Petition to Create an Ontario Crown Corporation Bank.

“Whereas the interest charged on government bonds costs the Ontario taxpayer billions of dollars each year; and

“Whereas these interest charges are paid primarily to private banks and do not benefit society; and

“Whereas relying on private banks to buy government bonds allows banks to control the government by refusing to buy bonds; and

“Whereas when government-owned banks such as the Bank of Canada or the Alberta Treasury Branch own government bonds, interest can be rebated back to the government, keeping interest costs low; and

“Whereas a government-owned bank could also offer loans for various other pro-social purposes;

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

“—immediately establish a provincial bank to purchase existing and future government bonds;

“—provide low-interest loans for pro-social purposes, such as to allow employees to buy businesses from retiring business owners;

“—provide loans to farmers to consolidate higher-interest debt held by private banks;

“—provide start-up capital to do co-operative and worker-owned business; and

“—fund construction of co-operative and social housing.”

I will pass this petition to page Owen to take to the table.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

FEWER FEES, BETTER SERVICES ACT, 2022

LOI DE 2022

POUR DE MEILLEURS SERVICES ET MOINS DE FRAIS

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 1, 2022, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 84, An Act to enact two Acts and amend various other Acts / Projet de loi 84, Loi visant à édicter deux lois et à modifier diverses autres lois.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It is a pleasure to rise this afternoon to participate in the debate on Bill 84, the Fewer Fees, Better Services Act, on behalf of the people I represent in London West.

First, I would like to begin by commenting on the speed with which this legislation has made its way through the legislative process. The bill was introduced last Tuesday afternoon, shortly after 2 o'clock. At 9 a.m. the next morning, second reading debate began. Second reading debate concluded on Thursday. And this week, here we are, well past the halfway point of third reading debate as this bill is about to become law.

1520

One of the concerns about that, Speaker, is that this is an omnibus bill. There are 11 schedules. It is focused on a number of different so-called red tape reduction measures. But there is a lot in this bill that one would have thought the government would have been interested in consulting on, both before they brought this bill to the chamber and after it went through second reading debate. But the government chose not to send it to committee.

In my comments this afternoon, I'm going to be focusing on just five of the schedules of the bill. I am going to be sharing some of the feedback I have received from people in London West and also some of the comments that have been made by other organizations across the province.

I want to begin, Speaker, with schedule 1. That is a schedule that establishes a service standard for government entities, government services, and it provides a refund for people when those government entities do not deliver on the service standard. One of the problems of this schedule is that there is no definition whatsoever of what constitutes a business service standard. It is a fairly low bar in that sense, because it says that refunds will be provided, compensation will be provided when service standards aren't met, but it doesn't give you any details as to what would constitute an appropriate service standard for a government service.

We were told that one of the consequences of failing to meet the service standard would be naming and shaming on a government of Ontario web page. That would be for the entity that had failed to meet that service standard.

The other concern, Speaker, about schedule 1 is the fact that the legislation is silent on which ministries and government entities will be covered. If the official opposition could offer some advice on which government agencies and ministries we think should be covered, I would be happy to do that today. Certainly, the ministry of—what is it called now? I can't remember the official title. The ministry of small business would be, I would say, one of the absolute musts in terms of ministries that need to be covered by this service standard.

I wanted to share some of the experiences that small businesses encountered during the pandemic as they tried to access the ministry's small business grant program. I had written a letter to the minister of red tape reduction and small business back in June 2021 outlining some of the problems that London West small business owners

were experiencing with the Ontario Small Business Support Grant, both of the first two versions or programs that were offered. In my letter, I let the minister know that the funds that small businesses were relying on were frequently delayed to a great extent, which was causing severe financial hardship for the businesses that were waiting for those funds to arrive.

Businesses were inexplicably deemed ineligible, and one of the biggest frustrations for the business owners who came to me was that there was absolutely no way that they could find a ministry staff person on the phone to speak to. There was no way to get any meaningful support by either email or phone. As you can imagine, Speaker, that was a huge frustration for businesses that had already at that point in the pandemic been faced with a number of lockdowns and were looking at the possible closure of their business if they weren't able to get the finances they needed to continue.

I let the minister know a number of the—I had two pages of businesses from my riding that contacted me to share their concerns. I didn't get a response from the minister at the time, so I do not know if the ministry was actually able to reach out, as I had requested, and ensure that those business grant applications were processed. You would think that the government might have learned something from those first two rounds of the small business grant program administration, when there were such problems encountered, but unfortunately, as we know from the third round, the problems have just continued.

I wanted to read some comments that have been shared with me from people who are dealing with the same kind of frustration that businesses had experienced earlier.

This was an email I received just last week. A business owner says, "After being shut down again in my business, the business I have run for almost 20 years is on a lifeline...."

"The announcement of the recent OSBRG sounded like a relief and the process was going to be more fluid as less information to review. Twenty business days to get an answer.

"Well once again the process has been disappointing. Now on day 25 and no answers whatsoever—the 'it is submitted and under review' is disappointing. Add in the statement today that it will likely take seven to 10 business days to receive the funds."

He goes on to say, "Once again, small business is left to stress and an unknown future."

Some of the other business owners who have contacted me with the most recent round of business grants: Cathy Brown-Swanton. She's a reflexologist. Whoever in that ministry processed her application thought that she was a registered health profession and denied her the grant, but she's not. She is a business that is eligible for the grant, but, after much back and forth, there was no resolution to this issue. She's eligible and was deemed ineligible for arbitrary—and, actually, incorrect—reasons by the ministry.

These are some of the experiences for London West businesses, but they certainly reflect what businesses

across the province have encountered. So I would hope that the customer service standard is applied to that ministry, in particular, in light of the information that we received from the Auditor General when she released her report in December about the \$210 million that was distributed under that program to businesses that were actually ineligible, when we had eligible businesses who were being denied the grants.

Another ministry that a customer service standard would be helpful for is the Ministry of Education. I don't know if other MPPs received emails and phone calls from parents who were having extreme difficulty accessing the Support for Families and the Support for Learners grants and then, subsequently, the COVID-19 child benefit program. Parents told me that they only learned about the earlier programs when they applied for the COVID-19 child benefit, and then it was too late to get the earlier programs. Families who had errors on their applications were not informed of the errors until it was too late to resubmit. Families who had more than one child applied for all their children and maybe only got the benefit for one. I had a family with four kids. She applied for the four kids and only one kid received the benefit. These are the kinds of issues that need to be addressed with that customer service standard.

1530

I want to very briefly give a shout-out to my colleague the member for Waterloo for her contributions to schedule 2 of this bill. Schedule 2 provides preferential treatment for Ontario businesses when the government is procuring goods and services under a certain amount. The MPP for Waterloo had introduced a private member's bill that dealt with government procurement, that sought to diversify government procurement and ensure that the province's economic recovery from COVID-19 is more equitable and inclusive. Now, unfortunately, the schedule that the government has incorporated in this bill does not go nearly far enough, and I would encourage them to look more closely at the member for Waterloo's private member's bill and incorporate more of the details that she had provided.

I want to talk about schedule 4, Speaker. Schedule 4 is a schedule that has received a lot of attention, in fact, because what it does is it removes that accountability guarantee that this government was so proud to unveil, as we all recall, back in the 2019 April budget, when they proudly declared that the citizens of this province deserve transparency and accountability in the budget process and that this government would be delivering a budget annually on or before March 31, or else—or else—the Premier and the finance minister would pay a fine equal to 10% of their salaries, which is more than \$20,000 and \$15,000 respectively.

Now, they learned the hard way the following year, in 2020, that when you make a law like that, that when you pass an accountability guarantee that provides those fines for missing a deadline, you've got to pay those fines when you miss the deadline, and they certainly missed the deadline in 2020. In 2021, they made the deadline, but this

year, for 2022, we have an election coming on May 4, so they decided they are going to change the law so that they don't have to pay the financial penalty and set the budget date as the end of April. We all know what this means. We're going to see a budget unveiled at the end of April, and it is going to immediately be used as a campaign platform as we go into the election campaign.

I wanted to talk a little bit now about schedule 6. Schedule 6 is the other schedule in this bill that I think has received the most public attention, Speaker, and that schedule deals with the elimination of vehicle licence sticker fees. Interestingly, I have received a number of emails from constituents about this measure included in this bill. One constituent says, "We are not in favour of the proposal by the Ford government. Is this another buck-a-beer proposal? How is the revenue shortfall being replaced? How many jobs will be lost at the Service-Ontario centres? How much will it cost to deliver the refunds? Please bring these concerns to the attention of the Ontario Parliament," which I am happy to do today.

Another constituent wrote that "Doug Ford stated that he was removing the licence sticker fee because, and I quote, 'This is your money, not ours.'" He goes on to say, "One would think that the electorate might say, there are a myriad of fees that we pay using 'our money.' I guess we should expect the removal of those as well. He has opened a Pandora's fee box. This 'let me give your money back' electioneering ploy is blatantly using provincial funds for his campaign by breaking open the piggy bank... Vote for me, and I'll share your wealth."

Another constituent went on to say, "For the fortunate who weren't hurt" by the pandemic, "\$120 per year per car wasn't a problem they needed solved. For those many that were hurt, this annual fee doesn't even begin to move the needle in terms of help they need from their government or from their community. This is a move that serves no one, except perhaps the sitting government."

I don't know if that was the reaction that this government expected, but it was certainly a reaction that I know many of us received from people in our communities. And I saw a lot of people commenting online about what would have been helpful. What would have been helpful, a lot of people pointed out, was a child care deal. I mean, many families in this province are looking at \$20,000 a year for child care. A child care deal that would relieve some of those cost pressures would have meant a lot more to those families than the \$120 that they would get back from a licence plate sticker fee.

I did want to highlight the contradiction between this government's approach to rebating sticker fees and what they did to people on disability, people on social assistance during COVID-19. Members may recall that there was a previous period, a four-month period, in 2020, when people on social assistance were able to collect a one-time payment of \$100 per month for individuals, \$200 per month per family, but they had to apply to get that one-time payment, unlike this sticker fee rebate on which the province is prepared to spend an undisclosed amount of money to administer an automatic rebate to anyone who

has purchased a licence plate sticker. Let's face it, it's going to be rather complicated, because they're talking about going back several years, and people have bought multiple months and they have different kinds of vehicles. But the province is willing to take on the administration of that automatic rebate—we are looking at days before an election when the cheques will arrive—and yet they forced people with disabilities and people on social assistance to go through a very complicated application process to get those COVID support payments.

We know from advocates for people with disabilities that thousands of people with disabilities were not able to access those payments because they couldn't navigate the process or they didn't know about the process. And when that four-month period was over, they were out of luck.

Speaker, I did want to conclude very briefly with some comments on schedule 3. Schedule 3 amends the Child, Youth and Family Services Act and it makes some changes to child welfare services for Indigenous communities. I want to quote from my colleague the member for Kiiwetinoong, who pointed out, "It's a shame that safety, security, human rights and care of Indigenous children are equivalent to business efficiencies in the eyes of this government, that this discussion on the wellness of Indigenous children has to sit alongside talk of toll roads, licence plate sticker fees, procurement and budget deadlines.

"Speaker, our children are not numbers or benchmarks for policy measurement. They are human beings. We are human beings."

I have to share those words, because I do not understand why the government thought it was appropriate to include schedule 3 in this red tape reduction bill. I would encourage them to do the comprehensive consultation that is necessary to really deal with the crisis of the over-representation of Indigenous children in care in this province.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: I want to thank the member for her address today. I do want to focus on one thing: She seems to be very opposed to removal of the fees for licence stickers. I know she doesn't live in rural Ontario like I do, where people, if you're going to get around, have to get around in a vehicle of some sort. It's massive. Some of your members understand it, but apparently at the House leader level, you don't.

1540

The reality is that most of those communities have no access to gas tax rebates. They pay for gasoline every time they get into their vehicles, and our government has made the decision that we want to try to help those people. If you're in a family with two working people—and in this world today, you know that most people have to have both people working—the chances are they're going in opposite directions to go to work in the morning. They require the break. Our government is giving them a break. You should support it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I return to the member from London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Look, when the NDP formed government in 1990 in this place, one of the measures that the government moved forward with was the removal of fees for licence plate stickers. The removal of user fees wherever we can do that makes sense, so long as we supplement it with a progressive tax system that recognizes that the people who can pay more should pay more.

But one of the big concerns about the proposal in this bill is that there is zero information about where that billion-dollar annual cost to fund the elimination of licence plate sticker fees is going to come from. The government has not been transparent in any sense as to how they are going to pay for the removal of the fees.

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

Mr. Chris Glover: Thank you to the member from London West for her comments. You mentioned in your comments about child care and this government's adamant refusal to sign the federal child care deal, which would save Ontario parents thousands of dollars—tens of thousands of dollars—if they don't do it before the next election. I would like to ask you about this from a gender perspective and also from an economic recovery perspective, because I've talked to parents in my riding, mothers in my riding who would like to return to work but they simply cannot afford \$20,000 a year in child care fees and return to work. Could you talk about the need for this government to sign that federal child care deal?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I appreciate the question from my colleague, and I'm happy to talk about the urgency of signing the child care deal. I mentioned the bill that had been brought forward by my colleague the member for Waterloo, dealing with procurement, and one of the aspects of that bill is to support women-owned Ontario businesses, because we know women have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

This has been called a "she-cession," and in order to deal with the challenges of the she-cession we need a "she-recovery," and that relies on child care. Women cannot get back into the workforce unless they have access to high-quality, affordable and accessible child care. There is no reason for Ontario to be the only province in Canada that has been unable to sign a deal with the federal government.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I recognize the member from Mississauga–Malton.

