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Jeudi
5 novembre 2020

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO**

Thursday 5 November 2020

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO**

Jeudi 5 novembre 2020

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers/Prières.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

**MOVING ONTARIO FAMILY LAW
FORWARD ACT, 2020**

**LOI DE 2020 FAISANT AVANCER
LE DROIT DE LA FAMILLE EN ONTARIO**

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 4, 2020, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 207, An Act to amend the Children's Law Reform Act, the Courts of Justice Act, the Family Law Act and other Acts respecting various family law matters / *Projet de loi 207, Loi modifiant la Loi portant réforme du droit de l'enfance, la Loi sur les tribunaux judiciaires, la Loi sur le droit de la famille et d'autres lois en ce qui concerne diverses questions de droit de la famille.*

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: Before I start, can I ask Bruno to send me a copy of the bill, because I forgot it? Thank you.

It is my pleasure to say a few words this morning on third reading of Bill 207, Moving Ontario Family Law Forward Act. As you all know by now, the law has three schedules. The first schedule deals with the Children's Law Reform Act. Basically, what it does is, it introduces legislative changes that more or less mirror some of the changes in legislation at the federal level. Some of those changes include:

(1) a shift in the language of "custody" and "access" to "parenting orders," "contact orders," "decision-making responsibility" and "parenting time";

(2) a positive requirement for counsel to encourage their clients to try to resolve matters through a family dispute resolution process, including mediation and collaborative practice;

(3) the requirement that family violence be considered as a matter of the best interests of the child, as well as the positive obligation of parties to protect children from conflict arising from the litigation itself; and

(4) a statutory "best interests" definition, which was not there before.

Additionally, the first schedule provides streamlined rules including jurisdictional conflict, notice of change of residence and similar matters, and consequential amendments to other acts so that these changes remain consistent

across various pieces of family law legislation. This is what the first schedule does.

The second schedule has to do with the Courts of Justice Act. Basically what this schedule does is, it clarifies the appeal procedures for family law matters. Previously, this was kind of a mix of legislation and case law precedent. It has now been clarified.

The third schedule deals with the Family Law Act. What it does is that it amends the Family Law Act in order to require the Minister of Finance to provide the court with certain financial documents, so that the court can more easily have access to financial documents during a family law court.

Are those changes welcome? Yes, they are welcomed by family law practitioners. They will help to streamline family practices and avoid greater confusion by aligning terminology with the federal legislation. So less confusion makes it a little bit easier. That said, the bill, I would say, makes some tiny, wee steps in a good direction, when really we have a long path to go.

To describe this long path, I would like to put into the record some of what Justice Warren Winkler had to say. This dates back to 2011. Some of us have been here long enough to remember when this was said. Back in 2011, Justice Winkler, who was the Chief Justice of Ontario, had this to say about the crisis in our family law: "There is a growing concern among the bar and the general public that our family justice system is not delivering on its primary purpose," which is "access to justice for families in transition."

I am quoting again from Justice Winkler: "I was made starkly aware of the level of dissatisfaction with our family justice system after I became Chief Justice of Ontario four years ago. I travelled throughout the province, and met with law associations to get their feedback on issues facing the legal system. The overwhelming theme of these conversations was that the family justice system was in a state of crisis."

He went on to say: "I agree with Alf Mamo"—a family lawyer—"who has written that our goal in family justice reform should be 'meaningful access to justice,' which he defines as 'the ability of a citizen to bring about a solution to his or her legal problems that is (a) financially affordable; (b) timely; (c) easy to understand; and (d) easy to manoeuvre through.'"

"Unfortunately, rather than a system that is financially affordable, timely, easy to understand and manoeuvre through, the public is experiencing a process that is unaffordable, slow and overly complex. Moreover, rather than finding solutions to their problems, litigants often

find that the legal process exacerbates problems in an already emotionally charged situation.

“There are two noteworthy trends occurring in the family justice system. Those that can afford it are increasingly choosing methods of private mediation or arbitration where they seek a faster and more efficient process over which they have greater control. Meanwhile, the public court system is increasingly dominated by self-represented litigants. These litigants either commence their litigation in this manner or are forced to represent themselves after exhausting their funds midway through the process. More than half of family law litigants are self-represented. In some Toronto-area courts, over 70% are reported to be self-represented.

“We are thus increasingly seeing a two-tiered justice system. On the one hand we have a public court system which is filled with large numbers of people who cannot afford lawyers, and on the other we have a second process for people who can afford to seek justice elsewhere.”

These are the words of the Chief Justice of Ontario almost a decade ago, and they are just as applicable today. We’ve known about the crisis in family law for many years, and again, we have seen no action on this for the last nine years. The bill before us today in third reading does not get to the root of the issue that plagues family law: that many people simply cannot get access to the legal process because it is too expensive. This will continue to happen. Nothing in this bill will change this.

0910

I would say, unfortunately, some of the actions of this government will actually make matters worse. I’m referring, of course, to the cuts to legal aid. Our legal aid system has been overburdened for years, to the point where most of the time they will not pick up family law cases. First, the threshold is set so low. Right now, if you make more than \$20,000 a year, you do not qualify for legal aid. Let’s put this in comparison where the average divorce or separation costs \$12,000. Can you do the math? You or somebody who works minimum wage, full-time, probably with a job and a half or two jobs—you make a little, wee bit over 20 grand; you make \$22,000, \$23,000. You do not qualify for legal aid. But yet, going through the court for a separation will cost an average of \$12,000. This is not right. Our legal system should be there for all of us.

I represent a riding in northern Ontario where we do have Family Court. The situation in northern Ontario is no better than in any other part of the province. I would say, in some of the north, it is worse, where most of the people don’t have enough money to hire a lawyer to help them navigate an extremely complex system. Nothing about family law is self-evident, is easy to access or any of the above. And at the core of it, people should have legal representation when they go to court. People should be able to afford legal representation. Is any of this in the bill? No. I’ve read into the record the three changes, through the schedules, to the Children’s Law Reform Act, to the Courts of Justice Act, and to the Family Law Act, but nothing gets to the core of the problem.

J’aimerais passer un petit peu de temps pour parler des coupures par le gouvernement qui ont eu lieu dans le

système d’aide juridique. Je peux vous dire que les coupures ont eu un effet dévastateur partout dans tout le système d’aide juridique, et pour les francophones, ça a été un effet multiplicateur, dans le sens que plusieurs de ces bureaux-là, qui sont dans des régions désignées sous la Loi sur les services en français, doivent être capables d’offrir des services en français.

Je peux vous parler de la clinique juridique de Sudbury. Lorsqu’ils ont fait face aux coupures du gouvernement en place à leur budget, ils ont dû laisser aller des employés, des employés qui étaient occupés cinq jours par semaine, 40 heures par semaine, sans arrêt, à aider les gens. Pour les services en français, ça veut dire qu’une des personnes qui a été laissée aller était la personne responsable d’aider les francophones. Donc, pour une région désignée où, dans mon comté, près de 37% de la population est francophone, on n’a plus accès à un service d’aide juridique en français à cause des coupures qui ont eu lieu. Ils essaient de leur mieux d’aller chercher de l’aide, etc., etc., mais ce dont ils ont besoin, c’est du financement.

Ce que je viens de lire du chef de justice M. Warren Winkler—les problèmes, ils étaient là depuis longtemps.

Legislation is not something that moves a little bit at a time. We hadn’t touched those laws for a long time, and now was the opportunity to do changes. So making laws is not an incremental process; it’s something that happens now. We had the opportunity to change things. We had the opportunity, through second reading and third reading, to make this bill address the crisis in our Family Court justice, but we didn’t.

Ce que ça va vouloir dire—bien, ça va vouloir dire qu’on va continuer, partout en Ontario, de voir que des gens qui doivent faire affaire avec la Cour de la famille vont se représenter eux-mêmes. Ils n’auront pas suffisamment d’argent pour être capables d’aller se chercher un avocat qui pourrait les aider à naviguer tout le système de justice, parce que même avec les changements que l’on a faits avec le projet de loi, la Loi modifiant la Loi portant réforme du droit de l’enfance, la Loi sur les tribunaux judiciaires, la Loi sur le droit de la famille et d’autres lois en ce qui concerne diverses questions de droit de la famille—même avec les changements qu’on vient de faire dans ce projet de loi-là, les problèmes de base dans notre système de cours de justice et de la famille sont encore là. Les gens n’ont pas suffisamment d’argent pour être capables d’aller se chercher un avocat pour les aider à bien être représentés, ce qui veut dire qu’ils se représentent seuls devant la cour. Souvent, ils n’ont pas les documents nécessaires et ils n’ont pas la préparation nécessaire, et on n’a pas de justice. Ce qu’on a, c’est un système qui ne rend pas justice.

Mais il faut se rendre compte que les grands perdants là-dedans sont souvent les enfants, parce que la réforme du droit de l’enfant, la réforme du droit de la famille—on parle de familles, on parle d’enfants. On parle souvent d’enfants très jeunes, très vulnérables, pour qui les parents ne sont pas capables d’avoir justice.

Pour ceux qui ont beaucoup d’argent, souvent ils vont ignorer complètement la Cour de justice. Ils vont aller se

chercher de la médiation. Ils vont aller se chercher de l'aide où ils peuvent être entendus, où ils peuvent s'assurer qu'on aura justice, parce qu'ils vont avoir l'opportunité d'être entendus, l'opportunité d'amener des faits, etc.

Ça, ça marche bien si tu as l'argent pour te payer de la médiation. Ça, ça marche bien si tu as de l'argent, mais quand tu n'en as pas—ce n'est pas parce que tu es riche ou moins riche que les problèmes familiaux ne peuvent pas se développer. Il y a des problèmes familiaux dans toutes les situations, dans toutes les communautés, peu importe combien d'argent tu gagnes. Mais pour tous ceux qui ne sont pas capables de se payer un avocat, ils n'auront jamais justice, et ça veut dire que les enfants de ces familles-là, eux non plus n'auront pas de justice.

Je ne comprends pas pourquoi le gouvernement a coupé les fonds à notre système d'aide juridique. C'est un système qui est là pour aider les gens. C'est un système qui a un plafond qui est tellement bas : on parle de 20 000 \$ pour une personne seule, quand le coût d'un divorce ou d'une séparation c'est 12 000 \$ de frais d'avocat. Comment est-ce qu'une personne qui travaille deux emplois à temps partiel au salaire minimum, qui fait peut-être 22 000 \$, 23 000 \$ par année peut se permettre une dépense de 12 000 \$? Elles ne pourront jamais se permettre ça. Et ça, on le sait depuis longtemps. On le sait depuis 2011, quand M. le juge Warren Winkler l'a mis en écrit et l'a amené à l'Assemblée législative.

Mais il n'y a rien de ça qui change dans le projet de loi, madame la Présidente. Le projet de loi, oui, ça faisait longtemps qu'on voulait des changements; oui, il y a des petits pas qui sont faits dans la bonne direction qui vont aider. Mais le problème majeur, qui est que ça coûte trop cher en Ontario d'avoir accès au système de justice du droit de l'enfant et du droit de la famille—il n'y a rien de ça qui a changé. Tout ça va continuer d'être là pour les tribunaux dans le nord de l'Ontario ou à Toronto ou partout. Ils vont continuer d'avoir 50 %, 60 %, jusqu'à 70 % des cas devant eux où les personnes vont s'autoreprésenter, qui n'auront pas d'avocat avec eux. Ça fait que le système est trop difficile, et la justice n'est pas rendue.

0920

Pourquoi est-ce qu'on n'a pas changé ça ? On sait qu'on a un problème. On est ici pour passer des lois. Les projets de loi sont là, l'opportunité était là et on a laissé passer cette opportunité-là. Ça va prendre combien d'années ou même de décennies avant qu'on ne retourne sur ces projets de loi-là pour finalement adresser le problème de base dans notre système judiciaire ? Je ne le sais pas.

Mais ce que je peux vous dire, c'est que c'est une opportunité manquée, une opportunité qui aura des conséquences sur des centaines de milliers de familles ontariennes et des centaines de milliers d'enfants ontariens qui n'auront pas eu justice, qui auraient pu avoir un meilleur accès à leurs parents, qui auraient pu avoir un meilleur futur. Ça prend des parents pour élever des enfants, puis quand les parents continuent de se chicaner, puis quand les parents continuent de ne pas s'entendre, puis quand les parents le savent que la décision qui a été

prise par la cour n'est pas une décision juste et équitable parce qu'ils n'ont pas été capables de se payer une représentation, ce sont des blessures qui restent longtemps. Ces blessures-là, bien, on est tous des êtres humains à un moment donné, puis quand on est blessé, ça paraît.

So Bill 207, the Moving Ontario Family Law Forward Act, does take small steps to improve our family law system, but it leaves the major aspect—the crisis in our family law—untouched. The crisis in our family law is that up to 50%, sometimes up to 70% in different Family Courts, of people have to self-represent because they cannot afford a lawyer. This crisis has been there for a long time. This crisis has a direct impact on the health of families, on the health of children, for the rest of their lives. We had an opportunity to do better for those children. We had an opportunity to do better for these families, and we did not.

So I will say thank you for the little steps. I don't know when we will be talking about family law again, but the sooner, the better, because there is a crisis in family law, and we missed this opportunity to fix it.

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

M^{me} Gila Martow: Je tiens à remercier la députée de ses remarques sur le projet de loi 207, qui constituerait un pas en avant pour moderniser notre système de droit de la famille.

Peut-être qu'elle peut expliquer comment l'investissement du gouvernement dans un meilleur Internet est important pour sa circonscription, en particulier en ce qui concerne l'accès virtuel au soutien juridique et à notre système judiciaire. Merci.

M^{me} France Gélinas: La députée de Thornhill a raison qu'il y a des petits pas par en avant qui ont été faits dans le projet de loi, et d'avoir accès de façon virtuelle à la Cour de la famille, d'avoir accès de façon virtuelle aux services de la Cour de la famille est un pas dans la bonne direction.

Je vous dirais que, avec la COVID, on a vu que notre système judiciaire a été capable de pivoter vers le système en ligne et a été capable d'aider plusieurs personnes. Donc, ça c'est quelque chose de positif. Mais je vous dirais quand même que—moi, je viens du nord de l'Ontario—dans Nickel Belt, incluant chez nous, on n'a pas d'Internet haute vitesse. Donc, pour les gens qui sont capables d'avoir accès à l'Internet haute vitesse, ça a été un pivot qui en a valu la peine, mais pour les gens que moi, je représente, l'Internet haute vitesse, on ne l'a pas.

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

Mr. Jeff Burch: Thank you to the member from Nickel Belt for her presentation.

As she mentioned, there has been a huge cut to legal aid, I believe about a third of the funding, following along the lines of the last Liberal government, so this has been happening for a long time. A lot of people have characterized this as one step forward, two steps back. Does this very small improvement in this bill correct the problem of having a third of legal aid funding cut? And what are some of the effects that the member has noticed in her riding and with the French community with the cuts to legal aid?

M^{me} France Gélinas: The member from Niagara Centre is absolutely right: The cuts to legal aid have made the crisis worse. In my area, legal aid had to let go of some of their lawyers, some of their workers. That means that the person who was responsible for offering services in French had to be let go, which means that in an area like mine, where 37% of the people are francophone, French speaking, all of a sudden the legal aid system was not able to help them anymore. And in family law, a lot of families in my riding speak French. They will have their entire procedure in French, and they have nobody there to help them. With the fact that the crisis in our family law system has to do with too many poor people—too many people—not able to access a lawyer—

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

Ms. Donna Skelly: To the member from Nickel Belt: As you pointed out, a number of people say that the changes that we're proposing in Bill 207 don't go far enough, but we do recognize that they are a start. Navigating the family law system, navigating the judicial system, whether it's in Ontario or federally, can be confusing, it can be time-consuming, and it can be costly. But the proposed changes in Bill 207 are just the beginning. Currently, the government is in discussions with the judiciary about planning for future unified Family Court expansions and changes to make it simpler, more affordable and easier for families to navigate. Knowing that, would the member opposite support Bill 207, understanding these are just the beginning? There are more changes to come.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have no problem supporting the little steps that are taken in Bill 207. Where I have a problem is that we know that there has been a crisis in family law. I have been here long enough to know that changes to different acts are not an incremental process. It's not something that—you do a little bit of it this year and a little bit next year and a little bit the year before. That's not the way it works here. When you have an opportunity to make changes to the act, look at least 10 to 15 years ahead, because this is how long it will take for those bills to come back.

I would say that I was surprised when I got here and realized that. I can tell you that, in 2007, with the Long-Term Care Homes Act, I was kind of, "Oh, they didn't put a standard of care in the act, but I don't have to worry, because they're committed to this and they will bring it again." Fast-forward to 2020: We haven't touched it again. There's a good chance we don't touch this again till 2030.

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

M. Guy Bourgouin: Je voudrais remercier aussi ma collègue de Nickel Belt pour son allocution. À la Clinique juridique Grand-Nord de Kapuskasing, il y a des clients français qui doivent attendre 18 mois pour accéder à une audience dans leur langue au tribunal de Timmins. On a eu des familles qui ont attendu plus d'un an. Les audiences ont été annulées trois fois parce qu'ils attendaient une audience en français. L'aide légale a déposé une plainte au

commissaire aux services en français, puis cela n'a rien changé. Quand on a la chance de parler français, les traducteurs ne parlent pas proprement la langue. Ce sont des familles en besoin. We are talking about people who are on OW and who have been denied ODSP.

