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Mardi
12 avril 2022

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 12 April 2022

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 12 avril 2022

The House met at 1015.

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

Prayers.

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 Spring 2022 Economic and Budget Outlook: Strong Economic Growth Driving Significant Fiscal Improvement, from the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HEALTH CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Two years of pandemic have ravaged our health care system. Nurses and PSWs are leaving their professions, and those left behind are feeling the strain of working short on every single shift. Nurses are calling me because they care about their patients, but they know the risk to their patients and to themselves of working short-staffed all the time.

A nurse's husband called me last week. He says that every time his wife comes home, she cries out of exhaustion and despair, as they were working short on her unit yet again. Even patients are calling me from their hospital beds, witnessing nurses running from one patient to the next. They tell me that they feel sorry for those nurses, that they're working short four nurses in that particular unit.

Four years ago, the Ford government promised that they would fix health care. Everyone agreed that our health care system needed 20,000 new nurses, that years of zero budget increases by the Liberals had made things worse. So what did the government do? Well, first they cut millions of dollars from public health units, then they froze every single front-line health care worker's salary with Bill 124.

This government has failed Ontario's patients, nurses, health care workers and society at large. Our health care is too important to be ignored. Shame on them for their failures. Come June 2, the NDP will fix our public health care system.

MEMBER FOR OTTAWA WEST-NEPEAN

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: I rise today for my final member's statement of this 42nd Parliament. Serving in this assembly has been the greatest honour of my young life. When I

first decided to run for office, I did so because I wanted to try to make a difference for my community and for families like mine. I have worked hard every single day to do just that.

1020

In my community, I am proud to have delivered an expansion to the Queensway Carleton Hospital, a new 240-bed long-term-care home, a completely renovated and expanded Carlington Community Health Centre, a new building for CHEO to help serve kids with special needs and much more.

Speaker, as you know, I got involved in politics in order to advocate for individuals with special needs, like my brother. I made a pledge on election night to be a champion for them. From CHEO's new building to doubling the budget and reforming the Ontario Autism Program to supporting local organizations like Children at Risk and helping to steer our developmental services agencies through the challenging pandemic times, I have worked tirelessly to live up to that pledge.

I hope to be returning here in the next Parliament. I look forward to working hard to continue to make progress on all of these important issues and many, many more. To my constituents, my staff and team, and most of all to my family, who are here with me today: Thank you so much for being on this journey with me so far.

FIRE IN SOMALILAND

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I rise this morning to speak of the fire that destroyed hundreds of businesses in the centre of Hargeisa in Somaliland. This massive open-air market was the economic centre of the city of Hargeisa. It was a hub of activity, with hundreds of small businesses. This tragic and devastating fire occurred on the first day of the month of Ramadan.

I have been meeting with Somali Ontarian communities across the greater Toronto area about this disaster and how we all can assist in the recovery efforts. Somaliland has a high rate of unemployment, and the market was a lifeline for many poor families who depended on it to make a living, and was a source of income for women in particular. The fire happened just a few hours after the month of Ramadan began, when food business traditionally booms. Many dozens were injured, and now the market is gone.

We need to do more, and I'm urging the federal and provincial governments to step up and support the efforts for humanitarian assistance for those impacted by this disaster.

EASTERN CANADIAN RINGETTE CHAMPIONSHIPS

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: On Saturday I had the pleasure of visiting two local teams from my area of Carleton, in the Ottawa area, who recently won opportunities to represent the province of Ontario next month at the Eastern Canadian Ringette Championships, being held in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The teams are part of the West Ottawa Ringette Association, and their members are comprised of players from Stittsville, Kanata, Richmond and Carp.

The Ottawa Wild U14AA team placed second at the provincial championships in Waterloo two weeks ago, and this past weekend the U16A team captured gold to become Team Ontario. They reached out to me looking for items to bring and share to show their Ontario pride, such as flags, pins and other things, and that's why I was pleased to go see them personally, congratulate them, give them a whole bunch of Ontario paraphernalia, and also give them all scrolls of appreciation and congratulate them on behalf of the government of Ontario.

To the two Ottawa ringette teams who are going to Halifax to represent the province of Ontario: Good luck. I wish you all the best, and we're all cheering you on. You've already made Ontario proud.

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Last week I toured the Mohawk Institute in Brantford with Nishnawbe Aski Nation Deputy Grand Chief Achneepineskum and survivors of the institute. The Mohawk Institute was run by the Anglican Church and the government of Canada from 1828 to 1970, making it the longest Indian residential school in the country. Children from over 20 First Nations across Ontario were taken from their families and forced to attend.

Speaker, these weren't schools; they were like prisons for children. Right now, we know of three First Nations in the riding of Kiiwetinoong that had children who attended, and we are learning of more each day.

One thing that we talked with the survivors about last week was the importance of creating an Indigenous-led archive of records from governments, churches and other institutions that were involved in the operations of the Indian residential schools across Ontario.

Kimberly Murray of the Survivors' Secretariat said, "No one can analyze and assess the records more quickly and accurately than the community themselves. The community lived through this attack on them. They do not need, nor have they asked for the government to review records on their behalf. The time has come for institutions to turn over all the records to the communities now. No more hiding behind colonial laws." Ontario must turn over all records now. Meegwetch.

MEMBER FOR GUELPH

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I rise today to give my last member's statement in the 42nd Parliament. I have to say, I've learned a lot in the last four years. I'm grateful for the way our community has worked together to secure funding

for youth wellness hubs, permanent supportive housing and more non-profit long-term-care beds.

I also want to take a moment to thank my colleagues from all sides of the House for being willing to work together even when we disagree. It was an honour to have my name on the first bill co-sponsored by all four parties in this Legislature declaring the month of August as Emancipation Month.

I want to thank the member for Whitby for co-sponsoring the Reserved Parking for Electric Vehicle Charging Act with me, which turned out to be the first Green bill in Ontario history, and we did it at a time even when I was pretty critical of the government's record on climate and the environment.

I also want to thank the people in Guelph who helped me write my first private member's bill, the Paris Galt Moraine Conservation Act, to protect water in our community. While the bill has not become law yet, I do want to thank everybody in our community who came together and worked with the minister to finally close the Dolime quarry, which is the biggest and most direct threat to our community's drinking water. We've been fighting it for decades. Speaker, it shows what you can get done, what you can accomplish if you're willing to work with others.

EASTER

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Good morning to all of my colleagues. To some, Easter is a time for chocolate bunnies, Easter eggs, hunts for treats with excited children—we all remember "Here comes Peter Cottontail, / Hopping down the bunny trail"—and, of course, the scrumptious dinners that we all enjoy with friends and family.

To people of Christian faith, it is remembering Jesus's sacrifice and giving thanks to what he brought to this world—sadly, a world that in many respects is troubling, with tension and violence in Ukraine and elsewhere. It is not only deeply disappointing but truly, truly heartbreaking.

To most, though, it's looking forward to the fresh start of spring, particularly after the long Canadian winter that we've just experienced—regrets, of course, if you're a skier or snowmobiler.

Let's reflect upon and be thankful for the opportunity to enjoy our faith, our family and our friends at this most meaningful time of year. We can all share the Easter story, regardless—the message, of course, which is one of love, forgiveness and reconciliation.

To all my colleagues here and certainly the staff of the Legislative Assembly, may all have a very, very happy Easter with your loved ones, and may you be blessed with peace, happiness and harmony through your life.

MEMBER FOR TORONTO CENTRE

Ms. Suze Morrison: It's an honour to rise to give my last statement in this House. Last week, I announced that I will not be seeking re-election to represent the wonderful people of Toronto Centre, and I'd like to use my brief time today to thank a few folks.

First and foremost, I want to recognize my good friend Kristyn Wong-Tam for stepping up to carry the torch for the NDP in the upcoming election. I cannot wait to see you take your seat in this chamber.

To the people of Toronto Centre: Thank you for trusting me with the greatest privilege I will ever know. Fighting for our communities for the past four years has been an absolute honour.

To all my staff over the years: Nadine, Emma, Ben, Sasha, Alison, Vanshika, Jasmine, Sam, Linnea, Ibna—thank you for being the heart of our team, and to the all central and party staff that have supported us over the years as well.

1030

To my riding association, our volunteers, our members and donors, thank you for being a part of our progressive movement for change in Toronto Centre.

To Andrea and our entire caucus, I can't imagine ever fighting the good fight with anyone else.

To my race team Dina, Quintin, Mike, Physk, Jesus, Barry, Daniel, Justin, Tashko, Fast Bill, Slow Bill, Tina and everyone at WOSCA, including Matt, Eric, Jing, Tom, Clint, Paige and all the old guys, too.

To my favourite therapist and Taylor Swift for getting me through the pandemic.

To my chosen family, I love you endlessly.

To Kevin, for being the best friend a girl could ever ask for—also, happy birthday.

And to Trevor for loving me always, for having the most bi-wife energy possible and for standing beside me while I chased a dream that, four years later, still feels surreal.

It's been a slice—an orange one, at that—and I don't regret it for a single second. Thank you.

COST OF LIVING

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: The cost of living is a key concern for many residents in Niagara West. I'm thankful that, as part of the PC government under the leadership of our Premier, Doug Ford, we continue to hear the concerns of the people and put money back into the pockets of hard-working families.

This PC government is cutting gas taxes by 5.7 cents per litre, and fuel taxes by 5.3 cents per litre for six months to provide relief for businesses and families.

This PC government, under the leadership of Premier Ford, is cutting costs for millions of Ontario vehicle owners by refunding licence plate sticker renewal fees paid and eliminating licence plate renewal fees and plate stickers, saving \$120 a year in southern Ontario for passenger and light commercial vehicles.

This PC government introduced the Low-income Workers Tax Credit, providing up to \$850 per year in income tax relief to low-income workers to be used to reduce or eliminate personal income taxes.

This government introduced the Ontario Childcare Tax Credit, providing flexibility for parents to choose the child care options that work best for them; the Seniors' Home

Safety Tax Credit, helping seniors make homes safer and more accessible so that they can stay in their homes longer and providing up to \$2,500 back on up to \$10,000 in eligible expenses; the Ontario Jobs Training Tax Credit, helping workers get training for career shifts or to retrain to sharpen skills; and there's the Ontario Staycation Tax Credit, Ontario Seniors' Public Transit Tax Credit, Ontario Energy and Property Tax Credit and Northern Ontario Energy Credit.

Through these efforts and more, our government is putting money back into the pockets of hard-working families, Mr. Speaker.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Today we are honoured to remember and pay tribute to a former member of our provincial Legislature, the late William Walter Barlow, who was the MPP for Cambridge during the 32nd and 33rd Parliaments. Mr. Barlow's son is here with us in the Speaker's gallery, Tom Barlow. Welcome.

Also in the Speaker's gallery is our friend David Warner, the Speaker during the 35th Parliament. Welcome, David.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: I am so delighted today to have my three biggest supporters here in the Legislative Assembly: my parents, Al and Janine Roberts, and my partner, John Daz. So glad to have you here with me today.

Mr. Will Bouma: From the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada, I'd like to welcome national president Reverend Steven Jones, national coordinator Reverend Richard Flemming and my good friend Pastor Charlie Lyons.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: They are not here yet, but they will be shortly: From the Gender Equality Coalition which is located in London, I'd like to welcome Dr. Amanda Zavitz, Dani Bartlett, Tracey Whiteye and Linda Davis, who are here today for Equal Pay Day.

WILLIAM WALTER BARLOW

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I understand the Government House leader has a point of order.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Speaker, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to allow members to make statements in remembrance for the late Mr. William Walter Barlow, with five minutes allotted to Her Majesty's loyal opposition, five minutes allotted to the independents as a group and five minutes allotted to Her Majesty's government.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to allow members to make statements in remembrance of the late William Walter Barlow, with five minutes allotted to Her Majesty's loyal opposition, five minutes allotted to the independents as a group and five minutes to Her Majesty's government. Agreed? Agreed.

Ms. Catherine Fife: On behalf of Ontario's official opposition, it is an honour to be able to take part in today's tribute. Earlier this morning, I met a former colleague of Mr. Barlow, David Warner, in the elevator. He had wonderful things to say about his former colleague, including that the world was Bill's friend.

I love the fact that we do pay tribute to former members. It is a solemn and respectful moment for all of us and a powerful way to celebrate the work of public service. It is without question that Bill Barlow set a precedent to not only exhibit strong work ethics and determination, but also to make sure that we remain involved in our communities wherever possible. He was a man of many talents, some being multi-tasking, giving back to the community and maintaining levels of involvement where some people may have given up. He was the definition of resilience.

Mr. Barlow lived by the principle of one's age never defining their capabilities, a man for whom hard work had no expiration date. Many may remember him by his trademark, the bow tie, or by how much of himself he gave to serving various orders of government. Although I did not have the chance to meet and work alongside Mr. Barlow, his vibrant, determined personality shines through all of the accounts of his life and his work.

Mr. Barlow was born on February 20, 1931. He joined the Wolf Club, a Boy Scouts organization, at the age of eight years old. While being a Cub leader at the age of 16, he met an equally young Cub leader from the Trinity church who, in later years, became his wife. Bill and his partner, Bernice, were married in 1955 and raised three children by the names of Tom, Janice and Terry. Tom joins us here today.

Before getting married to Bernice, Bill had other commitments aside from working within the community and started taking on a larger role at his father's company, Barlow Cartage. By the age of 21, his father had passed away, and the responsibilities had transferred to Bill, making him at one point manager of the business.

Bill continually demonstrated drive and determination, managing and operating Barlow Cartage for over 40 years while having other community commitments. At the same time, Bill served on local and provincial business and trade associations. He never failed to keep himself busy, and it proves that if you want something done, ask a busy person. That was Bill Barlow.

Bill was a Progressive Conservative who served as the MPP for Cambridge, Ontario, for two terms, spanning 1981 to 1987. He worked hard all of his life because he believed that where there was a will, there was a way. In possessing this mindset, his political career included six years as the alderman in Galt, four years as the alderman in Cambridge, being on the advisory committee of Cambridge, past president of the Cambridge association, as well as the time that he served in this place as the MPP for Cambridge.

Aside from having extensive dedication and experience in government actions, community involvement was a major priority for Bill throughout his lifetime. Community anchored him in his service to the public. He volunteered

at many organizations, including but not limited to the local cancer society and the Terry Fox Run.