Mr. Deepak Anand: Thank you, Speaker. Through you: As the Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction mentioned in her leadoff, the Fewer Fees, Better Services Act is this government's eighth red tape reduction bill. It builds on previous legislation we introduced to support people and businesses across the province. The measures included in these bills have allowed us to reduce needless regulatory compliance by 6.5% since June 2018. We're also near our goal of achieving \$373 million in net annual compliance cost savings for businesses, not-for-profits, municipalities,

universities, colleges, school boards and hospitals. Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite: Do you support small business, the backbone of our economy?

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

Mr. Deepak Anand: Does the member opposite say no to eliminating this? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Thank you. He just had an extra thought.

I recognize the member from London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'm not sure if the member was actually listening to my comments, but I started out by talking about the challenges that small businesses have experienced, particularly during COVID-19. The NDP, throughout this pandemic, has been calling on this government to deal with those real pressures that small businesses are facing, and also highlighting the importance of those local mom-and-pop small businesses to our local economies, to the quality of life in our communities, to jobs in our communities. That is why we have been pushing so hard, first to get the small business support program in place and also to improve that program, because we've all been hearing about how flawed the delivery of that program was.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: To the member from London West, I appreciated the speech that you gave on Bill 84. One of the things that came up: You were talking about schedule 1 and the need for some sort of service standard, particularly given the experience that all of us had during the pandemic, of businesses desperate to get help and finding it almost impossible to get a coherent response to their requests.

Do you have confidence that, if schedule 1 as set forward was put in place, that would actually provide us with the service standard we need, or do you think there are substantial pieces missing here?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I appreciate the question from my colleague, because I have no confidence. I have no confidence that what we see written in this legislation is going to do anything to actually provide that service standard that Ontarians should be able to rely on. It doesn't say what should be in the standard. It doesn't say who the standard is going to apply to. We know that these problems are not just because of new programs that were hastily put together during COVID. I know we have all heard about ongoing problems with FRO and with other government programs—social assistance, ServiceOntario. There are lots of examples for years where people have been unable to access the services that they should be able to rely on.

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

Hon. Steve Clark: I listened to this member, who is the opposition House leader, this afternoon. I listened to her this morning. She used the word "confidence" two or three times in response to this question. The government House leader has been very clear about what Bill 84 is to the government. It's an issue of confidence. You're the House leader. You direct how your caucus votes. Tell me, are you

going to vote for this? Is this a motion of confidence? Are you with the government on Bill 84, or are you not?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Look, Speaker, this bill offers some measures that are supportable. I talked about them. I talked about the procurement provisions that are put in place that build on the work of my colleague the member for Waterloo.

I didn't get a chance to talk about another schedule of the bill that removes the tolls on the toll highways in Durham. Again, I have to give a shout-out to my colleague the member for Oshawa, who worked tirelessly on a private member's bill to deal with the removal of tolls.

So yes, there are certainly measures in this bill that we can support. In my speech today I hope I have highlighted some of the major concerns that remain.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I recognize the member for Kitchener Centre for a very short question to allow a short reply.

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: Very short—thank you, Speaker. In your speech, you spoke about people on OW and ODSP. You spoke about issues in education. You spoke about child care, small business, Indigenous rights and licensing fees, as well as customer service amendments in this piece of legislation. How important is consultation to putting forward pieces of legislation in this House?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Consultation should be at the heart of everything we do in this place, particularly for a government that is bringing forward legislation and that has lots of resources available to assist in doing that consultation that is necessary. Consultation in advance of bringing forward legislation and then also going to committee to get public input is critical for the government to undertake.

1550

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): 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. Bouma assumes ballot item number 34 and Mr. Pettapiece assumes ballot item number 43.

Further debate?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It's an honour to rise to participate in third reading debate on Bill 84, of which I'm happy to change the name for the government to the "fewer fees to cut public services act."

I want to be very clear, Speaker: I will not be supporting this bill. I will not mince my words and I will not equivocate why I'm absolutely opposed to this bill. Schedule 6 removes \$1.1 billion from our collective pockets. That's \$1.1 billion that could help the one million Ontarians who are facing surgical and diagnostic backlogs; or help people who are waiting up to 2.5 years to access mental health services; or support the people on ODSP who are living in crushing poverty, well below the poverty line at \$1,169 a month, or the families with special-needs children who are begging and desperately needing access to early intervention services and supports; or to pay fair wages to the front-line health care heroes,

who are underpaid, overworked and under-appreciated; or to support the families with loved ones who are in long-term care, who are saying, "We can't wait until 2025 to receive the staffing support needed to provide a minimum of four hours of care"; or the small businesses who are asking for expanded eligibility criteria under the Ontario Small Business Support Grant; or the young families who need access to affordable child care; or the people desperately searching for a deeply affordable place to call home.

Speaker, we're told over and over again that there's not money available to provide these essential public services for people. Well, I believe deeply in fiscal responsibility, the responsibility to say, "We will provide these services for people, and we'll be honest with people about how to pay for it."

Schedule 6, let's be clear, takes \$1.1 billion out of our collective pockets, the pockets that we, as Ontarians, put to government to pay for the public services that we all rely on to live in great communities, to have access to high-quality health care and long-term care. That's the choice I will make when I vote against this bill.

Quickly—and it's partly because the minister is here—I just want to put on the record with schedule 11, the centre for realty excellence: My hope, my request of government is that when we sell public lands, it goes to non-profit, co-op housing providers so they can provide affordable housing for people in this province.

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

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I listened with great intent to the member from Guelph and the leader of the Green Party today. As the member opposite spoke about the importance of increasing revenues, of course, I understand that the member is actually speaking about removing more money from the pockets of hard-working Ontarians.

My question to the member opposite, when he's waxing eloquent about the harms of schedule 6, is: Has the member from Guelph ever met or seen a tax, a surcharge or a government fee that he didn't like?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: The member from Guelph loves our public health care system and wants it to be improved. The member for Guelph wants to stand up for elders and wants to see our long-term-care homes have adequate staffing in place to provide four hours of care. The member from Guelph wants people to have a deeply affordable home available to them. The member from Guelph does not want people on ODSP and Ontario Works living in deep poverty. That \$1.1 billion that can be going into the pockets of Ontarians to create a better, fairer, more equitable and just province—this licence fee should stay.

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

Mr. Joel Harden: I'm just wondering, to ask the member from Guelph, if he's aware of the civic hospital project under way in our city. It's another example of this government's mismanagement of public funds. They are proposing, Speaker, if you can believe it, at a time when Ottawa desperately needs a new hospital—do you know

what stage 1 of this project is going to be? A 2,400-space parking garage plopped right across from Dow's Lake. That's what a civic hospital looks like to this government.

I'm asking the member from Guelph—I know your federal leader has spoken out against this project—will you today also speak out against this project? We need smart infrastructure. We need good spending. We need a hospital in Ottawa, not a planetary-sized parking garage. What does the member think?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I absolutely oppose building a big parking garage when people desperately need access to health care services. The limited government funds that we have need to be spent in the most fiscally responsible way, and that's providing access to health care.

While we're at it, I've been told by folks in Windsor that they're planning on building a hospital way outside of the city. So if you don't own a car, you can't access it. We need to be building hospital infrastructure and health care infrastructure in communities, in connected, livable communities, where people of all abilities and all means can access them in a way that's equitable and that promotes community health.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Thank you. I recognize the member from Eglinton–Lawrence.

Mrs. Robin Martin: It appears that the member opposite, the member from Guelph, is arguing that taxes and fees somehow put more money into the pockets of his constituents, and he'd like to maximize the taxes and fees that his constituents have to pay.

Under the Del Duca Liberals, supported by the opposition NDP, the cost for licence plate stickers increased by 62% in a five-year period for southern Ontario residents, such as those in the riding of the member for Guelph. Is the member from Guelph suggesting that this has somehow helped his residents, by asking them to pay more fees and taxes?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: My constituents want a new hospital in Guelph. They want to see the portable that is sitting in the front of our hospital being used for emergency services—can you imagine, Speaker? We have a portable because our hospital is underfunded. They want to see public dollars going into a stronger health care system.

I have residents reaching out, desperate for their loved ones to have four hours of care in long-term care now—not in 2025, right now. My constituents understand that if we're going to have responsible public services, we have to be honest about how to pay for them. Yes, the money needs to be spent in a responsible way, and I'll agree with you that the previous Liberal government didn't always deliver on that responsibility. But I also feel like we have a responsibility to the people of this province to be honest about the services we want to deliver and how we're going to pay for them. Licence fees are one way in which we can pay for those services.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Even with the fast-speaking people in this House, there's not time enough for another question and response.

Further debate?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: I'm pleased to rise today to speak to this important piece of legislation for the people of Ontario, brought forward by our wonderful Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction. I am proud to be part of a government that, throughout its mandate, has continued to prioritize—

Interruption.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Could you just make sure you move your phone?

A reminder to everyone: Please remove your phones from your desks when you're speaking, because it does reverberate for the comms people. Thank you very much.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Thank you, Speaker. My apologies.

As I was saying, I am proud to be part of a government that, throughout its mandate, has continued to prioritize Ontarians in a way that makes life more accessible, more affordable and more prosperous for everyone. With the Fewer Fees, Better Services Act, we are continuing to build on our accomplishments for Ontarians, especially as our province continues to progress out of the COVID-19 pandemic and look toward a bright future of strong economic recovery and vitality.

Ontarians were at the backbone of our communities throughout our pandemic, and they will be at the centre of our economic recovery in the days and months ahead. Yet this legislation also has many provisions that will benefit Ontario's businesses, which persevered through difficult economic times to keep Ontario's workers employed and, as a result, continued to get goods and services to Ontarians who needed them.

Speaker, this piece of legislation is dedicated to both of these groups. This is our government's way of continuing to support the people of Ontario in a meaningful and impactful way. I'm going to be using my time today to speak to some of the provisions included in this legislation and how Ontarians can expect to be benefited by them.

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As you know, Speaker, Ontarians are currently grappling with incredibly high costs as a result of inflation, particularly at the gas pumps. This legislation takes action to help drivers put more money back into their pockets. With this legislation, our government is removing licence plate stickers and their associated fees for exempt passenger vehicles, light commercial vehicles, motorcycles and mopeds. This move will save eligible vehicle owners \$120 a year in southern Ontario and \$60 a year in northern Ontario. Moreover, we will be providing refunds to owners of eligible vehicles who paid these fees for the period of March 1, 2020 onward. With this, we are putting more money back in the pockets of Ontarians so that they can spend it on things that they need and want and not on frivolous government fees. Working Ontarians know the value of their earnings better than anyone, and with this move, we are providing a way for them to have more control over their finances at a tough time when costs are rising.

But we're not stopping there. With our Fewer Fees, Better Services Act, we are also moving to remove tolls on

Highways 412 and 418 so that motorists have relief from costs associated with operating their motor vehicles. And I want to really commend our team from the Durham region, namely the chief government whip, the member for Whitby, and of course, our Minister of Finance, who are fierce, fierce champions for the Durham region and fought to get this important action done.

This provision will ensure that Ontarians using provincial highways are better able to get to where they have to go when they have to go by lowering their personal transportation costs. This, I should specify, will be a benefit enjoyed by both commuter and commercial vehicles who use either of these highways. This is yet another way that we are making life easier and more affordable for the people of Ontario.

One last provision included within this legislation that will be welcome news for the people of Ontario is our plan to establish a centre for realty excellence, also known as CORE. I'd like to commend our Minister of Government and Consumer Services for his work on this important initiative.

The establishment of CORE will provide a holistic approach to better manage properties held by the government in order to determine priority surplus properties. The benefits of this unprecedented advancement in the way the government of Ontario deals with its property holdings cannot be overstated. Through CORE, we will be better able to allow underused or vacant real estate to be more seamlessly transitioned into facilities that the people of Ontario both need and deserve.

For instance, CORE could be used to transition underutilized property to create new long-term-care homes or affordable housing, both of which our government has continued to prioritize throughout our mandate. As a strong advocate for long-term care in my community, I recognize how the establishment of CORE will be a valuable tool in bolstering our promise of 30,000 net new long-term-care beds in Ontario, an objective that is over 73% completed as of the beginning of this February. I look forward to seeing the tangible benefits of CORE come to fruition in the times ahead, to the benefit of Ontarians across this great province.

I'd like to now transition and speak to what this legislation will provide to Ontario's businesses. Our government, since day one, has recognized how critical Ontario's businesses are to the backbone of our province. When our businesses thrive, we thrive. When job creators succeed, the people of Ontario succeed. We also recognize the hardships that Ontario's businesses endured throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. That's why we have ensured that they have been supported with billions of dollars in relief since the onset of necessary public health measures. Our businesses were there for our communities during these unprecedented times, ensuring Ontarians had access to the goods and services that they needed, and we will continue to be there for them.