Ma question pour ma collègue c'est, qu'est-ce que tu pourrais dire sur les services en français et les coupures et comment on est affecté en étant francophone en Ontario?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Mon collègue a parfaitement raison. Ce qu'il décrit dans sa région, on peut décrire la même chose dans pas mal toutes les régions désignées de l'Ontario. Oui, en théorie, les francophones ont droit à des services juridiques en français, mais dans la réalité, si tu t'identifies comme francophone, c'est garanti que tu vas attendre plus longtemps.

0930

Dans des situations de divorce, dans des situations de séparation où tu as un couple qui ne s'entend plus—sinon, ils ne demanderaient pas le divorce—de les forcer d'attendre souvent un an, 14 mois, 16 mois, un an et demi, comme le membre vient de mentionner, ça, c'est un an et demi de misère. Ça c'est un an et demi où la haine, la discorde et la zizanie ont la chance de continuer.

Ça ne devrait pas être comme ça. Ce n'est pas parce que tu es francophone que tu devrais attendre plus longtemps, puis en ce moment en Ontario, ça l'est.

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

Mr. Norman Miller: Thank you to the member for Nickel Belt for that presentation, representing the north well, as usual.

In your comments, you talked about the fact that moving services online for the justice system made sense, especially in COVID times, but the challenge—with your riding as with mine—is having Internet. I assume, then, that you'd be in favour of the announcement the government made yesterday about greatly expanding support for Internet services. I assume that you'd like to see some of those services in the north and in your area to help with issues like this.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I can say that in the first round of expansion of Internet, what the government has put forward is a P3, where private providers of Internet decide where they're going to set up. Well, in all of my riding, there is only one provider, Sunwire, who will do the most southern part of my riding. That's the only thing that will change for me.

To leave it to the private sector to decide where they want to expand Internet—we, the people of Nickel Belt, will always be the losers. Nickel Belt has 33 little communities, none of them big enough to be a city. We have local services boards; we have unorganized areas. Is our private Internet provider interested in setting up shop for 28 people? No, they're not.

If you want all of Ontario to have Internet, the government will have to mandate it and will have to do this. We used to have Ontera. With Ontera we had Internet. We lost that.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): We don't have the opportunity for one more question or comment.

Further debate?

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: I'm pleased to rise in the House today for the third reading of the Moving Ontario Family Law Forward Act. This truly marks the beginning of significant family justice reform in the province of Ontario.

Before I begin, I just want to thank the Attorney General, as well as the parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General, for all of their hard work on this piece of legislation. Changes to family law would improve the lives of many parents and children across Ontario. I know that they have been working hard on this because they have spent a lot of time travelling the province since 2019, spurring conversations and gathering recommendations from many within the family law field.

When I was in law school at the University of Ottawa, and in the early years of my practice as a lawyer, I could never have imagined that one day I would be here in this Legislature and I would be part of the process to modernize the justice system in Ontario. Nor could I have ever imagined that I would join Ontario's chief justices, deans of law schools, law professors and lawyers in ongoing discussions about how to simplify the family law process for Ontario families to truly serve the people of Ontario.

I remember when the parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General came to the city of Ottawa for consultations back in March 2019. We met with Ottawa's County of Carleton Law Association, and these consultations were very informative. In offices and community gatherings, and sometimes even in coffee shops, as the parliamentary assistant travelled the province, she sat down with those who had experience in family law. In Ottawa, we had them at the courthouse, in the CCLA room. We actually had two conversations, Madam Speaker. One of them was specifically about family law and the other one was about civil litigation.

What was repeated to me during those consultations, and even afterwards when I met individually with lawyers, was that people shouldn't be required to navigate a complex and outdated justice system during some of the most difficult times of their lives.

I want to acknowledge and thank the many partners in our justice system who have worked tirelessly during the COVID-19 outbreak to provide urgent access to justice for thousands of Ontario families. Much like everything else, Madam Speaker, the COVID-19 outbreak highlighted an immediate and urgent need to evolve and modernize our justice system. I'm certain that when our justice system was designed, it never could have contemplated Zoom hearings and the need to provide for social distancing and the other effects of COVID-19. In fact, Madam Speaker, as a millennial, one of my biggest gripes when I was a lawyer was that I couldn't serve someone by email. We had to use these antiquated rules of civil procedure that just didn't meet or deal with the modern realities of today. We still had to use faxes.

Madam Speaker, this COVID outbreak has really shone a light on the need to modernize not just the legal system

but all of our industries, all of our sectors. One thing I can say that I'm very proud of our government for is that we have adapted and we have been flexible. We have moved forward and identified and highlighted these issues, we have fixed them and we are still working on improving on them. There's a lot to be done, Madam Speaker, but we've also done a lot, and I feel like we're gaining momentum and we're moving forward.

Madam Speaker, our government has committed to modernizing our outdated justice system well before the COVID-19 outbreak. I remember the Attorney General's first few speeches—he highlighted that as a goal last summer—but these unprecedented challenges drove us to look at what we could get done quickly, to collaborate and innovate, and to accomplish far more than we could have imagined.

Again, Madam Speaker, I reference the consultations that we held back in 2019 and our desire and our commitment to improve and modernize our justice system, to make it more accessible to Ontarians, to make it more affordable, to make it easier to navigate, to make it easier to understand. This initiative was started back in March 2019. It has been pushed forward, but it has always been something on our minds and I'm glad to be speaking to this legislation today.

Since March, we've invested in technology in order to move more services online and make it easier for the people of Ontario to access justice. For example, we've updated and expanded our justice services online platform so that users can submit close to 400 more civil and Family Court documents online, without having to walk into a courthouse, day or night, from anywhere across the province. These are the kinds of things that I heard when I was speaking with the County of Carleton Law Association, and some of the things that I've heard from the rural communities in my riding of Carleton, because ultimately these changes are not just going to benefit Ontarians in urban areas, but it's also going to be a huge advantage to those Ontarians who live in rural communities.

Madam Speaker, Carleton is very large. Its area, geographically, is larger than the city of Toronto—it takes me one hour to get from one corner to the other—and there's a very large rural component. Even though my riding is within the city of Ottawa, within the municipal boundary of the city of Ottawa, there's very little public transportation. Public transportation does not extend far south, and when it does, there's only maybe one bus a day, a bus in the morning and a bus in the afternoon. That leaves a lot of rural families in a difficult position. That leaves a lot of families in Richmond or North Gower or Vernon or Metcalfe, Ashton, Manotick even, Osgoode, Greely, Kars—families in those areas who need to access the justice system, unless they have a car and can drive to downtown Ottawa or unless they can afford an Uber to get there, are out of options because there is no public transit there. So with these modernizations, giving people like my constituents in Carleton from areas like Kars, Richmond, North Gower, Vernon or Ashton, an opportunity to access the justice system online is huge. This is exactly the kind

of innovation that we need. This is exactly the kind of assistance that is going to make justice accessible to everyone.

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Madam Speaker, I did hear during the debate this past week some questions or concerns from opposition members about how rural communities can access the justice system online if there's no reliable Internet or if they can't afford these things. Well, all I can say is that everything that we have done as a government has been a holistic approach; we haven't operated in silos. This family law justice act is in conjunction with the investments that we have made and the investments we've announced to improve broadband in rural areas. This is in conjunction with the grants we've provided to municipalities to help with infrastructure. This is in conjunction with the mental health supports we've provided. So it would be incorrect, I would say, to just look at this piece of legislation in a silo, because when we're talking about improving accessibility, we do have to look at it as a holistic approach, and we have to realize that every single piece of legislation works together and has an impact on each other.

One thing I can say about this government, as opposed to the previous government, is that a lot of ministries in the past were operating in silos and were never really communicating with each other. But I think it's really evident, Madam Speaker, especially looking at the legislation that we've passed since coming into power two years ago, being elected by the people of Ontario, that our legislation works together. It's complementary. They support each other. And so, maybe there might not be anything about Internet in this particular piece of legislation—because that's not what this legislation is about—but this legislation complements other legislation we've brought forward that deals with mental health, that deals with broadband. This complements funding announcements we've made. This complements the grants we're providing through the ministries.

Madam Speaker, I think we are moving forward, and I think people are able to see that. I know in my area, in Carleton alone, broadband is improving. It's becoming better. In fact, Bell recently announced, I think about a month or so ago, that they are going to be bringing fibre to Munster, which is a small community in my riding. I've brought up Munster several times. Munster used to have a public elementary school, which was shut down by the previous government, which is unfortunate. But for Bell to bring reliable Internet to that area is huge.

Even my constituency office, Madam Speaker—it's located in Richmond. Because it's a constituency office, it needs to have a certain minimum of broadband and megabytes. We couldn't get that through one line, so what we had to do eventually—and I don't know the full details, because my constituency administrator worked with financial on this—is that we ended up having to get four Bell lines and merge them together just in order to meet the minimum legislative requirement to have broadband. So I can only imagine what people in that area are going

through. And so, seeing these changes come in is huge. I'm able to see the changes on the ground first-hand, because I'm living through them. I'm experiencing them.

I've also met with representatives from Rogers who are interested in expanding Internet and bringing more reliable service in that area. I live in a rural area in Carleton, between Riverside South and Greely. When I say "rural," I mean I have a septic tank. I have a well. I don't have natural gas; I use propane. So it really is a country area. When I moved into my house last year, I only had maybe two bars on my cellphone. But now, I actually have the full five bars, which is amazing, and my Internet has improved dramatically as well. So I'm experiencing these changes first-hand. This is the kind of accessibility that's really going to improve the lives of people in Carleton and across Ontario. This is what's going to give them the ability to access justice.

And in terms of affordability, again, since the pandemic, we have done so much to help Ontarians with the cost of living. We've worked on hydro prices. We've provided funding. We've provided supports. There were measures we took before COVID-19. We got rid of provincial income tax for people who are making less than \$30,000. That's more money in your pockets. These are things that we have done and will continue to do to make things more affordable and more accessible.

We've also been working with the federal government to bring programs to Ontario to help them. Ultimately, the best way that we can support Ontarians and the best way that we can support the people of Carleton and everyone is to work together with our federal and our municipal partners.

The Moving Ontario Family Law Forward Act proposes to make the family law appeals process clearer and easier to navigate. It harmonizes Ontario's family laws with federal legislation to make it easier for Ontarians to navigate the system and to understand their rights.

This legislation allows parents and caregivers to request certified copies of child support notices made by the online Child Support Service so that child support amounts can be more easily managed or enforced outside the province. I know first-hand how significant this is. A lot of times, if you have a judgment in one province, it's difficult to collect if that person has moved to another province. So this is actually part of that harmonization. This is exactly the kind of work that we need to do and exactly the kind of collaboration that we need to have with our provincial partners so that we can support people not just in Ontario but across Canada.

This legislation also removes the requirement for family arbitrators to file arbitration award reports with the ministry. This is going to save time and money. Ultimately, arbitration awards—depending on the process, it doesn't need to be filed. It's just administrative burden; it's red tape. This is the kind of unnecessary procedure that just wastes time and money. This is the kind of unnecessary procedure where someone's hours could be wasted working on this when they could actually be doing something relevant or something more important. Before

we got elected, Ontario had over 300,000 regulations, a lot of them unnecessary. This is exactly the kind of regulation and red tape that we committed to cutting. This is the kind of regulation-cutting that I support, because it's unnecessary, it's a waste of time and it makes no sense.

Ontario is also working with the courts to expand dispute resolution officer programs to Kitchener and Welland. Dispute resolution officers are senior family lawyers appointed by the Superior Court of Justice. They work with families and guardians to determine their issues and help them work towards a settlement.

Madam Speaker, I know how intimidating it can be for someone to appear before a judge—not because the judge is mean, but because the process can be so overwhelming for people who are not used to the court system. You're already in a vulnerable position. You're concerned about the well-being of your child, or you're concerned about what's going to happen. You're going through a difficult time in your life. Having to stand there before a judge can sometimes be overwhelming. For lawyers, people like me, who have been before judges, it's not intimidating, especially if you're a litigator. I remember the first time I appeared in court. I was definitely nervous, but I got over that pretty quickly. I think I was 31 or 32. I was representing the government of Thailand in an international trade law case. I had to appear before three judges at the Federal Court of Appeal. I was a little bit nervous there but, ultimately, I did my case and I actually won. I was proud of being able to defend a foreign government in an international trade tribunal case at the Federal Court of Appeal. But, again, it's still daunting, and sometimes with the formality, you just don't know what to expect. Judges have to remain neutral. They can't look like they're taking a side or whatever, so they have to remain formal. People sometimes don't realize that, and they might get nervous or scared, so having these dispute resolution officers is actually a huge benefit, because now, instead of having to go through that formal process of being in a courthouse, you go into a smaller room. It's a little more informal. It's more casual. You're speaking face to face with someone. A lot of times disputes can be settled through dispute resolution, through mediation, through arbitration.

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In fact, one of the courses that I took at the University of Ottawa, and one that I can strongly suggest that all law students take, was dispute resolution. We had a whole course on it, a whole semester learning about dispute resolution. Why, Madam Speaker? Because oftentimes, dispute resolution can save time, it can save money, it can speed up the process and it can really assist families getting to the end result that they need without all the time or money wasted on lawyers, without court dates, without worrying about when the next court date is going to be scheduled.

That's why, not just in this but in every single legislation we've brought forward dealing with legislative changes to our legal system, we've always promoted dispute resolution. It was the same thing with the landlord and tenant tribunal: We focused on dispute resolution,

because again, for a tenant to go before the tribunal and present their case, sometimes it can be scary. But if you're before a mediator or an arbitrator, that's usually more informal. It's casual, and again, that process, depending on the system, is without prejudice, so everything that's discussed is confidential. That's actually sometimes really helpful, because that allows you to try to negotiate something, to try to come up with a solution without worrying about whether it's going to be used against you down the road.

That's how it works in small claims. In small claims court, before you go to a court, you have an option to settle, and those discussions are without prejudice. Seeing that here as well is huge, because it gives parents an opportunity to speak their minds without worrying about that being used as evidence against them down the road. That's why I'm so happy and I'm so proud to see this.

Madam Speaker, I see that my time is running short. Again, I just wanted to thank the Attorney General and the parliamentary assistant for all their hard work on this. I wanted to thank them for including myself in the process. I look forward to everyone's questions and I look forward to supporting this bill and supporting the people of Carleton and Ontario.

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

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Rock, paper, scissors. I recognize the member from Niagara Centre.

Mr. Jeff Burch: Thank you, Speaker. Good morning. I want to thank the member from Carleton for a very good presentation. I was really interested in one thing that she said about not looking at legislation in a silo. I actually agree with the member.

Yesterday, when we were debating this bill, I heard something different from another member. When I brought up cuts to legal aid, the member said that we should only be looking at this bill, that that's a separate piece of legislation. That member wanted to look at everything in a silo. I actually agree with the member from Carleton that we shouldn't be looking at it in a silo.

In the context of cutting a third of the legal aid budget, does the member not feel that this minor positive change is like one step forward and two steps back in the context of cutting so much money from legal aid?

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: With respect, I'd have to disagree with the member's premise. Looking at legislation in silos is, again, not something we're doing. We're looking at it comprehensively. What the member is referring to is asking about a specific measure that was taken, allegedly, in a different situation and applying it within this context.

Madam Speaker, I can say for a fact that I'm not quite sure what the member is speaking about when it comes to cuts, because I know that in Ottawa, the community legal organization in Ottawa's funding has not been cut. In fact, I am in constant communications with Gary Stein, who is the executive director, and all they've said is how grateful

they are for the support from this province and how they look forward to assisting the people of Ottawa and working with us to continue providing accessible legal aid to everyone.

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

Ms. Donna Skelly: To the member from Carleton: Our government introduced this legislation to make it easier, to make it quicker, to make it a little bit faster for families to navigate the Family Court system. We've all, in our constituencies, probably heard from parents who are so frustrated with the current legal system. It is time-consuming, it is very costly and it's frustrating. This is probably the worst time of their lives, when they're going through a marital dispute and they're dealing with children and custody battles and talking about supports.

Could the member from Carleton share with the Legislature why these changes are important, why our government brought forward these changes and how they will impact families across Ontario who are navigating the judicial system?

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: I'd like to thank the member for her question. Ultimately, these changes are so important because the proposed changes will allow parents to request and receive certified copies of support payment notices directly from the online services. Changes here will make it easier for family arbitrators to do important work and help vulnerable families who encounter the family law system in some of their most difficult moments.

These changes that we're implementing are common-sense changes. For example, by removing the arbitration report filing requirement, we're saving time and increasing efficiency for family arbitrators and staff who process these reports. Ultimately, families and children will benefit from a family law system that is easier to navigate and more affordable, and that's why these changes are so important.

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

Mr. Jamie West: Thank you for your debate, as well, member for Carleton. Previously, she said she wasn't familiar with the legal aid cuts. I'll just remind her that in the 2019 budget, legal aid was cut by 30%. It was \$133 million.

She talked about making life more affordable; in that same budget, \$31 million was allocated to rural broadband, but the Financial Accountability Office showed that not one dollar actually flowed through to the rural infrastructure for that. She also talked about doing a good job with hydro, though hydro rates have gone up about 12% since the Conservatives took government.

My question on this bill, because she doesn't want to talk about re-funding legal aid, is: We right now know that if you make more than \$20,000, you're not eligible for legal aid. Don't you think this bill should include raising that bar so more people have access? You talked so eloquently about your role as a lawyer and how important it is to have a lawyer. Shouldn't we raise that amount

above \$20,000, so that more people have access to legal aid?

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Madam Speaker, I want to read a comment here—actually, a quote—from David Field, who is the CEO of Legal Aid Ontario. David Field has said, “Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) recognizes that access to family justice is promoted through clarity and consistency between federal and provincial family legislation. That is why LAO fully supports the Ministry of the Attorney General’s proposed amendments to the Children’s Law Reform Act.” And I note that Legal Aid Ontario has given us positive enforcement in what we’re trying to do.