There is always more to be done within our communities, and we must always ensure, as representatives of this province, that we are doing our absolute best in maintaining communal ties. Former member for Cambridge Kathryn McGarry, who is now the mayor of Cambridge, said this of Bill: "Bow Tie Bill"—which he was affectionately known as—"was truly committed to public service and to his community.... He was a true gentleman, respectful, engaged, caring and thoughtful.... He would speak eloquently as a delegate at council," up till recently. He was still involved in ensuring that his voice and his concerns for his beloved Cambridge were being followed through on.

1040

I would like to close with a quote from Bill Babstock, Mr. Barlow's canvassing chairman, who said, "Barlow's biggest accomplishments ... were the ones seen and celebrated by few people other than those involved." As someone who was deeply invested in politics and creating a better community for all, being recognized for his work was the least of his worries, yet getting things done and creating results appeared to be his top priority.

Thank you, Mr. Barlow, for being an inspiration to many, and a role model to those who had the privilege in knowing you. Cambridge and the province of Ontario were well served by your time and expertise.

Mr. John Fraser: It's an honour to say a few words in tribute of William Walter Barlow—or, as he's known, Bill Barlow—the member for Cambridge from 1981 to 1987. Bill also served as alderman for the city of Galt from 1967 to 1972 and as a councillor for the city of Cambridge from 1973 to 1977. Bill was also a businessman who was deeply involved in the life of his community.

I read this line in the Kitchener-Waterloo Record that said this about Bill Barlow: Bill's "biggest accomplishments, however, were the ones seen and celebrated by few people other than those involved." If you needed something done with workers' compensation or birth certificates, he had it done, pronto, but nothing was said about it.

I love to look up old Hansard when we do these tributes and read what people were saying many years ago. I happened to stumble upon a "friendly" question, and I have a bee in my bonnet about friendly questions, even when I was on the other side. I thought friendly questions were a waste of a question, because it's just more theatre than anything else. But here's the friendly question that Bill Barlow asked. I think it was Gordon Walker who was the Minister of Industry at the time:

"I have a question for the Minister of Industry and Trade. A few days ago, I received a phone call at my home. I might add that this call really disturbed me. In view of the fact that this government has a very substantial investment in Massey-Ferguson, I would like the minister to verify for me whether it is true that two weeks ago today, on May 1, the complete combine line had to close down because a large percentage of the shift had phoned

in sick but, in fact, they went fishing at the opening of the trout season.”

Now, I'm not going to read the whole response from Minister Walker, but here's part of the response:

“I suppose that is their choice and they are the ones who are diminished in income. Maybe there is fisherman's flu going around or something. Sixty-nine per cent of the line, when there are 3,000 people working there, is quite an extensive turnout”—sounds like a government minister's response, right? “Whatever the case, I will be glad to look into the question.” I'd like to thank Bill Barlow for reminding us that we can have somewhat unfriendly friendlies on the other side. It would be great to hear them.

Bill Barlow was also known as “Bow Tie Bill,” even modifying a bow tie for his scouting uniform. I think that in politics, having a symbol of your individualism differentiating you from other people is a really smart thing. I think it's just because he preferred that, from what it sounds like, but we don't know too many colleagues these days who wear bow ties, and the ones who did in the past, I think we can remember quite well.

After reading his obituary and other stories about his life, it's clear for me Bill Barlow always persevered. He had his share of obstacles and disappointments in his life to overcome, but he did it through hard work and perseverance—that's clear. And that made him of great political service not only to the community that he lived in, in that community, but here in this Legislature and all the other things he gave his time to.

To his son Tom, who's here today, and his other children, Janice and Terry, and indeed all his family: You should be very proud of your father's record, both for his commitment to his community and those who lived in it, and for serving here in this Legislature and making Ontario a better place.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It's an honour to rise today to pay tribute to William Walter Barlow, or “Bow Tie Bill,” the former MPP for Cambridge, for his distinguished public service. I want to welcome his son, Tom, his colleagues, his friends and his family to Queen's Park today.

Mr. Barlow had many accomplishments, and I would say if there was ever an MPP who has served in this House who understands that every vote counts, it's “Bow Tie Bill.” Literally every election he won or lost was decided by less than 1,000 votes. Any of who you have ever—and I love to venture; I'm just up river from Cambridge—spent any time in Cambridge will recognize the stunning architecture and heritage that's preserved, particularly in the city of Galt. Bill played a critical role in preserving that heritage as the president of Heritage Cambridge and establishing Cambridge's local municipal heritage preservation committee.

I want to say to Bill's family, thank you for sharing him with us. Cambridge, Ontario and Canada are better places because of his service and his life.

Hon. Doug Ford: It's an honour to rise to speak in tribute of our late colleague MPP Bill Barlow. I'd like to acknowledge my friend for the last 28 years—Tom, you've

been an incredible person, and now I know where you got your character from, so thank you for joining us. I'd also like to thank the former Speaker David Warner: Thank you.

Bill passed away on July 5, 2020, at the age of 89. In all that happened that year as our province faced the pandemic, we were not able to gather together in the Legislature to honour Bill, so let us correct that now and take a moment to pay our respects.

As you heard, Mr. Speaker, “Bow Tie Bill,” as his friends affectionately called him, was dedicated to public service and had a long career representing the great people of Cambridge. He loved his hometown and had deep roots in the area, with his ancestors living in Cambridge all the way back to the pioneer days—now that, I didn't know; I didn't know that, Tom, but that goes a way back—so the Barlows have deep roots in the Cambridge area.

Since childhood, Bill was deeply involved in helping make this community a better place. Joining Boy Scouts sparked a lifelong passion in community service, and Bill served and volunteered with the Boy Scouts for 62 years—that's a staggering number there. Bill also devoted himself to the Jaycees, the Rotary Club, the United Way and his local Trinity Anglican Church. He truly was a man who defined public service throughout his whole life.

A hard worker from the start, he began work at his family trucking business at the age of 15. But Bill still found time to get involved in local politics, because he cared so much for his community. After a decade in municipal politics, he was elected to the Ontario Legislature in 1981 and served in the governments of Premier Davis and Premier Miller.

After retiring from politics, Bill continued to give back to his community as a scout leader and as the president of the architectural conservancy's Cambridge chapter. Bill was recognized for all his service with a well-deserved Queen's Golden Jubilee medal.

I think we can all learn from a man like Bill Barlow, who gave back so much to the community he loved. He was dedicated to serving others and making his home a better place.

I want to pay my heartfelt respects to the Barlow family and all those who knew and loved Bill. He'll be missed, and we're blessed to have had him serve the people of Ontario and the people of Cambridge for so many years. Thank you, and may God bless him.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I want to thank the members for their eloquent tributes as we give thanks for the life and public service of Bill Barlow.

1050

MEMBER FOR TIMMINS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the Leader of the Opposition on a point of order.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I wanted to wish my friend Gilles Bisson all the very best. I wanted to update members of the House to let you know Gilles suffered a heart attack

recently. However, his doctor said he's in fine shape, and his full recovery is imminent. So I did want to update people. All the best to Gilles.

QUESTION PERIOD

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My first question is to the Premier. Last week, the Premier said that Dr. Moore “never rests” and then went on to claim, “Yesterday he had a meeting with all public health officers throughout the province.”

However, Dr. Mustafa Hirji, Niagara region medical officer of health, said he wasn't invited to any such meeting, and now, media reports are indicating that last week, in fact, Dr. Moore was on vacation. So my question is, why is it that the Premier is making stuff up instead of being straight with Ontarians, especially—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw the unparliamentary remark.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Sure. Thanks, Speaker. I'll withdraw.

Perhaps I should be putting it this way: Why do people not get the information they need from this government and instead wonder what's really going on?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): You have to withdraw without qualification.

To respond, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health.

Hon. Christine Elliott: In fact, the people of Ontario did get the information that they needed. While Dr. Moore was away, we had an acting chief medical officer of health in Dr. Murti as well as five assistant medical officers of health, who were closely following the situation in Ontario, and Dr. Moore was in regular contact with them.

The people of Ontario have been well served by Dr. Moore as well as by the acting chief medical officer of health and assistant medical officers of health. In fact, Dr. Moore was here yesterday, speaking about a very important issue about expanding the eligibility for and access to antiviral medications, which are an essential tool that we are using to ensure that the people of Ontario are kept safe and well during this entire course.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, it's not about Dr. Moore deserving a vacation; I'm sure we all agree that he does. It's about the Premier providing accurate information to the people of this province.

We all know that the risk for children remains high, that in fact we are worried about children ending up in hospital, which nobody wants. Dr. Jüni, the science table head, said, “Mask up.” That was his advice. Public Health Ontario is calling for temporarily reintroducing a mask mandate requirement. The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario is calling for more safety measures in our schools. The

Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation say mask mandates and other safety measures are still required. The Catholic teachers' association as well is asking for a reinstatement of mask mandates in Ontario schools.

So why isn't the Premier listening to those folks? Why isn't he listening to the experts at Public Health Ontario, his own science table, our education system, in order to protect our kids from COVID?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Our government has been listening to Dr. Moore, the acting chief medical officer of health and the assistant medical officers of health since the beginning of this pandemic, and we will listen to their requests and their recommendations.

Dr. Moore and his entire team are actively following the situation with respect to masking in the province of Ontario. He is currently studying, right now, the situation for the most vulnerable people in Ontario, who are the people who are in our hospitals, in our long-term-care homes, in congregate settings, and, of course, there's also public transit.

We await his recommendations on whether he believes that this should be extended past April 27 or not. As soon as he makes those recommendations, he will be out to speak about them, and we will be available to answer any of your questions about them.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Dr. Moore has also said he anticipates that this sixth wave is going to lead to 600 hospitalizations a day—high hospitalization rates—in the ICUs: 600 Ontarians a day. Throughout the month of May, this wave is going to continue, in his estimation.

Dr. Michael Warner says this: “Surgeries will likely be cancelled and those patients with non-COVID care needs will be waiting and waiting and getting sicker and sicker, and that's not fair.”

Registered nurse Birgit Umaigba said, “Hospitals will not be able to handle the disaster that awaits.”

Health care workers are already burnt out, and now they're going home sick again with COVID in droves. Hospitals have paused their attempts at getting through the backlogs that already were caused by this government's inaction.

My question is: How many more surgeries and procedures is this government expecting to cancel while hospitals fill up with COVID patients? How many more years will Ontarians have to wait for the surgeries and procedures they need? Surely the government has estimates of those numbers.

Hon. Christine Elliott: We don't anticipate having to put any delays on any of the procedures that people want to have caught up on that we had to delay in previous waves of COVID. We understand that people have been waiting a long time for surgical procedures—hip and knee replacements, laser treatments for their eyes. All of those things are very important and they will be continuing, notwithstanding any increases in hospitalization.

As the member will be aware, we have created another 3,100 beds at a significant cost to the province of Ontario.

Dr. Moore is following the situation very closely. And because we have a high rate of people who have been vaccinated—currently over 92.9% of people aged 12 and over have had their first dose and 91% have had two doses. We're also offering third doses and fourth doses. That, along with the antivirals that are coming on board and the increased capacity that we have in our hospitals, means that we can deal with both the patients who are coming in with COVID as well as the patients who need to have procedures and surgeries done that had to be delayed long ago. We're catching up on them now.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's troubling the Minister of Health's description is inconsistent with that of experts and even with the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

But I want to talk about another issue and ask the Premier about Equal Pay Day. Today is Equal Pay Day for women—which means we've been pretty much working for free since January. What we know, though, is that tonight there's actually the first leaders' debate in this campaign, and it's focused on women's issues. In fact, the last time something like that took place in our province was back in the 1980s. Disappointingly, however, it looks as though the Premier is not going to be able to fit that into his schedule. So I'm going to ask him a couple of questions about the Equal Pay Coalition's desires for Ontario.

Ontario urgently needs things like decent wages for women, an affordable housing strategy, paid sick days for workers. These are the focuses of what they are asking, and yet the government that we have now is focused on low-wage policies like Bill 124, no answers to the housing crisis, a stubborn refusal to bring in paid sick days. Why isn't the Premier interested in making life more affordable and respecting women?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues.

Hon. Jane McKenna: Our government has been working with workers throughout this COVID-19 pandemic, including by giving a permanent raise to 158,000 personal and direct support workers. These front-line heroes are found in hospitals, long-term care and congregate care. Since October 2020, we have invested over \$1.3 billion to attract and retain health care workers through the wage enhancement. This was just one measure found in our government's Pandemic and Emergency Preparedness Act, a bill introduced to ensure our province would be able to act where needed most to support public services.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Ontario was the very last province to strike a child care deal, and of course that delay also hurt women and disrespected women. Women working in child care deserve a whole lot more than what this Premier has on offer. He's continuing with his low-wage policies, setting the ECE wage at only \$18 an hour, which is \$7 an hour lower than experts are recommending,

in order to make sure that the sector is able to thrive. That's \$300 less per week, what this Premier is offering.

The Coalition for Better Child Care is calling for higher wages. Of course, we've already made that commitment, just this morning. When the Premier heard about this, he said, "To be frank, they deserve more money and we're going to work on that."

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How can anybody believe that the Premier is serious about child care when he had to get dragged to the table, was the last province to make a deal and refuses now to make the investments necessary to ensure that our sector in child care is robust and the workers are being paid properly?

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

Hon. Stephen Lecce: The only political leader in this Legislature that is serious about getting the job done for moms and dads when it comes to affordability is the Premier of Ontario, who signed a better deal, a longer deal and a program that delivers affordability for those women and for all parents in this province: 25% this spring, 50% on average by Christmas this year; roughly \$10,000 into pockets. That is going to make a difference.

If New Democrats and Liberals were committed to affordability, they would have stood with Ontario to stand up for the parents in this province who demanded a better deal, a longer deal and a program that gets them to \$10 by the year 2025. We are hiring 14,700 more ECEs. We are increasing wages: \$18 minimum, rising to \$25—\$1 per year over the course of this program. It's going to help incentivize talent, provide quality to our kids and finally deliver affordable child care for parents in this province.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Housing affordability is another issue that women are very, very concerned about, and the cost of buying a home under this Premier's leadership has doubled. The cost of buying a home has doubled under this Premier, and renters are now paying almost \$200 more per month for rent. That is really tough for people when the price of everything is going up and the Premier has low-wage policies in place.

But it doesn't have to be this way. We could actually have an affordable housing strategy that fills in the missing middle sector of housing that gets more middle-class families into homes—focusing on starter homes, for example: townhouses and semi-detached homes. These are the kinds of things that people could actually afford.

Why is this Premier unwilling to listen to women and do something meaningful to take on the rising costs of housing in our province?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: We've actually started right from the beginning. Right from 2018, we knew that we had to focus on making life more affordable for the people of the province of Ontario. While the Leader of the Opposition tries to pick winners and losers, what we

decided is that all Ontarians should be winners in the economic prosperity that this province has had since 2018.