The economic recovery of our province will be unprecedented. Ontario, as an economic powerhouse, will continue to lead the world and lead our country as the burdens of the pandemic move behind us.

In this legislation, Speaker, we will be continuing to support their economic recovery. For example, one provision of this legislation will be to establish Ontario's single window for business, a cross-government initiative to consolidate approval processes, government information and application statuses. This provision will save both time and money for the people of Ontario and help ensure Ontario remains one of the best places in the world to do business.

Through streamlining the administrative burdens on Ontario's businesses, we are making it more accessible and more efficient for Ontario's businesses to begin conducting business, and give them the tools that they need to grow and succeed. This will be supplemented by implementing service standard guarantees, which will hold the government accountable through an emphasis on clarity and transparency.

With these provisions, we are publicly committing standards and guarantees, and being more forthright with timelines and requirements for various application processes as Ontario businesses access available support. This is yet another way we are fostering an environment that is conducive to doing business, strengthening Ontario's businesses and continuing to position Ontario to be a world leader in the post-pandemic world.

Au sujet d'embrasser le pouvoir de la technologie pour faciliter la vie des Ontariens, je vais discuter brièvement du travail effectué par le ministère des Affaires francophones ces derniers temps.

En janvier dernier, nous avons lancé une plateforme de désignation en ligne pour permettre aux communautés et aux organisations de demander plus facilement une désignation en vertu de la Loi sur les services en français. La modernisation de la Loi sur les services en français pour desservir les communautés francophones d'une manière digne du XXI^e siècle est demeurée une priorité fondamentale pour notre gouvernement. Grâce à cette décision, nous avons réduit à la fois le fardeau et le temps de traitement des demandes. Ce n'est là qu'un exemple des mesures que nous avons prises en coulisses pour améliorer la vie des Ontariens en veillant à ce qu'ils aient accès aux services dont ils ont besoin lorsqu'ils en ont besoin.

Cette législation également comprend la création de l'initiative pour favoriser le développement d'entreprises en Ontario, nommée « BOBI », par le biais de la Loi sur l'initiative favorisant l'essor des entreprises ontariennes. Grâce à cela, notre gouvernement poursuivra ses progrès pour développer les entreprises de l'Ontario, renforcer l'économie de notre province et renforcer les chaînes d'approvisionnement dont dépendent les Ontariens de toute la province.

Au cours de ces deux dernières années, le manque d'initiative des gouvernements précédents pour favoriser l'industrie fabriquée en Ontario a entraîné des problèmes d'approvisionnement au début de la pandémie. Depuis lors, notre gouvernement a fortement soutenu les initiatives d'achat local et de fabrication ontarienne pour aider les Ontariens à choisir local, et l'évolution de notre stratégie d'approvisionnement n'a pas été différente.

Notre gouvernement comprend que les marchés publics du secteur public peuvent jouer un rôle crucial dans le développement économique en favorisant une solide base de production nationale et, par conséquent, en créant davantage de possibilités de croissance économique.

Avec BOBI, les acheteurs du secteur public contribueront à la croissance des entreprises de l'Ontario en leur donnant la préférence dans l'achat de biens et de services en dessous d'un seuil spécifié. Non seulement cela aidera nos entreprises à prospérer ici même en Ontario, mais cela les positionnera également pour réussir sur le marché mondial. Cette décision de soutenir l'industrie nationale en est une qui a été prise par d'autres pays, comme les États-Unis, et les provinces de l'Atlantique.

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Grâce à BOBI, nous assurerons des règles du jeu équitables pour les entreprises ontariennes qui, nous le savons tous, respectent des normes éthiques, environnementales et de travail strictes.

Par-dessus tout, nous savons à quel point les entreprises de l'Ontario sont essentielles pour assurer la santé future de notre économie et de notre chaîne d'approvisionnement, et c'est pourquoi BOBI sera un élément essentiel alors que notre province continue de se remettre économiquement des forces de la pandémie.

Je réitère que ce gouvernement continuera de travailler pour s'assurer que l'Ontario demeure l'un des meilleurs endroits au monde pour faire des affaires.

Speaker, Ontarians have risen to meet the challenges posed to our province over the last two years with tenacity, grit and determination, both individuals and businesses. I am proud not only of this government's work to support them through these difficult moments but in our work to position Ontario for the bright and prosperous future that it deserves.

I would now like to turn to another aspect of this bill, which relates to changes to child and family services for Indigenous children and youth that are a key part of Bill 84. Speaker, we are committed to working with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples on how best to address the needs of their children and youth in Ontario. Like First Nations, Inuit and Métis partners, we want every one of their children and youth to have a safe, loving and permanent home. We want Indigenous families and communities to be strengthened and supported through prevention and early intervention.

When First Nations, Inuit and Métis children and youth are in need of protection, we want them to have access to services that are high-quality, culturally appropriate, responsive to their needs and close to home. Working with representatives of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, we are committed to finding and furthering approaches that meet the specific needs of their communities.

We know that our current child welfare system has faced significant challenges for some time, and we recognize the overrepresentation of First Nations, Inuit and Métis children and youth in the child welfare system. It is unacceptable. We are committed to addressing the

issue of overrepresentation through community-based prevention supports and culturally safe and appropriate services so children and youth have the opportunity to flourish.

Over 18 months ago, our government announced our vision for a redesigned child welfare system, where children, youth and families receive services that are community-based, high-quality, culturally appropriate and responsive, with a focus on prevention and early intervention. During this time, we've been working closely with sector partners and stakeholders to shift investments from protection services to community-based prevention that better supports the unique needs of diverse kids and their families, including Indigenous, Black, racialized and LGBTQ2S+ children and youth and those with special needs.

We are continuing to work with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples as well as urban Indigenous partners to support their families and expand access to care that better reflects their customs, heritages and traditions. The government has recently invested \$5 million to enhance access to prevention-focused customary care so children and youth can remain closely connected to their culture and community.

This bill builds on other supports and other commitments, including \$6 million to support First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples to develop and begin implementing their own Indigenous-led models for child and family services. It also builds on the province designating last April Nijjaansinaanik Child and Family Services as the 13th Indigenous children's aid society in Ontario, meaning that more Indigenous children and families will have access to culturally specific prevention and child protection services. We also invested \$5.4 million to expand the Family Well-Being Program, designed to end violence against Indigenous women, reduce the overrepresentation of Indigenous children and youth in child welfare and youth justice systems and improve the overall health and well-being of Indigenous communities.

Going forward, we will continue to work collaboratively with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, and with Black and African Canadian communities, to build a system that supports diverse children, youth and families and keeps them connected to their communities and out of care, where safe to do so.

And that brings me to the positive changes for Indigenous children and youth contained in Bill 84. The amendments we are proposing to the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017, will, if passed, address systemic disparities experienced by First Nations, Inuit and Métis children and youth in care. Once in place, these amendments will benefit children and youth and improve their outcomes by increasing and enhancing access to customary care, which allows children and youth to remain closely connected to their culture and to their community. Passage would also improve access to culturally appropriate prevention services to reduce the number of children and youth who come into care.

These prevention services include the implementation of circles of supportive persons and other holistic

wraparound, culturally appropriate supports for those receiving child welfare services. The term “circle of supportive persons” refers to individuals or groups, such as extended family members, band members, elders, Indigenous service providers and others, supporting a First Nations, Inuk or Métis child or youth as they receive services in Ontario’s child welfare system. Passage of the amendment would also strengthen the role of prevention-focused Indigenous service providers to increase pathways to access their culturally appropriate supports, including parenting programs, mental health supports, alternative schooling and jobs and skills training. Passage would also help reduce the involvement of children’s aid societies.

Speaker, research shows that keeping kids connected to their communities and culture is key to their success as well as community well-being. It also supports improved overall economic outcomes as it reduces costs to government and grows the economy.

Our government is committed to reconciliation with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. These proposed amendments are in response to the calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and they would be a key element of the overall transformation of Ontario’s child welfare system.

To those across this great province, I say to you that Ontario is getting stronger. With this legislation and the measures included, we are continuing to support communities, people and businesses alike during this transitory period. Together, we will build a more prosperous—

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

M^{me} Marit Stiles: Pour le député d’Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean : votre gouvernement propose de couper plus d’un milliard de dollars—a billion dollars—de revenus avec l’élimination des permis d’auto. Ma question est très simple. Qu’est-ce que vous allez couper? Les écoles, encore; la santé, les hôpitaux, encore plus d’infirmières—quoi? Soyez honnêtes, soyez transparents avec les Ontariens.

M. Jeremy Roberts: Merci beaucoup pour la question de la députée de Davenport. C’est une question importante.

Over the past several weeks, I, like many other members of this chamber, I’m sure, have had the chance to go door-to-door and speak to hundreds of Ontarians. One of the things that keeps coming up, time and time again, is the cost of living and the fact that life is getting more expensive, particularly at the pumps. When I speak to folks who are drivers, who have to use their car to get to work, to get their kids to school, they are feeling punished at the pumps because of these high costs. I saw gas in Ottawa the other day at \$1.66, one of the highest I’ve seen in ages.

The measures in this bill are responding directly to that concern. We are looking at ways that we can put money back into the pockets of Ontarians and help those drivers save some more money at a time when they’re being pinched elsewhere.

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The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I recognize the member for Peterborough–Kawartha.

Mr. Dave Smith: As we’re coming out of the global pandemic of COVID-19, we have to make sure that we’re focusing on the economy in Ontario and getting the economic conditions back in place that allow for us to grow.

Now, the member talked in his speech about the Building Ontario Business Initiative Act, BOBI. Could you elaborate a little bit more on how that is going to help companies who do business with the public sector?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Thank you so much to the member for Peterborough–Kawartha for that important question. I know the member has been a fierce champion in his riding for economic recovery, supporting the small businesses that make Peterborough–Kawartha such a beautiful, wonderful place to visit.

Mr. Dave Smith: God’s country.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: He often refers to it as “God’s country,” and while I would never compare my riding to another, I know that his home is a beautiful place.

BOBI is a wonderful initiative that’s going to allow Ontario businesses to have a preferential status when dealing with government in terms of procurement, and the number that I think is really important to focus on here, Speaker, is \$29 billion. That’s the amount of business that the government of Ontario does through procurement each year—\$29 billion, a substantial amount. Through this initiative, local businesses here in this province will be able to access some of those contracts on a more presentation basis and support their growth and—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Thank you. I recognize the member for Humber River–Black Creek.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I’ve been hearing a lot of government members pat themselves on the back, and in returning to the chamber again and the honour that is to be here, one issue that I’m not hearing as a priority of this government is the fact that there’s this huge surgical backlog. It was something I was hoping to see a bill being tabled on, or some action.

Each and every one of us is getting calls from people who are facing long cancer screening times and surgeries, procedures and therapies that are being delayed. The FAO has made recommendations, what the investment would be to fix things. Why isn’t this a priority? Aren’t you hearing the same things we are?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Thanks for the question from the member from Humber River–Black Creek. I, too, am thrilled to be able to be back in the Legislature after the winter constituency break.

I’m hearing two things from constituents, Speaker. One I’m hearing about is the cost of living, and that is something that this bill is directly tackling, putting more money back in the pockets of Ontarians. And yes, I’m hearing, of course, questions about Ontario’s health care system. The great thing is that investments are being made to bolster our health care system. We have seen billions of dollars put into the system to help deal with the surgical

backlog, and we're also seeing investments made to fix decades of neglect in our health care system.

In my own region of Ottawa, our government has invested in 254 new hospital beds. And right in my riding, we are training new nurses at Algonquin College to make sure that we can staff those beds as well.

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

Mr. Lorne Coe: I wanted to congratulate the member from Ottawa West–Nepean for his presentation. A concern that I hear from my chamber of commerce that I'm sure the member from Ottawa West–Nepean hears from time to time is that it's difficult for business to interact with government. I know you would agree, Speaker, that small businesses form the backbone of the province's economy going forward.

Can the member please explain what the proposed At Your Service Act will mean for small businesses in his riding? How will it allow those businesses to create the jobs and, in turn, become more prosperous?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Before I respond to that question, let me just thank the member from Whitby for his tireless advocacy on behalf of his constituents to get the tolls removed on Highways 412 and 418, something that will help members in his riding as they move around to get to work and to school, etc.

To address this question, Speaker: When I got elected, I was the second-youngest member of this Legislature to be elected in this term of Parliament, and one of the things I wanted to do was to see how we could make government more digitally friendly. Thankfully, our government took action. In fact, we appointed Ontario's first Associate Minister for Digital Government, the member for Mississauga East–Cooksville, I believe. He's been doing a great job championing measures like the one in this bill, the single window for business, which is going to provide a website portal where businesses can go and access the supports they need for permits, supports to get their businesses started, different things like this, through a single online portal as opposed to navigating the myriad of different government ministries.

That's the sort of thing this bill is doing, and it's helping to drag the government into the 21st—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Thank you. I recognize the member from Kitchener Centre.