So again, I'm proud to support this piece of legislation. I'm proud to support this bill. This is the kind of harmonization that we need to make our family law and our justice system more accessible and affordable for Ontario families.

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

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: My question to the member is: Obviously she's got lots of experience in practising law. If she can tell us, from her former role as a lawyer and how she sees her role as an MPP now, how this has really simplified and made the law more accessible. Especially for families going through such a hard time and, more importantly, the fact that when we talk about children and child support, how it's really bringing a child-focused law system, a family-focused law system, rather than the amount of paper and burden that is often a burden for many of these families.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: I can say that transitioning from lawyer to MPP has been sometimes a bit of a challenge. When constituents do reach out to me, and I do have a lot of constituents who reach out—questions about the Family Responsibility Office or child support or issues like that—I really want to help them, because I'm used to doing that.

I became a lawyer because I wanted to help people, and I actually did a lot of pro bono work. I became an MPP because I wanted to help people as well, but ultimately I recognize that as an MPP there's a different way I can help them. Where in law I was helping one person at a time, as an MPP what I can do is look at the overall legislation and work towards fixing it so that I can help everyone all at once.

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To answer the member's question, this is how I can support children, this is how I can support women: by modernizing the system and making it more accessible and making it more child-focused. I can take those measures and implement them across Ontario.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: I've had the opportunity to listen to debate on Bill 207 a number of times, and I agree with my colleagues, actually, from the north that talk about how destructive and how hurtful it is to cut legal aid. But what I haven't heard a lot about is what's in the best interests of the kids, because that's really what we should be discussing as we try to fix this bill. I also agree with my

colleague from the north that we might not have the opportunity to fix this for 10 or 15 years.

I know in California, since 1990, they've had a system in place that is joint physical custody, which means that both parents share the equal responsibility of growing their children up. What happens there is that they stay within the same school district. They keep their same friends.

This is something that I think has worked so well in California that I think it should be done here in Ontario. If we're only going to discuss this once every 10 or 15 years, joint physical custody puts equal responsibility on the parents, and they both share in their lives. I think it's so important to make sure the kids are doing it. My question is: Is this something that's being discussed to put into the bill?

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: I'd like to thank the member for his excellent question, because I think, ultimately, we do, not just as a government but I think as a Legislature and as elected officials, have a responsibility to be a voice for those people who don't have voices for themselves, and that includes children.

I can say to the member that this legislation does put children first, because ultimately family law is about protecting children. One of the fundamental legal concepts in our justice system is what's in the best interests of the child. One of the changes we've done is that we're changing terms like "custody" and "access." Instead, these terms would be replaced with terms like "decision-making responsibility," "parenting time," "contact," in order to move away from the perception that one person wins a custody dispute and another parent loses. But ultimately, these decisions are based on the court and what the judge decides based on Ontario's legal principles.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): We don't have time for another question or comment, so further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am pleased to rise to participate in this third reading debate on Bill 207. I want to begin by acknowledging the leadership of our critic, the member for Hamilton Mountain, for her work on this bill, both in speaking to the bill but also in taking in the input that was heard during the public hearings on the bill and trying to constructively move amendments to the bill to make it stronger. As my colleague the member for Nickel Belt has pointed out, we have a once-in-a-decade opportunity to really make the changes that are necessary in this legislation, because it is unlikely that we will be having a similar debate on this any time soon.

I want to refer specifically to some of the concerns that were raised by an organization called Luke's Place—certainly an organization that you, Speaker, will be very familiar with. They brought a brief to the committee that was looking at this bill, and that brief was endorsed by 20 provincial and national women's equality organizations in Canada.

It's important to note the context that Luke's Place highlighted for consideration of this bill and the amendments that they proposed. They noted that every six days in Canada, a woman is killed by her intimate partner, that

family violence is under-reported to police, that approximately one in four women will experience intimate partner violence in her lifetime, and that children are profoundly affected when there is violence in the home, whether they witness it or not. The research is clear. There is a deeply negative impact on children when there is violence in the home. The legislation, everything that we do in this House, needs to acknowledge the gendered reality of intimate partner violence and of violence within families.

They also point out that the highest risk of violence to women is at the time of separation. It's just prior or after separation. So making these changes in this legislation to deal with the dissolution of a relationship and custody decisions about children is very important, because we recognize the danger to women who experience violence in the home when separation occurs. Certainly, this bill is a good step forward, but it is a small step forward.

It is important to align our provincial legislation with the Divorce Act because people who are in common-law relationships should have the same rights and access to justice as people who are in marital relationships. Those relationships are covered by the Divorce Act, so it is important to have our family law legislation in Ontario consistent.

It is also important to ensure that all Ontarians have access to the legal rights that are provided in this bill. We know that this government made sweeping cuts to legal aid. I'm hopeful that this afternoon we might hear that that funding has been restored, but I'm not holding my breath, actually.

This was something that almost every deputant who appeared before the committee highlighted, that without ensuring that the resources are there through legal aid so that people can access the Family Court system, the family law system, then we are excluding many, many women—I was talking specifically about women in my remarks today. We are excluding women who are most likely to be low-income, who work in precarious employment, who may be racialized or otherwise disadvantaged. We are excluding them from accessing the same kinds of legal supports that others have available. That is an essential component in moving forward with changes to the family law system.

I want to review some of the changes that have been proposed by our member for Hamilton Mountain during the committee hearings on this bill that reflected the input that was received but were voted down by government members on the committee, which is a real missed opportunity, Speaker, to strengthen this legislation.

I do want to point out, when I talked about the context of the violence that women in Ontario experience on a daily basis, we have to also recognize that the COVID-19 pandemic has just heightened the risk that many women are facing. Many women are working from home. We know that co-workers frequently are the people who recognize the warning signs that a woman may be experiencing violence at home. With women working at home, they don't have co-workers around them to see those warning signs.

Family, friends and neighbours: Those are the three groups of people who often are the first to see those red flags, those warning signs. The pandemic has really restricted women from being in situations, in dialogue and interacting with family, friends and neighbours, so those warning signs are missed. And so, we hear about skyrocketing numbers of calls that are being made to domestic violence shelters and to sexual assault centres because of the heightened violence that is occurring during COVID-19.

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But to get back to some of the amendments that were proposed and unfortunately rejected by this government, the first one deals with parenting time. This was based on a concern that was brought to the committee by Luke's Place about the vagueness of the language around parenting time decisions that could create an opportunity for an abusive partner to manipulate the intention of the legislation and exert further abusive control on the other parent. As my colleague the member for Hamilton Mountain said during the committee, the bill must be clear on the day-to-day decisions that cannot conflict with decisions made by the parent with primary decision-making responsibility. As it's currently worded, section 28(6) may provide abusive fathers with the opportunity to exploit decision-making responsibilities to make decisions not in the child's best interest, and to undermine and threaten or otherwise exert control over the mother. Unfortunately, that amendment, as I've said, was voted down when this bill went to committee.

Another amendment that was proposed by the NDP during the committee hearings on this bill was around communication and co-operation between parents. The bill includes language to encourage communication and co-operation, but for too long we have seen that in cases where the breakup is because of violence in the home, the woman, who is typically the one who has experienced the violence, is reluctant—understandably reluctant—to want to engage in communication and co-operation. What happens is that the courts have often penalized women who do not want to engage in communication with their former abusive partner by actually removing custody of the children. And so, there is a need to be very clear that encouraging communication and co-operation between parents is not appropriate in cases where mothers have experienced abuse and are fearful about their ability to communicate safely with their former partner. There has to be an exception to those requirements for communication and co-operation in cases of domestic violence.

The third amendment that I want to highlight refers to the duty to assess for lawyers or other legal advisors who are representing women in cases of family breakdown. This was an amendment that was proposed that would recognize the duty of every professional who's involved in the family law system to be engaged in preventing violence against women and children. The amendment was to make specific the duty of legal advisors to assess whether family violence may be present, the extent to which family violence may adversely affect the safety of

the family member themselves or their ability to negotiate a fair agreement. Unfortunately, that amendment was also voted down.

I want to conclude, Speaker, with another point that was made by Luke's Place about the need for education. Without education, without a comprehensive education for everyone involved in the family law system about what violence in the home looks like, what the impact is of violence in the home, no legal changes that are made will actually help women and children who are experiencing violence.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I'm sorry to interrupt the member, who may continue her time, but seeing the time on the clock, it is time for members' statements.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: With its new COVID response scheme announced earlier this week, the government is reducing public protection against COVID, with wider alert categories even as cases, transmission and positivity climb and contact tracing and testing go down.

In the east end, Dr. Michael Warner from Michael Garron Hospital has warned that the government's new system creates the preconditions for more illness and death. He warns it will create the preconditions for increasing the chance of future lockdowns, as we're seeing from the Conservative government in the UK. It's a scheme that will cause the pandemic to be longer and deeper in Ontario.

Once again, the government is behind the curve on COVID-19. Instead of fixing contact tracing and testing, staffing up long-term-care homes and providing direct support to vulnerable communities and businesses, the government is continuing to sit on a pile of unspent COVID response dollars badly needed by those businesses and communities. We do need a data-driven plan with clear benchmarks to beat the challenge of COVID-19, but that is not what we have with the government's announcements earlier this week.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. Norman Miller: Like everything else, Remembrance Day is going to look very different this year. Some of the communities in Parry Sound–Muskoka are still going to have ceremonies, but with very few people in attendance.

Earlier this year, we marked the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II. Unfortunately, we were unable to gather to show our appreciation to the soldiers who sacrificed so much for our freedom. Now, as we approach Remembrance Day, older veterans are among the people vulnerable to COVID-19, so there are few veterans out

selling poppies, but the Legion and our veterans need our support more than ever. I encourage you to look for poppy boxes or see if your local Legion is selling handmade masks, like the one I just had on. Or, if you're not going out, the Legion has an online store where they sell poppy-themed items, including masks. You can find that at www.poppystore.ca.

Early in the pandemic and even now, there are some people complaining about the sacrifices they're being asked to make to protect the rest of the community. As we remember the sacrifices of past generations, I hope that we can all see that being asked to stay home, avoid gatherings and wear a mask is a small price to pay for the health of our friends and neighbours.

This year, show your support for our veterans and active servicemen and women by taking part in a virtual Remembrance Day ceremony. While we stand apart this year, we remember together.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Ms. Catherine Fife: Speaker, 4,000 Canadians die each year by suicide, 1,000 in Ontario, 11 deaths each day. This is an epidemic.

Debbie MacRury lost her son, Greg, to suicide in 2017. Gregory was 28 and a member of the Royal Canadian Air Force. As a mother, Debbie says she is just now finding the strength to fight for Greg and others who are suffering. She writes, "When you lose a loved one to suicide, the wake of destruction that is left behind is staggering. Losing a loved one to suicide adds another complicated component to your grief. It never leaves. Never. It is with you always—it is purgatory on earth, but we have to be their voice."

Margit Simon also lost her son, Jason, to suicide at the age of 20. Suicide often comes with stigma and emotional labour, shock, denial, shame, guilt; we all deal with grief differently. These mothers have channeled their grief into advocacy. Parents are advocating for a universal crisis number, much like the US has established through legislation. When someone is in crisis, they need a clear path to compassion and mental health guidance, plus resources.

MP Charlie Angus's bill to establish a national suicide prevention strategy passed in May 2019. It mandates the creation of a national online hub providing essential information and guides to accessing services. To date, inaction has defined suicide prevention. Enough. We need the courage to act, because no one should underestimate the strength of a parent's love. We must see action in Ontario and in Canada.

WILMA McNEILL

Mr. Robert Bailey: I rise today to pay tribute to the late Wilma McNeill, a community champion in Sarnia-Lambton who passed away last February at the age of 88. Wilma entered every room with a vibrant energy, a great sense of humour and a positive spirit. She fought for many

causes, but none so fiercely as she did for Remembrance Day to be reinstated as a holiday in Ontario. She worked tirelessly on this mission for almost 30 years. I'm sure every member in the House at some time or other received a letter on behalf of Wilma asking us to do this.

1020

This Remembrance Day will be the first since her passing. For anyone who had the pleasure of knowing Wilma, she is now part of the history of Remembrance Day. She became known not only in her community but also to politicians at the municipal, provincial and federal levels all across Canada. Her friends like to say that she was a "force to be reckoned with." Everyone who met Wilma knows this to be true. Whatever the cause, Wilma's dedication and hard work were an inspiration for all of us on how to live our lives more harmoniously and make the earth a better place for everyone.

In memory of Wilma, this Remembrance Day, the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, I encourage everyone to pause and reflect on the sacrifices made by all the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces in conflicts around the world. It's what Wilma would have wanted.

COLLEGE STANDARDS AND ACCREDITATION

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I am so proud to represent the people of the city of Windsor, the fourth most diverse city in all of Canada. In Windsor, we have many community members and groups who contribute to this diversity and give back in countless ways. We have a generous, proud and engaged LGBTQ community and a thriving Muslim community. In fact, members of the Windsor Islamic Association have volunteered countless hours during the pandemic, organizing a grocery assistance program for the sick and the elderly.

It is because of the compassionate, diverse community that I represent that I am sickened and outraged by the Ford government's desire to grant Charles McVety and Canada Christian College the ability to issue university degrees. McVety has a long, very public history of proudly espousing and promoting hateful, homophobic, transphobic and Islamophobic views. He has made hateful comments that are meant to hurt LGBTQ and Muslim members of my community: my brothers, sisters and siblings.

The fact that Premier Ford has not only openly promoted his close friendship with McVety but is now attempting to push through legislation to give McVety even more power and influence is abhorrent. Premier Ford has yet to answer for his personal relationship with McVety and has not backed down from this egregious plan.

My NDP colleagues and I will continue to expose and oppose this repugnant direction from the Ford government. We stand shoulder to shoulder with our friends, neighbours and constituents against hate.

ANCIENS COMBATTANTS

M. Stephen Blais: Aujourd'hui marque le premier jour de la Semaine des anciens combattants, qui est l'occasion pour nous tous de rendre hommage et de nous souvenir de ceux qui ont tant sacrifié pour notre pays.

Des familles d'Orléans ont fait des sacrifices que nous ne pouvons pas imaginer. Ils ont manqué du temps précieux avec leur famille, ils ont subi un traumatisme physique et émotionnel et, monsieur le Président, comme nous le savons tous, plusieurs ont fait le sacrifice ultime pour servir notre pays. Ces sacrifices ne peuvent jamais être oubliés.

Je tiens également à prendre un moment pour souligner les efforts incroyables de la filiale 632 de la Légion royale canadienne dans ma circonscription d'Orléans.

La pandémie a obligé les légions de partout au pays de s'adapter et trouver de nouvelles façons de se faire connaître auprès des donateurs, et je suis heureux d'annoncer que leur première fin de semaine a été couronnée de succès. Je me réjouis de me joindre aux membres de la légion et d'autres bénévoles de la communauté ce samedi pour soutenir la campagne du coquelicot et permettre de recueillir des fonds pour les anciens combattants et leurs familles.

Enfin, monsieur le Président, j'aimerais encourager tout le monde à porter un coquelicot et à prendre le temps cette semaine de réfléchir au sacrifice qui a été fait par nos anciens combattants.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. Michael Parsa: Next Wednesday, on November 11, we mark Remembrance Day—a day to honour and pay tribute to Canada's heroes both past and present. In communities all over this province and throughout Canada, memories of conflict and memories of war live on in the hearts and minds of veterans and their loved ones. These brave women and men answered the call to serve and defend our homeland with courage and self-sacrifice, sometimes paying the ultimate price.

Generation after generation, brave Canadians from cities and towns across this great land have stepped forward to fight for what they believe in and protect our way of life. They're always on watch and on guard for us, and we're forever grateful for their courage and patriotism.

I, along with every person who calls this great country home, owe these brave men and women in uniform a great debt for all they have done and continue to do for us. Next week, myself and countless others will be visiting the cenotaphs in Aurora and Richmond Hill to pay our respects and show our gratitude to the countless heroes who have served to defend our country at home and abroad.

Every year, starting November 1, I proudly wear a poppy in honour of our service members, both past and present, who sacrificed so much to safeguard our freedom and our way of life. I know this year, Remembrance Day might look and feel different, but I encourage everyone to

show our heroes we care by proudly wearing your poppy and generously donating to your local Legion.

On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month—and every other day—we remember them. Lest we forget.

CHILD CARE

Ms. Doly Begum: The latest COVID-19 regulations and every effort made by this government have undermined the importance of protecting vulnerable people across Ontario. The Ministry of Education has proposed sweeping changes to Ontario's child care system that will put our children at further risk of not only COVID-19, but also neglect and lack of appropriate care. This is being proposed while 125 child care centres have permanently closed.

This government is trying to quietly deregulate child care and weaken child care quality by placing younger children into larger groups with fewer qualified staff. They're increasing maximum sizes for infants, toddlers and preschool children, without additional staff or supervision. They're quietly removing qualification requirements by allowing non-ECEs and those who are deemed to be non-qualified persons to be automatically categorized as qualified.

We're talking about our little ones. These changes are extremely dangerous, but even more so with the added public health and safety threats posed by COVID-19. Now more than ever, we need to invest in safety and quality care for young children and make child care more affordable for our families. Access to safe and sustainable child care infrastructure is the only way to ensure Ontario is on the road to recovery—or in fact a she-covey—that does not leave anyone, especially women and children, behind.

I am calling on this government to listen to the families and child care workers who want maximum safety in the care of our children across this province.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Stan Cho: I think all members of this House will agree that, objectively, Willowdale is the best riding in the country. But it does have its challenges. For example, my riding has hit its provincial growth targets for 2041, and being a geographically very small riding, this has led to some challenges up and down Yonge Street.