When it comes to housing affordability, we've brought in transit-oriented communities to revolutionize the fact that you build communities around transportation corridors. The Leader of the Opposition of course voted against it and actively campaigns against that.

We brought in a new program by working with our municipal partners to get more homes, more shovels in the ground quicker. They are against that. She's against more homes in her own community, in her own backyard. She's against affordability.

When it comes to renters, the policies that this government has brought in have seen more affordable housing starts for renters than at any time over the last 35 years, and it is because of the work of this Premier, it is because of the work of this finance minister and the colleagues behind me who work every day for—

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

Next question.

PAY EQUITY

Ms. Jill Andrew: Today is Equal Pay Day in Ontario, or, as many women would say, “unequal pay day.” This is a day to raise awareness of the gender pay gap that still exists in our province. Despite Ontario implementing the Pay Equity Act in 1988, here we are, 34 years later, and have yet to achieve its core mandate. To this day, the pay gap sits at 32% for all women, and it's even higher for women who are Black and who are Indigenous and trans women. Women with disabilities, for example, face a pay gap of 56%. Meanwhile, this and previous governments would rather take women workers, such as midwives and workers in for-profit nursing homes, to court for 15 years than actually close this.

My question to the Premier: Will this government finally close this gap by implementing key asks to do so, asks that we as the official opposition have been pushing for for years, including legislating pay transparency in this province once and for all?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues.

Hon. Jane McKenna: The Pay Equity Act is about equal pay for work of equal value. Under this act, female and male job classes and the value of the work they perform are compared. Subject to certain exceptions, female job classes must be paid at least the same as male job classes where they perform jobs that may be different but are of equal or comparable value. The value of jobs is based on the levels of skills, efforts and responsibility and working conditions involved in doing the work.

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

Ms. Jill Andrew: Well, to all of the Ontarians who are trans or non-binary, I would like to say that the government is stuck in a binary that's hurting Ontarians.

My question is back to the Premier. Last week, representatives of ONA, SEIU and the OFL stood in this very building, calling out Bill 106 for exactly what it is: yet another tactic used to suppress pay equity in this province by effectively interfering with the collective bargaining powers of nurses, PSWs and other health care workers—jobs that are predominantly held by women—to demand better pay, pay that matches the value of the work they do. This on top of Bill 124, which we know has had a catastrophic consequence for not only our health care system, but for those same workers who have had their salaries capped by it that this government calls heroes.

My question is to the Premier: Will this government commit to pay equity and finally—finally—repeal Bill 124 and withdraw Bill 106 for the devastating impacts both have on meeting the goals of women in Ontario?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Again, I think it is worth coming back to where we were in 2018, when we were elected to office. We saw a province whose economy had stagnated and we knew that our number one responsibility was to reignite the Ontario economy. And to reignite the Ontario community, that means bringing everybody, making everybody a part of that, and that is what we did right from the start.

We knew that, when it came to health care, that we could not fix health care if we didn't start to fix long-term care. What did we do? We built 30,000 net new long-term-care beds. We fixed 27,000 old, outdated beds. We're hiring 27,000 additional health care workers. Why did we do that? We did that so that we could rebuild the health care system, the hospital system in this province that, under the previous Liberal government, supported by the NDP, had started to crumble.

We're building brand new hospitals in Peel region. We're fixing hospitals in Niagara region and across the province. And it is because of a strong, stable, majority Progressive Conservative government that Ontario is leading the nation in economic—

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

The next question.

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Mr. Lorne Coe: My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, it's been great to hear you speak so highly of nuclear power and all that it has to offer Ontario, throughout this legislative session. I'm so proud to be part of a government that has been such a strong advocate for the nuclear sector.

Speaker, nuclear facilities run by Ontario's expert nuclear operators, Bruce Power and Ontario Power Generation, generate clean and reliable electricity that powers Ontario families and businesses and creates good-paying jobs. Minister, what is our government doing to continue advancing nuclear technology, such as small modular reactors, in this great province of Ontario?

Hon. Todd Smith: Thank you the great member—one of our great MPPs—from the clean energy capital of Ontario, the Durham region, from Whitby. The member is quite right. Our government's never been shy about our support for nuclear power. We know that continuing to advance nuclear technology in Ontario is only going to benefit every family and business in this great province. That's why, since December 2019, Ontario, New Brunswick and Saskatchewan, and now Alberta, have been working together to advance SMRs in Canada through an interprovincial memorandum of understanding.

Just a couple of weeks ago, I was out in Regina, and we finished our final product, which is a strategic plan for the deployment of small modular reactors in this country and around the world. The strategy is a path forward for the advancement of SMRs. It's an opportunity for us in this country. It's an opportunity for jurisdictions around the world to harness what we have in Ontario, and that is a clean energy, nuclear advantage that we are going to export around the world to clean up emissions and grow our economy.

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

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you, Minister, for that excellent answer. It's great to hear that Ontario's work on this collaboration between provinces has come to fruition. I'm also pleased to hear that our province is continuing to lead the way on nuclear technology.

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Our government knows that the nuclear industry has so much to offer Ontario, not just through the generation of clean, safe and reliable electricity, but also in economic potential, export opportunity and good jobs in the skilled trades.

Ontarians want to know more, Speaker, so through you, back to the minister: What will the government strategy mean for the future of energy in our great province?

Hon. Todd Smith: What a great question from the member from Whitby. Canada's nuclear sector already supports 76,000 jobs. Most of them are right here in our province in our supply chain. We know that this sector has the potential to do so much more.

The goals of the strategy that we released a couple of weeks ago are to position Canada as an exporter of global SMR technology while promoting a stronger nuclear regulatory framework and securing support from the federal government—which is really important—on the new SMR technologies that are being developed. By working with the feds and our nuclear operators and also engaging with the public and Indigenous communities, we can turn our vision for nuclear technology in Ontario into a reality.

This will mean more jobs in the skilled trades, more export opportunities and more economic growth for our province. At the same time, it's going to mean even more reliable, affordable and safe, clean electricity for families and businesses right across this great province. We're excited about it.

CHILD CARE

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: My question is to the Premier. When the \$10-a-day child care deal was announced, we learned that there would only be a tiny wage increase for workers and that, too, only for half of the child care workforce—a workforce of predominantly women. This, in the midst of hyperinflation and a child care staffing shortage, doesn't make any sense.

The NDP has committed to a wage floor of \$25 an hour for registered ECEs in child care and \$20 an hour for all other child care program staff. My question is simple: Will the Premier do the same?

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

Hon. Stephen Lecce: It is this Progressive Conservative government that did what no Liberal Premier could, which is deliver affordable child care for Ontario families, \$10 by year 2025, a 25% reduction on average by this spring and 50% on average by this Christmas.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Although I do hear the members of the Liberal Party quite defensive on this issue—and they should be, because when they increased fees by 400%, 40% above the national average—they have a lot of explaining to do for the negligence and the inability to get the job done.

Hon. Paul Calandra: A 400% increase, and you're cheering.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: As the House leader has rightfully acknowledged, a 400% increase on Ontario families. But there is relief on the way under our government, finally getting it done, and for the workers—

Interjection.

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

Supplementary question?

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: Back to the Premier: We all know that a \$10-a-day child care program will create a very large increase in demand, and failing to address the supply side of things—in this case, workers, mostly women, taking care of our children—will lead to a major crisis in child care. We are going to need to expand the supply of qualified child care workers, which will not be possible without improving wages and benefits.

Will the Premier commit to paying fair wages and creating a workforce strategy so we're able to recruit and retain workers in the child care workforce?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: It is the government's stated intent to hire over 14,000 workers by increasing wages; \$18 is the floor, \$20 for supervisors—that increases \$1 every year to 2025 to get to \$25, for example.

Not only did we do that for children, for staff who work with kids aged zero to five; for staff who work with children six to 12—which is outside the scope of this federal agreement—the province unilaterally provided \$390 million to also increase those wages. So we created a floor of income, and we incented the hard-working people to stay in our child care centres.

We're going to need many of them, because our government is expanding affordable child care, increasing access and delivering \$10 by year 2025.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: It has been over a month since Bill 60, the Safe and Healthy Communities Act (Addressing Gun Violence) has been sent to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy. I commend the government House leader for moving this important bill forward—my question is to him.

Some cynics have suggested that these are just parliamentary games and that Bill 60 will never get out of committee. But I am not one of them. The government House leader has stood in this House and stated that Bill 60 has merit. I know that he believes it is an important bill. We are running out of sitting days. Bill 60 will help Ontarians suffering from the trauma and the pain of gun violence.

Will the government House leader prove the cynics wrong and move Bill 60 to public hearings so that we can get to clause-by-clause in one day—just as he did for Bill 78—today?

Hon. Paul Calandra: I'm surprised to get the question from the member opposite because we spoke about this yesterday, we spoke about it last week. Of course, it is a private member's bill and, as I mentioned to the member opposite, private members' business has to be worked on with members. Now, because she does not have an available slot to debate her bill, I asked the member if she could work with somebody else in her caucus who does have an available spot and do what all members do: They swap their ballot dates to bring forward pieces of legislation quicker.

If the member opposite wants to suggest who we can facilitate that with for her, then we can do that. If it's another member of her caucus, if it's another member of the NDP caucus who she wants to pull a bill away from, we can do that. But I think I've mentioned to the member on multiple occasions that she brought a bill forward that has no ballot date or time to be debated in this place, we did the courtesy of moving it into committee quickly so that there could be some discussion on it, and we are awaiting her advice as to who she would be swapping her ballot date with.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Back to the government House leader: The past weekend has been deadly. On April 7, Kartik Vasudev, an international student attending Seneca, was shot and killed in broad daylight at Sherbourne station. On April 8, a teenager was gunned down along with four others who were shot near Niagara Falls, while two other people are now in hospital. On April 9, two separate shootings in Toronto left two men dead. That's 19 homicides so far this year in this city. Our community in Scarborough is still reeling from the death of a grade 12 student who was shot at school.

Toronto medical officer of health Eileen de Villa has said that the community effects of gun violence have not only physical effects but also mental. These effects can be long-lasting, multi-generational and cyclical. I have met these families, and I have seen and I have heard their pain. I have witnessed them suffering. Without the supports, they are in silence.

Speaker, I cannot be silent. We have Bill 60. It is right here in this Legislature. It is about public safety. I am asking all members of this House to help to represent these people and to answer their call now.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Look, Mr. Speaker, again, I think I've answered the member's questions, both in the House and on a number of occasions outside of the House. But, ultimately, I think the people of her community, a community that I know quite well—what they're looking for are better resources and better outcomes. I know that the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions has been providing that with a groundbreaking investment in mental health. I know that the government is looking at law and order, obviously, with the guns and gangs supports that we have put in place. I note that there have been investments into the local community, including the Boys and Girls Club in her riding.

We know how important it is that people have options, and that's what the government has been working on. But it's not just about punishment. It's not just about rehabilitation. It's about giving people the opportunity to succeed. When I lived in Scarborough, that's what people asked for. They asked for the dignity of a job, and that's what this government is doing, putting in place the environment that has created 550,000 jobs, lifting people out of poverty, giving them the opportunity to succeed. I think that is the best thing that we can do—

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

Next question.

AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

Ms. Christine Hogarth: My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Having a strong food supply chain means making investments in every region across this province, and that includes in my riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore. We are proud to be home to the Ontario Food Terminal, North America's third-largest wholesale market for fruits and vegetables. It is because of this government that it will remain in Etobicoke for many, many years to come.

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Over two billion pounds of produce are sold there every year in Etobicoke–Lakeshore. Agri-food is a huge economic driver. In fact, there are over 60,000 agri-food jobs right here in Toronto.

Ontarians are looking to our government to invest in food and beverage manufacturers as a key pillar to creating more jobs and growing our economy. So, Speaker, through you: Could the minister please tell the House what

investments are being made for the food and beverage sector across the province?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the member for Perth–Wellington and parliamentary assistant.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Thank you to the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore for that important question. Our government is building a stronger, more robust food and beverage processing sector that will help our processors expand their businesses, create new jobs and grow our economy.

Through the Canadian Agricultural Partnership, Ontario is supporting a \$4.5-million investment in over 100 food and beverage processors in every corner of the province. This is an investment in an industry that contributes over \$45 billion to Ontario's GDP each and every year.

We're securing the future of Ontario's agriculture and food sector and supporting livelihoods in communities across the province, including Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

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

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Thank you for that answer. First of all, I also want to thank the minister for her visit to Dimpflmeier Bakery in the riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore. We went for a tour together and it was a great visit, so I just want to thank her. For everyone who knows Dimpflmeier, just so you know, it's baked fresh right in Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

I want to thank the member for that response of supporting Etobicoke–Lakeshore through this \$4.5-million investment. One of our local businesses, Two Bears coffee, which is just up the street from my constituency office, is going to receive funding to help develop a plan to export into the US and expand their marketing to increase their sales; and upgrades to Bani Halal Foods means they will be able to produce more and grow their operations right here in Etobicoke. Both of these started as small businesses and have now grown into successful operations that are ready to bring their products to new markets. I am so proud to be part of this government, which supports the expansion and the success of our businesses.

Back to the minister, and through you, Speaker: What additional projects will this \$4.5-million investment support? And how does the minister plan to get it done for Ontario's food and beverage processing sector?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Again, thank you to the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore, a champion for her local businesses.

We're investing from farm to fork in all parts of our province and across the agri-food sector. From Keto Buns in Middlesex county's marketing campaign to expand into the plant-based market to Alstein Farms in Oxford, which will use the funding to enhance their biosecurity through better sanitation, we're building up every link in our value chain to further strengthen our robust food sector.

Under the Liberals, red tape and the sky-high cost of doing business in Ontario kept our food manufacturers from reaching their full potential. But this government is focused on creating an environment for them to grow and prosper as they should.

By reducing red tape, we've saved the agri-food industry over \$3.2 million every year without compromising on the quality of Ontario products. Through investments like these and our \$25-million Strategic Agri-Food Processing Fund, we're supporting a bright future as a global leader for Ontario food and beverage processors.

We continue to say yes to growth and prosperity and to strengthening the agri-food sector as part of how we will continue to get it done.

SMALL BUSINESS

Ms. Doly Begum: My question is to the Premier. In my riding of Scarborough Southwest, small businesses were left behind throughout the last two years of the pandemic. A local favourite and Black-owned business, Omo Bamboo Shop, owned by Omowunmi, a creative young woman entrepreneur, suffered losses and was also left behind by this grant.