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: My question is in regard to the remarks on schedule 3. One of the questions that I have and that has been brought to my attention is about the nature of consultation that was embarked upon to move this bill through so quickly. During your remarks, you spoke about the government's vision that was announced, which centres the government, as opposed to Indigenous communities, and you spoke about money that was being set aside for Indigenous communities to build their own. But what I'm being told on the ground is that there are a lot of preventive services by and for Indigenous communities that exist now, and there's real concern that the money set aside is to build something new that's more run by the colonial system versus Indigenous communities. Can you tell me how you will assure the money set

aside for these changes will go to the communities doing the work already?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Absolutely. Thank you so much for the very important question. I agree that collaboration, consultation and working together are key to make sure we can move this issue forward.

In 2019, I was honoured to be asked by the Premier to serve as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community, Children and Social Services. Upon taking on that role, my first task that I was assigned was to travel across the province and hold consultations on how we could modernize our child welfare system, and that included consultations in various communities right around the province. That included First Nations, Inuit and Métis participants.

I think particularly about a wonderful consultation in Brantford–Brant, an area that is all too familiar with the history of residential schools because of the Mohawk Institute. We had a great conversation—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Thank you. I recognize the member from Eglinton–Lawrence.

Mrs. Robin Martin: I just want to commend my colleague the member from Ottawa West–Nepean for a great presentation, great answers to the questions. Clearly age doesn't disqualify him. Even though he's one of the youngest members, he's certainly a great member who has brought a lot to the table. We're grateful he's part of our team.

I want to ask, just to elaborate a bit, because you know so much about schedule 3, what these provisions will do to help.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Thank you so much to the member from Eglinton–Lawrence for that question. To build upon my answer a moment ago, when I had the chance to visit Brantford–Brant and had a consultation there—it was one of the first round tables I held on this—members of the Indigenous community in Brantford–Brant talked to me about customary care and the importance of making sure that if a child needed to access the services of Ontario's child welfare system, they could do so in a way that allowed them to remain close to their culture, their heritage and their community. That was so critical to ensuring that these children and youth had a chance to succeed in the future. This bill is helping enshrine that principle into legislation and making sure that customary care is—

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

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: I'm going to begin my debate where my colleague from London West actually left off. At one point in the earlier remarks, she noted the speed with which this particular omnibus bill has passed through the House. I think it's really important for us to take some time to think about that, because as quickly as a bill like this passes through the House, we quickly see a decrease in the ability for a community to engage with each of the schedules in this bill and provide feedback.

There are often consultations that happen with people who are already on side. Those consultations are really

easy to do. We're often in touch with people who agree with the kinds of changes and legislative amendments that we'd like to make, but the real work, especially when I think about schedule 3, which is where I'm going keep the focus of most of my remarks, comes with speaking to folks who may not share our opinion initially.

When it comes to this system that we're in, and especially the impact of colonial systems, like the one that we are actually a part of, on Indigenous community members, Indigenous children, who are often disproportionately overrepresented in care, taking the time to speak to them about what it is they need, what the impact has been of the kinds of legislation that already exist and the ways in which we can propose amendments that speak to them is hugely important.

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And while I think it's wonderful that, to my last question, I was told that some of that consultation had happened some ways back, something else has happened to pose some questions about the relationship to consultation that this particular government has that's not necessarily sitting well with a number of people, including, based on what I have received, some Indigenous community members. This bill has gone through this process so quickly that there are community members that only found out yesterday that this particular bill is at third reading, which is problematic when they have been proposing some of these amendments and have been attempting to work with government systems like this to ensure that their children and communities are safe.

For instance, the Association of Native Child and Family Services Agencies of Ontario, who represent on-reserve, remote and rural care societies, have explained that they were given no notice that the bill was coming. Some of the schedules are actually pulled directly from some of their asks, which, on the one hand, is a good sign, because at least there's something in there that reflects what these communities needed. But they did point out that section 73.1, and section 3 of that, of the schedule now reads, "The minister shall not designate a society as a prevention-focused Indigenous service provider."

What was pointed out to me was that on-reserve in remote and rural communities, these societies don't function strictly as CAS proxies, but they provide a lot of that preventive care that is required in order to ensure that communities are able to thrive where they are. But if on this end we put in language in the legislation that separates out funding streams for these two pieces of really important work to support Indigenous children, there's the possibility that the money that should be used to ensure that folks on the ground doing that preventive work are fully funded and are able to expand the kinds of work that they're doing in prevention—that they will lose that opportunity. And from my vantage point, what I've been hearing is that a lot of that advocacy was coming from Indigenous communities well before this bill. So if we push through omnibus bills like this, embed within schedules that haven't been deeply consulted on with the communities that will be most impacted, at a time when

we also say that we're doing this as a concrete example of our commitment to reconciliation—or, I'd prefer, reconcili-action—then there are questions that arise on the ground.

I know for my community in Kitchener Centre, there's a number of organizations that have been trying to push for preventive work and funding to prevent some of the issues that happen when we put through legislation around children in care, especially as a way to address the overrepresentation of Indigenous youth in care. But if they are not consulted when major amendments like this are to happen, then you're not able to hear the kinds of concerns that they have before this legislation becomes law. To find out today or yesterday that we're already at third reading of this bill is a way of actually backtracking on the relationship-making that we would hope would happen between government and Indigenous communities, especially if we're going to focus on this bill and spend so much time during debate speaking about this particular schedule.

Don't get me wrong; I want to be really clear: Ensuring that the voices of Indigenous communities and parts of what they have advocated for are present in the legislation is hugely important. But reconciliation is about more than just taking bits and pieces of what an Indigenous person has said and plopping it into an omnibus bill; it's about relationship-building. And you can't build a relationship if you don't tell people outside of the system what you're doing inside the system with their words. And if you don't spend some time making sure that even though they may not agree entirely, if there's a reason for why, for instance, that particular section is phrased differently or is required to be incorporated differently—because, personally, it's gone through so fast, I don't know why it is that that particular language doesn't reflect what the organization had been advocating for. But if there is a rationale, it's relationship-building that allows you to be able to do that.

At this point, it becomes pretty questionable where that commitment is, and it's unfortunate, because part of my role as the anti-racism critic in the province is to be able to speak to communities about moments where the legislation that runs through this House can have a negative impact on particular communities, including Indigenous communities. But I'm not provided with enough information or rationale to know why, going back to my colleague's words where we quoted the member from Kiiwetinoong.

I don't know why this important set of amendments are thrown into an omnibus bill called "red tape reduction." Consultations aren't red tape. Reconciliation is not red tape. Reconcili-action is most certainly not red tape. And so it's very difficult for us to be able to help to build that relationship as elected officials in our respective communities and across the province if we aren't able to say, "Well, look, there were X amount of weeks where the bill travelled," for instance, "and people asked questions, and this is what they were trying to navigate, and so as a consequence this is what we have." Instead, I have to go home and say, "Well, they wanted it through in six days

and they threw it in”—which doesn't make somebody feel held and heard and cared for, and when we're thinking about Indigenous children, that's particularly problematic.

But this group, the Association of Native Child and Family Services Agencies of Ontario, wasn't the only one to remark that they did not know where this bill was at. Third reading—this is going to become law. Other people did not know. The Native Child and Family Services of Toronto also wrote and said they had no idea that this bill was where it is right now, which raises a number of concerns.

Currently, in third reading, while proposing Indigenous-specific amendments to the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, if it passes, these amendments create a new class of Indigenous organizations in Ontario called “prevention-focused Indigenous service providers.” This new class could, in fact, result in moving funds from where it's needed in Indigenous communities to these new organizations. My understanding—and, again, I'm saying this with all due respect. Just let me know what it is that's actually happening in case I'm misunderstanding something, but my understanding is that the minister would have, I guess, an application process of some kind so that these new entities would be part of these prevention-focused Indigenous service providers, and then that list would go out to Indigenous communities so that Indigenous communities would know which ones had been allocated this designation.

Questions have now arisen as to whether or not the organizations in Indigenous communities across the province, especially in remote communities, who are doing this work already will even qualify to be provided with this designation. And if they don't qualify to be part of this designation, then what happens? Do they not have access to the fees? Does that mean that the people who are doing the work, have built the relationship, are recognized and supportive of community in such important ways, who are struggling—because oftentimes those folks on the ground doing that kind of work don't necessarily have access to the funding that allows them to expand the work, which is what we should be hoping for, especially if we're committed to reconciliation. Will they be able to access this, and if they're not, then what happens?

If we create things that are not entirely what Indigenous communities have wanted, then that means in 2022 we're still carrying on our work with a mentality that is similar to the colonial violence we have seen historically. As hard as that is to hear—and nobody wants to be listening to me talk about that at this point in our history in this place—I think it's really important, because we can't talk about how to do our work better without pointing out when we're actually doing our work in exactly the same ways that they had been doing it in the past, that landed into things like legislating residential schools. Right?

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If we want to build the relationship, repair that relationship, heal from that relationship, then consultation has to be taken extremely seriously. The questions that are being raised now by Indigenous communities that do the

prevention work already, but may not necessarily qualify to be part of that class, have to be taken seriously. And so I do hope that when we have the question and answer, some of those questions will also provide us with some information, because I do think it's important for people to know that the government is in fact implementing this in a way where they've thought it through, where they've thought about all of these kinds of questions and they can tell me who they've spoken to that have told them that going this route is exactly what we need right now—and when I say “we,” I mean Indigenous communities, because they should be centred, not the government—and then we can move forward and see what happens next.

I'm being told that there are hundreds of pre-existing prevention-focused programs and services that are offered at Indigenous child and family well-being agencies that may not be included on this list. These newly designated PFISPs would be able to deliver the customary care without the restrictions that Indigenous child and family well-being agencies are forced to operate under. Indigenous child and family well-being agencies have been lobbying for the modification or the removal of these restrictions to customary care for over a decade, and now they won't benefit from these amendments.

I want to take a deep breath, because this is not going to be something that anybody wants to hear, but I'm saying it anyway: When we don't listen to the people who are impacted by the kinds of legislative changes that we're talking about right now, we are replicating colonial systems that perpetuate violence. I don't think that that's what anybody in this House wants to do, but we do have to take seriously that when we do this and impact Indigenous communities in 2022 in this way, we are running the risk of doing just that.

The other piece I was thinking about a lot as I was looking through the bill, and schedule 3 in particular, was this: If, in fact, a lot of what's in here and the amendments that we're speaking of in schedule 3 are things that have been proposed that the government has in fact listened to Indigenous communities about as they started to draft the legislation and this is really a good-news story, where we are listening to community, we are legislating things in the ways that are going to help you thrive and we are centring Indigenous voices, then why didn't you tell them that? Like, why didn't you tell Indigenous communities that are now writing to us, saying that they didn't even know this bill was at third reading, that we had, as government, in fact listened to them? Because if you're not going to tell the people that you're consulting with the good news, well, what's going to happen when you have bad news?

Governing is hard. There are moments, especially as we've seen during the pandemic, where you've got to make decisions that aren't necessarily going to be what people want to hear. But if you can't tell folks that are on the margins, that are quite vulnerable, that have experienced all sorts of trauma—and this trauma of a pandemic has happened on top of it—that you are listening to them and we've got something good that we can show you that we're doing today, then what happens when you have to

tell them that there is something really hard, something that we can't do? That's where the relationship- and the trust-building comes into question. I think that that, Speaker, is the most worrisome for me.

If passed, these amendments would likely result in the reduction of customary care providers at Indigenous child and family well-being agencies, resulting in more placements in non-Indigenous foster homes. I need to slow down and say that again. As I would say if I was actually on Twitter instead of in this chamber, I would say it louder for the people in the back. These amendments could potentially result in more placements in non-Indigenous foster homes.

If we're going to be speaking about preventive measures and we're speaking about the importance of—and this was part of the remarks from the member prior to me—ensuring that Indigenous children and youth are still connected, remain connected to their own cultures and wisdom etc., then why would we put together a set of amendments that undermine that broader goal, right? If there are some pieces of it that are okay, but other pieces of it could result in Indigenous children, who are already overrepresented in care, being put into non-Indigenous foster homes, then—people don't realize how old I am, but in the words of I Love Lucy, we got some explaining to do, right? Because Indigenous communities have already been advocating about the impact of that. That's part of the intergenerational trauma that's often discussed. We've got to make sure with legislation—this is what an anti-racist lens does. It (a) makes sure that we consult and that we consult well, and that we do it from a place where we're honestly trying to hear what it is that people need and the most vulnerable are centred in those consultations; and, (b)—presuming, of course, I did say (a)—

Interjection.

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: Yes, okay. Sometimes I say (a) and (b) and then (a) and (2), because I didn't know if I said (1), but that is not what we're here for.

So (b) we have to make sure that when we—

Interjection.

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: See? You know what I'm talking about.

So (b) we have to make sure that when we start to draft the legislation from our vantage point—because there are limitations to how we can say things and that kind of stuff—we go back to communities and make sure that they understand why we're doing what we're doing and the ultimate goal of that. And then (c), the hardest part is we have to actually ixnay the things that could be harmful, which, for us, we may not want to do, because we spend so much of our time in these privileged positions, thinking that we know better, that we can do better, that we can save everybody from themselves. But when you do that, you just decentre all those people that you said you wanted to centre in your legislation.