I want to talk about one with you this morning, Speaker. Yonge Street is the world's longest street. The 401, north of there, is the busiest highway. But when you drive south on Yonge Street and you want to get onto the 401 east, you have to ramp up to turn left at a traffic light. Imagine the traffic congestion this creates in the mornings during rush hour and in the evenings, when people are trying to get home.

I've been driving since 1993 and I have spent months of my life waiting to turn left onto that 401 east. It's a challenge not just for Willowdalers, but for the people who come from the north to get to work as well.

That's why I am absolutely thrilled to announce that this project, building the Yonge-401 ramp, has received stage 1 planning approval.

Interjections.

Mr. Stan Cho: Thank you. I want to thank our Associate Minister of Transportation, our Minister of Transportation and the city for wanting to get this done. The city and the province will cost-share the EA, a necessary step in getting this thing built and alleviating traffic congestion in the great riding of Willowdale.

LEE-ANNE QUINN

Mr. Dave Smith: As we near Remembrance Day, I want to acknowledge an exceptional veteran in my riding. Honorary Lieutenant Colonel Lee-Anne Quinn of the Hasty Ps has dedicated her life to serving our country. For 23 years, she was a military nurse, where she rose to the rank of major. She served four tours in Yugoslavia, Somalia, Rwanda and Afghanistan. Since returning to her home in Peterborough, she has served our community tirelessly and has become an outspoken advocate for our veterans.

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Colonel Quinn will be honoured on November 12 by the Governor General of Canada. She will receive the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers in recognition of her leadership role with the Peterborough chapter of the Canadian Association of Veterans in United Nations Peacekeeping and her role as a co-founder of Salaam Peterborough, an organization that sponsored several Syrian refugee families.

Colonel Quinn continues to work as a nurse practitioner with the Peterborough Family Health Team and is recognized as a gifted athlete. She has actually been inducted into the Peterborough and District Sports Hall of Fame and the Ontario Colleges Athletic Association Hall of Fame.

Although Colonel Quinn is notoriously humble about her accomplishments, today I get the honour of saying thank you for her dedication to our community. Colonel Quinn, you truly are an exceptional person.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent for members to make statements respecting Remembrance Day, with five minutes allotted to Her Majesty's government, five minutes allotted to Her Majesty's loyal opposition and five minutes allotted to the independent members as a group, after which the House shall observe a moment of silence in commemoration of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our country and our freedoms.

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

I recognize the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: On Remembrance Day next Wednesday, all over Ontario and across Canada, we will recognize the sacrifice of our veterans and their families, from past generations to the present day.

In every community in the province, from Cornwall to Kenora, from Windsor to Wawa, memories of loved ones and memories of the terror of war live in the hearts of veterans themselves and in their families'.

Throughout history, we have proven that our commitment to one another and to our fundamental freedoms is unbreakable. From Passchendaele in World War I to Kabul in our own recent memory, Canadians have stood fast against tyranny and against terror. They left their homes, their families and their communities to defend our way of life and to protect the values we hold so dear. We must remember those who fought on land, in the air and on the seas, those who guarded us in the past and continue to guard our freedom through NATO and the UN missions today against terrorism and piracy. We thank them for all of their sacrifices.

As we rise together in the House to pay our respects to our veterans, their tremendous sacrifice puts our role as legislators into perspective. We all look forward, outside here, to the unveiling of the Afghan war memorial, under construction on the south lawn of Queen's Park right at this moment. That memorial will honour the 168 souls we lost in that recent war, and to never forget the sacrifices of the 40,000 soldiers who fought in it.

Speaker, all of our feelings can be summed up in a poem written by Lionel Murphy. He was then a 90-year-old veteran with Legion Branch 23 in the city of North Bay. We lost Lionel just after he wrote this poem about four years ago. It's called *On This Great Day*. And Lionel was just a great guy. I wish you could have met him. He was just such a great guy.

I wandered through the fields today
 A field of marble stone
 So many young men laying there
 Some stones are marked unknown
 They gave their lives that we might live
 The life we live today
 Make sure the life they gave us
 Was not just thrown away
 So many that have fallen
 In battle lost and won
 So many young lives taken
 Before their lives began
 No loving wives to bear a family
 Just kith and kin to mourn
 They fought for love
 Not for fame
 For love of country
 They lit the flame
 They died alone
 Or in a crowd
 For those that did so
 Let's be proud
 The sacrifice they made was real

And now they lay in far-off fields.
 Their duty done, the torch is passed
 We must not let their memory lapse
 And take the torch that they have passed
 For if we fail to carry on
 Our liberty may soon be gone
 And many young lives will bear the cross
 Of liberty that we have lost.

Lionel has shared that. I remember the day he read that to my beloved Algonquin Regiment, where our motto is, “Ne-kah-Ne-tah.” That means, “We lead, others follow.” We thank you, Lionel, for your words. And to all other veterans: Lest we forget.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for St. Catharines.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: It is a distinct honour to stand in this Legislature and speak today in recognition of Remembrance Week and Remembrance Day. Once again, this House, this province and, indeed, this entire country, will be asked to participate in two minutes of silence on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 2020. The two minutes of silence we are asked to participate in is indeed much easier in comparison to what the men and women we are honouring have done for us and for our freedom in the past.

I am fortunate to represent a community, St. Catharines, with a rich military history that has produced tangible and concrete reminders of who and what we should remember every November 11. Like cities across this province, St. Catharines has an established Royal Canadian Legion and veterans’ clubs dedicated to veterans and their families. These Legions conduct annual ceremonies of remembrance at our cenotaphs and, just as importantly, raise both funds and betterment of the local veterans and local initiatives. They promote remembrance and awareness for those whose names are engraved in our war memorials, on our cenotaphs and memorial walls. Five new names will be added to cenotaphs across this country: Captain Brendan Ian MacDonald, Captain Kevin Hagen, Captain Maxime Miron-Morin, Sub-Lieutenant Matthew Pyke and Master Corporal Matthew Cousins of Guelph.

Remembrance Day ceremonies this year will be different. As Canadians, we have lots to remember. This year, our Canadian military raised the spirits of Canadians across the country through aerial performances of the Royal Canadian Air Force’s Snowbirds. We must remember Captain Jennifer Casey, who lost her life while trying to uplift our spirits during the COVID-19 pandemic. We must remember to thank our Canadian military members who saved many lives by looking after our seniors and understaffed long-term-care homes.

This year, our local cenotaphs will be limiting attendance, as will our Legions. There will be virtual ceremonies from local, provincial and national sources. This year, unlike any other, we will be remembering not at our local cenotaphs and local Legions across this province, but in our homes, in our places of employment, in this House. Indeed, wherever we may be, we will be remembering

them virtually. We should be remembering all of the conflicts and wars that Canada has participated in, remembering all of our Canadian air force, army and navy members who fought for and who have given their lives for the freedom we have today. We should be remembering how wonderfully lucky we as Canadians and Ontarians are to have the support of our military members who are presently serving this country and this province.

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Who should we be remembering? This may be a little bit more difficult. It involves names: the names of husbands, fathers, sons and daughters, names that are being remembered mostly by spouses, parents, children and grandchildren of those who did not return. The names and the faces are different for us, because the two World Wars happened so long ago. Not so for Afghanistan and not so for the Korean War and not so for many Canadian peacekeeping missions.

Just this year, I had the privilege to celebrate Chuck Page’s 100th birthday, from my riding of St. Catharines. He shared stories of when he was in the Canadian air force for four years and how he spent two years as a prisoner of war during the Second World War, Speaker. He is a proud veteran who fought valiantly for our country. Chuck vowed to walk 100 steps to raise funds to support a local hospital in St. Catharines. He is a true hero.

Some of us in this House, like myself, have active-duty military members serving our country today. As a mother of an active service member, a Petty Officer 1st Class in the Royal Canadian Navy, I am familiar with the hardships faced by his wife and his two young children, my granddaughters: three six-month tours of duty away from home and his family in support of this country.

As we go about our business, as we go about our busy lives, as we debate motions and deal with the realities of COVID-19, forgetting the rights and the privileges we have happens. We may take them for granted. Rights, privileges and freedoms—we must never forget how we got them.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
 Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
 At the going down of the sun and in the morning
 We will remember them.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Orléans.

Mr. Stephen Blais: As we begin Veterans’ Week, we honour and remember those who have sacrificed so much to serve our country. So many families from the community that I call home and from across Ontario have sacrificed in ways we can only begin to imagine. They have foregone valuable time with their families, they have suffered traumatic physical and emotional traumas, and, Mr. Speaker, as we are all aware, too many have made the ultimate sacrifice to serve our country and the values that we hold so dear.

These sacrifices cannot be forgotten, and it’s our duty to preserve this tradition of remembrance. The members

of the Royal Canadian Legion play a critical role in supporting our veterans and ensuring that we all remember what has been given up for all of us.

Last weekend was a very special one, Mr. Speaker, as the Orléans Legion and Legions across Ontario began their annual poppy campaign. The poppy campaign looks different this year. COVID-19 has forced Legions across the country to adapt and find new ways of connecting with Canadians. It might be a digital poppy you can share with friends or loved ones. In Orléans, the Legion has set up drive-through locations to ensure that poppies can still be distributed safely.

I look forward to joining the members of the Legion and other community volunteers this Saturday, to support the poppy campaign and raise money for veterans and their families. I want to say to all Legions across Ontario that it's because of your hard work and dedication that millions of dollars are raised and distributed to veterans and families every single year.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, as we remember those who have come before, the brave men and women who have sacrificed so much, I also want to thank those who are serving today: members of the armed forces here at home and abroad who stand up to protect the values of democracy, equality and human rights. Your service and sacrifices are deeply appreciated. Let us always remember the brave men and women who have done so much to ensure that we can live freely in this greatest country on earth.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Guelph.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Speaker, it is an honour today to rise to express our sincere and heartfelt gratitude for the service and sacrifice of veterans and first responders. Those who risk their lives in defence of democracy and freedom must never be forgotten.

When we look around the world today, we see how fragile democracy is, and so we have a duty: We have a duty to uphold the democratic values and freedoms that women and men in uniform made the ultimate sacrifice to protect and defend. We should never take this for granted. When we vote, when we pass laws, when we express our opinions, when we practise our faith, when we love those who we want to love, when we stand up for what we believe in—these freedoms, this ability to build a better place for the next generation—we would not have them without the brave women and men who stood up to defend them.

My heart goes out to the loved ones of those who did not return home. For veterans who do return home, it is our duty to ensure that you receive the supports, care and services that you need and you deserve. And we must continually support the families of those veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice.

So let us all remember and honour veterans of both world wars, Korea, Afghanistan, multiple peacekeeping missions and all the other conflicts women and men in Canada served in. We continue to benefit from your sacrifice and your service. Lest we forget. Speaker, lest we forget today and every day. Thank you to our veterans.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Let us now rise to observe two minutes of silence in memory of those who lost their lives defending our country and freedom.

The House observed two minutes' silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We will always remember.

Members can take their seats. It is now time for oral questions.

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QUESTION PERIOD

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Mr. John Vanthof: My first question is to the Acting Premier. Front-line doctors and public health experts have been sounding the alarm about the Premier's response to the second wave of COVID-19. Yesterday, the Premier responded by suggesting that they hadn't read the whole plan. He keeps insisting that infection rates have gone down. Hours later, Peel's medical officer of health responded, and I quote, "Regardless of what the province's new framework is saying, I must be clear: All of our metrics are going in the wrong direction."

Does the Ford government expect people to believe that this doctor, working on the front lines, just hasn't read the whole plan?

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

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, our government has followed the best advice available from scientists and public health experts, and that's certainly what's happened with our COVID-19 framework that we put out recently.

We have been looking at all the available evidence and listening to all the available experts. As you can imagine, there is no shortage of opinion from different doctors on what should and should not be done and where the line should be drawn, but all we can do is make the best advice available to the public transparently, and that is what the COVID-19 framework does. It puts a framework out there for people to discuss and consider. We can always adjust, if need be, in the future, but we believe it's a good framework based on the advice of our public health measures table and the advice of all the public health experts we have consulted across the province.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: Many doctors and health experts are raising serious concerns about the Premier's plan. These are the people working in critical care units. These are the doctors running our public health units, and the Premier at times calls them "armchair quarterbacks."

If the government is so confident about their plan, which the member on the government side just stated, why don't they show us the reports and studies they're basing

the plan on. Show us, and actually be transparent with those reports and studies.

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. Our government has been very transparent all the way along throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We have had daily briefings with the public, with media available and ready to ask questions. We've been here in the House answering questions. Frankly, we've been producing the public health experts who give the government advice, the Chief Medical Officer of Health and the associate chief medical officer of health, for a while every day—and now two days a week—for questions. We have been extremely public and transparent.

Recently, we have just released this COVID-19 framework, which transparently sets out the kinds of indicators and things that the public health measures table looks at and advises the Chief Medical Officer of Health about, and that is where the government gets its advice. So I believe the public has a great deal of information.

We've also put out a dashboard recently on our COVID-19 website, which has been updated and is easy to use, with access available for anyone to look at any time. We're making the best information available so we can make the best decisions available.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: Many public health experts would not agree with that answer.

The Premier has squandered many opportunities he has had to prepare Ontarians for the second wave, and now cases are reaching all-time highs. It's clear that our communities need to bear down hard against the spread of COVID-19, and it's clear they need support.

Long-term-care homes need staff now. Testing and contact tracing needs boosting now. Businesses in hard-hit communities need direct financial supports now.

Instead of adding more chaos and confusion, will the Premier finally deliver what the province needs to weather the second wave now?

Mrs. Robin Martin: Our government is committed to using every resource possible to protect the health and well-being of all Ontarians. That's why we unveiled, this fall, our comprehensive \$2.8-billion plan, Keeping Ontarians Safe: Preparing for Future Waves of COVID-19. That plan looks to build upon current measures in place and introduce new and innovative policies to ensure that our province is prepared to respond to several scenarios. The plan includes helping prevent illness and protecting communities by identifying six key areas, including maintaining strong public health measures, implementing the largest flu immunization vaccine campaign in Ontario's history, quickly identifying outbreaks, accelerating efforts to clear health backlogs, preparing for surges of COVID-19 and recruiting, retaining, training and supporting our health care workers.

This is a great plan. It has led to unprecedented levels of testing—up to 50,000 tests we're able to do now. Nothing, really, will stop this government from putting

every resource toward protecting the health and safety of all Ontarians.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. John Vanthof: My question is also to the Acting Premier. The government wants to rush through its bill that is going to let long-term-care home operators off the hook for legal liability. After 2,000 seniors lost their lives in long-term care, the government set up hearings for the bill. But instead of doing all they can in a pandemic to make sure that everyone who wants to participate can, they are doing the exact opposite. The government—this is hard to believe—scheduled hearings in a room without webcast ability. In other words, no one was able to watch the proceedings.

Why is the government suppressing the hearings instead of ensuring that the public, who is very interested, can actually see debate on this?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: I'm a bit surprised at the question from the honourable member. My understanding is that he is a committee Chair, and he will know that the government does not schedule what rooms committee hearings take place in. Members and the committee Chair will entertain motions from members asking for certain committee rooms.

Having said that, this government did recognize during COVID that there was a deficiency in many of the committee rooms with respect to broadcasting. That is why the government asked the Board of Internal Economy early on to ensure that, going forward, all of the committee rooms are available to be televised. It's a step that is long overdue, and I appreciate the fact that this government is ensuring that all Ontarians, going forward, will have access to all of the committee rooms. It's something that should have been done many years ago and I look forward to that being done very soon.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: Speaker, for the safety of Ontarians, this building is closed to the public; we appreciate that. That's exactly why a bill with this much interest should have had public hearings available online or on TV to watch.

The government knows there's an interest: 58 individuals signed up at short notice to speak to the bill, but only 15 were allowed. Not surprisingly, the government did not prioritize a single family who had lost loved ones in long-term care.

Why isn't this government doing everything it can to ensure this legislation that limits the liability of private long-term-care providers gets the full public hearing it deserves? Why? Why is it not opening it up so everyone can see?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Again, Mr. Speaker, the committee, to the best of my knowledge, did not receive a request from the members opposite, either from the

official opposition or from the independents on the committee, to ensure that the committee was a televised committee. There was no request that was made.

At the same time, with respect to who presented in front of the committee, the same process was used as has been used for all committees. Members of the opposition have an opportunity to select the members that they want to appear before the committee, to highlight the ones that they feel are important. The government did not make a decision on that. The government did not step in to stop people from presenting.

My understanding is that—I believe it was the member for Orléans, if I'm not mistaken, who was filibustering the committee, which resulted in fewer members appearing before the committee. But at no time did this government have any decision in whether the committee was televised or who would appear in front of the committee.

I would suggest to the member opposite, who is a committee Chair, that in future, if he wants a room changed or a televised committee hearing, he make that request.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: The government has a majority on the committee, so the government can make changes at committee.

Speaker, families deserve answers from their government. They deserve to know exactly who has lobbied for these changes. In our caucus we believe families and survivors should have their voice heard.

1100

It appears that the government is so ashamed of their own legislation, they want to clamp down on how much the public knows about it. The government knows there is more interest in this bill. They have the majority on the committee; they control the agenda of the committee. Will the government do the right thing and open up more time in committee, in a webcast room, for the public to share their views on the legislation, so all the people who applied to be heard can be heard?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Again, Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that this bill has been dealt with, with respect, through an order of this House, which all members had an opportunity to vote on. It's also my understanding—and if the member has information to the opposite—that no motion or request was made of the committee to transfer the room from where the hearings were held into a room where they could be televised. If the member opposite has that request, I would certainly like to look at it, but I have certainly not seen any request.