Omowunmi and many others who sell products at shops, farmers' markets or creators' markets were left behind because of the barriers that this grant included. Omowunmi wrote to us:

"I own a store, but most of my sales come from pop-up markets.... You've seen me at markets. I couldn't do any market in January because indoor gatherings were not allowed and flea markets couldn't operate.

"The categories listed on the government website doesn't take into account people like me, whose businesses were brought to a stop indirectly. My sales for January was about 90% less than what I would have done if there were markets and about 200% less than that of December.

"Myself and many businesses like me who rely on flea markets, artisans markets and pop-up markets in general should be able to apply, but for some reasons we were overlooked."

Speaker, my question is: Why did the provincial small grants leave behind businesses and entrepreneurs like Omo and dozens of others in my community who are still left without any answers or support?

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

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you to the member opposite for that question. Of course, as you know, we were following public health guidelines and the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health. Of course many businesses were impacted by the shutdown in January, but of course we came there to support those businesses that were 100% locked down. We provided a third round of small business support grants to over 100,000 businesses, over \$3 billion in the three rounds.

But we didn't stop there. We provided property tax and electricity relief for those businesses affected, Mr. Speaker. But we didn't stop there. We've provided support for digitization, for PPE grants. But we didn't stop there, Mr. Speaker. We're now reopening the province such that the conditions are there for small businesses to prosper, because they are the backbone and the identity of our province.

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

Ms. Doly Begum: Speaker, in case the Minister of Finance wasn't listening, Omo did not have the struggles that the minister just identified—she did not even qualify to get the grant.

And he mentioned the grant that was just introduced, which was the latest small business grant program that was announced in January, but opened on February 18—a month later—and closed on March 11. The application, which needed to be done fully online, was available for less than 30 days.

Our community takes pride in being a place where people from all walks of life, people who may not be all digitized for their businesses—for example, some seniors and people with many other barriers—can enrich the local economy with their small businesses, and entrepreneurship can flourish. These exact people and many others were left behind by the grant's unreasonable requirements and accessibility barriers. Local grocery shops—farmers' markets, for example—that lost income over the past two years did not qualify. In fact, I have a list of over 20 businesses right here that I have told the ministry about, and they did not do anything. People are still waiting, and these include people like taxi drivers, driving instructors, gym owners—and I could just go on, but I do not have that time.

Speaker, my question is: Why did the government not expand the eligibility and the deadline, despite being told repeatedly about the issues of the grant program? And why did the province fail to deliver a broad and accessible support program for small businesses?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you again to the member opposite for that question. Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we have focused on to support the job creators in this province—including small businesses, large businesses, entrepreneurs, men and women of this great province—is putting in place the conditions so that they can prosper.

That's why we have a minister in charge of red tape. That's why we've introduced eight bills and passed eight bills for red tape reduction. That's why the Minister of Energy has focused on providing electricity relief and energy relief for the people and businesses of Ontario. That's why we saw, in the last month, 34,000 new jobs created in Ontario—leading the country again—followed by, in February, 194,000 new jobs. Those are people who have more money in their pockets that can go to your local businesses, so they can prosper and support our economy, because that's the way forward. We're not going to go backward.

PAY EQUITY

M^{me} Lucille Collard: To the Premier: Mr. Speaker, gender parity is not yet a goal that has been achieved, and I look forward to an Equal Pay Day where we can actually celebrate parity as a fait accompli. Unfortunately, in fact, the fight for support that women need remains a harsh

reality in many areas. That's why I felt compelled to table bills like Bill 99 to help survivors of human trafficking with their debts, and Bill 108 to give victims access to sexual assault evidence kits. In addition to these struggles, women still earn lower incomes than men do in Ontario. We need to level the playing field and give women the chance to fully contribute to society.

1130

In 2018, the Ontario Liberal government passed the Pay Transparency Act, which is a great instrument to promote gender parity and equal opportunity by requiring transparency about workplace practices. Unfortunately, the government never allowed it to take effect.

What is the government doing to ensure transparency about the practice of sexism in the workplace?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues.

Hon. Jane McKenna: Our Premier and our government cares about making sure women are getting paid equally for the work that they do. One example would be women in the trades: equity in skilled trades, good-paying jobs. And because of our Premier and our government are rebuilding Ontario's economy, there's 36,600 more women working since the pre-pandemic. We are addressing core issues that will help close this gap, and I'll repeat those in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Women in Ontario make 89 cents for every \$1 a man makes. The Pay Transparency Act would have exposed the worst wrongdoers who are denying women workplace advancement.

Women are too often passed over for promotions that they deserve because there is still a presumption that they are less qualified for leadership roles. If we want to change this pattern, we need to have measures of accountability on pay equity practices. All the government had to do to address this discrimination was follow through with an existing law, the Pay Transparency Act. Why did the government hit the brakes and say no to implementing this legislation?

Hon. Jane McKenna: Our government is dedicated to supporting equal pay for work of equal value. This is why we have been working diligently on empowering women and providing women supports to make sure that they have all the resources to enter and re-enter the workforce. We are breaking barriers for women and breaking stigmas around women so that they feel free to pursue male-dominant jobs, such as the ones in skilled trades and STEM that I spoke about earlier. They're well-paying jobs.

We also know that pay equity is a problem, which is why we introduced the Supporting Retention in Public Services Act, an act to ensure that the existing pay equity gaps are not widened and to help employers meet their obligations when it comes to pay equity. I would also like to say that we have the Pay Equity Office in place to ensure that we have a functioning and strong complaints system in place.

We will continue to stand for empowering women and have put together the women's task force.

SPECIAL-NEEDS CHILDREN

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: My question is to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. There's currently a growing demand for services for children and youth with special needs. Statistics show when children in Ontario begin school, almost 30% have at least one developmental vulnerability that could pose a risk to their lifelong health, learning abilities and behaviour. Statistics like this show there is a great need for support for children and youth with special needs. In 2020, over 110,000 children and youth received rehabilitation services including occupational therapy, physiotherapy and speech-language pathology across Ontario through children's treatment centres in community-based settings.

So my question, Mr. Speaker, through you is: What is this government doing to make it easier for children with special needs to gain access to the care they require?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa West–Nepean.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Thank you to the member from Carleton for asking such an important question.

When I was first elected, I had the chance to visit CHEO services for children with special needs in our hometown of Ottawa. I was already personally familiar with many of these facilities. While these services are staffed by an incredible team, they are currently scattered across disparate and outdated facilities. Our government got to work, driven by a commitment to make services for our kids with special needs better and more accessible.

And I was so proud, Speaker, when in last year's budget, our government announced that we would be fully funding a new 200,000-square-foot building for CHEO to better serve these kids. This new multi-story building, called 1Door4Care, will reduce the need for families to have to travel to multiple facilities to gain access to these critical treatment and rehabilitation services.

I'll have more to say about 1Door4Care in the supplementary.

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

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Thank you very much to the member for that response.

Speaker, this government has announced that over the span of four years, we will invest an additional \$240 million in funding to reduce wait-lists and build additional service capacity for early childhood intervention and rehabilitation services for children and youth with special needs. This investment is addressing the critical needs of children and youth with special needs. Such support for children with special needs and actions like this investment set up these children to have the best outcomes for their health and happiness.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, my question for the minister is, what benefits and services will this new treatment centre provide for children?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Thank you to the member for that question. For children with multiple or complex special needs, the 1Door4Care building will bring together teams

of professionals under one roof to support children with special needs through a coordinated plan of care. 1Door4Care will help reduce wait times for services so that more children and youth can receive these important services. It will address capacity issues so there's more space available for service delivery, and it will bring together teams of professionals working together under one roof to support children with special needs.

CHEO currently provides these services in eight locations across the eastern Ontario region, which can make it difficult for families and providers to coordinate services and support for children and youth as they grow into adulthood. We are making special-needs supports more accessible through this investment. Speaker, I am so proud to have been part of a government that made this project a reality after 10 years of CHEO working to make this possible.

PAY EQUITY

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: The gender wage gap is the widest in female-dominated professions in the health care sector. These are the jobs that have borne the brunt of the pandemic. The jobs that are absolutely critical to Ontario's recovery from COVID-19 are the jobs where women's labour is most undervalued and most underpaid.

Instead of closing the gender wage gap, this government is doubling down on old legislation like Bill 124, which forces a 1% cap on female-dominated work. This government is doubling down with new legislation like Bill 106, which overrides public sector workers' pay equity rights.

Through you, Speaker: Premier, this is a question from women working in Niagara's nursing homes, hospital workers and my past colleagues at Hotel Dieu Shaver hospital—why is this government so committed to low-wage policies that keep women's wages down?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues.

Hon. Jane McKenna: We are dedicated to ensuring that pay is determined by work, and that equal work has equal pay, regardless of all other factors. We have recently introduced legislation, the Supporting Retention in Public Services Act, which helped address pay equity gaps.

Yet it is important to mention that our government is not only focused on addressing pay equity, but we are fighting hard to empower women. Our government is also working diligently on supporting women. We are investing \$117.3 million in employment and training supports so women have access to training for in-demand skills and have opportunities to connect with employees looking to grow their businesses.

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

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: When I look at the landscape of Niagara health care leadership, these are positions held by women. The vast majority of our hospital workers, nurses, long-term-care staff, home care staff and nearly all Niagara health care workers are represented by

female leadership in Niagara. Fixing these pay equity gaps for women is not only about supporting women's work, it is also supporting the results of that work for families.

When we don't meaningfully address pay equity in health care, then we really are not meaningfully closing the gaps of hospital wait times or quality of care for our loved ones.

Speaker, to the Premier: Why are you moving backwards with legislation that keeps the wages of these health care workers down when these female-dominated health care workers are the ones who continue to carry us through this pandemic?

Hon. Jane McKenna: Let me first be clear that the Liberals and the NDP did zero, nothing, to close these gaps for women—like, nothing; absolutely nothing.

1140

Through this pandemic, as I've said before, there was a permanent raise to 158,000 personal and direct support workers. These front-line heroes are found in hospitals and in long-term care. Since October 2020, we have invested over \$1.3 billion, again, to attract and retain health care workers through the wage enhancement. This was just one measure found in our government's Pandemic and Emergency Preparedness Act, a bill introduced to ensure our province would be able to act where it's most needed and to support public services.

PAY EQUITY EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. Mike Schreiner: My question is for the Premier. Today is Equal Pay Day. In Ontario, the gender wage gap is an unacceptably high 30%. What that means is, on average, women in this province have been working for free up until today, because, on average, they earn less than 30% of the average man. The wage gap is even higher for women of colour, at 40% to 46%. Experts say that pay transparency is a key tool to addressing the wage gap, but one of the first things the government did on taking office was to say no to the Pay Transparency Act.

Speaker, I want to give the government an opportunity—and I think women deserve a clear yes or no answer—will the Premier say yes to closing the gender wage gap by immediately restoring the Pay Transparency Act?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Look, I can say this: I appreciate that today is the day that there is a focus on that, but in this government pay equity and issues surrounding women are every day for us.

I have the actual honour of sitting in a cabinet and a caucus full of strong women who, every single day, whether it's at the cabinet table or at the caucus table, advocate on behalf of women and, frankly, in a Legislature surrounded by strong women who do the exact same thing. We all want the same thing, I believe. I think we would all agree that if you do work, you should be paid the same amount as somebody else doing the exact same job. I can't

imagine anybody would disagree with that. I'm a father of two girls, Mr. Speaker, and I can tell you this: I won't be leaving this place, I won't be leaving advocacy for them until it is the same for everybody.

The member opposite has my word that we will continue as a government to do everything we possibly can to set aside the failures of the last 15 years where the Liberals did literally nothing on this, Mr. Speaker. We will set that aside, and we will continue to move forward, because it is important to the province of Ontario for a strong Ontario with economic activity like we've never seen. We have to have women involved in that. And, yes, we will continue to work to ensure that women get paid the same as any man who does the job. Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, I can say, in this caucus, women do the job a lot better than some of us men and they deserve that recognition.

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Speaker, I don't know if I got the clarity I was looking for. I did hear the House leader say yes, so I'm hoping that is yes to bringing back the Pay Transparency Act.

While we're on that, let's give the government an opportunity to be really clear with women on a few other issues. Manitoba understands that early childhood educators deserve \$25 an hour. Ontario doesn't seem to get that because they're saying \$18 an hour. Health care heroes get it: By having their wages capped at 1% when inflation is at 5%, that means predominantly women front-line workers are actually taking a pay cut.

While the government is in the mood of saying yes or no, Speaker, I'd like to ask another yes or no question. Will the government commit to paying ECEs \$25 an hour, and will the government commit to repealing Bill 124 so women front-line health care workers can negotiate fair wages?

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

Hon. Stephen Lecce: What we can commit to doing is increasing wages by \$1 each year to \$25 over the course of this mandate. We are hiring 14,700 more ECEs to support families.

What we're also doing to support women, which was left out of the question, is the fact that this Progressive Conservative government is delivering affordable child care: \$10-a-day care by year 2025 and a 25% immediate reduction—it's retroactive to April—rising to 50% on average by Christmas of this year. That's going to make a big difference for women's economic participation in the economy. It's going to support affordability, increase access. These are things all governments, politicians for a generation have spoken about. Our government is getting it done.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'm not sure if you've noticed, but the official opposition is marking Equal Pay Day with an

all-women lineup of questions, and I have a question for the Premier.

Last week, I told this government that without a commitment to renewed funding, the Best Care program for chronic disease management would have to send layoff notices to its 30 staff. Best Care has changed the lives of 10,000 patients in London and southwestern Ontario who are living with chronic diseases like COPD, asthma and heart failure. It has reduced emergency room visits by 63%, hospitalizations by 60% and urgent physician visits by 50%, representing \$10 million in health care savings over the three years since it opened.

Speaker, why is this government ignoring urgent calls from Best Care board chair Dr. Cathy Faulds and allowing the program to fold?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader to respond.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Look, Mr. Speaker, I guess I would just say this: I hope one day that if my daughters ever replace me in this chamber, they'll never have to get up and remind me that it has been all women asking questions. I think that is where we have to get to in the province of Ontario. I think that question itself highlights the work that still needs to be done in the province of Ontario.

Interjections.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I know the opposition is upset, but what that really is, is an indication that we have more work to do, and if we have more work to do, let's get at it.