If you've got major Indigenous organizations—and one of your colleagues literally from over on this side of the House said there are real concerns here—my question is, why didn't we take that seriously? Whatever happens as

we move forward, the impact of that rests on our shoulders, and that's hard. It's hard to know that that's what happens. But I do hope that people will listen on the government side and think seriously, long and hard, about what reconciliation should look like and what listening and consulting should result in, because we don't want to move our relationships backwards; we want to move them forward. In fact, we shouldn't be focusing on a whole bunch of systems taking children from Indigenous communities and putting them into these newfangled systems that are better because now we have an elder in the system. We should be preventing Indigenous communities from having their children removed, because it's the removal of the children that has resulted in the trauma that we talk about, when we say that we're paying attention to the needs for reconciliation in this space. That's upstream supports.

We've got to make sure that we do better when it comes to legislation like this. There's no way that we can turn the clock back, because we are in the third reading of this bill, but I do think that Indigenous community members who are worried, who don't know if they can trust what's going to happen next, have some of their questions answered.

Again, my hope, because we'll move into these 10-minute blocks of questions, is that the government members will spend some time talking to Indigenous community members about what it is that they're doing and why and explain—and perhaps apologize for not letting them know how far into the process this bill actually is.

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

Mr. Joel Harden: Thank you to my friend for those comments. I wanted to get your reaction, given where you ended, on the issue of dialogue, because as I was saying earlier this afternoon, we've got a government over here building a hospital in our city in Ottawa that begins with a parking garage for 2,400 spaces which has been built to an inaccessible design—Speaker, 500 metres from the front door to the hospital. Experts say it's going to take someone with a disability 15 minutes to get from the front door finally to the hospital's front door.

I'm wondering if my friend thinks that's listening. Does a hospital happen by building a parking garage first, or do we build it with people with disabilities and their interests in mind? What do you think?

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: Thank you so much for that question. The notion of the ways in which this government has tried to maneuver around the AODA is something that I think we really have to pay attention to. When we think about the impact of many of these decisions on people with disabilities, we're back to this question as to whether or not this particular government is ready and able to centre the most vulnerable in the decisions they make. Also, we have to make sure that what we build makes sense for that particular region. It's the reason why we all represent different ridings.

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So when we come and say, "This is going to be the impact," we need a government that listens to us and says,

“Okay, let us rethink,” but you can only do that if it’s not just relationships with folks outside and in this chamber but also amongst us across the aisle, where they take seriously the kinds of concerns that you continue to raise, not just for the people in Ottawa but also for the folks with disabilities. Thank you for that work.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I recognize the member for Peterborough–Kawartha.

Mr. Dave Smith: I was listening intently—and actually I was the one who reacted when the member made mention of not knowing whether she said (1) or (a) or whether it should be (2) or (b). But one of the things that I wanted to ask about—I know you didn’t talk about it in your speech, but as the parliamentary assistant to northern development, mines, natural resources and forestry and the parliamentary assistant to Indigenous affairs, there is one part of this bill that I think is very, very good, and that is the Critical Minerals Strategy that we have for Ontario and the changes that we’re making in this bill so that we can respect the treaty rights and still advance the mining that we need to do for electric vehicles, for solar panels, for windmills, for all that green technology.

Do you support that portion of the bill so that we can enhance the mining industry in Ontario to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions?

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. I think what you’re touching on, for me at least, is the detrimental impact of passing so many omnibus bills. You can’t agree with one thing if, at the end of the day, I just spent 20 minutes talking about the impact of this part of the legislation, this schedule on Indigenous children, and that’s the part that’s so difficult.

In fact, my colleague in London West was also saying the same thing. The point of an omnibus bill from the government side is that we get to push through all of this while we also give you a couple of things that you can’t vote against. As much as that’s fun and games in politics, it’s not fun and games on the ground for Indigenous communities and their children who are already navigating intergenerational trauma and now, in 2022, we’re providing them with a little bit more trauma to navigate.

So I think it’s important for us to centre Indigenous children and answer some of the questions that Indigenous communities have.

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

Mr. Chris Glover: I listened to the member’s comments with great respect. The concern that you’re raising is that the government is making major changes to Indigenous child care services, and they have not let Indigenous child care services know that this bill is being rushed through the Legislature. They have not let them know that this bill is an add-on. It’s schedule 3 of another bill that’s called Fewer Fees, Better Services Act.

This is incredibly disrespectful to the Indigenous people of this land, particularly in the wake of the most recent revelation that there are potentially 169 children’s graves just discovered at a residential school in Alberta. What would you recommend that this government do with

this schedule if they want to make changes to services for Indigenous children?

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: Thank you to the member for that important question and for the clarity. I think at the end of the day, if you’re trying to build relationships with folks who have been harmed by the political systems that we are all part of, then your starting point has to be to apologize. As weird as that might sound, I think that’s where you have to start.

There are a whole bunch of advocates who are now worried that their words and their trust is being used against them to perpetuate more harm, even inadvertently, because I don’t think that anybody is saying that the folks on the government side are doing this intentionally. I do want to believe, especially after listening to the remarks beforehand, that they were doing this based on consultations that happened before. But if we don’t consult when the legislation comes down; when we say to people, “Oh, don’t worry; I’ve got you,” and then you start writing things and pushing them through this House, we have this moment where we might inadvertently harm. I think that’s what people are trying to warn us of right now.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I recognize the member from Peterborough–Kawartha.

Mr. Dave Smith: It’s really interesting because I’ve heard a couple of the opposition members now say that this was rushed through. You want more consultation. When you had the opportunity to stand up and say that this should go to committee instead of going straight to third reading, why didn’t five members from the NDP rise to force a vote?

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: Thank you for the question. I’m still going to remain focused on this one aspect. It doesn’t matter what kinds of political games happen in this space. That’s literally the reason why this particular chamber and the work we do is considered colonial, because we’re more interested in games than we are in actually hearing from people. So I ask instead: Why didn’t you force it to go to committee? Why did you play the game that would result in it not getting to committee?

Right now, while people are telling you that they’re worried about the harm to Indigenous children, why are you not figuring out what game you can play to make sure that you change that? Because if you did that, then you could be centring the needs of Indigenous children. That’s all that’s being asked of you, and I would do anything to make sure that we centre the needs of Indigenous children.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I recognize the member for Davenport.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I want to thank the member for Kitchener Centre for her really excellent comments. It’s indicative of how she presents herself in this Legislature. It’s how she serves the people of her community. It’s really exemplary, and I want to thank her for that.

When I was listening to you, one of the things that really struck me again is how many times we are dealing with omnibus legislation in this place, especially with an issue, as you’ve pointed out, like schedule 3, Child, Youth and Family Services Act changes, how deeply

disappointing and how much of a lost opportunity that is, as well as some of the other changes in this legislation. This schedule has absolutely nothing to do with the government wanting to push back their budget and change the rules.

I wonder if the member would comment a little bit again on why we continue to see this government presenting these ridiculous omnibus bills?

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: Thank you to my colleague for that important question. I don't know why the government chooses to put through omnibus bills time and again. I don't know why, in the midst of omnibus bills, we do things that can make already vulnerable groups feel even less heard when there's an opportunity to do differently.

What I do know is this: I know that we are in positions of privilege and influence. I know that we can make different choices. I know that we could choose right now to take seriously the concerns that have been raised by Indigenous community members who are providing upstream supports to their own communities, and I know that we could choose to do things differently in this House. I also know that if we don't, then we run the risk of maintaining a colonial system instead of challenging it to do better, and I really want to believe that we can choose differently.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): There's time for a very short question and a very short reply. I recognize the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakubski: I want to ask the member, on the removal of licence plate fees for vehicles: In rural Ontario, where the incomes are lower, this is going to be a positive thing for low-income families more than anybody else because they all have to drive in rural Ontario. Why are you people not supporting the removal of licence plate fees?

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: Thank you to the member for your question. I'm going to do what I think just happened. I'm going to keep focused on what I'm talking about, which is Indigenous children that are potentially being harmed by schedule 3. So that, I think, has to be the focus of whatever happens next.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Further debate? I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Just a second—my pants, Mr. Speaker. They seem to have been stuck to my thing. Some would say that I have Minister of Education pants on right now. But anyway, I digress.

I have the opportunity to speak to this bill, Speaker. It has actually been a very interesting debate. There's so many words I could say, and I will in the course of my speech bring up some of those words that I've heard from the opposition.

What do we have here? I think my colleagues on this side of the House have done a very, very good job of explaining why this bill is so important to the people of the province of Ontario. The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has been very, very clear in explaining how this measure, one of many other measures that we've put in

place to help people make life more affordable people-wise—this one is also a very important measure in smaller communities across the province, in areas where the income might be lower, income that we have been working on to make better and make communities even more prosperous.

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I note that the Minister of Transportation has been working very, very hard to improve transit and transportation, not only in Ontario—but build roads and bridges in other parts of the province. Why? Because that helps other parts of the province enjoy some of the economic success that has been brought on, of course, by the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade when he is out there encouraging businesses to set up shop in the province of Ontario. We're not just doing it in big cities, but we're looking across the province of Ontario. We're able to do that quicker because, of course, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is doing MZO's, which allow us to move even quicker.

As the Minister of Long-Term Care, we are able to use MZO's to get long-term-care homes built faster in communities across this province and in areas of the province—smaller communities. I think that is very important.

Of course, the Minister of Government and Consumer Services and the work that he is doing to transition how government works with our small, medium and large job creators, how it works with individuals, how it works for people: the BOBI initiative. We've already talked about that.

The minister—well, not specifically in this, but the Attorney General is making access to justice quicker, easier and faster. That is also very important.

These are the things people look at when they look at, where do you want to invest? Where do you want to set up shop?

We haven't talked about francophone businesses. The Minister of Francophone Affairs along with the parliamentary assistant have really unleashed francophone business opportunities in the province of Ontario. It's not just about—of course, we were the ones who brought in the flag and made it a symbol of the province of Ontario, but it's also about, how do we use our francophone businesses? How do we support them so that they can unleash economic activity, understanding the advantage that brings us not only here in Ontario but around the world, in communities, in countries where French is their first language? It's surprising to me that nobody ever thought of that. We're getting that job done across the board.

You have the Minister of Colleges and Universities here as well, who has pioneered—look, as the Minister of Long-Term Care, we have been trying to get more PSW's as part of our North American-leading four hours of care. We want to hire 27,000 additional health care workers, PSW's, nurses. The Minister of Colleges and Universities has been instrumental in helping us get there.

It would be wrong of me not to mention my parliamentary assistant, who, for almost four years now, has

been working very, very hard in long-term care, has been on the front lines for four years, and quite honestly, if I'm being honest, was the one who briefed me and explained to me all of the hard work that had been done in long-term care, brought me up to speed; who sits down daily at the table and makes sure that we continue on the hard work that we're doing.

I would be remiss if I didn't talk about the member from Whitby, the chief government whip, who has been talking about removing fares, the tolls on the 412 and 418 from day one, Mr. Speaker. From day one, he has been talking about doing that.

Of course, the member for Etobicoke Centre is here and she is, I will say this, very tenacious when it comes—

Hon. Jill Dunlop: Lakeshore.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Lakeshore, excuse me. The member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore, who has been just extraordinary in advocating for the Ukrainian community, but equally important, in advocating for long-term care in her community, sitting down at the table, advocating, telling us why it's important that we make certain investments, advocating for health care, but equally importantly, advocating for the small, medium and large job creators in her community; explaining to us why it's important that we reduce WSIB premiums while continuing to support workers at the exact same level, putting more money in the pockets of businesses and individuals.

And of course, there's the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour, who has been bringing groundbreaking legislation to this table. We know as Conservatives, core to us, core to Conservative beliefs is that it is important that we have a good government, an efficient government, one that cuts taxes, reduces fees, eliminates red tape, so that we can put more money back in the pockets of people, but ultimately it is people who help grow an economy. It is people who help make health care better. It is people who will build the roads and bridges. It is people who will drive on the de-tolled 412 and 418, Mr. Speaker. Everything that we do, core to Conservative beliefs, is ensuring that people are supported every way we can, and when it comes to supporting workers in this province of Ontario, this government has done what many other governments have failed to do. I thank the parliamentary assistant for that hard work.

But let's look at what we heard today, Speaker. We've heard speaker after speaker on the official opposition benches talk about—and the member from Peterborough talked about this as well. Look, the member for Peterborough, I have to tell you, has a number of portfolios that he manages as the parliamentary assistant to everything. But the work that he did in helping get out rapid tests through our chambers of commerce really was extraordinary, the millions of tests that the Minister for Government and Consumer Services helped secure, in addition to the HEPA filters—not to digress.

Speaker after speaker on the opposition side has highlighted the things that they don't like in the bill. Every schedule seems to be a problem for the opposition. They then said, "It's gone too fast," and question after question,

"Why is it going fast?" Well, I could say very clearly, the reason this bill is being expedited is because of the opposition specifically.

Now, we introduced a bill, we go through debate, and then when it comes to the time that enough members have had an opportunity to speak to a bill, you get to closure and you ask the questions and then there's an opportunity for the opposition to decide whether a bill needs to go to committee or not for additional consultation.

Mr. John Yakabuski: They must have sent this one to committee.