The member will also know that subcommittees are equal in this place. The government does not hold a majority on the subcommittees; it is one member of the opposition and one member of the government. The member will also know that the opposition has the ability to prioritize what witnesses they would like to see at committee.

I would suggest to the member opposite, if he is unaware of all of these things, that we can certainly

arrange a refresher course for him and for the members opposite. As a committee Chair I am surprised that he does not know this, but I would suggest to the member to stop politicizing what is so important for so many people across the province of Ontario. In the absence of them getting the job done, we will.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: My question is to the Premier. Premier, my London colleagues and I have repeatedly implored your government to ensure the increased number of folks needing testing would have access to tests and timely results. In a press conference last week, London's medical officer of health, Dr. Mackie, warned that contact tracing is not effective if it takes people a week to get back their results.

And yet, testing backlogs persist in London. Yesterday, just over 28,000 results were posted, while 33,000 are still waiting to be processed. That's a far cry from the 50,000 tests per day the government promised Ontarians. Meanwhile, parents and kids are left in limbo, wondering if it's safe to go back to work and back to school. Small businesses are forced to work short-staffed and long-term-care residents are separated from their essential caregivers.

Will this government take immediate action to address the backlogs in London?

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

Mrs. Robin Martin: Our government recognizes how important testing is in defeating COVID-19, and we've made it clear that testing is a priority. The sooner we can identify the cases, the sooner we can stop the spread of the virus.

It's important for the member opposite to remember that testing is demand-driven. I also want to be clear that any person who needs a test, according to the guidelines, will receive a test. Right now you can book them immediately, and 80% of results are being reported within 24 to 48 hours across the province.

While there are always tests in progress, the situation has now stabilized and I can assure you there is no backlog. It takes time for the test to be taken, time for the test to be transported and time for the lab to run the test, so there are always going to be tests in the pipeline. Unless it exceeds our capacity, which is now about 50,000 tests, it is not a backlog. Those are tests we will process the next day, and the results will be available within the 24-to-48-hour period.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Leora is an essential caregiver to her mom, who is 101 years old and in long-term care, so time is very important to her and her mother. She wrote me and this is what she said: "This past Wednesday, I went for my regular two-week testing. It is now five going on six days since I was tested with no results.

"I cannot see my mother without results. Just advising the home that I was tested is not enough. The system is broken. The effect on our elderly is appalling.

“While my mother’s physical needs are very well attended to, the staff does not have the time to attend to emotional needs. They are doing their best but they need family help.

“Safety is first and foremost for her and others in the home but without improved response time for providing results, precious time is being lost.”

Will this government commit to providing local public health units the resources and supports they need, so essential caregivers aren’t forced to waste precious time waiting for results?

Mrs. Robin Martin: Our government is committed to ensuring that Ontarians can continue to get tested and receive their results in a timely manner. That’s why our government is investing over \$1 billion to expand the capacity of our provincial lab network so that more tests can be processed and ensure that labs have the resources they need to meet our provincial testing targets—and they have. This investment will include hiring more staff—more lab staff, more professional staff—improving data quality through digitizing requisition forms, and other automated features.

I would also like to remind the member opposite that Ontario Health has made it clear that long-term-care homes and other congregate care settings have priority at provincial labs, especially those in outbreak scenarios. It’s also critical that we remember that this province has completed over five million tests; that’s a third of our population. Our government will continue to work with our sector partners around the province to make sure that testing turnaround times continue to improve so that Ontarians do not experience any untimely delays in receiving their test results.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Stephen Crawford: My question is to the Minister of Long-Term Care. We know that wait-lists for long-term care have grown significantly over the last decade and a half, and that was prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The minister has spoken frequently in the House about the ongoing work being done to repair and rebuild our long-term-care system. On Tuesday, you announced that the government is selling surplus land to build three new long-term-care homes accounting for almost 900 new beds.

Given the urgent need to add new capacity to provide the tens of thousands of people on the long-term-care wait-list with the care they need, can the minister please explain to this House what our government is doing to build new long-term-care beds and how this announcement will help the capacity for the people of Oakville?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the member from Oakville for his advocacy on this file.

We are delivering on our commitment to transition our seniors from wait-lists to modern long-term-care homes, providing a warm and safe environment with the quality of care that they deserve. Developing long-term-care homes on surplus government lands will help address barriers often faced by long-term-care operators, such as

the limited supply of available land, particularly in urban areas.

In Oakville, this will mean an additional 512 long-term-care beds that will be located at 2165 Dundas Street West. This is just one piece of our government’s commitment to building 30,000 new long-term-care beds over 10 years. Our government will continue to deliver on that commitment.

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

Mr. Stephen Crawford: Thank you, Minister. That’s great news for the people of Oakville and everyone in Ontario, really. That’s phenomenal.

Many citizens of Oakville have written to my office, raising their concerns about access to long-term care. I’m glad to hear that progress is being made in my community and across the province of Ontario. This is a critical step towards improving the quality of life for people on the wait-lists and their families.

The fact is that the previous Liberal government built only 611 beds between 2011 and 2018 while the over-75 population grew by over 170,000 people. This government was elected by the people of Ontario in part because of our plan to address bed capacity in long-term care, so I’m glad to see us building nearly as many in one project, and I’m glad to see that one of the projects is in my community.

Can the minister please explain what else this government is doing to rapidly address capacity shortages in long-term care?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thanks again for the question, to the member from Oakville.

Working together with our sector partners, our government continues to use innovative ideas and modern solutions to pursue an aggressive modernization agenda for long-term care. Developing these three long-term-care homes on surplus government land will add almost 900 new long-term-care beds to the system.

But our government knows that more has to be done to improve capacity. This past summer, we announced the Accelerated Build Pilot Program, which is helping build new long-term-care beds across the province in record speed that meet modern design standards, including air-conditioning and private and semi-private rooms. We have a plan to improve long-term-care capacity and staffing that is much needed to coincide, and we will continue to do just that.

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CAREGIVERS

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: My question is for the Minister of Long-Term Care. Anne Baird, who lives in my riding, hasn’t been able to help with her mother’s care since the pandemic hit in March. Neither have her sisters. Anne’s mother lives in Bertram Place, a retirement home in Dundas. She is over 90 and in failing health, and she desperately misses the care of her daughters.

Despite the fact that there has been no COVID at the home and that her daughters qualify as essential caregivers, the home is not allowing her daughters to come into

her room. Speaker, how is the minister ensuring that people like Anne's mom can have the help and visitors they need for the sake of their physical and mental well-being?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the member opposite for that important question. Our government acknowledges and recognizes the importance of family caregivers and caregivers beyond the family for our residents in long-term care. Their emotional well-being is our focus, as well as their physical safety and health.

We understand the homes. We understand the situation that some of the homes are in. But as you mentioned, homes that are not in outbreak do have an obligation to allow essential caregivers. Each resident can identify two caregivers, and those caregivers should be allowed into the home. This is something that we will continue to work with our sector partners on, understanding the needs of our residents, the needs of their families and the needs of the staff and other residents in the home to be kept safe. All of this is an effort to address an issue that was long-standing over the first COVID wave. We understand the issue. We're continuing to work with our partners to make sure that access to family members' essential caregivers is done.

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

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: Anne, her sisters and their families have been limiting their exposure to others in order to ensure that there's no chance that they could possibly transmit COVID to their mom or inadvertently bring it into the home. It's cruel to deprive Anne's mom of the loving care of her daughters when there's absolutely no health reason to do so. Anne's mom needs her daughters, as the minister has acknowledged. This is why the NDP has proposed legislation to fix this problem and allow individuals receiving care and their caregivers to have a voice. When will the minister listen to the families and pass that bill?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: We are constantly monitoring the situations within our homes. Again, our government recognizes the importance of essential caregivers and family members for our residents. The emotional well-being of our residents is really something that I very much take to heart.

As a daughter of a family member, my parent, who was in long-term care, I know how much it means to families to visit. I used to take my mother regularly to do that, so it is something that is very close to my heart.

I will continue to make sure that we take every measure possible, work with our homes, listen to our families and continue to address the situation that means so much to families and residents in long-term care. We will be on this continually.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. John Fraser: My question is for the Minister of Long-Term Care. At Ottawa's Starwood long-term-care home, there are 79 resident cases of COVID-19 and 19

staff cases. Nine residents have died. That makes it one of the worst outbreaks in the province.

I said before, COVID-19 is like a brush fire: Once it starts inside a home, it's hard to control. At Starwood, the home's operator admitted in an email that delays in testing contributed to the spread of COVID-19, and it's not the first time we've heard that in the second wave. It's not good enough to say, "We make it a priority." It actually has to happen. Delays in testing mean delays in cohorting and sending staff home. The minister knows that's how residents get sick.

Can the minister tell us why testing is not in place to protect every resident in long-term care?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The parliamentary assistant.

Mrs. Robin Martin: As I said before, our government is committed to ensuring that Ontarians can rely on test results, and test results coming back in a timely manner. That's why we invested \$1 billion in our testing strategy so that we can have more lab capacity and get those tests turned around as quickly as possible, and that's what we've been doing.

We've hired more lab staff. We've hired more professional staff. We've improved the data quality with digitizing requisition forms and other automated features, and 80% of tests across the province are being returned within 24 to 48 hours. Frankly, that's a lot of testing. We've tested over five million Ontarians. Long-term-care homes are prioritized for testing results, and long-term-care homes in outbreak are at an even higher priority for test results.

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

Mr. John Fraser: Well, you don't know an outbreak until you do the tests.

Eighty-nine long-term-care homes are in outbreak this morning. Earlier this year, at Ottawa's West End Villa, 20 residents died of COVID-19. If you look at the dashboard, you don't see the cases; you do see the deaths.

Both West End Villa and Starwood are a 15-minute drive from the minister's constituency office. What happened at these homes is very serious. Every day, it's really discouraging to hear the minister downplay the number of cases in the Legislature and on social media, as if it was somehow minimized by the minority of homes being in outbreak. You can't minimize the impact of COVID-19, and it's the minister's responsibility to protect every resident in long-term care.

The bottom line is, the things that need to be in place, like testing, are not there for everyone. So my question to the minister is this: What are you going to do to ensure a timely test turnaround for every resident in long-term care?

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you for the question. As I've indicated in answer to several questions, we have ensured a timely test turnaround. Some 80% are being returned within 24 to 48 hours. We are working on improving that even further so that we get up to 90% of tests being returned within that period of time. It would be

wonderful if we could get to 100% of tests being returned within that period of time.

But we have invested \$1 billion in testing. Testing is a high priority for this government. Testing, especially for long-term-care residents and long-term-care facilities that are in outbreak, is the highest priority in that list—and hospitals as well—because we know how important it is to get those tests turned around quickly. Obviously, we're very concerned with any institution—long-term-care home or hospital—that is in outbreak, and we want to do our best to make sure that we contain and isolate the cases as best as possible to ensure that the health and safety of all of the residents is protected.

SKILLED TRADES

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development. As you know, he's always building up success in this province, but it's no secret that there is a looming labour shortage in this province. With a third of journeypersons in Ontario nearing retirement age and the average apprentice being at the age of 29 years, the government needs to do more work, it's clear, to bring more people into the trades. There are hundreds of thousands of jobs that are available across our province that could transform the lives of many people, be they young people, women, new immigrants. There is opportunity for all these individuals to support a meaningful, high-paying, successful career.

But there are often many barriers. I wanted to ask the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development what he can tell us as to what he's doing to build up success for all those people, no matter their background.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I want to thank the member from Barrie–Innisfil for this important question and for working within our government to get more young people into the trades.

Mr. Speaker, ensuring that these good-paying jobs, often jobs with pensions and benefits, in the skilled trades get filled over the next few years—this is our government's mission. Filling these jobs is vital to keeping our province competitive for the future and building what our communities need.

As part of our skilled trades strategy, we've made investments in the trades right across the province. Our government recently announced \$43 million, which includes teaching kids from grade 1 and up about the skilled trades to encourage them to pursue a career in the trades. Additionally, the Premier and I recently announced an additional \$2 million to help racialized and disadvantaged job-seekers train for these great careers. This included \$500,000 for Youth Employment Services in Toronto to help with cloud computing and programming training for 100 racialized youth.

Mr. Speaker, our government believes that good, meaningful jobs change—

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

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Thank you, Minister, for the answer. There's no question that COVID-19 has taken a toll in many sectors, but especially on women's economic position when it comes to STEM, manufacturing and the construction sector. I know the Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues has been doing many tours across the province to encourage more women to get into the skilled trades, and working with Kickass Careers. You see the opportunity across our province for these women—with high-paying jobs, huge demand in our economy—to tackle many of the barriers. Some of these women are going into the trades, but not all.

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Could the minister please tell us what she's doing to get more women into the skilled trades?

Hon. Jill Dunlop: Thank you to the member from Barrie–Innisfil, who's also a great neighbouring MPP.

The member is right: We know that women have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, both at home and in the workplace. We are committed to ensuring that women are not left behind as we reopen Ontario's economy. Our government continues to stand and fight for all Ontario workers, including women, and is working to encourage them to pursue careers in the skilled trades and STEM sector.

This past month, I had the pleasure of visiting the Women in Skilled Trades program at the Burlington Centre for Skills Development. Over the course of their 22-week program, women are equipped with the carpentry tools and training they need to launch successful careers in the construction industry.

Alongside the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development, we announced an investment of \$75 million over the next two years to help apprentices cover living expenses during their in-class training.

Mr. Speaker, our work does not end here. We will continue to fight for women across Ontario, to make sure they are aware of the opportunities in the skilled trades and to support them along their pathway.

ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING

Mr. Ian Arthur: My question is for the Acting Premier. On Tuesday, Kingston city council passed a motion urging this government to extend the eviction ban for arts venues for six more months.

Entrepreneur Wendy Huot, owner of our beloved independent cinema, the Screening Room, has seen a 75% drop in attendance since the pandemic began and says they are hemorrhaging thousands and thousands of dollars per month. Like many others, this business could not access this province's commercial rent subsidy.

Arts organizations across Ontario desperately need stability and assurances of support now. If these spaces are forced to close—who are we kidding?—they are not going to open again.

With that in mind, will this government please step up and extend the commercial eviction ban for arts venues for six more months?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The parliamentary assistant and member for Willowdale.

Mr. Stan Cho: Thanks to the member opposite for raising this important issue.

The arts industry, like many businesses throughout Ontario, has been facing very difficult times from the onset of this pandemic. That's why this government put away partisan differences and worked with all levels of government across all party lines to make sure that we provided a coordinated system of support. That's what this government has done. Our part has been \$30 billion in direct relief, and \$241 million of that went to the commercial rent relief program, which has aided over 617,000 employees here in Ontario.

Of course, there is a new rent program that the federal government has announced. This will be tenant-led, as we heard at the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

There is more to be done; there's no question about it. That's why I look forward, in a few hours, to tabling our next step for a COVID-19 response to make sure that we protect, support and recover here in the province of Ontario.

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

Mr. Ian Arthur: Respectfully, to the member opposite, I was asking for an eviction ban to be extended for six months. I do hope that is part of the budget this afternoon, because all the programs in the world won't matter if these landlords decide to evict these tenants from those locations.

The arts and culture sector makes huge contributions to the economy and the well-being of our communities.

Earlier this summer—with the member opposite—the world-renowned Toronto International Film Festival testified at the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs and told us how it generates more than \$200 million in annual economic activity, creates over 1,000 jobs and reaches approximately 850 million people worldwide.

Arts and culture organizations and individual artists are the soul of our communities. They create spaces of joy and celebration. And with so many struggling with isolation right now, these outlets are especially important in a province where we lack adequate mental health supports.

Will the government provide additional funding for immediate and near-term support in recognition of the increased costs experienced by these businesses and organizations?

Mr. Stan Cho: Thank you to the member for his concern for this very important industry.

TIFF, I think, was missed by all members of this House—as well as the valuable sector itself and the jobs it creates and the economic prosperity it brought to Ontario.

Speaker, we still must protect and support those businesses, and there's no question about that. Our government outlined that support in \$30 billion of direct relief. I want to remind the member that this is a coordinated approach with our federal partners to make sure that we

fill the gaps in the relief they provide. That's why we've helped with \$300 million in our recent announcement, to help with additional fixed costs, to help with property taxes, to help with other taxes and keep hydro rates low.

There is absolutely more to be done as we move through this second wave. That's why our budget will be an opportunity to table our next steps to make sure that we protect the hard-working businesses in the arts sector, to make sure that we support those businesses and also look around the corner to make sure that we have a plan for that day of recovery.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is for the Minister of Education. The Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board received approval and funding two and a half years ago to build a much-needed school in the Treetops subdivision in Alliston. After meeting all the requirements, the board is still waiting for final sign-off.

Parents, students, staff and trustees are beyond frustrated, and COVID-19 has only heightened their exasperation. The pressure to limit overcrowding, reduce the use of portable classrooms and allow for physical distancing is greater than ever.

Will the minister put an end to the delays? Will he review this sorry situation with his department and see that the necessary approval to proceed to tender is finalized?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Thank you to the member opposite for his question. The project noted—as I understand, the board had submitted a request for approval to proceed to tender in August 2020. We have reviewed it. They've also come forth with a request to increase the project budget cost. We are reviewing the matter since August.

I appreciate very much the community pressures in Alliston, a growing community in your riding. I'll work with the deputy minister's office to make sure that the board gets an answer as soon as possible.

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

Mr. Jim Wilson: I thank the minister for that answer. Hundreds of students are counting on you to get this project moving forward.

The new school will accommodate just over 430 students. Those students right now are being bused to Beeton. Beeton is almost at capacity now for the number of portables. I think we have eight portables. We're going to grow to 12 soon, which is the municipal limit for that school.