With the program the member opposite is talking about, look, we have put so many significant resources into ensuring the best quality of care across the province of Ontario. It is what we had to do right from the beginning. We were left with a health care system that was not able to keep up with the demands of the people of the province of Ontario. The very same things that they are critical of are what are allowing us to make these important investments, whether it's long-term care, whether it's rebuilding hospitals across the province, whether it's hiring 8,000 nurses, 27,000 additional PSWs, bringing care into communities that have never had it before—we will continue on that work because it's important for the people of Ontario.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Best Care has made a huge difference in improving outcomes for patients, but time has run out to save it. After I asked my question last week, Dr. Faulds received a call from the Minister of Health's office assuring her that the government is looking at funding. I talked to the Minister of Health later, who said she would follow up. I sent the minister an urgent email yesterday. The response? Crickets.

The Best Care board is meeting tonight. Termination notices must go out tomorrow for the board to meet its legal severance obligations. The 30 respiratory technologists and nurses who work for Best Care will lose their jobs. Speaker, will this government contact Dr. Faulds today and confirm that Best Care funding will be renewed?

Hon. Paul Calandra: I think the member indicated in her question that the minister had already reached out, Speaker. We are going to continue, though, as I said, ensuring that we have the best quality of health care, whether it's in London, whether it's in any part of the province. I know that in Niagara region, we're building additional hospitals. We're bringing 8,000 nurses. We're building a medical school in Brampton, a medical school in Scarborough.

I am told—somebody can correct me if I'm wrong—that our medical schools are graduating more women than men now. So when we look at where we can improve services, it will be strong women who are at the forefront of delivering these services that the member talks about.

The one thing that we need to do to ensure this continues, Mr. Speaker—the reigniting and the unleashing of the Ontario economy, which allows us to support health, long-term care, education—is to re-elect a strong, stable Progressive Conservative majority government on June 2, or we risk all of that.

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. Stephen Blais: Today marks Equal Pay Day, a day that is dedicated to raising awareness about the gender pay gap, because women deserve to earn the same pay as men for doing the same work—period, Mr. Speaker. But women also deserve to work in an environment where they are free of harassment and abuse, and one where actions so egregious as these would warrant losing your job.

It has been over a month since my private member's bill, Bill 10, Stopping Harassment and Abuse by Local Leaders Act, passed second reading unanimously. We don't have much time left to get this bill passed into law. I'm urging the government to fast-track Bill 10 through committee so that there's enough time to debate it and vote on it before the end of the session.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs has said that this is a non-partisan issue, and I agree. Will the government commit to expediting Bill 10 through committee and back for third reading before we break for the election?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Again, private members' business is just that: It is business that is brought forward by members, and they have to have a ballot date in order to discuss that bill. It is something that we work on. Again, I say to the member opposite, as I have said to the previous member, if there is an opportunity to switch your ballot date with somebody else to bring forward a piece of legislation that you think is very, very important, please do so.

At the same time, obviously we want safe workplaces in the province of Ontario. I don't think anybody on either of the side House would disagree with that. That is why we've ensured that we have resources in place to do that. I know that that Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has been working with the AMO round table, I know that the Minister of Children and Women's Issues

has also been working on this, Mr. Speaker. We will continue to work with our municipal partners to ensure the highest standards for elected officials across the board so that all workplaces can be safe.

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

Mr. Stephen Blais: As was noted, I did use my ballot date. We're asking for a hearing at committee and fast-tracking it to approval.

The government has consulted municipal leaders on this issue. They were heralded in media across the province for vowing to strengthen codes of conduct, and yet nothing came of it. The Association of Municipalities of Ontario supports a mechanism for removal from office, so do Ontario's big city mayors. The city of Ottawa has called for such a mechanism. The city of Barrie has called for such a mechanism. Yesterday at the Good Roads Conference, I heard from the Women's Caucus of Middlesex County that they support a mechanism for removal from office.

We are running out of time to get this issue addressed. This is a non-partisan issue. Will the government commit to supporting victims of workplace violence and harassment by passing Bill 10 before the House adjourns for the election? Let's get it done.

Hon. Paul Calandra: We're going to continue working on issues and ensuring safe workplaces, not just in the days before an election. We've been doing it since the start of our mandate back in 2018 and we will continue to do it after June 2. This is not something that we look at in the dying days of the Legislative Assembly and say, "Let's bring it to the table now because we want to campaign on it." It is something the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has been working on with his municipal partners. The minister for women's issues also consulted on this broadly, and we're going to do something that we get right.

Now, the member opposite of course talks about a situation in Ottawa while he was a municipal councillor in Ottawa. It is a terrible situation and something that we want to ensure never happens again, but that leadership also can come from individuals who serve on councils in communities across the province of Ontario. You don't always have to wait for the provincial government to do something. We have rules in place, we have laws in place, but you should also take responsibility when you have the opportunity—

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

The member for Orléans has informed me he has a point of order.

Mr. Stephen Blais: On a point of order, I would like to seek unanimous consent to expedite passage of Bill 10, Stopping Harassment and Abuse by Local Leaders Act, 2022, to third reading so we can have justice for the victims of abuse by local leaders.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Member for Orléans is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to

expedite the passage of Bill 10 by calling it for third reading. That was the intent. Agreed? I heard a no.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Attorney General has a point of order.

Hon. Doug Downey: My point of order has to do with the pages. I just wanted to point out when I was a page, "Bow Tie Bill" was sitting right where the member for Peterborough–Kawartha is.

I just want to do a shout-out to the page captains today, Brianna, Jackson and Molly. Molly's parents and grandmother are in the House today.

FRED ALLISON

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Peterborough–Kawartha has a point of order.

Mr. Dave Smith: I want to wish a happy 100th birthday today to Fred Allison, the grandfather of one of my constituent assistants Julie Chatten.

DEFERRED VOTES

TAX RELIEF AT THE PUMPS ACT, 2022

LOI DE 2022 SUR L'ALLÈGEMENT DE LA TAXE À LA POMPE

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 111, An Act to amend the Fuel Tax Act and the Gasoline Tax Act with respect to a temporary reduction to the tax payable on certain clear fuel and on gasoline / Projet de loi 111, Loi modifiant la Loi de la taxe sur les carburants et la Loi de la taxe sur l'essence en ce qui concerne la réduction temporaire de la taxe à payer sur certains types de carburant incolore et sur l'essence.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1154 to 1159.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members will please take their seats.

On April 11, 2022, Mr. Parsa moved third reading of Bill 111, An Act to amend the Fuel Tax Act and the Gasoline Tax Act with respect to a temporary reduction to the tax payable on certain clear fuel and on gasoline.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be counted by the Clerk.

Ayes

Babikian, Aris	Harris, Mike	Pettapiece, Randy
Bailey, Robert	Hogarth, Christine	Piccini, David
Barrett, Toby	Jones, Sylvia	Rasheed, Kaleed
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Kanapathi, Logan	Roberts, Jeremy
Bouma, Will	Ke, Vincent	Romano, Ross
Calandra, Paul	Kramp, Daryl	Sabawy, Sheref
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Lecce, Stephen	Skelly, Donna

Cho, Stan	MacLeod, Lisa	Smith, Dave
Clark, Steve	McKenna, Jane	Smith, Todd
Crawford, Stephen	McNaughton, Monte	Tibollo, Michael A.
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Miller, Norman	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Downey, Doug	Mulroney, Caroline	Wai, Daisy
Dunlop, Jill	Oosterhoff, Sam	Walker, Bill
Fullerton, Merrilee	Pang, Billy	Yakabuski, John
Ghamari, Goldie	Parsa, Michael	

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be counted by the Clerk.

Nays

Andrew, Jill	Karpoche, Bhutila	Stiles, Marit
Begum, Doly	Mamakwa, Sol	Taylor, Monique
Burch, Jeff	Morrison, Suze	Vanthof, John
Fife, Catherine	Sattler, Peggy	West, Jamie
Gélinas, France	Schreiner, Mike	
Hassan, Faisal	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 44; the nays are 16.

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

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

Hon. Paul Calandra: On a point of order, Speaker? I regret that we were so excited by cutting taxes that the Liberals probably didn't hear that it was their turn to vote and didn't have a chance to rise, so I'm prepared to allow them to rise now—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That's not a valid point of order.

Mr. John Fraser: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): What's the point of order?

Mr. John Fraser: Well, we didn't hear the Minister of Finance actually say what he was going to do with the pension assets yet, so we didn't feel like we could vote.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Nor is that a valid point of order.

This House stands in recess until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1203 to 1500.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Mr. Will Bouma: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Valerie Quioc Lim): Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill 106, An Act to enact two Acts and amend various other Acts.

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

Report adopted.

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

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated April 12, 2022, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 111(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE POLICY

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Justice Policy and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Valerie Quioc Lim): Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill 100, An Act to enact legislation to protect access to certain transportation infrastructure.

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

Report adopted.

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

PETITIONS

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Jill Andrew: This petition is entitled a petition "To Raise Social Assistance Rates.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's social assistance rates are well below Canada's official Market Basket Measure poverty line and woefully inadequate to cover the basic costs of food and rent;

"Whereas individuals on the Ontario Works program receive just \$733 per month and individuals on the Ontario Disability Support Program receive just \$1,169 per month, only 41% and 65% of the poverty line;

"Whereas the Ontario government has not increased social assistance rates since 2018, and Canada's inflation rate in January 2022 was 5.1%, the highest rate in 30 years;

"Whereas the government of Canada recognized through the CERB program that a 'basic income' of \$2,000 per month was the standard support required by individuals who lost their employment during the pandemic;

“We, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly to increase social assistance rates to a base of \$2,000 per month for those on Ontario Works and to increase other programs accordingly.”

I’m affixing my signature to the petition and will hand it to Stanley for the table. Thank you, Stanley.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Linda Benoit from Foleyet in my riding for these petitions. They contain 240 names from Foleyet and Ivanhoe Lake, which is every single adult population in those two communities. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board is considering removing the paramedics and ambulance services ... from the community of Foleyet. This service is vital, paramedics are front-line heroes in emergencies and often the reason people in life-threatening situations survive, because of the quick and responsive actions they are trained to take under pressure. If this social service is removed, the community of Foleyet and the surrounding area will be at risk in the case of an emergency due to the extended travel and wait time to access medical services through Chapleau or Timmins;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“We, the undersigned, are in opposition of the removal and relocation of the ambulance and paramedic services ... in Foleyet, Ontario. We want the emergency medical service in Foleyet to remain in full operation to service Foleyet and the surrounding area.”

I fully agree with this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Emily to bring it to the Clerk.

AGRESSION SEXUELLE

M^{me} Lucille Collard: « À l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario :

« Attendu que 39 % des hôpitaux et des centres de santé de l’Ontario contactés par She Matters tout au long de l’étude sur l’accessibilité des trousse médico-légales pour agression sexuelle ont déclaré qu’ils n’avaient pas de trousse d’agression sexuelle à la disposition des survivant(e)s;

« Attendu que de nombreux hôpitaux n’ont pas d’infirmières ou de médecins formés pour administrer la trousse de preuves d’agression sexuelle et une formation spécialisée est nécessaire pour recueillir des preuves sans traumatiser davantage le ou la survivant(e);

« Attendu qu’il n’est pas obligatoire dans les écoles d’infirmières et de médecine d’apprendre la collecte de preuves d’agression sexuelle et de nombreux collègues facturent des frais au-delà des frais de scolarité traditionnels pour les étudiants en soins infirmiers qui souhaitent suivre un cours pour infirmière examinatrice en matière d’agression sexuelle le week-end;

« Nous, soussignés, demandons à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario ce qui suit :

« Adopter le projet de loi 108, Loi de 2022 sur l’accès aux trousse médico-légales en cas d’agression sexuelle et la dispense de formation sur les agressions sexuelles, qui modifierait la Loi de 2000 favorisant le choix et l’excellence au niveau postsecondaire pour obliger les personnes qui décernent des diplômes en soins infirmiers en vertu de cette loi à fournir une formation gratuite d’infirmière examinatrice en matière d’agressions aux étudiantes en soins infirmiers et qui modifierait la Loi sur les hôpitaux publics pour exiger que les hôpitaux aient en tout temps au moins 10 trousse médico-légales en cas d’agression sexuelle à la disposition des patients et qu’ils les fournissent gratuitement aux patients qui en ont besoin. »

Je suis d’accord avec cette pétition, je vais la signer et la remettre au page Rhythm.

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Miss Monique Taylor: I have a petition to save eye care in Ontario:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I wholeheartedly support this petition, will affix my name to it and send it with Brianna to the Clerk.

PROTECTION OF PRIVACY

Mr. Rick Nicholls: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario is planning to introduce a comprehensive digital ID program that will centralize every citizen’s personal, financial, business, medical and social information, and assign them an identification under this system;

“Whereas central banks in Canada and around the world are already developing digital currencies to replace paper and coin money, and these digital currencies will be integrated into any digital ID program;

“Whereas the dangers that this new program poses to upholding civil liberties and privacy rights, and the clear opportunities for abuse of governmental authority it

presents in terms of surveillance and compelled behaviour, using access to basic resources as a tool of coercion, are ominous. They point toward a progression to a dystopian Communist Chinese-style social credit system;

“Whereas some Canadian citizens have already experienced such coercion through seized property and frozen bank accounts in retaliation for their having supported the freedom convoy protest, those acts having been justified by provincial and federal governments under the imposition of the Emergencies Act and a declared state of emergency in Ontario;

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

“(1) Insist that principles of data minimization, decentralization, consent, and limited access must be upheld in Ontario even as our world becomes increasingly digitized;

“(2) Demand that there be zero tolerance for the implementation of any digital ID program in Ontario, and that any government endeavour seeking to establish a system akin to the social credit system of Communist China be condemned, halted, and banned.”

I agree with this petition, will sign it and give it to page Pallas.

1510

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Jill Andrew: This petition is titled “Protect Ontario’s Universal Public Health Care and Say No to Privatization.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas deep spending cuts in public health care by the Liberal and Conservative governments pushed Ontario’s sector to the brink of collapse;

“Whereas the government has expanded the capacity of ‘independent health facilities’ to become private hospitals in order to address the procedure backlog, rather than make the needed investments into our public health care sector;

“Whereas privatized health care is more expensive and provides inferior care, as documented in numerous studies that show worse health outcomes for patients and higher spending for taxpayers;

“Whereas health care is a human right that must be equally accessible to all Ontarians, not just those who can afford it;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately stop the expansion of independent health facilities into private hospitals and reinvest in Ontario’s public health care and hospitals, including the recruitment and retention of its workers, to protect universal health care for all Ontarians.”

I excitedly agree with this petition. I’ve affixed my signature, and I will hand it over to Molly for tabling.

ORGAN DONATION

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Ksania Michlouski from Dowling in my riding for these petitions.

“Saving Organs to Save Lives.