Hon. Paul Calandra: What did they do? Not only did they decide, colleagues, not to send it to committee—

Mr. John Yakabuski: What?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Yes, I know. Shocking, given that every one of the speakers is talking about how quickly this is going through. Not only did they decide not to send it to committee, but—wait for it, colleagues—they didn't even want to vote on the bill. In fact, they let it go on division, which means that there was no vote on the bill—expedited through without a vote, expedited right through to third reading, not because of the members of the government, not because of us, but because of the opposition. Now, it wasn't just the NDP. Of course, it was the Liberals and all of the independents.

The member for Peterborough was correct. All you've got to do—

Interjection.

Hon. Paul Calandra: And here they say it was a mistake. Of the 50 of them that are on that side, not one thought that this bill should go to committee. Not one thought, "Let me get out of my chair. Let me get out of my chair and suggest that because this is such an important bill"—they call it an omnibus bill. If I could have one of the pages just bring me a copy of the bill, I would be most appreciative. They call it an omnibus bill, yet an omnibus bill that they don't want to send to committee. They didn't want to send it to committee. And then they come out with some lame excuse that—

Interruption.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Thank you. So this is a copy of the bill. This is an omnibus bill, French and English copy right here. They come up with some lame excuse that, "Oh, it's a mistake. Oh, we made a mistake. Oh, my goodness gracious, we made a mistake. We didn't mean to not vote on it and then we didn't mean to not send it to committee."

Let me ask you this, colleagues, and maybe you can help me, and even the opposition: If you're incapable of standing five people to send what you call a 15-page bill as an omnibus bill, if you're not able to stand five people on something that speaker after speaker has said is such an important piece of legislation—and I agree with them—then how the heck do you think that you can govern the province of Ontario? If you're incapable of simply standing five people for something that you say is so vitally important to the people of the province of Ontario and you can't stand five people to send the bill to committee, then how in God's name do you think that you can govern an economy?

I have gone over the work that members on this side of the House have been doing the entire time they were elected, and they are incapable of even standing five—and it's not just the NDP; it's also the Liberals. Between the two of them and the independents, they couldn't muster up five people who thought that this bill should go for extra consultation. Then they get up and they say, "Oh, forgive us. It was a mistake. Oh, you're rushing it through." Not only does the government have to manage the economy, not only do we have to make investments in health and long-term care, and build roads, bridges, transit and transportation that of course they couldn't get done—my gosh, as a federal member, I was announcing the Sheppard extension I don't know how many times, and they would change their minds; this, that, the next. But of course it takes the Conservative government to get subways built.

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Now, of course, Mr. Speaker, they voted against those investments. The Minister of Transportation—unless I am wrong, then she can rise on a point of order. I believe that the NDP voted against building subways in the city of Toronto—voted against it. They voted against transit expansion. They voted against roads expansion. They voted against highways in southwestern Ontario. They voted against a return to the Ontario Northland. They voted against the investments that we have done there. They voted against the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, who wanted to bring long-term-care homes to their communities. They voted against those ministerial zoning orders which got it done quicker. Access to justice, making it quicker and more responsive—they voted against it.

You would think, Speaker, that given what we've heard from the members opposite—the member for Ottawa Centre: "Where are you going to get the billion dollars to pay for giving money"—their money—"back to the people? Where are you going to get the billion dollars?" What's the solution of the NDP? "We're going to find the billion dollars by raising the carbon tax," to a level that will literally put people in the poorhouse, that will put businesses out of—small businesses; it will ruin them. That's where they're going to get the money.

Now, I digress. I forgot to mention, colleagues, that the first thing that we did in this place was cancel the Ontario carbon tax. We said then that it would cost us—everything; everything, more. They said, "No, no, it won't." We cancelled it. We saw it; we all remember the member for Markham–Unionville standing in front of a gas sign on that night when the Ontario carbon tax was eliminated by this government and we saw the gas prices come down one, two, three, four, five cents. People celebrated. What did they do? They went right up to their federal cousins, and of course—as the NDP usually does with the Liberals; they work together when it comes to taking money out of the pockets of hard-working people of Ontario, they work together to do it—they imposed a federal carbon tax after we eliminated it.

We've seen this show before, right? When Mike Harris was the Premier, he reduced taxes by 30%. What happened? The federal Liberal government then increased

personal income taxes by 30%. Of course, the rest is history.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you would think that after listening to all of these speeches, after all of the speeches from the members opposite, they are going to rise in their place tomorrow and they are going to vote against this bill. We've heard the member for Ottawa Centre: "Oh, it's a terrible bill. It's a terrible bill."

Hon. Steve Clark: That's what he said.

Hon. Paul Calandra: He said it: "It's a terrible bill. Where are you going to get the money?" How is he voting? In favour of the bill, thankfully. He's going to vote in favour of it because he knows it's a good bill. The member for Hamilton Mountain railed against the bill: "A terrible bill." How is she voting? In favour of it, Mr. Speaker. Every single member of the opposition will be voting in favour of the bill, but one: the leader of the Green Party, who has suggested that he's going to stick with his—I disagree with him, but he's going to do what he thinks is right and stick to the principles that he got elected on, and that's what he's going to do tomorrow.

If you're watching at home, you might think, "Well, why would a party and a grouping of people who are so dead set against a bill, who say that every part of it is wrong—why would they be voting for something?" Colleagues, because they know what we know, and what we have always known as Progressive Conservatives, that people, when you help them, when you give them a hand up as opposed to a handout, will create wealth. They know full well that's where the people are. That's where people are. Finally, after 50 years of existence, they have bought into our core belief that people's money is best invested in them, and when you give them more money they will invest in themselves, they will invest in their businesses, they will invest in their families and in their futures. That's what will grow the economy, as opposed to what they're suggesting: take more away, take more away. But they won't stand up tomorrow and do that, so what you will have is another vote of confidence in this government, and I thank them for that.

Partly, it has to go to the Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction. We saw it earlier. The member for Sarnia–Lambton got them to agree, finally, after 50 years, that oil and gas was good. They voted with us to support the oil and gas sector. Again, it was only the leader of the Green Party who voted against that. He had principles he wanted to stick to. I disagree with him, but he voted against that motion.

They're going to vote for this bill tomorrow, and I congratulate them for voting with us on this, because it is an important piece of legislation. So I congratulate them for eating themselves whole tomorrow and doing everything that is counter to what they believe. We believe in lower taxes; they believe in higher taxes. We believe you stand up for people. I said it yesterday: The 412 and 418 were designed and approved in 2013 when they held the balance of power. Did they bring forward, "Don't put a toll on it or we won't support you"? No, absolutely not. They let it be built with a toll. They put tolls on the 407,

the only party—the fathers of tolls, the parents of tolls are the NDP. Why did they have to toll the 407? Because they had bankrupted the province and nobody would lend money to the province of Ontario. Imagine in the 1990s when the one chance they had to govern, they had put on an \$11-billion deficit in 1990 dollars. It was so bad, nobody would loan the province of Ontario money. Nobody would loan the government of Ontario money. That's how bad it was. And now, they want the confidence of the people of the province of Ontario when they are unable to even stand five people to vote against a bill that they say is so important?

They will rise in their place tomorrow, and I will be so happy and so excited when this happens. Each of them individually, every single member who spoke against this bill, will rise in their place tomorrow. And when the Speaker, when the table asks, “Those in favour,” and they all rise and vote and bow and show their favour—when the Clerk announces it, Mr. Speaker, I am confident that there will be almost unanimous support for this bill, with the exception of one person, the leader of the Green Party, who, although I disagree, at least sticks to the principles that he is elected on.

But I congratulate the NDP. I said it the other day, Mr. Speaker: I'm prepared to send them Conservative Party memberships so that they can make the transition once and for all. And I know it's tough. I know it's tough; to leave behind 50 years of ideology doesn't come easily, so I get it. But I congratulate them for finally seeing the light. I offer the hand of assistance to them consistently, because they've admitted they are unable to do their job as opposition. So I will again, as we all have, build those bridges to the opposition to help them do their job, as we have on so many occasions.

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

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): The government House leader has moved that the question be now put. I am satisfied that there has been sufficient debate to allow this question to be put to the House, as there have been more than six hours of debate, and 15 members have spoken on this motion.

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

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

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

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Interjection: On division.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): On division. A recorded vote being required, it will be deferred to the next instance of deferred votes.

Third reading vote deferred.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Orders of the day? I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Speaker, I think if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to see the clock at 6.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Is it the pleasure of the House, as the government House leader has asked, that the clock be seen at 6? All in favour? Agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

RACIAL EQUITY IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM ACT, 2022

LOI DE 2022 SUR L'ÉGALITÉ RACIALE DANS LE SYSTÈME D'ÉDUCATION

Ms. Lindo moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 67, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to racial equity / Projet de loi 67, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'égalité raciale.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Pursuant to standing order 101, the member has 12 minutes for their presentation.

I return the floor to the member from Kitchener Centre.

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: It is with such great pleasure and honour and humility that I stand in this chamber to speak to this particular private member's bill.

1720

Before I jump into all of this good stuff, I just need to give a shout-out to Grand River Unitarian Congregation in my riding in Kitchener, who had sent me a number of petitions. I was able to table some of their petitions today, and I have to admit, I was in my office and I may have been a little bit teary. It is a wonderful feeling as a Black person in an anti-Black world to see so many community members from all corners of this province stand together to fight racism in our educational system. To think that people are taking seriously the need for systems change to better impact the experiences of Black, brown, Indigenous, Jewish and Muslim students in our school system, from kindergarten to grade 12 and all the way through post-secondary, is a little bit overwhelming for me.

I was going to start in one way. Anybody who knows me knows that I have 5,000 gazillion plans of what I'm going to do and then I change it all at the last minute when the mike's on, which would be right now. What I'm going to do is this: I am going to share with you some of the quotes that people have sent in to me in support of this bill. The reason I'm doing that is because this bill has very little to do with me. This bill has absolutely everything to do with community members who have been advocating for racial justice in school systems, all the way in this entire continuum of our education system in Ontario.

I first want to just give a shout-out to Karen Brown, who is the president of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, and a special thank you, because Karen actually stood with me when I did the press conference when I first tabled this bill in December. She's provided me with a lengthy quote, but I'm going to take little snippets of everybody's quotes, because I can't believe how many people have written in to me to say how important this bill is to them.

And so I quote: “Elected officials must take real action to dismantle systemic racism. We urge all MPPs to do what is right and support” this “bill so that we can ensure every student and education worker learns and works in

environments that are safe and inclusive.” That is such an important thought and vision to have when it comes to education in Ontario, and I am truly blessed that somebody who represents so many important people in our K to 12 system sees the value in this particular bill.

Shernett Martin, from the African Canadian National Coalition against Hate, Oppression and Racism, also wrote to me: “The Racial Equity in the Education System Act, 2021 is laying the foundation to put mechanisms in place that will safeguard our students and educators in spaces where they were made to feel ‘othered’ and marginalized. Requiring boards and schools to have racial equity plans and amendments in place moves Ontario closer to achieving equity in action.” This means that people have accountability mechanisms for one of the first times ever across the entire province to address racism when it occurs. I’m just really grateful to Shernett for writing in to me about this.

Riaz Nandan, from the York Federation of Students, wrote, “Acts of racism are very real experiences that students face, and they need the supports in place to create institutions that are safer to learn in. It’s important that our policy makers listen to and centre the voices of Indigenous, Black and racialized students,” and I wouldn’t be able to agree more.

Ben Losman—it’s interesting, because I started with people who are from all sorts of organizations, but I’ve also had individuals, like parents and community members, who have written in to say how important and impactful this bill is for their community. Ben Losman is a non-profit worker, and he’s a Jewish community member. He wrote, “To dismantle anti-Semitism, we must dismantle white supremacy. And to dismantle white supremacy, society needs to develop a nuanced understanding of how all forms of oppression—including anti-Semitism, colonialism, anti-Black racism, anti-Palestinian racism, anti-LGBTQ+ hatred, ableism, and class-based oppression—are interconnected. This legislation helps lay the groundwork for such an understanding, and in doing so, creates a foundation for safer, more equitable communities.”

The interesting thing about that is this came in to me before this article came out. Just in February of this year—there have been three instances in February alone of anti-Semitism in schools in our province, and there’s no way that those experiences of anti-Semitism in the school that have been reported on—this particular article I’m looking at is from February 25, “Anti-Semitic Incident Reported at Another Toronto Public School; Third Incident This Month”—it’s happening at the same time as we can’t forget we saw Nazi flags flying in Ottawa, and there’s no way what happens there isn’t having an impact on what’s happening in our schools. So here’s just another shout-out, again, to Ben Losman for that important quote.

I have heard from so many people. I’ve heard from the Coalition of Muslim Women Kitchener-Waterloo, for instance. They said, “CMW supports this ... bill.... The bill aligns well with CMW’s recommendations for Islamophobia summit and the proposed Our London Family Act which CMW endorses too.”

I need to pause because while this bill—and you would think this moment is supposed to be about the work that I’ve been doing as a member. The reality is none of the work that I do matters if community isn’t behind me, and this particular bill resonates so perfectly with a bill that everybody in this House is going to be debating, I think, next Thursday, the Our London Family Act where they’re also asking for concrete attention to Islamophobia in this province. You can’t do that unless you legislate some of the tools that are needed to build the inclusive communities that we’re fighting for. So thank you to the Coalition of Muslim Women in my own area in Waterloo region for that support.