It is a fast-growing part of the province, as all ministers know. Once the greenbelt went in, Simcoe county became the fastest-growing region in the province, because you have to leap over the greenbelt and then you buy your house or your apartment or whatever in my riding and in other PC members' ridings in Simcoe county and Grey county.

I appreciate anything you can do, Minister. Time is of the essence. I'm sorry it has fallen on your watch. It should have been built years ago.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: As noted, the board had come forth with a tender for approval in August. We are reviewing the matter expeditiously, appreciating that families in your community want to see action on a new school. I very much agree that building schools during COVID is important, at least for the medium term, to help alleviate the accommodation pressures that are rising across communities, including in Alliston.

We just announced with the Premier a \$500-million investment in capital. This is actually the second capital investment in this calendar year—two intakes of roughly \$1 billion to build new schools, to expand schools and to build over 1,700 net new child care spaces for working parents.

There's clearly more to do, and I look forward to getting to work for the people of Ontario.

TREATIES RECOGNITION

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: My question is to the Minister of Indigenous Affairs. The first week in November each year is Treaties Recognition Week in Ontario. The people of my riding know the importance of treaties, with Markham being part of the Johnson-Butler Purchase. Sometimes it's called the "Gunshot Treaty."

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please tell this House what our government is doing to highlight treaties and their significance in Ontario?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The parliamentary assistant, the member for Peterborough-Kawartha.

Mr. Dave Smith: Treaties Recognition Week is an opportunity to promote awareness and understanding of the treaties that form the basis of our relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Each year, Indigenous elders and knowledge-keepers, like Doug Williams from my riding, share their stories through Living Library events that are viewed online and in schools across the province. This year, we have expanded our online programming to reach even more Ontarians.

Recognizing the histories of treaties helps preserve Indigenous culture and traditions as we move forward together on the path of reconciliation. Having the knowledge-holders tell these stories provides a much richer experience for other people to learn.

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

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you to the parliamentary assistant for that answer. I know many of my constituents are participating in the virtual Living Library event this week. Can the minister please tell this House what else our government is doing to honour this important week?

Mr. Dave Smith: Our government is grateful to all the Indigenous leaders and educators who share their stories and perspectives each year for the Living Library program.

Additionally, Ontarians can access many more resources, including our digital treaties map, at ontario.ca/treaties.

I'd also like to share with the House that November 8 is national Aboriginal Veterans Day. May we honour the contributions of many First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples who proudly served this country during the First World War, the Second World War, the Korean War and every conflict since. Lest we forget the bravery and sacrifice of Indigenous veterans who answered the call and defended this country.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Minister of Health. Yesterday, the minister said, "While we have the ability to reach up to 50,000 tests per day, it is demand-driven, so it depends on the number of people that actually show up."

Speaker, Londoners are showing up, but they are finding it hard to get tests. Arden Urbano needs a COVID test in order to travel for business. Her local pharmacy has designated just one hour per day for people without symptoms to call for an appointment. They must wait for a callback up to 48 hours later before they can book a test, often days out. Last week, she emailed me to express her frustration and described the government's testing strategy as a complete fail.

Speaker, why is the minister blaming Ontarians for not getting tested instead of accepting her responsibility to meet testing targets?

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

Mrs. Robin Martin: I thank the member opposite for the question. As I've said many times, we recognize the importance of testing and testing turnaround times. We've made it clear that testing is a priority for our government and we've put \$1 billion into enhancing our testing strategy. We have a capacity to do 50,000 tests at this time every day; however, we don't always have 50,000 tests to process every day. When we do, those tests are able to be processed. We're working on improving that number to enhance our testing capacity even further.

We're also expecting rapid tests to be approved by Health Canada and perhaps available across the country shortly. That would be another initiative which would help testing turnaround times.

It is possible that occasionally people do have to wait longer for tests, but as I said, 80% of the tests across the province are coming in within 24 hours to 48 hours. We think that's a fairly good result, but we want to make it even better.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Speaker, another constituent emailed me last week to ask why, when testing rates are half the provincial capacity, it took four days to get a COVID test appointment at the Oakridge assessment centre for her symptomatic teenage son. She wonders if confusing messaging and barriers to access testing are

reducing numbers so the government can claim that people are not coming out. This is exactly what we heard yesterday when the minister said, “I’m not sure if the leader of the official opposition would like us to just go and grab people and bring them in for testing.”

Speaker, we don’t want people to be grabbed; we want a plan for timely testing that meets provincial targets. When will we see it?

Mrs. Robin Martin: We do have a plan for timely testing that meets provincial targets. We’re doing that plan. We’re executing that plan right now. We are meeting our targets. We’re able to test and process 50,000 tests a day at this time, and we’re increasing that number every day.

As to the member’s suggestion that you cannot get an appointment for testing, I can’t speak to the particular testing centre that you referred to but I do know that within the city of Toronto, when I have gone on the websites of the various testing centres, I’ve been able to get an appointment within an hour. So there are many testing facilities available and we have 160 assessment sites set up around the province. There are lots of testing sites available, and I hope that people will be able to get the test and get the results as quickly as possible. That’s certainly what our plan is working toward.

COLLEGE STANDARDS AND ACCREDITATION

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: My question is for the Premier. I’ve asked about the expansion of the mandate of Canada Christian College a number of times in this Legislature, as many of us have from this side of the floor. I continue to be deeply concerned, not about the PEQAB process, which the minister uses as a shield when he answers questions, but rather about the legislation that essentially pre-empts the objective process. The well-known homophobe, transphobe, Islamophobe Charles McVety is being supported and rewarded by this government. If his bigotry doesn’t give this government pause, then his dubious academic background and his questionable financial arrangements should.

We’ve had a lot of opportunity to think about the need for decency in political life as we have watched the machinations and behaviour of the—I hope—outgoing President of the United States. The support of Charles McVety is not decent. Will the Premier do the decent thing and withdraw schedule 2 from Bill 213 and cut McVety loose?

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

Hon. Ross Romano: I’ve talked about the process, and the process is critical. It’s critical for a reason. The most fundamental freedom we have under the charter is section 7 of the charter, which says that everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person, and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice.

Fundamental justice, to the member opposite, is about procedural fairness. These are principles of procedural

fairness, which are accountable and transparent. We cannot interfere with these types of procedural safeguards. It’s wrong. It violates the principles of fundamental justice. I ask no one in this House to accept or adopt beliefs that they don’t hold. I expect no one to do anything of that nature. I ask that you simply accept the principles of fundamental justice and the principles of fairness.

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

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: So if I were asking for interference in the PEQAB process, then that answer would have been perfectly legitimate. That’s not what I’m asking about. I’m asking about a political decision to pre-empt that very process.

But I have a very personal question for the Premier, if he refuses to end his support of McVety, and maybe the minister can pass it along to him. Can the Premier provide an explanation for his behaviour to all the lesbian and gay and trans and Muslim parents in the province, to all the educators and grandparents and families who will have to explain to their LGBTQ and Muslim children why their government would support a man who despises and loathes them and the people they love?

Because if the Premier cannot come up with an explanation, then the only explanation available to all of us is that he agrees with Charles McVety or, maybe if he doesn’t agree with Charles McVety, then the man did the Premier a favour and now he expects the Premier to do him a favour. The problem with that is that this man to whom the Premier is returning a favour is full of—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I’m going to ask the member to withdraw. You can’t impute motive.

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Place your question.

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: I ask the Premier what he suggests we tell our children and grandchildren. What does he suggest I say to Olivia, Claire and Hugh about why their government is rewarding someone who believes that their grandma and their Gagy and their uncle are evil?

Hon. Ross Romano: What the member opposite just asked, what I’ve been hearing over and over again is that we interfere with independent process. There’s a request that the government interfere and meddle with independent processes. There is no way to stand in the way of a PEQAB process. There is no way to stand in the way of an independent process.

But I know that the member opposite, when she stood as Premier, I know that that happened quite often. We can go through numerous scandals that happened, numerous issues that arose. And look no further than now the leader of the Liberal Party, the new leader appointed by that Premier to be the Minister of Transportation, that is Steven Del Duca, the leader of the Ontario Liberal Party, the former member for Vaughan, the former Minister of Transportation. We can talk about getting swimming pools built. We can talk about doing things like GO stations to avoid procedural fairness rules. We don’t meddle with procedural fairness. Those are the—

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

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COVID-19 RESPONSE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé. With COVID-19 numbers on the rise, Ontario must have a plan in case there are more critically ill patients than our hospitals can serve. On March 28, the government sent a widely condemned critical care triage protocol to Ontario hospitals. The Ontario Human Rights Commission, many disability organizations and even the government's own bioethics table have called on the government to cancel that protocol.

The critical care triage protocol has been criticized for allowing discrimination against people with disabilities who find themselves in need of life-saving medical care. With a dozen major intensive care units now operating at capacity, this can become a life-or-death issue for people with disabilities in a not-too-distant future. In line with the unanimous advice of her own bioethics table, the human rights commission and the AODA Alliance, will the minister cancel her discriminatory March 28 critical care triage protocol?

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

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you very much for raising that, because that really deserves clarification. I can tell you that I had nothing to do with any kind of triage protocols such as this. It would have been done by health experts, not by me. I'm aware of something that did exist in draft form. It never saw the light of day in terms of coming to reality.

Quite frankly, I find the whole approach extremely offensive. Ageism is illegal. If anyone in our long-term-care homes needs medical care, they will receive it, and that's exactly what is happening. I reject any premise that anyone is acting on any draft of any nature such as this.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: Two months ago, the government's bioethics table gave recommendations to the Minister of Health on the rules that should govern critical care triage to replace the March 28 critical care triage protocol that has been sent to every Ontario hospital already. Despite the Premier's promise of full transparency in the handling of this pandemic, the government has kept the critical care triage protocol kind of a secret—the minister doesn't know about it.

Ontarians, people with disabilities: We all deserve to know what directive the government is considering in this life-and-death decision-making process. The minister's own bioethics table, the Ontario Human Rights Commission and major respected disability organizations are urging the Minister of Health to immediately release the bioethics table's recommendations presently being considered.

Will the minister immediately make public the recommendations of the government's bioethics table on critical

care triage, and will she consult with people with disabilities on the rules that should govern critical care triage?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Response, the parliamentary assistant.

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. Obviously, the health and well-being of all Ontarians is our top priority. The March 28 draft critical triage protocol for a major surge in the COVID-19 pandemic was developed by the bioethics table, but has been rescinded and should not be implemented or relied on. This early draft and any subsequent draft documents developed for engagement and consultation should not be used. A revised framework may be shared in the future and distributed, should pandemic conditions deteriorate significantly in the province.

Our government has also introduced our comprehensive, \$2.8-billion Keeping Ontarians Safe plan, which will ensure that the province is ready to respond to several situations for COVID-19. Implementation of our plan is well under way. We don't anticipate getting anywhere near having to use such a protocol—

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

NORMES ET ACCRÉDITATION
DES COLLÈGESCOLLEGE STANDARDS
AND ACCREDITATION

M^{lle} Amanda Simard: Ma question s'adresse au premier ministre. C'est vraiment difficile à croire que le gouvernement continue de justifier sa mesure fautive dans le projet de loi 213 qui confère le pouvoir important de décerner des diplômes universitaires à un homme homophobe et islamophobe, qui continue de propager la haine : un certain M. McVety, un grand ami du premier ministre, ça a l'air.

Moi qui n'avais jamais entendu parler de cet homme avant—admettons que j'aurais pu m'en passer. Monsieur le Président, si vous voulez faire des cauchemars, écoutez cet homme parler : de quoi à faire dresser les cheveux sur la tête.

Chez nous, du monde de même, on tasse ça de côté, ça ne prend pas de temps. Mais ici, avec ce gouvernement, ça a l'air qu'on les récompense avec le pouvoir de décerner des diplômes universitaires en arts et en—wait for it—sciences. Incroyable, et absolument inacceptable.

Monsieur le Président, pourquoi le premier ministre et son gouvernement tiennent-ils à octroyer de tels pouvoirs à un homme homophobe, islamophobe et haineux?

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

Hon. Ross Romano: I want to expand on this a little bit more, because we've been having this conversation all week. The process is the most critical element of what I referred to earlier, our fundamental justice. Fundamental justice requires that we have procedural safeguards. So

anyone who wants to apply for a licence or a designation, as I said before, has to be guaranteed a process.

I'm not sure what the members opposite would like me to do. Would they like me to wait outside of a computer system and hack the computer system in order to stop an application from happening? No. That is not reasonable and that is not what we can do. There is a process.

Now, the fact that we're in this House and we're able to speak about this brings it out into a public domain that is transparent. That is why we're here—

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

M^{lle} Amanda Simard: Mr. Speaker, why can't the government answer the simple question? Do they stand against hate, homophobia and Islamophobia: yes or no? If yes, they will remove the schedule that they snuck into Bill 213 that encourages it. If they don't, they will keep it.

Will the government do the right thing and remove schedule 2 of Bill 213: yes or no?

Hon. Ross Romano: Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated, we obviously respect every element of fundamental justice, everything within the charter, equality rights, and we absolutely stand for principles of justice. We obviously do not stand for hate.

But these are not synonymous, as they want to be set out by the members of the opposition. What is in the bill is not synonymous at all with what they are referencing. In fact, it is all about procedural fairness, as we have said time and time and time again.

It is critical that we be able to enter into this chamber and have respectful debate. It is critical that we ensure that everyone has the opportunity to follow a process and that there is a clear line of what that process is. While we sit in this chamber, we have to be able to have respectful debate. That is what we would hope for.

We are all about transparency, accountability and procedural fairness, and that is what we are doing.

WORKERS' RIGHTS

Ms. Doly Begum: Last month, the Associate Minister of Small Business and the member from Scarborough Centre visited Cosmetica, a makeup factory, because the owner wanted to reduce red tape. This company is the same company that forced workers, who feared for their own safety and the health of their family members, to continue working during this pandemic—because this government made a makeup factory essential. And after taking advantage of these workers, 180 workers were terminated.

The regulations that protect our workers are not red tape. They are the basic rights of workers that should be upheld in this province. Can the minister explain what backroom deals were made with Cosmetica after they fired 180 workers?

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

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Thank you to the member opposite for raising this issue today at Queen's Park.

The health and safety of every single worker has been the government's top priority during COVID-19. That's why we recently announced that we're hiring, actually, more than 100 labour inspectors. That will be the most labour inspectors that the province has ever had in its history. That's why we've doubled the capacity at the phone line centre at the Ministry of Labour. If any worker is afraid for his or her safety on the job, they can call 877-202-0008, and the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development will investigate the concerns that any worker has.

Furthermore, I would let the member opposite know that they can visit ontario.ca/covidsafety to see the more than 200 resources available to workers and to every employer in the province.

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

Ms. Doly Begum: Over the last months, I've been fighting for these workers who were laid off by Cosmetica. These employees were laid off by the company only to be replaced by workers through an agency, simply to save money by this company. Some of these employees weren't given a record of employment or explained to about their severance packages.

When I reached out to the Minister of Labour in September to let him know about these issues and ask for help—because these 180 workers wanted help, and without exposing themselves, they wanted the minister to ask Cosmetica so it could be explained what their record of employment looked like and how much severance was paid. The minister simply refused and told them to expose themselves and actually file a complaint under the ESA.

Will the minister explain why he's unwilling to help Ontario's workers? Because the suppression of workers' rights by this government has reached a devastatingly high level, and it is unacceptable. Can the minister explain why he's unwilling to help these workers?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: To the contrary, this government is standing up with workers every single day that we're in office. In fact, the very first legislation that we brought forward during COVID-19 was Bill 186, the most progressive legislation in North America. That legislation, that law that was supported by all members in this House, tells any worker, if they're in self-isolation, if they're in quarantine, if they have to stay home and look after a loved one, they can't be fired for that. We expect every single labour law to be followed in this province, and if they're not, there will be penalties to pay.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 36(a), the member for Ottawa South has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health concerning testing in long-term care. This matter will be debated on Tuesday, November 17, following private members' public business.

This House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1151 to 1300.

PETITIONS

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 36(a), the member for Scarborough Southwest has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development concerning workers. This matter will be debated on Tuesday, November 17, 2020, following private members' public business.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

KEEPING POLYSTYRENE
OUT OF ONTARIO'S LAKES
AND RIVERS ACT, 2020
LOI DE 2020 SUR LA PRÉVENTION
DE LA POLLUTION DES LACS
ET DES RIVIÈRES DE L'ONTARIO
PAR LE POLYSTYRÈNE

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

Bill 228, An Act to prohibit unencapsulated expanded or extruded polystyrene in floating docks, floating platforms and buoys / Projet de loi 228, Loi interdisant le polystyrène expansé ou extrudé sans enveloppe de protection dans les quais flottants, les plateformes flottantes et les bouées.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka like to explain his bill briefly?

Mr. Norman Miller: It's an honour to introduce this private member's bill today, the Keeping Polystyrene Out of Ontario's Lakes and Rivers Act. This bill will do exactly as its title suggests: reduce the amount of polystyrene that pollutes our lakes and rivers.

The bill requires persons who sell, offer to sell or construct floating docks, floating platforms or buoys to ensure that any expanded or extruded polystyrene in the dock, platform or buoy is fully encapsulated.

704176 ONTARIO LIMITED
ACT, 2020

Mr. Glover moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr33, An Act to revive 704176 Ontario Limited

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

First reading agreed to.