“Whereas Ontario has one of the best organ transplant programs in the world;

“Whereas there are currently 1,600 people waiting for a life-saving organ transplant in Ontario;

“Whereas every three days someone in Ontario dies because they can’t get the transplant in time;

“Whereas” donation of “organs and tissue can save up to eight lives and improve the lives of up to 75 people;

“Whereas 90% of Ontarians support organ donation, but only 36% of us are registered;

“Whereas Nova Scotia has seen” an increase “in organs and tissue for transplant after implementing a presumed consent legislation in January 2020;”

They “petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“Change the legislation to allow a donor system based on presumed consent as set out in MPP Gélinas’s Bill 107, Peter Kormos Memorial Act (Saving Organs to Save Lives).”

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

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Jill Andrew: This petition is titled “Take Profit Out of Ontario’s Care System and Reinvest in Public and Non-Profit Care.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas aging Ontarians deserve dignified, culturally responsive, inclusive, and affirming care;

“Whereas the for-profit long-term care model is proven to provide inferior care compared to non-profit or public models, as the needs of investors are put ahead of the needs of residents and workers;

“Whereas COVID-19 made clear the deep cracks of our long-term care sector as the Conservative and Liberal governments expanded for-profit care to appease their political donors;

“Whereas the documented wilful negligence of for-profit long-term care operators went unpenalized and rather, incentivized through licence extensions by this” Conservative “government;

“Whereas 90% of Ontarians 55 and older say they would rather age in place at home than be placed in long-term care as a more dignified and fiscally responsible option to receiving the care they need;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to remove profit from our care system by placing a permanent moratorium on for-profit operating licences and reinvesting in public long-term care and home care, including infrastructure and recruitment and retention of staff.”

Again, I am enthusiastically agreeing with this petition. I’ve affixed my signature and I’m handing it over to a page for tabling.

FRONT-LINE WORKERS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Sharon Colwell from Lively in my riding for these petitions.

“Make PSW a Career....

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

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

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

They “petition the Legislative Assembly ... as follows:

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

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

OPTOMETRY SERVICES

Ms. Jill Andrew: This petition is called “Petition to Save Eye Care in Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I absolutely support this petition. Eye health is health. I’m going to hand it over to Callum for tabling. Thank you.

LAND USE PLANNING

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Dr. David Rosen from Mississauga for these petitions.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment Ontario regional committee ... is concerned that the health risks outweigh any potential benefits from Highway 413 and the Bradford Bypass; and

“Whereas highways are associated with increased air pollution (which was estimated to cause 6,600 premature Ontarian deaths in 2016) due to increased vehicle use as well as urban sprawl...; and

“Whereas increased driving combined with loss of green space, agricultural land, and wetland carbon sinks

will escalate Ontario’s greenhouse gas emissions thereby worsening the climate crisis...; and

“Whereas the environmental impacts of the Bradford Bypass may potentially threaten the health of the surrounding communities including Indigenous communities; and

“Whereas Ontarians deserve high-quality and easy access to nature for their physical and mental health as supported by the Canadian Medical Association;”

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Representing” the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, ask the government “to halt Highway 413 and the Bradford Bypass and invest instead in the health of Ontarians through integrated community planning, zero-emission public transportation, green spaces, walking and cycling infrastructure and sustainable farming. We also ask that the Ontario government ... avoid working in separate silos and rather, work together to optimally accomplish these goals...”

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

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Pursuant to standing order 7(e), I wish to inform the House that tonight’s evening meeting is cancelled.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PANDEMIC AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS ACT, 2022

LOI DE 2022 SUR LA PRÉPARATION AUX PANDÉMIES ET AUX SITUATIONS D’URGENCE

Mr. Sarkaria moved third reading of the following bill:
Bill 106, An Act to enact two Acts and amend various other Acts / Projet de loi 106, Loi visant à édicter deux lois et à modifier diverses autres lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Further debate?
1520

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Off the top, I would like to note that I will be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant and the member for Mississauga–Lakeshore, who has done an incredible job over the past couple of weeks in supporting this piece of legislation as well. I want to thank him for all of his work.

As the President of the Treasury Board and minister responsible for Ontario’s plan to stay open, it is my pleasure to rise in the House today for the third reading of the Pandemic and Emergency Preparedness Act. Mr. Speaker, as you and everyone else across the province know, Ontario has made significant progress in the fight against COVID-19 across Ontario. That is why I am pleased to share that our government’s plan to stay open will protect this progress. It will protect the systems and sectors that

make up our province, and it will protect the health and safety of the families, businesses and people of Ontario now and into the future.

As we all too well know, the past two years have been unlike anything that Ontarians have ever experienced. When the province first declared the state of emergency in March 2020, our government committed to taking all the necessary steps to protect the health and safety of Ontarians, because there was no one in this province, nor around the globe, who was unaffected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Frankly, there was too much pain, too many loved ones lost, and too many jobs and businesses gone. One day, we were reading about the first positive cases in Canada, and the next day our health care system was on the brink. In only a very few weeks, patients and need far outnumbered the hospital spaces available to care for them. Crowded corridors were, in too many settings, the only option, leaving loved ones shocked, disoriented and confused. Front-line workers were forced to put themselves at risk because there were limited critical supplies available.

Very quickly and early on in the fight against COVID-19, one thing became clear: Historically, Ontario had not done enough to protect and prepare the province for a crisis. Decades of mismanagement and ignored warning calls led to our province's health care system not being ready for such a massive shock.

When it comes to ignored warning calls, one needs not to look any further beyond the fact that COVID-19 was not the first virus outbreak that impacted Ontario. Many of us remember SARS. Even then, this Ontario needed more capacity, Ontario needed more resources, and Ontario needed to be better prepared to respond to events like pandemics and other emergencies. Instead, Ontarians were left with no support.

Businesses across the province, the engines of our economic growth and job creation, suffered trying to stay open. The people of Ontario scrambled trying to keep their loved ones safe. Whether it was N95 masks to protective gloves, Ontario faced shortages of critical supplies because stockpiles were found expired and depleted under the previous government's watch.

As our province went through the harshest stages of the pandemic, significant and long-standing gaps across our health care system were exposed, gaps that should never have been allowed to leave so many vulnerable for so long.

Anxiety, angst and unease weighed on everyone as the crisis prevailed. That is why our government got to work right away to address the long-standing problems plaguing our system. We made historic and unprecedented investments in priority areas, including our health care sector. We moved swiftly and safely to protect Ontarians and, as Premier Ford has said many times—it bears repeating here—our government has not spared a single penny to protect the health and safety of Ontario.

While we continue to build on this progress, we know that more needs to be done. That is why I am honoured to stand here today and introduce the third reading of the Pandemic and Emergency Preparedness Act. The proposed

legislation represents our plan to stay open—the first comprehensive post-COVID-19 pandemic preparedness plan in Canada. If passed, it will help us to build on all progress to date and maintain our momentum to ensure Ontario is ready and resilient in the future.

Mr. Speaker, the Pandemic and Emergency Preparedness Act is built on the following three pillars: expanding Ontario's health workforce, shoring up domestic production of critical supplies and building more hospital beds. In addition, there are several initiatives and legislative pieces that fall outside of these pillars, which exist in another category of their own. These initiatives are designed to protect our ongoing progress by increasing capacity in Ontario's health care system, strengthening government-wide coordination for emergency response, and streamlining policies that are needed to safeguard Ontario for the future. Altogether, these initiatives will help our government to continue strengthening Ontario, looking to the future and saying yes to building Ontario into the best place in the world to do business, work and raise a family.

It is my pleasure to outline these pillars of the plan once again here today. But before I do that, I would like to take a few moments to thank the people of this province, the people who have exemplified the Ontario spirit that saw our province through the darkest days of COVID-19 and will now see us to a brighter and more prosperous future.

I would also like to thank my fellow caucus members for their significant efforts over the past two years. Mr. Speaker, when it was time to say yes and make the decisions that would position Ontario for success, my colleagues were there. Finally, I would also like to sincerely express my gratitude for my fellow members who have partnered on this extensive plan.

Ontario's health human resources represent exceptionally skilled, committed, and well-trained professionals. However, for years the province didn't invest in the staff they needed for Ontario's health care system to work as best as possible. That is why, Mr. Speaker, the first pillar of the Pandemic and Emergency Preparedness Act details the expansion of Ontario's health workforce.

The pandemic only underlined what we all know: Protecting the health and safety of every person in Ontario starts with protecting our front-line health care heroes. Ontario's health care workers sacrifice so much to provide patients across the province with the world-class medical care they need and deserve. We cannot thank enough our health care heroes for their dedication, yet we can ensure that they are safe and that they continue to be supported. This is precisely why our government is working hard to ensure that our health care workers are well equipped with adequate health human resources.

1530

Mr. Speaker, before I detail this pillar any further, I would like to thank the Minister of Health and the Minister of Colleges and Universities and their respective offices for the hours they put in to meeting the needs of the people of Ontario, including our health care workers. Ontario has recently heard about some of the incredible work these ministries are doing. Now I will overview how that work

is fortifying our health care human resources workforce across this province.

Earlier this month, our government announced a historic investment of \$763 million to help retain nurses across the health care sector. These funds are providing Ontario's nurses with a lump sum retention incentive of up to \$5,000 per person. Through this support, we are helping to stabilize the nursing workforce and build a stronger, more resilient health care system in Ontario.

A key part of providing Ontarians with the high-quality patient care they need when and where they need it is having a health care system that is able to meet new challenges head-on. Our health care system has been Ontario's first line of defence throughout the pandemic, and we have the opportunity to ensure it remains the best line of defence in any future emergency or pandemic. But building a world-class health care system is not possible without our front-line health care heroes, who are quite simply the very core of this system. That is why Ontario's Plan to Stay Open features several ways for us to continue bolstering our health human resources. I'd love to give the House a couple of these examples.

Our plan includes the expansion of medical schools across this province. Through this expansion, we are adding 295 postgraduate seats and 160 undergraduate seats over the next five years. This represents the largest expansion of Ontario medical school seats in more than a decade, and it could not have come at a better time. It will add medical school seats across the province and across many institutions. It will also create the new Ryerson medical school in Brampton. It will also add the new University of Toronto Scarborough Academy of Medicine and Integrated Health in Scarborough. Queen's Lakeridge Health campus is another additional medical school that will be created. And, Mr. Speaker, we're almost doubling the amount of doctors that will be able to graduate from the Northern Ontario School of Medicine. This expansion will improve access to family and specialty physicians and other health care professionals across this province. It will also help to address the staffing issues that plagued the province at the height of the pandemic.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also very pleased to detail how our plan seeks to cut red tape from within Ontario's health human resources workforce. To help bolster our number of health care workers, we are making it easier and quicker for foreign-credentialed health care workers to begin practising in Ontario. This will help by reducing barriers to registering and being recognized by health regulatory colleges. These steps will once again help to address staffing challenges and enable talented, resourceful individuals to contribute to the workforce and use this training and expertise to care for the people of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed red tape within Ontario health teams that, if reduced, would improve how they work together. The province currently has 51 separate Ontario health teams that recognize and organize health care services for patients across Ontario. By amending the Personal Health Information Protection Act from within this omnibus legislation, we can better

integrate Ontario health teams across this province. Integrating these teams and the community care they provide will ensure that Ontario's health care system, including its hospitals, doctors, and home and community care providers, can, at long last, work together as one coordinated team wherever they provide care.

This amendment exemplifies the efficiencies we are finding within this province. Through these efficiencies, we are strengthening local health care services and making it easier for patients to navigate these services and systems. Ontario will no longer run into undue burdens and regulations when changing health care providers.

The amendment will also better prepare the province's health care providers to respond to any future emergencies. We will do this by allowing them to securely access patient information when needed, without facing unnecessary barriers within the sector. This is a critical part of delivering the high-quality patient care Ontarians need, when and where they need it.

Another initiative within this pillar of the plan, Mr. Speaker, is the Ontario Learn and Stay Grant. The grant is intended to provide crucial financial support to post-secondary students who enrol in high-priority programs such as health human resources and other critical care positions. It would also enhance the health care sector in the north through a commitment from graduates to work in underserved communities. Tracking to launch next spring, this program represents the Ontario-wide innovation and resiliency that we are working to increase.

In addition to the grant, we are launching a program continuing to build on the Community Commitment Program for Nurses. This new program is specifically designed to place new nursing graduates in communities of greatest need across the province. Through the program, an investment of \$81 million will go towards full tuition reimbursement to 3,000 nurse graduates over the next four years. This will help ensure that our system meets the needs of communities in every corner of Ontario. In return, these graduates will pledge to work in communities in need for a minimum of two years, with 1,500 starting early in 2022-23.

Together, the Ontario Learn and Stay Grant and the Community Commitment Program for Nurses will help us to grow Ontario's health workforce. These initiatives demonstrate how our government is bolstering the health human resources workforce, undertaking the most comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy in Ontario's history and improving Ontario's health care system. By implementing these initiatives, we also represent how our government is learning from this pandemic, which is why we understand that securing Ontario's preparation and readiness for the future does not end here.

1540

Mr. Speaker, now to speak on our second pillar, which speaks to shoring up production of critical supplies. After years of intense pressures facing the health sector and health technology sector, such as high taxes, limited domestic production and procurement and a shortage of highly skilled talent, to name but a few, many of Ontario's

life sciences companies have left the province. For years, the sector was not receiving the resources and support it needed to prosper. That is why the second pillar of the Pandemic and Emergency Preparedness Act specifically concerns shoring up the domestic production of critical supplies.

Reinvigorating the province's life sciences industry is vital to increasing that production. This important work begins with having the expertise that we can leverage right here in Ontario. Our government is building a life sciences sector that improves patient outcomes and will help Ontario thrive as a market leader in the health industry.

I am proud that Ontario is home to innovation that has led to many world-changing discoveries, one of the most famous examples being the discovery of life-saving insulin. But I strongly believe that we have the potential to build on this innovation, and so does the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade and his entire team.

Reinvigorating the life sciences sector begins with creating the right conditions to nurture and foster it. That is exactly why we are working together to establish Ontario as a global manufacturing and life sciences centre, one that takes the lead in the development, the commercialization and the early adoption of health products and services.

Mr. Speaker, Ontario has the largest life sciences sector in the nation. It provides 66,000 well-paying jobs to this province. Positioning the province to compete and excel in today's global economy will allow Ontario to utilize the strengths in the health care sector. It will also allow medical technology companies to produce much-needed life-saving solutions, such as vaccines, right here in Ontario. That is why our government is increasing Ontario's biomanufacturing capacity and boosting Ontario-made innovation through an impressive life sciences strategy. This new strategy will help close the gap that the COVID-19 pandemic exposed in the province's inability to nurture innovation in the health care sector. It will take the sector to the next level and make it clear that Ontario is a leading partner in developing the medicines, vaccines and health technologies of the future.