Kimiko Shibata, who’s a parent and an elementary teacher in the WRDSB and an MLL resource teacher wrote to me, “I fully support this private member’s bill, which would help education systems to better recognize, name and address system racism and ongoing barriers for racialized students, families and education workers. An equity audit would help school systems to recognize where the gaps are, so that schools can put culturally and linguistically responsive practices into place to meet the needs of staff, students and families.”

Thank you, Kimiko, for writing to me and letting me know how important this bill is, not just as one of the education workers in the school system in my area, but also as a parent who’s spoken out about anti-Asian racism in this province and the impact of anti-Asian racism on the experiences of young people in school. But what happens in K-to-12 is reflected in what happens in post-secondary. If you’ve got racism running willy-nilly through our schools from kindergarten to grade 12 in the form of harsher punishment and discipline for Black and Indigenous children—literally children—and then you look at what’s happening in post-secondary and you hear the concerns people have that we don’t have a diverse workforce in post-secondary, well, maybe part of that is because we still continue to stream Black, brown and Indigenous kids out of K-to-12 so that they aren’t able to get to the post-secondary space. And then when they are in post-secondary spaces, those spaces aren’t built for them, and racism and their experiences of racism aren’t taken seriously.

This bill changes all of that. It takes seriously experiences that we have been speaking about. At least the four years I’ve been here, we have been talking a lot about racism, not just because I’m the anti-racism critic, not just because I’m a Black woman in this space. but also because there has been a concrete rise of racism as the world has started to get, in my humble opinion, into quite a hot mess. But we can have hope, and a bill like this provides that hope. It means that we have listened to community members so closely that we have decided to provide tools to people who can make changes in the education system, and we’ve listened so closely to people about their experiences of racism, the trauma that they have to navigate, that we are going to legislate in all of the whole continuum of education something different, an anti-racist vision for education. It makes me cry. I’m a little teary right now.

To all those folks who actually joined the Zoom call who are watching while I'm debating right now—it's kind of creepy but it is hilarious—because here I am, fully dressed and pretty darned good looking, which is where I want to end this.

Applause.

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: Thank you, everybody.

While that seems like a weird thing to say in the midst of talking about racism, I have to tell you: If we want to build an anti-racist world, we have to do it on hope, love and compassion, and you do that with laughter and ways bringing people in, not pushing people out. That's what this bill does.

1730

There are still so many people who have written to me. Michelle Munk, a middle school teacher: "As a Jew and a grandchild of Holocaust survivors, I understand from my own family history the legacy of systemic discrimination.... The proposed Racial Equity in the Education System Act would embody these values, and be an institutional structure to support all educators in dismantling racism. It would add systemic legitimacy to existing policies, and would validate the advocacy work being done by individuals and groups."

Wow, "systemic legitimacy to existing policies." I don't think that people understand how long people have been asking for changes like this. We often think that you can just address racism by hugging it out. I have a TED Talk about that, a TEDx Talk. You can't hug out racism. You can't do that. You have to actually change legislation, because legislation and policies perpetuate racism. Racism exists in our systems, and so if today we all vote in favour, if we all come together and we take deep breaths and we decide we're going to do education differently in Ontario, we have an opportunity to actually shift the discussion and ensure that policies get crafted that do, in fact, create anti-racist spaces from kindergarten to grade 12, and all the way through post-secondary. Can you imagine that? Can you imagine being part of something that absolutely amazing?

I know I'm really humbled and excited that I was trusted to bring this to the chamber, but I am so, so, so very hopeful that when we do vote for this bill, everybody comes together and recognizes how important it is to take concrete steps to build anti-racist educational spaces in Ontario. We can do it. We must do it. I think we will do it, because I, my friends, am an eternal optimist.

With that, I say thank you, thank you, thank you to everybody. I can't wait to hear more of this debate.

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

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I'm very grateful to be able to rise to speak to Bill 67, the Racial Equity in the Education System Act, introduced by the member for Kitchener Centre. I wish to commend the member opposite for her passion and hard work to fight racism and discrimination across this province and congratulate her on bringing forward this private member's bill.

Speaker, I believe that the member has brought forward this bill that is a worthy bill, and I look forward to seeing it come before this chamber for a vote, to pass, hopefully, and also be able to be given further study at the committee stage, a very important stage of the legislation.

I also rise today in this chamber as the member for Niagara West, but additionally as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education, which provides me with an important understanding of the work that we are doing to ensure that our schools are safe and welcoming for all students in this province. Our government stands firmly against all forms of religious and racial discrimination and intolerance, and we are working to combat it with a decisive plan that the Minister of Education has spoken about.

Studies have shown that students who are racialized, Indigenous or from lower-income families are disproportionately impacted by academic streaming in secondary schools. That is unacceptable, Speaker.

To make our classrooms safer and more inclusive, the government has taken action to advance important work in fighting racism by:

- strengthening sanctions against staff for racist actions or behaviour;

- successfully beginning the destreaming of the grade 9 curriculum, providing a pathway to success for racialized children;

- expedited directives for boards to collect race-based data and requiring all school boards to implement an equity board improvement plan;

- more than doubling the number of Black and Indigenous graduation coaches; and

- dedicated mental health funding for racialized children disproportionately at risk.

Speaker, for the first time, our government has also mandated anti-racism training for all educators and board staff. I will add that we are committed to increasing funding for numerous initiatives at community organizations to address anti-Black racism, anti-Asian racism, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. We're providing real support to Black and Indigenous students, as well as supports for newcomer parents and families to enhance access to school and community supports, and culturally appropriate mental health resources for youth, for families and for teachers.

Nearly a year ago, our government announced the release of the bold new grade 9 math curriculum. It represented a major milestone in the province's plan to destream the grade 9 curriculum for students. When we made that announcement, Shernett Martin, the executive director of ANCHOR, said, "Parents, students and community leaders have been asking for changes for decades; finally we have a minister who has listened."

Speaker, I've provided a high-level overview of some of the actions to combat racism and discrimination in schools, but I'd also like to take a moment and share with my colleagues a key announcement we made last Friday, on February 25. In partnership with community organizations and to provide targeted support for Black

students, this school year our government is investing a total of \$4.3 million, to include:

—\$400,000 for the Lifelong Leadership Institute providing programming and activities focused on advancing arts, academic, entrepreneurship, technology and leadership skills for Canadian youth of Jamaican, African-Caribbean and Black heritage;

—\$200,000 to the Pinball Clemons Foundation to provide comprehensive social, athletic and academic programming and activities for marginalized and racialized youth;

—\$150,000 to the parents of Black children to deliver a tutoring program in French, math and English for Black students from kindergarten to grade 12;

—as well as \$50,000 to Jaku Konbit to provide African-Caribbean Black Canadian youth in Ottawa with after-school educational and cultural programming.

Speaker, in the words of Michael “Pinball” Clemons, “For many years, Black students have thrived despite multiple barriers, and the goal here is to have our students soar because of the intentional, useful and transformational supports derived from our collective efforts.”

I’m proud to also add that for the 2021-22 school year, our government will provide an additional \$560,000 to the \$2.94 million already invested in the graduation coach program for Black students. For 2022-23, this incredibly worthwhile initiative will also receive an additional \$1.1 million. This program provides intensive and culturally relevant support to Black students by hiring graduation coaches with lived experiences and connections to Ontario’s diverse Black communities.

These are just some of the actions our government has committed to ensuring that the province’s schools are safe and welcoming so that all students are able to reach their full potential. I look forward to hearing more about the member’s bill and ensuring that we’re able to pass it in this chamber.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: I’d like to start by thanking my colleague the member for Kitchener Centre for introducing this incredibly important bill. She is a wonderful representative for her constituents, and in this bill brings the voices, the research and the demands for action of generations of countless parents, teachers, students, faculty members, education workers across this great province. It’s quite a feat. I also want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has fought for so many years to address these injustices and demand systemic change.

Let’s be clear: No one should have to lead a march or a student walkout to ensure their school is safe or to demand their child has access to the same opportunities as other children, but change has never, sadly, come easy. The reason is clear: Our country, our province and our institutions were founded on systemic racism, on colonialism, and those roots run deep. This manifests in how our educational institutions operate and in the ways they have failed racialized students and educators. From

racist slurs and symbols to differential treatment to targeted and punitive disciplining and a lack of equal opportunities, these problems have been enumerated time and time again: a child discouraged from pursuing their dreams, told to be realistic, not to aim too high; a child who goes undiagnosed with a learning issue; police called, yes, on a 4-year-old—a 4-year-old—the most absurd proof of the schools-to-prison pipeline I’ve ever encountered; a teacher overlooked for promotion; racist dress codes; the list goes on and on. Anti-Black, anti-Indigenous, anti-Asian, anti-Semitic and Islamophobic acts of racism in our public schools are not isolated incidents. They’re not one-offs. They’re not unusual.

I just want to mention quickly in my own community, Regal Road Junior Public School just woke up this morning to anti-Semitic graffiti in their playground—absolutely shameful, insidious, but all too often treated as one-offs by governments.

Reports are filed, time goes by, and the heavy lifting to address the structures behind these acts is left always to those who suffer from them the most, and that’s not right. Mr. Speaker. Racism and the roots of racism need to be tackled in our classrooms, and that starts with Bill 67 and defining what racism is, offering the type of language, ministry oversight and action we need to build an anti-racist education system from kindergarten to post-secondary. We cannot continue to deny our students and educators the right to learn and work in environments that are safe and free from all forms of racism. Maya Angelou said: “Prejudice is a burden that confuses the past, threatens the future and renders the present inaccessible.”

1740

I urge the government to support this bill and support dismantling the barriers to success and well-being for racialized groups in our education system. Thank you.

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

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Mr. Speaker, our government has been clear from day one that hate of any kind has no place in Ontario. As parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Colleges and Universities, I am proud to be part of a government that has a zero-tolerance policy for any sort of hate speech, violence or discrimination.

All students deserve to be able to learn in a healthy, safe and respectful campus environment, and our post-secondary institutions have a responsibility to provide and uphold that standard. In order to ensure our campuses remain a safe and accessible place for everyone, our government has undertaken several initiatives, such as the expansion of the Campus Safety Grant, partnering with groups such as Pathways to Education, and required a mandatory free-speech policy on all post-secondary campuses. Since January of 2019, all publicly assisted colleges and universities have had a free-speech policy that meets a minimum standard prescribed by the government and based on best practices from around the world, and 21 of 24 publicly assisted colleges and all publicly assisted universities have policies to address the prevention of discrimination or harassment on the basis of

race, colour or religion on the premises of post-secondary institutions and during any institution-sanctioned activities. In fact, Mr. Speaker, in 2018-19 and then in 2019-20, the ministry doubled each institution's allocation under the Women's Campus Safety Grant by providing a lump-sum payment, bringing the annual value of the grants to \$6 million.

Some other examples of ways that we are assisting to combat systemic racism and discrimination include a \$200,000 grant to combat Islamophobia and \$25 million to combat hate crimes in communities through the Ontario Grant to Support Anti-Hate Security Measures for Faith-Based and Cultural Organizations. On January 27, we announced almost \$300,000 to counter anti-Semitism, \$148,000 to the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies and \$150,000 to the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs.

Mr. Speaker, I'm glad that the member has brought forward this motion, because it is such an important topic. Regardless of which side of the House we sit on, I think everyone in this House can agree that racism has no place in Ontario. That's why, on behalf of the ministry and the minister, I'm proud to be supporting the member's bill, and I'm looking forward to voting in favour of it.

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

Ms. Suze Morrison: It's certainly an honour to rise today and speak in support of this bill, and I really want to thank my very good friend the member for Kitchener Centre for bringing it forward. I'm so proud of the work that you've done on this file.

Speaker, we must create learning environments that keep everyone safe from racism, discrimination and systemic barriers that are a direct result of the rise of white supremacy in Ontario.

Currently, the Education Act and other acts do not include any language about racism. Because of this omission, there is no mechanism in place that addresses acts of racism, including anti-Indigenous, anti-Black, anti-Asian racism, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism.

I recently spoke with Maseeda, who is a mother in my riding of Toronto Centre from Regent Park. She shared with me that she sees the impacts of overt and covert racism in the classroom and sees the impacts that that has on her kids. She said, "There is blatant, capital-R racism once or twice in 10 years, but microaggressions" are "daily. It is hard to prove or bring up without sounding like a complainer but they are legitimate and systemic issues."

When I asked her about what some of those microaggressions were, she shared examples that included repeated comments from staff about not celebrating Christmas; judgmental comments about how many people lived in their multi-generational home; surprised reactions to the fact that her family takes vacations; or the fact that her kids are asked why they don't speak English at home.

She also said that she has to protect her kids from racism. She said, "I tell my children to change some of their behaviours to be more palatable to white people, such as not eating with their hands at lunch. This is a cultural

practice that they do at home, but it is not for at school. I have to do this because in grade 1 my son's friend ate with his hands and got in trouble every day because it was considered 'uncivilized.'"