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

WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

Mr. Michael Mantha: A petition from the great people of Bruce Mines: "Improve Winter Road Maintenance on Northern Highways.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Highways 11 and 17 play a critical role in the development and prosperity of northern Ontario;

"Whereas the former Liberal government introduced private winter maintenance contracts, and the current Conservative government has failed to improve winter road conditions in northern Ontario;

"Whereas injuries and fatalities are twice more likely to occur on a northern highway than on a highway in southern Ontario, per capita;

"Whereas current Ministry of Transportation classification for winter highway maintenance negatively impacts the safety of drivers on northern highways;

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

"Classify all 400-series highways, the QEW highway and Highways 11 and 17 as class 1 highways;

"Require that the pavement on class 1 highways be bare of snow within eight hours of the end of a snowfall."

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

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Petitions?

Pursuant to standing order 61(b), this House is recessed until 4 p.m.

The House recessed from 1306 to 1600.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

2020 ONTARIO BUDGET

Hon. Rod Phillips: I move, seconded by Premier Doug Ford, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Phillips has moved, seconded by Mr. Ford, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Rod Phillips: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

In March of this year, when I introduced the first phase of Ontario's Action Plan, COVID-19 had only just begun to be part of our daily lives.

For so many in this province, it was a time of anxiety. Worry. And fear.

Fear for our health. And the health of our loved ones.

For front-line workers, it was a time of anxiety about what was to come.

And for so many others—there was real worry about whether their jobs ...

Their businesses ...

Their ability to earn a living and support their family ...

Would survive the pandemic.

At the time, Premier Ford made a simple, non-negotiable promise to the people of Ontario:

Your government will do whatever it takes to get you through this.

In the ensuing eight months, we have remained focused ... every single day ... on living up to that promise. To do what it takes to protect you.

This promise has not changed. And it will not change.

We will do whatever it takes to protect and support the people of Ontario. Today. Tomorrow. And every day.

In the past nine months, some things have changed.

For one—we know more about this virus ... how it is transmitted ... how we can protect ourselves ... and who is most at risk.

This has informed our government's approach to public health ... on the necessary steps to stay ahead of the virus ... knowing it is better to be a week too early than a week too late when it comes to people's health.

It has informed our approach to reopening our economy in a way that is flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances...

... and it has informed the approach we are taking today.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce the next phase in our government's response to COVID-19—Ontario's Action Plan: Protect, Support, Recover.

It is a three-year budget that builds on our \$30-billion initial response.

It is a plan that provides as much certainty as possible in an uncertain time ... ensuring that we are always there to support those most in need.

Today's plan continues to support front-line health care workers.

It continues to support those hardest hit by COVID-19.

And it provides relief for families, workers, businesses and communities, while laying the groundwork for our economy's recovery.

Mr. Speaker, this is not the first very difficult time that our province and our country have faced.

Next week, we mark Remembrance Day.

We will pause to remember our Canadian heroes ...

From Vimy Ridge to Kandahar, they served to make Canada the best country in the world.

A place we can all be proud to call home, a country we can all be proud to continue to build.

This marks 75 years since the end of the Second World War.

More than one million Canadians wore the uniform during that conflict.

55,000 were wounded.

45,000 made the ultimate sacrifice.

While we honour our heroes—let's not forget that winning that war required sacrifice from all of Canada's then 11 million citizens.

Everyone on the home front pulling together to support those who served on the front lines.

Canadians were called on to be great. And they were.

Mr. Speaker, today's fight is different. The front lines are in our hospitals, our schools, our long-term-care homes.

And while many of our front-line heroes still wear uniforms, many do not. And this time our enemy—COVID-19—does not wear one either.

But what has not changed, is that once again, it's up to all of us to do our part to help our heroes win this fight.

And Mr. Speaker, for all of the challenges the virus has caused, it has also exposed the greatness of the people of Ontario.

People like Cecilia, a PSW in Timmins, who compassionately cares for her patients day and night.

And Walter, a school custodian in Etobicoke. He stays late every single day to make sure that his school is clean for his students.

And Katrina, an ICU nurse in North York and devoted mom of three, who provides exceptional care to patients in their greatest hour of need.

Mr. Speaker, there are millions of people across Ontario like Cecilia, Walter and Katrina who contribute every day to our fight against COVID-19.

And on behalf of our Premier and this entire chamber, today I want to say thank you.

Our province has been through difficult times. And come through stronger.

In the past nine months, our collective strength has been tested.

We know that COVID-19 is unrelenting.

Mr. Speaker, there are countless examples of jurisdictions around the world that have let their guard down and are paying a steep price.

Our government is determined to avoid those mistakes.

That said, Mr. Speaker, no government is perfect.

We respect those from outside the government who, in good faith, call for different decisions and different approaches.

But please, understand the difference.

When the pundit or the critic gets it wrong, the consequences are minor.

When the government gets it wrong, people's lives are at stake.

And, every decision we make is heavy with the knowledge that lives are at stake.

That is what I know keeps the Premier up at night.

It's what I know keeps the Minister of Health up at night.

It's what keeps me—and our entire government—working through the night.

But it is also what gets us up in the morning.

We all have a job to do. All 14.5 million of us.

On March 25, I introduced Ontario's Action Plan: Responding to COVID-19.

The first phase of our response to the global pandemic, which was ultimately \$30 billion.

Including \$7.7 billion for front-line health care,

\$11 billion in direct support for people and jobs ...

And \$11.3 billion in relief measures for individuals and businesses that would improve their cash flow.

Ontario was the first government in Canada to provide a financial and economic update amidst the global crisis, because the Premier and I are committed to being transparent and accountable to the public.

And these principles of accountability and transparency continue today....

Because as any family or business understands, it's important to have a plan—especially amidst uncertainty.

Our initial \$30-billion response to COVID-19 has funded expanded testing capacity.

It invested in domestic PPE manufacturing and delivered support for people, businesses and communities.

And now, as we face a second wave, our plan has adapted to reflect the current needs of the people of Ontario.

Our plan has three pillars: Protect, Support and Recover.

First, we are taking steps to protect people from this deadly virus by increasing our health investments to \$15.2 billion.

Second, we are building on our earlier relief to provide a total of \$13.5 billion in direct support for families, workers and employers, in addition to \$11.3 billion in cash flow support.

And third, we are removing barriers to recovery and providing \$4.8 billion to protect and create jobs now and in the future.

Mr. Speaker, this next phase of our action plan brings our COVID-19 response to \$45 billion over three years.

This budget is unprecedented in that it also includes three possible economic scenarios that could impact the trajectory of our recovery on COVID-19.

We have done this because the people of Ontario deserve transparency about the public's finances—especially at such an exceptional time.

It is no secret that our government inherited a challenging financial situation.

Ideally governments, like families, budget prudently during good times, in order to have flexibility in tough times.

Unfortunately, that didn't always happen in Ontario.

But the good news is that our government made significant progress towards a sustainable financial path before COVID-19.

1610

That progress enables our \$45-billion response as outlined in today's budget.

As the people understand, the current level of government spending is neither sustainable nor desirable in the long run.

But as the global pandemic continues around the world, it is absolutely necessary today.

Mr. Speaker, our deficit is projected to be \$38.5 billion, unchanged from what I reported in the first quarter finances this summer.

We are projecting that the deficit will decrease to \$33.1 billion next year and \$28.2 billion the following year.

We are not alone in facing these fiscal challenges. They're faced by countries and provinces and states all around the world.

But we remain confident in our balanced and responsible approach to Ontario's finances.

There is still great uncertainty in the global economy. And this means more risk to the Ontario budget just as it does for family and business budgets.

That is why we are setting aside \$4 billion next year, and \$2 billion the year after, in a dedicated pandemic contingency fund to ensure the resources are there when they are needed for our citizens.

Nobody knows for certain what direction the pandemic will take. Or what direction the economy will take.

We need to be prepared for anything.

Which is why I will continue to provide regular, public updates to the province on our finances each quarter.

We will return to the normal budget calendar with another multi-year update by the end of March of next year.

As time goes on, the impacts of COVID-19 will begin to recede, and then so will this uncertainty.

I look forward to the day when the people of Ontario can, once again, see certainty in the long-term fiscal plan ... because that is when COVID-19 will be behind us.

The time will come when we will once again gather in groups in restaurants and arenas across the province. When you won't have to wear a mask to shop for your groceries.

But until then, Mr. Speaker, we are asking the people of Ontario to remain prudent and vigilant and their government will do the same.

Mr. Speaker, Protect is the first pillar of our plan.

It represents our most fundamental responsibility.

The people of Ontario have done—and are doing—their part by following public health advice.

And we as a government are doing ours.

We are spending a total of \$8.3 billion this year to support our front-line health care heroes and protect people from COVID-19.

This includes supporting 141 hospitals and health care facilities and 626 long-term-care homes.

Mr. Speaker, COVID-19 has added extraordinary costs to hospital budgets.

So I am today announcing an additional \$572 million to ensure Ontario hospitals have the necessary resources to provide the care that is needed.

This means, in total, hospitals will receive \$2.5 billion more than last year.

Since March, we have been working with our hospital partners and added 3,100 hospital beds, to ensure the communities are ready for every scenario.

Ontario has built the most robust testing network in the country, which includes 161 assessment centres, 170 participating pharmacies and 40 community-based mobile testing units.

We are leading the country with over 5.3 million tests done since March.

Over the last eight months, our testing capacities have increased tenfold, thanks to our incredible health care workers and lab technicians who have not stopped since the pandemic started.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier has led the charge, calling for the federal government to approve rapid tests so that people can get their results quicker ...

Progress has been made. 110 PCR-based rapid test analyzers have been shipped to us and will be in use within a few days.

Antigen-based tests are now ramping up and will be in use soon.

This is good news ... because rapid testing needs to be deployed, in Ontario and in Canada as soon as possible.

These new rapid tests will be deployed next week in some of our highest-need and remote communities.

Since March we've purchased \$1.1 billion in personal protective equipment to protect our front-line heroes and make sure they can do their essential work, safely.

That's 300 million masks. 900 million gloves. 50 million gowns. 6 million face shields.

Our Ontario manufacturing workers are the best in the world.

Showing their incredible Ontario spirit, they have retooled to make critical medical supplies available during global shortages.

Thanks to partnerships with industry, supported by our Ontario Together Fund, manufacturers now produce masks, gloves, gowns, hand sanitizers and sanitizing wipes right here at home.

Thanks to strategic investments by the Ontario and federal governments, we will soon be mass producing N95 respirators and vital ventilators for Canada and the world.

Just as Ontario has the world's best manufacturers, we also have some of the best researchers.

We have invested in Ontario scientists racing to find treatments and cures for COVID-19.

And we are building on that.

Today, as part of our commitment to protect people and the environment, we are investing \$37 million to protect our community's water supplies.

This includes \$12 million to detect COVID-19 in waste water. This innovation will help detect outbreaks early, ensuring public health measures can be timely and targeted.

Ontario is investing \$25.5 million to protect our agri-food supply chain by supporting this crucial sector's work to supply safe, high-quality and locally produced food.

COVID-19 has affected our mental health as well as our physical health. Our government's historic \$3.8-billion investment in mental health includes \$176 million this year to help expand critical mental health services vital during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In September we introduced our \$2.8-billion plan for the second wave, which includes \$1.4 billion for more testing and contact tracing ...

\$70 million for the largest flu shot campaign in Canadian history ...

And \$284 million to clear the backlog COVID-19 created in our hospitals ... this will ensure that 60,000 essential surgeries can happen.

We are also protecting our most vulnerable—today we are announcing \$30 million to support group homes, women's shelters, children's aid societies and other organizations with continued infection prevention and control.

Today we are launching a new Victim Support Grant to support partnerships between police services, community groups and others who will fill the gaps for victims of domestic violence.

Mr. Speaker, I know I speak for everyone in this Legislature when I say—the lost lives here in Ontario in our long-term-care homes and around the world remain the darkest chapter of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In July our government appointed a Commission of Inquiry, led by the Honourable Associate Chief Justice Frank Marrocco, to provide answers for the families, lessons we can learn and solutions to ensure such a tragedy never happens again.

But just as the second wave is not waiting, Mr. Speaker, neither are we.

We know there are steps that need to be taken, right now, to strengthen the long-term-care system in our province.

Years of inaction by governments of all stripes have led to an unacceptable situation, including bed shortages and staffing challenges.

Between 2011 and 2018, just 611 beds were built in this province when tens of thousands were needed.

These challenges are not simple to solve. But our government is determined to act.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have made close to \$800 million available to protect our loved ones in long-term care.

And, as we announced this week, we will make Ontario the leader among Canadian provinces in terms of the quality of care our loved ones receive.

Our government is investing \$1.7 billion to build more beds and upgrade existing ones ... part of an investment that will create 30,000 new beds.

We are moving forward with the campus of care model—a pilot that will see new, modern long-term-care beds built in months, not years.

The campus of care pilot will add 1,280 beds in Mississauga, Ajax and Toronto by 2022.

But Mr. Speaker, it is not just about the quantity of beds. The quality of care is even more important.

That is why we are committing to an average of four hours of direct care per day for our loved ones.

Ontario is the first province in Canada to take this important step ...

The challenges of finally fixing our long-term-care system are complex and will require partnerships with labour, homes and training providers to recruit and train tens of thousands of new staff over the next four years.

We know the incredible caregivers that work in our long-term-care homes, the PSWs and the nurses, are

working through very, very challenging circumstances. Our entire province is stepping up behind them.

Mr. Speaker, as COVID-19 continues to threaten our health, we will continue to protect the people of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, Support is the second pillar of our plan.

COVID-19 has brought severe challenges and economic difficulties for families and communities across Ontario.

1620

Since the beginning, we have promised to be there to help those struggling the most. Today, we are expanding that support.

This starts with giving back to all the seniors who built this province.

We provided \$75 million in relief by doubling the Guaranteed Annual Income System payment for 194,000 of our lowest-income seniors.

We allocated \$16 million to the Ontario Community Support Program that helps to deliver more than 230,000 meals and other essentials to low-income seniors and people with disabilities.

We will extend this program into 2021 so that deliveries can continue to homes, particularly during the winter months.

COVID-19 has reminded us all that our homes are a special place where we should be safe.

But for many seniors, staying in their homes requires expensive improvements, such as wheelchair ramps and stability bars, to make them safe and make them accessible.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we're proposing a new Seniors Home Safety Tax Credit for the 2021 tax year.

This investment will help tens of thousands of seniors stay in the homes they love, longer.

The tax credit would be worth 25% of up to \$10,000 in eligible expenses and will be available to every senior whether or not they pay taxes.

It means an Ontario senior, or a family with a grandparent living in their home, would receive \$2,500 back for a \$10,000 renovation to make their home safer.

Mr. Speaker, helping our precious seniors stay in their homes longer is something we can all support.

The government is also increasing funding to the Seniors Active Living Centre Program by 22% for a total of \$17 million.

This will help seniors stay active, engaged and independent, while also monitoring and managing public health advice.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, our province and our country have been through difficult times before, and nobody knows this better than our elders. We all owe them our deep appreciation for the province they built. We are proud to support them, especially during these challenging times.

Mr. Speaker, parents also need our support.

Whether kids are attending school online, in person or a mix of both, every parent in Ontario is feeling the strain of COVID-19.

As part of our commitment to keep students safe, we made available \$1.3 billion to support the safe reopening of schools—the most robust and comprehensive plan in the entire country.

Our thanks go to the parents, teachers and staff whose daily vigilance and hard work ensures all our kids are learning and safe.

We are also investing in new programs to help kids learn online, creating a new, more accessible digital curriculum.

Our government continues as well to look to the future—that's why we are investing \$13 billion over 10 years, including \$1.4 billion this year and \$1.9 billion next year, in vital capital improvements for new schools and existing schools.

But we also need to deal with today's challenges.

We have all heard from parents about the new expenses that supporting their kids' education during COVID-19 have brought on.

The government can't end the global pandemic. But we will provide a measure of support through our Support for Learners program.

Parents will once again receive a payment of \$200 per child under 12, \$250 per child under 21 with special needs.

This \$380-million investment in families builds on the \$378 million provided to parents during the first wave of COVID-19.

So, an Ontario family with three children, including one with special needs, would receive \$1,300 this year that could help cover the costs of an accessible workspace and technology to enable learning online.

Mr. Speaker, that is money well spent.

Like many in the province, I've been reflecting on the important conversations that are happening across our communities about anti-Black racism.

Ontario is a place where every person deserves respect and the opportunity to be all that they can be.

Unfortunately, systemic racism and other forms of hate still get in the way. And that is simply unacceptable.

In many cases, COVID-19 has exacerbated existing inequities.

Important work is already under way to address these issues.

One example is the Black Youth Action Plan.

Today I am proud to announce that our government is doubling the base funding for the Black Youth Action Plan, providing an additional \$60 million over the next three years.

Consultations are under way by the Premier's Council on Equality of Opportunity, chaired by the Premier's Advocate for Community Opportunities, Jamil Jivani, working with community partners to inform and target these additional investments.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to remove social and economic barriers for Black, Indigenous and racialized youth, and put more opportunities within their reach through our education equity strategy and the work of the council.

And Mr. Speaker, we've talked often in this House about small business owners, and all of us know small business owners that are struggling with COVID-19.

We see the anxiety in their eyes when we're getting a haircut or when we stop by our favourite restaurant.

These anchors of our community employ our neighbours, our friends and our family.

COVID-19 has hit them hard. But in Ontario, they have responded with resolve and resilience that has been nothing short of heroic.

They have adapted and provided safe a experience for their employees and for their customers.

We have worked with our partners at the federal and municipal levels to support these job creators.

We have made \$300 million available to assist businesses with fixed costs including property taxes and energy bills.

That money will begin to flow this month.

We have provided \$60 million in one-time grants of up to \$1,000 for PPE for businesses.

We have invested \$57 million with the federal government in the Digital Main Street program that has already helped 23,000 businesses build an online presence.

We will continue a critical source of revenue for restaurants by allowing restaurants to permanently sell alcohol along with their food delivery orders.