When the pandemic emerged, our government was left to find that the province's stockpile of PPE had expired and depleted under the previous government's watch. The policies of the last 15 years hollowed out our production capabilities, weakened our manufacturing sector and forced Ontario to rely on an uncertain foreign supply of PPE in a time of production shortages, imposed border restrictions and disarray. That is why the Minister of Government and Consumer Services and his office have introduced specific legislation and initiatives within the plan to stay open that will prepare Ontario for future crises.

As part of this legislation, the proposed Personal Protective Equipment Supply and Production Act would impose requirements for the province to maintain a robust supply of PPE and CSE. This legislative piece will also include the planning, procurement, storage, distribution and management of PPE and CSE. These critical supplies would be ready to be deployed in both emergent and non-emergent times. It would also be annually reported on and

publicly disclosed, and therefore provide Ontarians with another way of holding their government accountable.

While the last two years were dominated by stories of people pulling together, unfortunately there have also been those who looked to take advantage of a shortage of critical supplies. That is why this proposed legislative piece also includes a schedule to prohibit the resale of government-supplied PPE and CSE. This schedule would prevent product hoarding and ensure that those who would seek to take advantage of hard-working people face stiff penalties for their actions. It would make critical supplies accessible where they are needed most.

In addition to the proposed legislation, our plan to stay open also includes the creation of the made-in-Ontario PPE and CSE program. This program will reinforce the aforementioned legislation by building up our own stockpile of domestically produced critical supplies. It is a vital part of our plan that will safeguard our access to the critical supplies that families and businesses across Ontario rely on.

I will also highlight how we are investing in Ontario's production capacity. In addition to producing this legislative piece and launching the made-in-Ontario PPE and CSE program, in April 2020, our government launched the \$50-million Ontario Together Fund to help manufacturers retool their operations to produce supplies and equipment for the health care sector and front-line workers. In 2021-22, we doubled that investment, for a total of \$100 million.

We are investing in Ontario's expansive manufacturing capability wherever possible. This strategic way of supporting Ontario's businesses is yet another example of how our government's fiscal firepower has helped to meet the needs of Ontarians and how we are continually moving forward and preparing for the future. Our government is doing what previous governments failed to do: We are keeping a healthy stockpile of quality critical supplies to ensure the preparedness, safety and security of Ontarians for any emergency that will arise in the future. Never will our government leave Ontario in as precarious a position as the previous governments did.

Another key aspect of shoring up domestic production of critical supplies involves creating a robust process to secure safe and stable food. That is why our government is taking further steps to help build the agri-food sector's needs into our emergency preparedness planning. We are doing this by increasing sector capacity, strengthening the sector's labour force, and growing and succeeding in a globally competitive environment that builds a resilient supply chain from farm to fork.

Mr. Speaker, before I pass it to my colleague, I also want to very quickly touch on the third pillar—my colleague will also go into further detail—of this plan, which is building more hospital beds. It is a commitment by this government to make sure that, unlike previous governments, capital investments in the province of Ontario continue, as our government has promised over 3,000 new beds over the next 10 years—a \$30-billion commitment that our government has made because our previous

government failed to invest. This includes new hospitals in places like Windsor and communities like my own, in Brampton, which have been neglected by the previous Liberal government for so long. It also includes building one of the largest in Canada in cities like Mississauga. We will continue to build on the historic investments that we have made in the past two years and ensure that Ontario is always prepared for the future.

1550

It is now my pleasure to turn it over to PA Cuzzetto, who will outline the rest of our plan to stay open and this Pandemic and Emergency Preparedness Act legislation. Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The President of the Treasury Board did say that he would be sharing his time with his parliamentary assistant, so we turn to the member from Mississauga–Lakeshore.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: It's once again a great honour to rise in this House today in my role as parliamentary assistant to the President of the Treasury Board to speak in support of Bill 106, the Pandemic and Emergency Preparedness Act. Again, I would like to thank the President of the Treasury Board for the opportunity.

I would also like to thank the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and her team for all their efforts to develop and propose amendments to schedule 2 and schedule 3. Speaker, I'll begin with these two sections.

Proposed amendments to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Act would make it clear that the ministry's mandate includes providing advice and programs to safeguard and to sustain our food supply. This issue is another matter of the two guiding principles of the government of Ontario: transparency and accountability.

There should be no question when it comes to maintaining the safe and stable supply of food in Ontario. Food is a universal basic need. It feeds the children, the parents, the grandparents, the workers and the communities in every corner of Ontario. Ontarians should never have to worry about putting food on their table, especially not during a pandemic or any other emergency. That's why it must be a top priority to keep healthy and nutritious foods safe and accessible.

The proposed amendments in schedule 2 and schedule 3 would require the ministry to create a full report on the status of Ontario's food supply. This report process would include regular testing of all of the food supply system and related plans that the ministry has in place to respond to an emergency situation. Mandating these regular reports is just another way that our government is working towards province-wide preparedness.

Speaker, as you know, previous governments often failed to track how they were protecting Ontario. That's why we are not just mandating these regular reports, we are also making all reports on Ontario's food supply available to the public. The people deserve to know the truth about the reliability of our agri-food sector and about how prepared this government is to protect them in the

future. That is exactly how we're delivering on this commitment to accountability and transparency for the people of Ontario.

This report would provide valuable information to guide requests for surge capacity resources that may be needed to support a safe and stable food supply. As the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us, these are exactly the types of requests that are often made in emergencies.

Speaker, next, I'd like to draw your attention to the Ontario Food Terminal. As other members know, this is Canada's largest wholesale fruit and produce terminal. It ranks among the top four terminal markets in Canada and the US by volume of food distribution. As of March 2019, it distributes 2.1 billion pounds each year. This volume is equal to the average of 5.6 million pounds of food products distributed daily from this 40-acre site.

The Ontario Food Terminal is an essential crossroads for Ontario food supplies. As I mentioned at second reading, I was able to pick up fruits and vegetables at the terminal during the pandemic many times for local food banks, including the Compass and the Sai Dahm Food Banks. I'm highlighting this today because the terminal is owned and operated by the Ontario Food Terminal Board, which operates under the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

It's our government's responsibility to make sure the right steps are taken to ensure that the terminal is secure and sustainable. That's why the proposed amendments here in schedule 3 would change the Ontario Food Terminal Act to add a requirement that the board maintains and submits contingency plans for emergencies that could affect the operation of the Ontario Food Terminal, and authorizes the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs to direct the board to implement any emergency measures that are needed. In particular, schedule 3 would give the ministry the authority for alternative temporary locations for food terminal operations during an emergency. This would build the flexibility that we need into the government's plans, including backup plans and options, so that we're prepared for any future emergency. These amendments would not just help us meet the province's needs in an emergency, but they would also help build our ability to anticipate future emergencies too.

Speaker, these amendments would improve clarity and decisiveness. They would help cut some of the red tape that was the real challenge for our government at the beginning of this pandemic. They would support the ag food sector and prevent any disruptions in our access to healthy and high-quality food made right here in Ontario. Our government is bringing manufacturing jobs back to Ontario, including in the ag food sector, to keep shelves stocked with critical supplies for the future in every corner of Ontario.

Our commitment to preparing the people of Ontario, now and into the future, doesn't end there. Under the previous government, capital investment in our hospitals failed to meet the needs of Ontario. As a result, our government was left with hospitals that were not able to address the immediate and urgent need that came with the

COVID-19 pandemic. That's why the third pillar of the Pandemic and Emergency Preparedness Act is building more hospital beds.

In my role as parliamentary assistant to the President of the Treasury Board, I have had the great honour to help unleash the province's full fiscal firepower to protect the health and safety of all Ontarians. And now it is my pleasure to give you some examples of the record investments our government has made in Ontario's health and long-term care infrastructure.

Since the beginning of this pandemic, we have made record investments to create more hospital beds across Ontario and to finally end the chronic underinvestment of previous governments. In January 2021, we announced an investment of up to \$125 million to add more than 500 critical care and high-intensity medical beds to create capacity and to address any new waves of COVID-19. This was critical to address the pressures faced by the hospitals early last year. It is just one example that demonstrates how we have and continue to use every tool at our disposal to support our hospitals as they respond to COVID-19.

In March 2021, we provided over \$1.2 billion to help Ontario's public hospitals recover from financial pressures created and worsened by COVID-19. This builds on our previous investment, and it helped to ensure that Ontario's hospitals could continue providing the world-class programs and services that Ontarians deserve. Speaker, the actions we are taking and the investments we are making are creating more hospital capacity and ensuring that Ontario is ready to respond to any emergency in the years to come.

It is clear that our hospitals are the single most important part of the province's health care infrastructure, which is why it is so astonishing that under previous governments, capital investments in Ontario's hospitals fell so far short. As I said before, the former Liberal Deputy Premier George Smitherman said that the Ontario Liberals "really starved health care for five years, and ... that's not spoken of enough." And earlier this year, the former Premier admitted she would never have done this had she known a pandemic was coming.

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Speaker, we can't afford to go into another pandemic or into another future emergency unprepared ever again in this province. This is exactly why our government is making long-overdue investments in capital projects, to build more hospital beds and more long-term-care beds across Ontario, and to provide Ontarians with the health care that they need and deserve. It is also why our government is investing in communities that have not seen a significant new capital project in decades.

I would like to outline a few examples of these investments. Our government is committed to add 3,100 acute and post-acute care beds with over 50 major projects as part of our \$30.2-billion hospital infrastructure plan, and it is worth repeating here that the plan begins with the single-largest investment in hospital infrastructure in Canadian history to completely rebuild the Mississauga Hospital in Mississauga–Lakeshore.

At 24 storeys and about 2.8 million square feet, this new, state-of-the-art Mississauga Hospital will be the largest and most advanced hospital in Canada—triple the size of the current hospital, which was built in 1958. The pandemic brought to light some of the real limitations of the current hospital. As Mayor Bonnie Crombie said, it highlighted the need for a major upgrade that has long been overdue. This is even more critical because, over the next two decades, demand of the hospital service at the Trillium Health Partners facility is expected to grow about seven times more than the average hospital in Ontario.

Speaker, the truth is, this investment should have been made 15 years ago, but the former Liberal government kept saying no. The Premier, this minister and this government have said yes to this historic, game-changing project in Mississauga.

With the multi-billion-dollar investment, we're adding over 600 more hospital beds, for a total of almost 1,000 beds at the Mississauga Hospital site alone, over 80% in private rooms. The new facility will have one of the largest emergency departments in the country, with 23 new, state-of-the-art operation rooms; a new advanced diagnostic imaging facility; a new pharmacy and lab; a new eight-storey parking structure with spaces for 1,500 vehicles; and connections to the Hazel McCallion LRT on Hurontario. The first phase of this construction begins this year, and I'm looking forward to an exciting announcement about this next week.

This project also includes a new in-patient care tower nearby at the Queensway Health Centre in Etobicoke–Lakeshore. Put together, these investments will build, modernize and expand our hospital system and add more hospital and long-term-care beds across the province, protecting communities across Ontario and providing the best health care possible in Mississauga, Etobicoke and right across Ontario. This investment will ensure Ontario will never again be left with hospital capacity at such vulnerable levels as it was under the previous Liberal government. This is a government that is fully committed to protecting the health and safety of all Ontarians: families, communities, workers and the businesses in every corner of Ontario.

Speaker, because of the decades of neglect and underfunding of previous governments, no group of Ontarians was impacted more by the devastating effects of the COVID-19 virus than our seniors living in long-term-care homes. That's why another key pillar of Bill 106 is our government's progress towards fixing long-term care.

At this point, I want to acknowledge the former Minister of Long-Term Care and the great work of our government House leader and his team at the Ministry of Long-Term Care, for all their ongoing and dedicated work on our government's long-term-care strategy.

To date, we have committed \$4.9 billion to hire more than 27,000 long-term-care staff over four years and to ensure that all residents will receive an average of four hours of direct care per day by 2024. Hiring more staff is part of our government's plan to fix long-term care and to improve the quality of life for our seniors across the

province. This includes registered nurses, registered practical nurses and personal support workers, all of whom work tirelessly to support long-term-care residents across Ontario.

Our government has been clear: Our seniors deserve better. That's why we're making this historic investment in staff and resources to provide the care that seniors need to stay safe, comfortable and healthy and to live with the dignity they deserve.

We will take every action to ensure Ontario's most vulnerable population is never again left in the difficult position that it was under the former Liberal government. That's why we have committed to investing \$6.4 billion to build 30,000 new long-term care beds and upgrade 28,000 current beds to modern design standards. This includes 877 new beds and 275 upgraded beds in Mississauga–Lakeshore—more than any riding in Ontario. This includes 632 beds at two new long-term-care homes at Speakman Drive and Sheridan Park in Mississauga–Lakeshore. This project will include a new health service building and the first residential hospice in Mississauga, operated by Heart House Hospice. Partners Community Health, a new non-profit organization, will operate these beds, which will be ready this year as part of the government's accelerated build pilot program. Speaker, there are projects like this in various stages of planning and development in communities right across Ontario.

Beyond the pillars I've already outlined, there are some other initiatives that are also a key part of our plan to stay open that I would like to highlight now.

At the beginning of this pandemic, our government found that despite the previous Liberal government's 15 years in office, there were no up-to-date emergency protocols to clearly outline roles and responsibilities within and outside the government. Because of this, our challenges in the early days of COVID-19 were more difficult than they had to be. In fact, in 2017, the Auditor General reported that, under the previous government, Ontario's emergency plan had not been updated since 2006—no updates for 11 years. That's unacceptable, and the cost was far too high, while the lives, and livelihoods, of Ontarians hung in the balance.

That's why our government has worked to implement plans like Ontario's roadmap to reopening and the Ontario Onwards Action Plan. These plans respond to the most urgent needs of a pandemic, and they provide a clear path forward during a time of unprecedented uncertainty. We stepped up to the plate and did the work. That's what the former Liberal government failed to do. I'm very proud of this work, but we all know that we need to build on it. We know more needs to be done to ensure Ontario is prepared in the years to come.

That's why, again, we are doing what the Liberals failed to do. We're creating an emergency preparedness plan. Establishing this plan is a key component of Bill 106. Again, I just want to thank the Solicitor General and her team for all their work developing the emergency preparedness plan.