These covert acts of racism are sometimes more ingrained and harder to address. Our schools need tools to identify and address unconscious bias, stereotypes and a lack of cultural competency.

More overtly, Maseeda has also shared that a few years ago there was a violent incident that happened at the school. She was concerned that there was no note that was sent home from the school about the incident, and the only reason she found out about it was through her kids. She emailed the school to ask why and was not given a satisfactory answer or a commitment to having a letter sent home. Maseeda suspected that she wasn't being taken seriously about her concerns as a Muslim mom, and asked her affluent white friend, who was also a parent at the exact same school, to send the same request in. The very next day, every student had a letter that came home about the incident. It's really clear in this example about the parents who are taken seriously and the parents that aren't, and race is definitely a factor.

Speaker, this bill will provide public institutions with the definitive language, purpose, lens and responsibility to meaningfully address racism and discrimination. I fully support this bill, and again, I want to thank my good friend the member from Kitchener Centre for putting it forward.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I recognize the member from Unionville-Markham.

Mr. Billy Pang: I rise today to discuss private member's Bill 67, the Racial Equity in the Education System Act. Ontario condemns all forms of racism and discrimination in the strongest terms. Our government is working to eliminate racism, address hate and advance racial equity across Ontario. As the parliamentary assistant to Parm Gill, Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism, I hope to support this bill, once it has been properly reviewed in committee.

Under the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism, the Anti-Racism Directorate, or ARD, lists our government's anti-racism work, which includes meaningful collaborations across ministries and sectors. Together, we are driving positive change. Elementary students in classrooms, apprentices, and college and university hopefuls should never be limited by barriers and discrimination.

The Ministry of Education is leading important initiatives to make a difference in the lives of students, parents, educators and communities to build a stronger, more inclusive education system. Our government is committed to ensuring equitable opportunities, meaningful experiences and successful outcomes for every student in Ontario.

Indigenous, Black and other racialized students should never be denied opportunities to succeed. Our anti-racism strategic plan includes concrete tools like race-based data collection, under the Anti-Racism Act and in accordance with the anti-racism data standards, to help the education

sector identify and remove racial disparities. A growing number of school boards are doing this important work right now, and by 2023, it will be province-wide.

Through our strategic plan, we are also developing anti-racism impact assessment tools to support evidence-based decision-making and understanding the racial impacts of policies and programs.

The Anti-Racism Directorate has worked directly with school boards and community health partners to address racism in our schools, including anti-Indigenous racism, anti-Black racism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and anti-Asian racism. The work includes:

- funding the Durham District School Board and the Toronto District School Board to support anti-Black racism training initiatives;

- working with the National Council of Canadian Muslims and school boards to offer workshops and tool kits to combat Islamophobia;

- funding programs like Facing History and Ourselves and Liberation75 to support education on the Holocaust and anti-Semitism;

- engaging with Indigenous leaders, communities and organizations to support initiatives to address anti-Indigenous racism and hate;

- funding the Asian Canadian Educators Network to develop professional learning and workshops about anti-Asian racism for schools and boards in Ontario.

1750

Mr. Speaker, we are supporting anti-racism and equity programs while helping to create more inclusive classroom environments. Our work is collaborative and community-focused, and we will continue to build our progress by engaging community partners in education and continuing to work to advance racial equity for children and youth. We will make Ontario stronger and the best place to live in Canada.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I'll lead by example: Correcting my record, it's the member for Markham–Unionville.

I now recognize the member from Spadina–Fort York.

Mr. Chris Glover: There are opportunities in this House to do some great work, and this bill on creating racial equity in the education system is one of those opportunities. In speaking to this bill, I want to acknowledge my own privilege as a white male, but I also want to state categorically that creating racial equity is the responsibility of all of us.

I want to thank the member for Kitchener Centre. I read her PhD thesis, which was on creating racial equity, last night—well, not the whole thing, but I read quite a bit of it. We're so fortunate to have her expertise in developing this bill that's before the House today.

I honestly believe that members of this House are willing to do the work that is necessary to eliminate racism in Ontario. And over the past few years, we've seen a surge in anti-Asian, anti-Black, anti-Indigenous racism as well as horrific acts of Islamophobia and anti-Semitism. We need a plan to address racism and systemic racism, and that's what this bill does. It provides a plan to address

racism in schools, colleges and universities. It mandates anti-racism and racial equity training for new teachers. It requires school boards, colleges and universities to establish and implement racial equity plans, and it provides fines for people who disrupt proceedings of a school or class through the use of racist language or activities. The question is, can it make a difference?

Before being an MPP, I was a trustee in the Toronto District School Board. The board has been doing anti-racist work for the last 20 years. It began with an investigation that showed that Black male students were suspended at a higher rate for the same infraction as other students. The board has investigated streaming of students in special education in grade 1 and into non-academic courses in grade 9. It has also investigated the lower graduation rates because of systemic biases based on race, gender, sex, disability and religion.

I spoke with executive superintendent Jim Spyropoulos earlier today. He talked about the importance of collecting race-based statistics, because you need the data to identify the problem if you are going to address it. The race-based statistics allowed the board to identify lower graduation rates among male students from particular groups, and this meant that the board was not serving those students well enough. They worked with community members to develop plans, and the graduation rates among one group of boys increased from 60% to 80%. This is a truly life-transforming success story, and is the kind of life-transforming success story that's possible if the government not only passes this legislation but implements it.

The ultimate outcome will be what the member from Kitchener Centre has described as a step towards creating an anti-racist Ontario that's built on love, hope and compassion. So I encourage all members to vote and support this bill.

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

M^{me} Lucille Collard: I'm proud to be supporting this bill of the member from Kitchener Centre, which is somewhat complementary to my bill on equity education.

Systemic racism is deeply embedded in Ontario's institutions, including the health care, justice, welfare and education systems. This bill proposes feasible and concrete steps to root out racism in the education system and to prevent it from being spread by teachers who are not educated on racism.

Racism influences everything. It influences disciplinary decisions, grading, curriculum choices, learning disorder diagnoses, streaming, social interactions between students and every other aspect of the education system. This is why BIPOC students are not set up to succeed in our current system. Confronting the systemic racism in our education system is one of the best ways to confront systemic racism in other societal systems. Children who are educated in a less racist environment will carry less unconscious biases and stop replicating systems of oppression in their workplaces. The next generation is so important, and they should not be held back by a racist education system.

That is why I have tabled a bill mandating equity education in our schools. We debated this bill before, and the member for Kitchener Centre made constructive comments about it. Unfortunately, the government thought that they were already doing enough to address systemic racism and voted it down. I'm grateful that the member for Kitchener Centre has brought this topic up again so that we can continue the debate. Her bill is important, and it is ambitious.

Chaque enfant a droit à une éducation exempte d'obstacles systémiques et de discrimination.

En nous assurant que nous disposons de rapports complets, de recommandations d'amélioration accessibles au public et d'actions concrètes pour éliminer les obstacles du système éducatif, nous pouvons créer une voie transparente et efficace vers l'élimination des inégalités systémiques. Je crois fermement que la société peut être améliorée en travaillant à ses racines, et les racines de notre société commencent dans nos écoles, car c'est là que nos jeunes esprits sont développés.

I would like to thank the member for Kitchener Centre for tabling this excellent private member's bill. I urge all the members of this House to show Ontarians that they have listened to racialized and Indigenous communities in this province and around the world. Support for this bill is support for concrete action towards a better future for our province.

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I'm honoured to rise today to speak in favour of Bill 67, and I want to thank the member from Kitchener Centre for bringing such an important and thoughtful bill to this House.

Systemic racism exists in all institutions in our society, and it's shameful that, in 2022, Ontarians who belong to racialized communities continue to face racism and microaggressions within our schools. It's essential that we do whatever we can to work towards a society where racism no longer exists, where racial equity is the status quo. An anti-racist society will require institutional and systemic change. It makes sense that it starts within our educational institutes as the cornerstones of building and shaping the thinkers, the creators, the leaders of tomorrow: our children. That's exactly why anti-racist education should be taught, must be taught.

It is critical that we address the rising levels of white supremacy and hate in our society, and I appreciate the member from Kitchener Centre talking about the importance of love and compassion in addressing hate. Her words reminded me of one of my favourite Martin Luther King speeches, so I quickly looked it up. This was a speech in support of the Voting Rights Act—and I apologize for the gendered language: “It may be true that the law cannot change the heart, but it can restrain the heartless. It may be true that the law can't make a man love me, but it can restrain him from lynching me.... So while the law may not change the hearts of men, it does change the habits of men. And when you change the habits of men, pretty soon the attitudes and the hearts will be changed.”

Speaker, I believe this bill is a positive step in changing the hearts and habits of the people in this province. I want to thank the member for Kitchener Centre for giving us the opportunity to support this important piece of legislation.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I recognize the member from Humber River–Black Creek.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I'm proud to rise in support of the Racial Equity in the Education System Act. I want to thank my dear friend and colleague the exceptional member for Kitchener Centre and chair of the Ontario NDP Black caucus for introducing this very important bill.

I'm going to use my brief time today to act as a conduit and share the voices of some experts who have been strong advocates in the fight against systemic racism. Patricia Falope is the CEO and founder of Early Childhood Development Initiative, which delivers anti-racism advocacy programs to students and families in my community and beyond.

We were all horrified last November when the Waterloo district school board called the police on a four-year-old child. Patricia and her organization have been advocating for the boy and his family. She said, “This four-year-old boy has been brutalized by the system and this has happened again because of the lack of clarity in the Education Act. In terms of development, learning, at four years of age, where he should be getting a positive foundation to the curiosity and enjoyment of the learning process to set him up for a good learning journey, he got such a horrible, traumatized experience, that he's afraid of going to school.”

Dr. Janelle Brady, assistant professor in the School of Early Childhood Studies, faculty of community services at X University and president of the Ontario NDP, said:

“This is an important bill which builds upon the leadership and activism of Black, Indigenous, and racialized community members dating back for many years.

“It is an acknowledgement that not all children, students, and learners' experiences are the same and that many are tainted with racism including anti-Black and anti-Indigenous, and Islamophobia and anti-Semitism.

“It is not simply about a few bad apples; rather, it is about systemic change that is long overdue. To get there, mandatory anti-racism training, a system for reporting, and system-wide racial equity are all key building blocks.

“I hope this bill will be treated with the urgency that Black, Indigenous, and racialized students all need and deserve.”

From my own community, Lorraine Anderson, executive director of Firgrove Learning and Innovation Community Centre, says, “Discrimination has no place in society and even more so in our school system.” To “provide a level playing field for our children to learn and grow,” we must “provide equitable resources across the board.”

And finally, Professor George Dei in the department of social justice education at OISE at the University of Toronto says, “Fighting racism and other injustices in our public school system is the right thing to do morally, politically and economically. Racism is a stain on human

conscience and we each have a responsibility to cleanse our conscience and be at peace with ourselves for doing the right thing.”

Speaker, this is the right thing to do. Let’s get it done.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I return to the member from Kitchener Centre for her final two-minute reply.

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: Thank you to everybody in this House for your kind words. I’m literally going to cry because anti-racist work is love work. Most people think that anti-racist work, because you’re talking about things that are hard and because it’s really uncomfortable—they don’t understand how loving it is to fight for better for those who are harmed by our systems. They also don’t know that we’ve done these things before. Sometimes they get scared, like, “Oh, my gosh, no one else has ever done this before.” But I’m going to give you concrete examples of when it’s happened before.

Once upon a time, in a previous PC government, there was something implemented call the Safe Schools Act. Over the course of years of the implementation of the policies associated with that, Black and brown and Indigenous students were seen to be disproportionately punished and disciplined because of that act. The Liberal government came in and they removed the act. They looked at the data. They decided, “We’re not going to do that.”

And now, today, in 2022, you’ve got the ONDP who are standing here and saying, “Hey, here’s a map. Here’s a road map to move forward.” That means the Conservatives, the Liberals, the NDP, and I know the Greens are out there going to get ready to do all the things that they need to do so they will join in on all of this fun stuff. We saw it

with Emancipation Month bill, when we all came together to do something solid to make change. This is an opportunity, a historic moment, when we can put, they say, money where your mouth is.

Thanks to the Conservative government for all of the investments that you have put forward. I don’t want anybody to think that I’m standing in the chamber denying that those things are important. What I’m trying to do is unwrap, envelop and bring together all of those investments with a strategy, a strategy for change, a strategy that works, a strategy that community has bought into and a strategy that we can lead from these places.

So thank you to everyone for this amazing work, and thanks to everybody who’s watching live right now.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): The time provided for private members’ public business has expired.

Ms. Lindo has moved second reading of Bill 67, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to racial equity. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carries? I heard a no.

All those in favour of this motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded division being required, the vote on this item of private members’ public business will be deferred until the next proceeding of deferred votes.

Second reading vote deferred.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): All matters related to private members’ public business having been completed, this House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1804.

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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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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	
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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
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Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
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Karahalios, Belinda C. (NBP)	Cambridge	
Karpoche, Bhutilla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
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Kusendova, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga- Centre	
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Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
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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	
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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
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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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Nicholls, Rick (IND)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
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Park, Lindsey (IND)	Durham	
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Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
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
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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	
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