We've partnered with the federal government to support 64,000 small businesses with \$960 million of rent assistance for this first six months of the pandemic.

Now, at the time, we and many others expressed concerns about that rent program, how it was structured, and the fact that it was dealing with landlords and not with tenants.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very glad to see the legislation for the new program introduced in the federal House, and I call upon all federal parties to work together to see that it is passed and implemented quickly.

Ontario's Action Plan: Protect, Support, Recover is going further, for those who need it.

And few need it more than our hard-hit tourism operators.

We expect that travelling within Ontario will be safe sooner than travelling beyond our borders.

Which is great, because as a tourist, Ontario has something for everyone.

Right here in Ontario, you can go on a world-class wine tour, visit exceptional art exhibits, go hunting, fishing and camping, skating, skiing and snowmobiling. Ontario has some of the best cultural attractions in the world.

All of us can support our tourism operators by making 2021 the year of the Ontario staycation.

We will help out, as our government provides Ontario residents with a 20% tax credit for tourism expenses.

We look forward to working closely with our partners in the tourism industry and will release details ... again, when it is safe.

COVID-19 has been a challenge for many organizations that make up the fabric of our communities.

Today we are launching the \$100 million Community Building Fund that will support tourism, culture and sports organizations that are facing significant pressures due to the pandemic.

Funding will be available through the Ontario Trillium Foundation, and will help organizations like museums, theatres, fairs and cultural institutions sustain operations in the short term, while helping municipalities and non-profit sports and recreation organizations invest for the long term.

We are also investing \$26 million to support the upgrade of Ontario's parks and expand and protect Ontario's green spaces in partnership with groups like the Nature Conservancy of Canada.

Ontario is also providing one-time funding of \$25 million to Ontario's arts institutions to help cover operating losses during COVID-19.

We are supporting our province's outstanding agricultural and horticultural societies with more funding this year to help cover losses from fall fair cancellations and other events that are so important to our rural communities.

And we have also established the COVID-19 relief fund for francophone non-profits to ensure these vital organizations continue contributing to Ontario's vibrant French-speaking communities.

Mr. Speaker, as COVID-19 continues to create challenges, we will continue to be there to support the people of Ontario.

Recover is the third pillar of our plan.

It is about direct actions that help get through today, while providing hope for tomorrow.

As we deal with the day-to-day anxiety and impacts of COVID-19, it may seem ambitious, to some, to start to talk about recovery.

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But someday, hopefully soon, COVID-19 will fade. And every government in the world will be focused on recovering from the economic crisis that the pandemic has caused.

For Ontario to recover, we need strong, sustained economic growth. We cannot expect our economy to just bounce back and we cannot expect lost jobs to return on their own.

We need to start working on the recovery now.

There are long-standing, structural barriers that we all know, without action, will prevent the growth necessary for job recovery and economic recovery.

They existed before COVID-19. But what was a strong headwind for job creators before will become a hurricane in the post-COVID-19 world.

Failing to act today will cost the people of Ontario tomorrow.

So, we are not waiting to act. We are protecting, creating jobs now, and in the future ...

With a plan that trains workers. A plan that addresses job-killing electricity prices and regulations. A plan that reduces taxes on jobs. And a plan to connect every home, business and farm in Ontario to broadband.

These efforts include a recognition of the disproportionate effect of the burden of COVID-19 on women.

When I hear reports that one third of Canadian women are now considering leaving the workforce—that is an alarm bell.

That is why we created 16,000 licensed child care positions this year, a 4% increase.

But more is needed. We remain committed to our promise to create 30,000 licensed child care positions.

We have also provided families with the CARE tax credit to help cover the cost of child care.

Families can receive 75% of their child care expenses, or up to \$6,000 per child.

It is indisputable that child care challenges brought on by the pandemic have disproportionately impacted women, and that many of the heavily impacted sectors—such as hospitality and tourism—employ a high percentage of female workers.

Now is the time to invest in retraining our workers, so that they are ready to contribute to the recovery of our province.

Our government is investing an additional \$181 million in employment services and training to connect workers in industries most affected and put them in touch with the industries that have skills shortages.

This includes \$100 million through Employment Ontario skills training.

It also includes \$60 million to help support workers acquire in-demand skills rapidly to support faster transitions to new jobs.

We are also launching an unprecedented skilled trades strategy—breaking the stigma, simplifying the system and encouraging employer participation in training and apprenticeships.

Taken together, these initiatives will help job seekers, particularly those hardest hit by COVID-19, to get the skills they need.

The economic impacts of COVID-19 have played out in many ways, but many of them similar around the globe.

But the mess that we inherited in the electricity system in our province is Ontario's alone.

Time and again, we have heard employers consider Ontario as a place to locate or expand their business, but then decide to go elsewhere because the province's electricity costs are just too high.

Like Northern Cables in Brockville, who faced a higher cost of business because of Ontario's electricity prices against the competitors they had south of the border.

Or Gerdau Steel, a major employer in Whitby in an industry that requires significant electricity.

Mr. Speaker, we are fixing this with our competitive plan to reduce job-killing electricity prices.

The problem is the result of unnecessary contracts signed by the previous government, as part of the Green Energy Act, for electricity Ontario does not need and at prices we cannot afford.

A small number of people did very well from these contracts, Mr. Speaker. But the rest of us are left paying the bill.

For example, the price of electricity for commercial businesses increased by 118% between 2008 and 2019. That's five times the rate of inflation, Mr. Speaker, and that is just too much.

Employers big and small have told us that, despite all Ontario has to offer, it simply does not make sense for them to come here and expand their operations, because the cost of electricity is so much higher than in competing jurisdictions.

That means lost jobs and lost opportunities for people across this province.

We repealed the Green Energy Act, Mr. Speaker, in order to stop the abuses. But we know that is not enough—especially now that high electricity prices threaten the economic recovery.

That is why we're announcing our plan to responsibly wind down these high-cost contracts once and for all.

To protect and create jobs, the excess cost of these contracts signed by the previous government will be funded by the province, starting January 1.

Removing these costs from electricity bills will save industrial and commercial employers 14% and 16% respectively.

For a mine in northern Ontario, this means a savings of \$270,000 a month or \$3.2 million a year.

For an automotive parts manufacturer in Mississauga, the savings will be \$31,000 a month or \$382,000 a year.

For a small gym in Grimsby, this is a savings of \$800 a month, or nearly \$10,000 a year.

As a result of our comprehensive plan, Ontario will go from being one of the least competitive jurisdictions for the cost of electricity, to one of the most competitive ...

Mr. Speaker, that will be better than the US average and better than most of the Great Lake states that we compete with for manufacturing and commercial jobs.

Paired with Ontario's clean energy advantage, this gives our province a significant leg up and will lead to more jobs, growth and a strong economic recovery.

The cost of these contracts will decline over time, beginning at \$1.3 billion over the next three years, and costing the province less over time until the last contract expires in 2040.

It's unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that the previous government left Ontario in this situation. But we cannot undo the past. We must move forward and we must support our job creators.

Our government is also acting to reduce and eliminate taxes on jobs.

Back in March, we more than doubled the employer health tax exemption to \$1 million.

We have heard from employers across Ontario that this measure helped them keep workers on the job during COVID-19.

Now is not the time for anybody, anywhere, to impose increases or charges on employers that affect jobs.

So, we are proposing to make this exemption increase permanent.

That means an additional 30,000 Ontario small and medium-sized employers will no longer pay this tax.

But this is just the start.

Mr. Speaker, the budget consultations this year looked very different, with social distancing and Zoom meetings, but the people of Ontario came forward with fantastic ideas.

I should mention I am grateful to the members from the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs from all parties who participated and contributed to the important work of consultation at this critical time.

One suggestion that came up, time and again, from municipalities and employers was related to unfair property tax rates.

Ed Holder, the mayor of London, and other municipal leaders, were some of the most compelling voices.

We heard loud and clear that levelling the playing field and addressing unfair property tax rates was one of the most important things we could do to immediately support employers, and support them for the future.

Property taxes are one of the most unavoidable costs businesses face.

They must be paid, even when business is slow, and it has been slow for many, many people this year.

In Ontario, there is a wide range of business education tax rates across this province—despite promises made by previous governments to fix this inequity.

This creates an unfair challenge for businesses operating in communities that have the higher rates.

We are acting immediately to reduce these high rates by \$450 million in 2021.

Rates will be reduced to 0.88%.

For many employers, this will represent a 30% reduction.

It means a small employer, like a boutique hotel in London, will save \$44,000 annually.

That's significant savings—especially when you consider that that's money competitors in other parts of Ontario are not paying.

Over 200,000 businesses, or 94% of properties in Ontario, are going to benefit, starting January 1.

We have also heard from many municipalities, including Mayor John Tory in Toronto, that they want the flexibility to provide targeted relief to businesses in their communities that need it the most during these tough times.

So, we are proposing to empower municipalities with a new tool to provide a property tax reduction for their small businesses.

Ontario will match these municipal property tax reductions to further reduce taxes on jobs.

Taken together, let's consider the impact of this on businesses in your communities.

Consider a typical Toronto bakery.

If the municipality decides on a 30% discount, they would receive \$5,000 in municipal tax relief and \$4,000 in relief from the province. \$9,000.

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Combined with \$1,500 in our business property tax reduction, that bakery owner would receive a total of \$10,500 in property tax savings in 2021.

As any small business owner will tell you, that could be the difference between being able to grow or having to close your doors.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, this is help now and this is help for the future.

One of the greatest frustrations during COVID-19 has been the lack of reliable, high-speed Internet and cell service for too many households in Ontario, due to a lack of adequate broadband infrastructure.

This isn't just an abstract First World problem.

These days, the lack of reliable Internet can make it almost impossible to earn a living, get an education, see your doctor or stay in touch with loved ones.

COVID-19 has only amplified this challenge.

Mr. Speaker, our vision is to see a broadband connection in every family, business and farm in the province of Ontario. This is the vital infrastructure of the 21st century.

That is why we are making additional investments of over \$680 million over the next four years for the next phase of our plan, and that will include a doubling of our commitment to the Improving Connectivity for Ontario Program.

This brings our government's total commitment to rural broadband expansion to \$1 billion.

Now working with partners in the private sector and other levels of government, Mr. Speaker, this investment will be leveraged many, many times.

We urge our federal government to keep their promise, Mr. Speaker, to increase and accelerate funding for vital broadband projects here in Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, as COVID-19 continues to cause uncertainty in the global economy, we will continue to support Ontario for the future.

Mr. Speaker, back in March, when I introduced the first phase of Ontario's action plan, I said then that our response to COVID-19 would define our generation.

I said that our response as a province and as a country would shape the character of the next generation ...

When historians look back at this moment, they will see that this generation has been as strong as any.

They will see the greatness of our people's character.

It is clear we are not out of the woods yet.

But as I said before—we have been through difficult times before. And we have come through stronger.

It's not just students of history that realize this.

The people of Ontario already know it.

Never in my life have I heard so many people say how happy they are to be Canadian.

We have not let the virus divide us. We care for each other, we respect each other, even when we sometimes disagree with each other. Our civil society—that is our great strength.

Ontario remains one of the great workshops of the world—the only jurisdiction in North America with five major auto manufacturers, as well as companies that can build planes, trains and even spacecraft.

We remain home to the best and brightest minds in the world—the architects of insulin, open heart surgery and now research into COVID-19 treatments and vaccines.

We remain the economic heart of this country, but even more importantly, the real beating heart of this country, because nowhere else will you find more selfless, compassionate, hard-working people than right here in this beautiful province.

Mr. Speaker, it is the greatest honour of my life to represent the people of my community of Ajax here in this Legislature.

A community where, like in much of the GTA, half of its citizens were born outside of Canada.

They came here not just to benefit from living in the best country in the world, but to make a real difference, to contribute.

People like my friend Selva who left Jaffna in Sri Lanka in the 1980s during that country's civil war.

Like Boghos and Baizard who escaped the Syrian civil war and came to Canada in 2012.

And like Anan, a doctor who served in Liberia during that country's Ebola pandemic in 2014 and then settled in Ontario after serving in that epidemic.

When we reflect on the challenges the people of Ontario, the people of our province have been through—it is no wonder the Ontario spirit is so strong.

On the eve of Remembrance Day, let us never forget that the people of Ontario have been through challenging times before.

... and they have come out the other side stronger.

And your government will continue to be there for you and your family as we do that again.

As the Premier reminds us, like clockwork at 1 p.m. every day, we have your back. And we always will.

Today is neither the first step, nor the last step. But it is an important step in our fight against COVID-19.

Together, we will face whatever lies ahead. We will protect and support each other. We will beat COVID-19. And together we will recover and prosper.

Thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I move adjournment of the debate.

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

Debate adjourned.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

PROTECT, SUPPORT AND RECOVER FROM COVID-19 ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2020

LOI DE 2020 SUR LA PROTECTION, LE SOUTIEN ET LA RELANCE FACE À LA COVID-19 (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Mr. Phillips moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 229, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact, amend and repeal various statutes / *Projet de loi 229, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter, à modifier ou à abroger diverses lois.*

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Does the minister care to briefly explain his bill?

Hon. Rod Phillips: I think we've done that, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: I would move the adjournment of the House.

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

This House stands adjourned until Monday, November 16, at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1648.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.
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Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker
Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Tonia Grannum, Valerie Quioic Lim, William Short
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergente d'armes: Jacquelyn Gordon

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Arthur, Ian (NDP)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Baber, Roman (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Berns-McGown, Rima (NDP)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
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Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Stan (PC)	Willowdale	
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues / Ministre associée déléguée au dossier de l'Enfance et à la Condition féminine Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Elliott, Hon. / L'hon. Christine (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fee, Amy (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Fullerton, Hon. / L'hon. Merrilee (PC)	Kanata—Carleton	Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Parm (PC)	Milton	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gravelle, Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Hardeman, Hon. / L'hon. Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hassan, Faisal (NDP)	York South—Weston / York-Sud—Weston	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor—Tecumseh	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hillier, Randy (IND)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Solicitor General / Solliciteuse générale
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karahalios, Belinda C. (IND)	Cambridge	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Kramp, Daryl (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Kusendova, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
MacLeod, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa (PC)	Nepean	Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries / ministre des Industries du patrimoine, du sport, du tourisme et de la culture
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Miller, Norman (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	
Mitas, Christina Maria (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
Monteith-Farrell, Judith (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Morrison, Suze (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Park, Lindsey (PC)	Durham	
Parsa, Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Rod (PC)	Ajax	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Piccini, David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines / Ministre de l'Énergie, du Développement du Nord et des Mines Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Roberts, Jeremy (PC)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa- Ouest—Nepean	
Romano, Hon. / L'hon. Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction / Ministre associé délégué au dossier des Petites Entreprises et de la Réduction des formalités administratives Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Simard, Amanda (LIB)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Singh, Gurratan (NDP)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
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 Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Associate Minister of Transportation (GTA) / Ministre associée des Transports (RGT) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
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 Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
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, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Associate Minister of Energy / Ministre associé de l'Énergie Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Wilson, Jim (IND)	Simcoe—Grey	
Wynne, Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Yakubski, Hon. / L'hon. John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
Yurek, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Wayne Gates
Lorne Coe, Rudy Cuzzetto
Wayne Gates, Randy Hillier
Andrea Khanjin, Jane McKenna
Judith Monteith-Farrell, Michael Parsa
Randy Pettapiece, Donna Skelly
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Thushitha Kobikrishna

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

Chair / Président: Amarjot Sandhu
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeremy Roberts
Ian Arthur, Stan Cho
Mitzie Hunter, Logan Kanapathi
Sol Mamakwa, David Piccini
Jeremy Roberts, Amarjot Sandhu
Sandy Shaw, Dave Smith
Vijay Thanigasalam
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Julia Douglas

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Présidente: Goldie Ghamari
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Mike Schreiner
Robert Bailey, Jessica Bell
Goldie Ghamari, Chris Glover
Mike Harris, Daryl Kramp
Sheref Sabawy, Amarjot Sandhu
Mike Schreiner, Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens
Daisy Wai
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Isaiah Thorning

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: John Vanthof
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
Will Bouma, Lorne Coe
Robin Martin, Norman Miller
Taras Natyshak, Rick Nicholls
Billy Pang, Amanda Simard
Marit Stiles, Nina Tangri
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Julia Douglas

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Roman Baber
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Roman Baber, Will Bouma
Lucille Collard, Parm Gill
Natalia Kusendova, Suze Morrison
Lindsey Park, Gurratan Singh
Nina Tangri, Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Kevin Yarde
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Thushitha Kobikrishna

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

Chair / Président: Kaleed Rasheed
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vijay Thanigasalam
Rima Berns-McGown, Michael Coteau
Faisal Hassan, Logan Kanapathi
Jim McDonell, Christina Maria Mitas
Sam Oosterhoff, Kaleed Rasheed
Sara Singh, Donna Skelly
Vijay Thanigasalam
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Présidente: Catherine Fife
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: France Gélinas
Deepak Anand, Jill Andrew
Toby Barrett, Stephen Blais
Stan Cho, Stephen Crawford
Catherine Fife, France Gélinas
Christine Hogarth, Daryl Kramp
Michael Parsa
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: Deepak Anand
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: John Fraser
Deepak Anand, Toby Barrett
Will Bouma, Stephen Crawford
John Fraser, Laura Mae Lindo
Gila Martow, Paul Miller
Billy Pang, Dave Smith
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-président: Aris Babikian
Aris Babikian, Jeff Burch
Amy Fee, Michael Gravelle
Joel Harden, Mike Harris
Christine Hogarth, Belinda C. Karahalios
Terence Kernaghan, Natalia Kusendova
Robin Martin
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tanzima Khan

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

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