Very briefly, schedule 1 of Bill 106 includes much-needed amendments to the Emergency Management and

Civil Protection Act. These amendments are designed to strengthen our overall resilience and our capacity to plan and prepare to respond quickly and recover from emergencies. These amendments would achieve this, firstly, by providing the province with the tools they need to aggressively and consistently monitor new waves and threats from around the globe; secondly, by improving the support and guidance our government provides to communities across Ontario; and lastly, by protecting and safeguarding Ontario in the event of any future emergencies.

These amendments would support a coordinated, whole-of-government approach to future emergency plans. They would also modernize how each level of government plans for emergencies and how we share information with each other. Under this approach, each provincial ministry would be responsible for certain clearly defined aspects of Ontario's emergency response, and they would be required to monitor the hazards and risks within their own areas, while providing information to the chief of emergency management, either every year or upon request. If passed, ministries would be required to identify and respond to any potential threat or any future emergency.

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The government of Ontario will be more prepared for future emergencies than ever before with these comprehensive, detailed plans on a ministry-by-ministry basis. There would be a mandatory review of the whole plan at least every five years, and it will be updated as necessary. Taking advantage of the full expertise of each ministry through their own emergency preparedness plan would ensure they are consistent with the provincial plan and ensure that no detail is left unaccounted for.

Speaker, the pandemic revealed that it is critical for the government to have every possible resource at their disposal to respond to any emergency or threat that could endanger the people of Ontario. Gathering this information and developing a comprehensive plan will ensure Ontario stays safe, stays healthy and stays open, without ever having to close again.

With that in mind, this initiative builds on our commitment to transparency and accountability for the people of Ontario. The proposed amendments to the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act will require an annual report. Speaker, this isn't about creating another pile of paper to be filed away or just ticking off boxes on a to-do list. This is about maintaining the progress that we have already made towards the objective of the province's emergency management plan. Every year, the report will highlight the achievements and identify any gaps in each ministry's plan, making the province aware of where we stand, where more resources should be directed and what areas need future action.

Equally important is the fact that the people of Ontario will also know Ontario's emergency plan. The report would be publicly available for all Ontarians to read, meaning there will be no more surprises in the future. It would give Ontarians the confidence and the security they expect and deserve, knowing that their government will be ready for any new emergency or threat that comes our

way. And it would give all Ontarians the ability to hold their government accountable.

We have become all too familiar with names like Delta and Omicron. The Greek alphabet has come to signal new waves of infection, tightened health restrictions and more pressure on our health care system. That's why another important part of this bill is to provide the tools we need to track potential new waves and other emergencies from around the globe.

Speaker, I'm pleased to share that the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and his team are already hard at work on this through the Wastewater Surveillance Initiative. This program began in 2020 as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic in order to detect this virus that causes COVID-19 in Ontario's waste water. It does this by sampling waste waters, together with clinical and public health data, to help local public health units identify potential outbreaks and to help public health officials make more timely decisions. This is another initiative that relies on gathering the most relevant information as quickly as possible.

Monitoring waste water gives us a nearly real-time way of tracking the spread of this virus, even before symptoms appear. This initiative is already under way in over 170 locations across the province, covering over 75% of Ontario's population. Some examples of these locations include municipal waste water treatment plants, long-term-care facilities, university campuses, correctional facilities, hospitals and retirement homes.

To develop and maintain our government's Wastewater Surveillance Initiative and to continue detecting COVID-19 through the waste water over the coming years, we're investing an additional \$24.7 million into this program. Speaker, it's also important to note that this program isn't just about COVID-19; the same technology can be used to detect many other diseases. Therefore, it will help us to anticipate and monitor any potential threats and to prepare accordingly. It will position Ontario to respond with flexibility, instead of falling victim to another emergency without protocols in place, and it will protect the progress we've made together and ensure that we remain prepared moving forward. Together, the initiatives and the amendments in this plan are designed to build resilience and to ensure that Ontario stays open.

It has been my honour, alongside Ontario's President of the Treasury Board and the ministry responsible for Ontario's plan to stay open, to help outline the three pillars of our proposed Pandemic and Emergency Preparedness Act: expanding Ontario's health workforce, shoring up domestic productions of critical supports, and building more hospital beds, together with many other related initiatives to help support these pillars. These plans represent our government's unwavering commitment to protecting the safety and health of Ontarians. They reflect the many ways our government is meeting the needs of the people while applying the lessons that we have learned from this pandemic.

As we continue to make progress in the fight against COVID-19, we must never forget the neglect and mismanagement that brought Ontario close to the brink, and

we must never allow Ontario to become so vulnerable to future emergencies or disasters ever again. This is not just a hope or an aspiration; this is a commitment to the people of Ontario. We must never go back to the failures of past governments.

Speaker, this bill is one of the ways that the people of Ontario will hold us accountable. It is one of the ways that we will support our front-line, health-care-worker heroes, and it's one of the ways we will give Ontarians the confidence and the security of knowing that in a future pandemic emergency, Ontario will be ready. There is no challenge too big to overcome and no goal too great for us to achieve. Team Ontario is up for it. Together we will ensure that Ontario is always prepared for the challenges of tomorrow, because we can never go back to the ways things were.

Once again, I want to thank the President of the Treasury Board and his team for all their work on this bill and for their work throughout this pandemic. It is a great honour to serve as his parliamentary assistant at the Treasury Board.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you to the President of the Treasury Board and his parliamentary assistant for that presentation.

It is now time for the questions and responses. Just as a friendly reminder: The questions are limited to one minute or less, as well as the responses to one minute or less. The first question goes to the member from Toronto—St. Paul's.

Ms. Jill Andrew: It's always an honour to stand on behalf of our community in St. Paul's to question this government about their legislation—on Equal Pay Day, no less. The government's Bill 106, according to the Ontario Nurses' Association, violates ONA members' rights to free collective bargaining. Bill 106 attempts to erase nurses' hard-won charter rights and violates women's equality rights, guaranteed by section 15 of the charter.

I would ask: What does the government have to say about putting forth a bill that essentially violates workers' rights towards collective bargaining, towards pay equity, towards supporting their labour rights? Why would the government put forth a bill like this, that simply is an anti-women—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): You're out of time. Thank you for your question.

We'll go to the government for a response.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: To the member opposite: I would like to address that head-on, because this piece of legislation will benefit over 158,000 PSWs and DSWs who deliver publicly funded personal support services across this province with a permanent pay increase. The previous government and individuals before have neglected our PSWs and DSWs. So the members opposite and the members of the former government have the option to stand with this government, to stand with our proposal here, where we've already invested over \$1.3 billion, to double down on that and make that commitment permanent and make sure PSWs and DSWs get the \$3 increase as a permanent increase.

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member from Brantford—Brant has a question.

Mr. Will Bouma: I really appreciated the debate today so far and the presentations by the minister and the parliamentary assistant. The part that struck me, especially since agriculture remains the single biggest industry in my riding, is the importance of food security for the province of Ontario and how this bill is making sure that we protect our food terminal.

I was wondering if I could ask the great member from Mississauga–Lakeshore and the parliamentary assistant to the Treasury Board president to talk a little bit more about how important food security and keeping our food terminal safe is.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank the member for that question. Food security is one of the most important things in this province, because without food, we can't survive. During a pandemic, we have to be able to pivot very quickly, because we have to be able to get food to our stores and to our shelves so we don't have a shortage in our grocery stores.

Especially during this pandemic, I was lucky in having so much food available to give to the food banks, like the Compass Food Bank and the Sai Dahm Food Bank, through our Ontario Food Terminal. I went there myself to help pick up food to bring it to the people of Mississauga–Lakeshore and across the province as well. I went as far as Barrie to bring food from our food bank. I know that it's very important, and we have to keep it secure and be able to pivot quickly to have another food bank available during an emergency order.

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

Ms. Doly Begum: I've got quite a few questions. I'm having a hard time deciding. I'll ask about food security since both of the speakers just talked about it.

Right now, on schedule 2, there is a requirement that the Minister of Agriculture prepare a report, without really a deadline or timeline on this bill. What is stopping the Minister of Agriculture from doing that report right now without this bill? Is it the President of the Treasury Board who has to force the Ministry of Agriculture to do this in terms of food security? We know how important food security is. We know what's happening to our land right now. We know what we need to do in terms of protecting the land. What is stopping the Minister of Agriculture from doing this report and providing food security and supporting the needs of our province right now without schedule 2?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Back to the minister to respond.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Thank you to the member opposite for that question. Since day one, this government has acted immediately. Since the pandemic hit, there were individuals across this province—when the public health measures were enacted in March 2020, if you can remember back to that, shelves were getting overrun; there was a toilet paper shortage. But it was because of this government and Ontarians displaying the Ontario spirit across this province that we all got together and we recognized that we could get through this.

In my community of Brampton, there is a significant amount of processing that happens there. Those individuals really stepped up to the plate and made sure we continued to get those products on the shelves to make sure that Ontarians had the food that they needed to get through the pandemic.

Our government will continue to work towards that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): The member for Flamborough–Glanbrook.

Ms. Donna Skelly: This being Equal Pay Day, I would never want to suggest and make a sexist comment that only women are nurses, because we know a lot of people get into the profession of nursing, men and women. In fact, one of the best nurses I worked with at the hospital was a male nurse. I just wanted to make that comment.

I would like to ask the Treasury Board president, what is the Ontario Learn and Stay Grant and when will the Ontario Learn and Stay Grant be available?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Thank you very much to the member for that question. The Ontario Learn and Stay grant is a pillar of this program, and I want to thank the Minister of Colleges and Universities for working really hard on that.

It really comes in two phases. There's an \$81-million commitment in which we provide the community commitment program. This is going to pay for the tuition of up to almost 3,000 nurses, starting right away with 1,500 in 2022-23. We recognize that we need to deliver health care equitably across this province, and there are some communities that can't get the health care human resources they need because they don't have the access to individuals. What we will do, through this program, is incentivize them and pay for their tuition so that all areas of this province have access to health care workers. We know that the previous government neglected health care human resources in the workforce, and we're going to make sure we change that.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like the minister to give reassurance regarding schedule 4 of the Personal Health Information Protection Act. The act basically broadened the definition of those who can access electronic health data as part of Ontario health teams.

There are a lot of people, for various reasons, especially in small communities, who do not want to have their personal health information shared with the entire Ontario health team. You can think of a woman who has been abused, and their abuser's spouse or brother is on that team, and they don't want their personal health information—there are a number of reasons why people don't want to share their personal health information with the entire team. How can you reassure people that their wishes to keep their information confidential will be protected, even with this new regulation making—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Percy Hatfield): Thank you very much. The President of the Treasury Board to respond.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: I want to thank the member opposite for that question, and reassure her that as the province rolls out not only this legislation, the highest regard for privacy is maintained. The Ontario health teams will be another step in making sure that we deliver the best care possible for patients across this province.

Very often we hear of cases, especially in Brampton, in my community at least—and I know I've heard many other members in my government and others speak to this,

but there's a disconnect between different health professionals that serve on that same team. You might be going in to get checked by a doctor, and then you might have another appointment with another doctor, and there would be no connectivity between both of those individuals to see what maybe that doctor has prescribed or what that doctor has recommended in the past, and this really builds—

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

Report continues in volume B.

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Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Simard, Amanda (LIB)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Singh, Gurratan (NDP)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Singh, Sara (NDP)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction / Ministre associée déléguée aux Petites Entreprises et à la Réduction des formalités administratives
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Wilson, Jim (IND)	Simcoe—Grey	
Wynne, Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
Vacant	Ajax / Ajax	
Vacant	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Vacant	Elgin—Middlesex—London	

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Randy Pettapiece
Teresa J. Armstrong, Toby Barrett
Lorne Coe, Rudy Cuzzetto
Goldie Ghamari, Randy Hillier
Christina Maria Mitas, Judith Monteith-Farrell
Michael Parsa, Randy Pettapiece
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Thushitha Kobikrishna

Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs / Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Ian Arthur
Ian Arthur, Will Bouma
Stephen Crawford, Catherine Fife
Ernie Hardeman, Mitzie Hunter
Logan Kanapathi, Sol Mamakwa
Jeremy Roberts, Dave Smith
Vijay Thanigasalam
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Michael Bushara

Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: Logan Kanapathi
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Mike Schreiner
Jill Andrew, Robert Bailey
Will Bouma, Guy Bourgouin
Chris Glover, Mike Harris
Logan Kanapathi, Sheref Sabawy
Amarjot Sandhu, Mike Schreiner
Daisy Wai
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Isaiah Thorning

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: Gilles Bisson
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Aris Babikian
Deepak Anand, Aris Babikian
Gilles Bisson, Lorne Coe
Wayne Gates, Robin Martin
Norman Miller, Billy Pang
Amanda Simard, Marit Stiles
John Yakabuski
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tanzima Khan

Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

Chair / Président: Daryl Kramp
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lucille Collard
Lucille Collard, Christine Hogarth
Daryl Kramp, Natalia Kusendova
Jim McDonell, Suze Morrison
Randy Pettapiece, Gurratan Singh
Donna Skelly, Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Kevin Yarde
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Thushitha Kobikrishna

Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative

Chair / Présidente: Laurie Scott
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: France Gélinas
Rima Berns-McGown, France Gélinas
Goldie Ghamari, Mike Harris
Faisal Hassan, Jim McDonell
Sam Oosterhoff, Laurie Scott
Vijay Thanigasalam
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tanzima Khan

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics

Chair / Président: Taras Natyshak
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Hogarth
Deepak Anand, Toby Barrett
Jessica Bell, Stephen Blais
Stephen Crawford, Rudy Cuzzetto
Christine Hogarth, Michael Mantha
Taras Natyshak, Michael Parsa
Amarjot Sandhu
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé

Chair / Président: Aris Babikian
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: John Fraser
Aris Babikian, Lorne Coe
John Fraser, Vincent Ke
Laura Mae Lindo, Paul Miller
Billy Pang, Jeremy Roberts
Dave Smith, Daisy Wai
Jamie West
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Isaiah Thorning

Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de la politique sociale

Chair / Présidente: Natalia Kusendova
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Bhutila Karpoche
Aris Babikian, Jeff Burch
Amy Fee, Michael Gravelle
Joel Harden, Mike Harris
Bhutila Karpoche, Natalia Kusendova
Robin Martin, Jim McDonell
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Vanessa Kattar

Select Committee on Emergency Management Oversight / Comité spécial de la surveillance de la gestion des situations d'urgence

Chair / Président: Daryl Kramp
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Tom Rakocevic
Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson
John Fraser, Christine Hogarth
Daryl Kramp, Robin Martin
Sam Oosterhoff, Tom Rakocevic
Sara Singh, Donna Skelly
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell