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of Ontario



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 29 March 2022

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 29 mars 2022

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

KEEPING ONTARIO
OPEN FOR BUSINESS ACT, 2022

LOI DE 2022
VISANT À CE QUE L'ONTARIO
RESTE OUVERT AUX AFFAIRES

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 28, 2022, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 100, An Act to enact legislation to protect access to certain transportation infrastructure / Projet de loi 100, Loi édictant une loi pour protéger l'accès à certaines infrastructures de transport.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): When we last debated this bill, the member for Algoma-Manitoulin had the floor. He still has time on the clock.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I left off yesterday talking about barriers—and the entitlement of this bill, Keeping Ontario Open for Business Act, Bill 100—and the barriers that are not being dealt with: like the barriers to the funding that is not going to the tourism sector, the barriers that are there to the trucking industry or the forest industry in regard to the high, elevated cost of insurance. That's where I left off yesterday.

It's funny I left off there, because as I walked into my office, the Rainbow Country Recreation and Development Association sent this letter to me raising their concerns. They host the La Cloche Art Show on Manitoulin Island. It's a strategically placed community hub. They have held many teas, dinners, dances, children's parties, meetings—actually, that's where the federal and provincial polling stations are during both the federal and provincial elections. They brought to my attention the insurance costs of 2019-20, which were roughly \$6,800. In fact, their costs have now increased 44%. This is a small community centre that is just trying to survive.

Now, they're not the only ones that are seeing these barriers that are coming upon them: curling rinks, a variety of associations. I want to raise those up, because those are barriers that are not physical, not like trucks, not like individuals that are causing blockades, but they are unseen barriers that we need to deal with.

Yesterday also what I touched on is: What happens next, Mr. Speaker? Because it might not be a truck, it

might not be a blockade, it might not be something physical, but it's going to be something like COVID. It's going to be something else, something new. We've gone through this with H1N1, SARS, now COVID. There are going to be others. And if we don't start talking now about how we're going to be dealing with those barriers and the impacts that they're having—this is really key and very important to keeping our economy going, because it's not only those physical barriers that we have to deal with, it's those informal, not seen, not visible barriers that we absolutely have to deal with so that tourism sectors or organizations are not left behind because they are facing those barriers as well, and we need to address those.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Now I'll invite questions to the member.

Ms. Donna Skelly: To the member opposite: When our stores are importing food or our farmers are exporting fresh produce, time can mean spoilage. Keep in mind, when the Ambassador Bridge was blocked it didn't just add six hours on travel time, truckers are required to rest for safety reasons after logging a certain number of hours, so increasing the distance travelled can make a huge difference in delivery times if they have to reroute and go to another alternate bridge. I know that these are concerns of yours. If they are, will you support this legislation?

Mr. Michael Mantha: I've always been a strong promoter of the trucking industry. I used to work within—not as a driver, but, in my days when I used to work in the forest industry, many of these truckers used to come into the mill and we'd sit down and I'd unload them. Actually, I have some very funny stories to share about you, Speaker, in regard to some fantastic—anyways, I'll leave that alone.

Yes, we need to keep the economy going. We need to keep the goods flowing, beyond these barriers. I'm one of those privileged individuals from northern Ontario who has been exposed to some very cultural experiences and information sessions, and I hope to touch on this in a few questions that might come up that I hope I have the ability to highlight.

But, absolutely, those barriers—we need to find a way to making sure that our goods go through and from both borders.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Next, the member for Brampton East.

Mr. Gurratan Singh: My friend from Manitoulin Island just described his cultural experiences he had that have informed a lot about his perspective on this piece of legislation. Can you expand more on what you're alluding to? I'd love to hear more about that.

Mr. Michael Mantha: The point that I was raising is a concern that has been brought to my attention from many First Nations individuals who like to express themselves to inform the public. Let me go a little bit further and explain. At times, there are moments where the level of frustration within Indigenous communities where they feel like they have to express themselves and inform the public, so they have these ceremonies, and these ceremonies are sometimes held at particular junctures—Highways 6 and 17 just outside of Espanola is an ideal area. At these events, it's very much a celebration. It's a celebration of culture. It's an opportunity for them to describe and to provide information to the public as to their sovereign right to expressing themselves in regard to the frustration with what's not happening at both levels of government with their lands and the discussions that need to proceed, but it's also an opportunity for them to share, because it's filled with song and dance.

Again, there's a starting point, but there's also an ending point to that discussion, and it's something that has been very constructive.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore

Ms. Christine Hogarth: To the member from Algoma–Manitoulin: I know from where you are situated you probably cross the International Bridge in Sault Ste. Marie quite a bit and you see trade going back and forth. According to the Michigan Department of Treasury, about 10,000 commercial vehicles, hauling an estimated \$325 million, use the Ambassador Bridge daily, and I'm sure there's good and services that cross the International Bridge in the Soo.

Given the huge value of goods going through on a daily basis, can you see how this legislation would help ensure that we didn't miss a day of this trade? Think of the people who live in Sault Ste. Marie and Algoma–Manitoulin who cross the bridge in Michigan all the time—I used to live in Sault Ste. Marie so I used to cross that bridge to go to school in the mornings.

Any thoughts on that and how that will affect trade or just people going back and forth?

0910

Mr. Michael Mantha: I'm glad you put that question forward, actually, and I thank you for it, because Sault Ste. Marie has been a very key destination for many people going to the States, coming to northern Ontario—and the impacts that would be there if that wasn't an open bridge, an open access.

We see a lot of concerns, and I touched on this in some of my comments, about the unseen or the informal barriers that could be there and the negative impacts that are happening on the tourism sector in northern Ontario. You're absolutely right: If that would hinder and the traffic couldn't come through, we would hear very quickly from the tourism sector, as we have through this entire pandemic, because they're one of the sectors that has been forgotten. We're addressing a lot of the goods, the jobs, but we're not addressing the unseen impacts on the individuals and businesses that are being affected by some of these barriers.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Member for Waterloo.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thanks to the member from Algoma–Manitoulin for his comments on Bill 100.

A CBC article from February 11 of this year reads, “Less than a year before the nation's capital was ensnared by a convoy of flag-bearing big rigs, a line of dump trucks assembled outside an Ontario Ministry of Transportation building, blocking access to its inspection sites.

“They were swiftly told to leave, threatened with provincial fines and possible licensing suspensions.

“It's a far cry from the hands-off response Ontario has had toward the Ottawa blockade that Premier Doug Ford himself has deemed an ‘occupation.’”

So the province had tools in their tool box to address the blockade in Ottawa. They only acted when the Ambassador Bridge was threatened and trade with the US was threatened. In your opinion, what does this say about Bill 100 and the context which we find ourselves in now?

Mr. Michael Mantha: This is something that came up time and time again when I was doing constituency clinics throughout my riding, and people have brought it to my attention: Why aren't we using the tools that are available to us? For a lot of the people coming from my riding, from a northern Ontario perspective, it's, “Well, why would the provincial government get involved in something that is so controversial when they can pass the buck and put it onto the federal government and let them be the ones that are looked upon as the heavy ones?”

Listen, it's something we brought up time and time again through questions on this bill, that it's great that there are new tools that are now being brought forward. There's some enforcement that is being done. There's legislation that is being brought forward. But you can bring all the tools you want and add them to the tool box, but if you're not prepared to use those tools when it is required, then what is the point? There are many tools that this government could have utilized in order to address a lot of the impacts that were happening in Ottawa and over in Windsor. But we just failed to see the presence and the action from this government actually implementing those tools.

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

Hon. Jane McKenna: I have the utmost respect listening to you speak in here and thank you so much for what you've contributed to this bill this morning.

I just want to say a couple of things. I was in here yesterday. The member from Perth–Wellington spoke—I know you were in here yesterday—about being a part-time truck driver as well, and my partner has a truck driver company as well—and was just saying, when they were stuck for six hours at the border and they had livestock, where did they go? Where did they go to the bathroom? There were so many things that were happening, and we needed to be able to stop that. I know that there's \$137 billion that's world trade that goes back and forth on that.

I guess my question is, do you not see how we need these protections and how necessary they are, because in these unprecedented times, with the pandemic and,

obviously, with what has happened at the borders, it's so important to make sure we get our goods and services going back and forth? I'm just curious; do you see that?

Mr. Michael Mantha: I'm definitely supportive of making sure that our goods are going to and from. I'm definitely in favour of making sure that our economies are not disrupted, as they were for the longest weeks that were there. As you said, many of the truckers who—I think the member from Brampton East brought it up in his comments that he made yesterday, the frustrating stories of truckers who were caught on the other side without having the ability to return home to their families, how it's impacting their lives, just the fact that they couldn't have access to food and washrooms.

Yes, keeping that border open is extremely important so it doesn't have an impact. However, the one thing that I will say—and again, we need to stress this—is that there are tools that were in place, and those tools were not utilized promptly, effectively and put in place. It could have been done a lot more effectively by this government. But again, from a perspective from my riding, when I'm engaging with people in Algoma-Manitoulin, they were saying, "Well, of course not. The province is not going to step in. They'll let the blame be passed on to the federal government." And they didn't.

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

Mr. Robert Bailey: It's a privilege to rise today and be able to speak to Bill 100. This had significant impact on my riding of Sarnia-Lambton as well. It speaks specifically to the Windsor case with the Ambassador Bridge, but the Blue Water Bridge in Point Edward—a lot of people say Sarnia, but it's really in Point Edward if you live down that way. For the Point Edward people who are watching today, I got it right for you. Anyway, they're very proud and independent, as you know, Speaker, from visiting there.

It's a pleasure to rise today and speak to Bill 100, on the Keeping Ontario Open for Business Act. Safe, open, international border crossings tie Ontario to the world. Hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of goods for people and businesses pass through our international borders every day. They're loaded onto planes at our international airports or cross bridges into the United States, like in Windsor and Sarnia, where truck drivers take them to the next destinations. The freedom of movement is why Ontario is poised for massive economic growth. It's the foundation on which countless hard-working moms and dads make their living every day.

Recent events like the blockades at the Ambassador Bridge and the Blue Water Bridge are having an impact on these very people. In February 2022, a group of individuals shut down one of Canada's most important international border crossings. Approximately \$17 million worth of trade crosses over the Ambassador Bridge and the Blue Water Bridge hourly, making up 25% of all Canada-US trade. The six-day blockade of the bridge disrupted billions of dollars of international trade, as well as calling into question the integrity of our border crossing. Supply chains were stalled, manufacturing facilities

closed and employees were sent home because the parts were not arriving on time with our just-in-time delivery models. Our auto sector took huge losses, as did agriculture and many other industries. The impacts of the illegal blockades were felt in Oshawa, Hamilton, Peterborough and even farther beyond. This shook investor confidence in Ontario as a reliable place to invest and locate manufacturing facilities. This caught the attention of the President of the United States at what I don't need to tell you is an important time in our very tenuous trading relationship.

This economic disruption caused by the blockade was compounded by public safety threats and resulted in significant amounts of police overtime and increased policing costs. And it did something else, Mr. Speaker: It highlighted to Ontario how important it is for law and order and for police to have the right tools to effectively protect Ontario's international borders and how important freedom of movement is for people and for businesses. The professionalism of the officers from the Ontario Provincial Police, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Windsor Police Service—and, of course, Sarnia, Brantford, Chatham-Kent, Hamilton, LaSalle, London and others that were called on to help at the Ambassador Bridge and at the Sarnia bridge in Point Edward at the 402. They acted safely and professionally.

In addition to their excellent skill and preparedness, they were able to do so because on February 11, 2022, Premier Ford and this government declared a province-wide emergency, pursuant to section 7.0.1 of the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act. Then, on February 12, 2022, the government approved regulation 71/22, the critical infrastructure and highways emergency order. This emergency order provided police services with the tools necessary to remove any illegal blockade of the Ambassador Bridge, with the authority to order the removal and storage of vehicles and objects used to block the flow of people and trade. It enabled the registrar of motor vehicles to suspend and revoke the licences, vehicle permits and commercial vehicle operators registration certificates of these individuals who were holding up trade and commerce.

0920

This emergency order was necessary because, without it, police and the registrar of motor vehicles would have had to piece together different provisions from multiple statutes, which may be possible during the normal exercise of duties, but was very challenging in an emergency context. The tools that they had available, such as fines, were not as effective at dispersing the crowd when compared to the seizure of vehicles, and lack of heavy equipment, such as tow trucks, and the unwillingness—of tow truck operators to assist meant the vehicles weren't being moved.

Even with emergency orders, police were limited by what the province could enable under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act. I think that we can all agree that it should not take an emergency order for police to be able to clear a shutdown of an international

border crossing. Blockades of this nature are illegal, and we need to give police the tools necessary to remove them. In light of recent events, workers, businesses and certainly our trading partners will not accept the status quo. They will not accept existing legislation that does not keep Ontario open for business.

We must take this opportunity to increase the provincial capacity to respond to disruptions at international border crossings, like bridges and airports, that can have widespread impacts to our economy and the flow of trade. That is why our government has brought forward Bill 100, the Keeping Ontario Open for Business Act. Bill 100 fulfils a commitment that Premier Ford made to the people of Ontario in February to bring forward new legislation to ensure our borders remain open for people and business. If passed, it will better protect critical international border crossings from unlawful blockades. This proposed act would protect jobs and shield the economy from future disturbances of this nature. It is our talented workforce and job creators that make our province a strong, reliable trading partner, and this bill is a signal to the world that we continue to be open for business.

In a moment, I will walk this Legislature through the measures included in Bill 100. But first, Speaker, I want to be clear that the legislation we are proposing is specific to illegal blockades of border crossings that disrupt ordinary economic activity or interfere with the safety, health and well-being of the public. We scoped the Keeping Ontario Open for Business Act very narrowly, and if passed, it will have no impact on the right to peaceful, lawful and temporary protests, which have been described here in the last couple of days. It does not apply to impediments that are minor or easy to move around. The goal here is to ensure public safety and limit the economic severity of disruptions in a timely manner if and when they arise in the future. To accomplish this, we are proposing a number of measures that would provide the necessary tools to clear the impediments quickly and safely.

While international border crossings, such as international airports, are under federal authority, the province has a very active role to play. Local and provincial police are the very first responders to situations of unrest and disruption at any land or water crossing point between Ontario and the US. The proposed act would prohibit all persons from impeding access to or egress from and ordinary use of protected transportation infrastructure if a number of conditions are met, including: It disrupts ordinary economic activity, including international trade or it interferes with the safety, health or well-being of members of the public. Again, these prohibitions do not apply to impediments that are trivial, transient or minor in nature—I see my time is winding down, Speaker.

International border crossings like the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor, the Blue Water Bridge in Point Edward and the Peace Bridge in Niagara Falls are the arteries that keep Ontario's manufacturing heartlands pumping. Ontario is the number one exporter of these destinations.

I'd like to quote Mayor Drew Dilkens, who praised the Keeping Ontario Open for Business Act, as well as Mayor

Bradley from my community of Sarnia–Lambton. Mayor Bradley said, “What happens in Windsor hurts here and even the blockade on the 402 had a negative economic impact. Again, it was the right thing to do, what the government is proposing....”

With that, Speaker, I would like to move that the question now be put.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Bailey has moved that the question be now put. I understand there have been more than nine-and-a-half hours of debate on this bill at second reading, and 23 members of the Legislature have participated in the debate. Therefore, I believe there has been sufficient debate to allow this question to be put to the House.

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

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

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Miss Monique Taylor: On division.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): On division.

Ms. Jones has moved second reading of Bill 100, An Act to enact legislation to protect access to certain transportation infrastructure. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

Second reading vote deferred.

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: No further business.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): There being no further business at this time, this House stands in recess until 10:15.

The House recessed from 0926 to 1015.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

SENIORS

Mr. Wayne Gates: It's a pleasure to rise today and discuss one of the most pressing issues in this province: standing up for and protecting our seniors. Seniors built our communities and they helped make this province what it is today. This government continues to fail seniors.

Seniors in my riding are struggling to find affordable housing. Many are facing the harsh reality of greedy corporate companies that force renovations and then leave them struggling to find a place to live that they can afford. Unfortunately, this government has done nothing to stop these renovations and skyrocketing housing costs in order to protect and support seniors. The cost of everything is rising. Hydro, gas and food are not affordable for seniors who are on a fixed income. This is an affordability crisis.

During the pandemic, we saw the grave reality of an underfunded health care system and a for-profit long-term-care system. Nearly 5,000 seniors died from COVID-19 in long-term-care and retirement homes. You'd think that would be a lesson for this government and they would change the flawed system in order to take care of our seniors, but that didn't happen. They saw the military report of seniors dying from dehydration and they've done nothing to fix a broken long-term-care system. Instead, they continue to find new ways to privatize our health care system, including long-term care, home care and now surgeries.

This government has failed seniors. Seniors in this province deserve so much better. They deserve a government that will address the affordability crisis and ensure they have the health and long-term care they need to be able to age with dignity.

HOMELESSNESS

Mr. Robert Bailey: It's my pleasure to rise in the Legislature today and update you and the House on the additional supports being made available by the government of Ontario to combat homelessness in Sarnia-Lambton. It's an honour to announce today that the government is investing an additional \$25 million annually in a new Homelessness Prevention Program which will help more people find the right housing services and other supports. This new program includes a 2022-23 investment of nearly \$3.6 million for the county of Lambton homelessness initiatives, an increase of more than \$200,000 from the previous allocation.

Additionally, the new program introduced by the government will simplify and streamline operations. This will allow municipal service managers to spend less time on paperwork and more time working with their clients to help find housing and other supports as well as helping those at risk of homelessness stay in their homes. This critical funding will address the growing challenge of homelessness in Lambton county and will help to ensure everyone in our community has a place to call home.

It's no secret that our government inherited a homelessness prevention system that was cumbersome and complicated. The existing system was administered through several different government programs and was underfunded, fragmented and overly complex. It's heartening to see that with Ontario's new Homelessness Prevention Program, our government is simplifying the delivery of services and increasing funding. That will allow our municipal partners like the county of Lambton to spend more time focusing on providing vulnerable Ontarians with the supports they need to stay in their homes or get the housing they need.

COST OF LIVING

Mr. Faisal Hassan: It is an honour to once again rise and speak on behalf of the decent and hard-working people of York South-Weston. Our community is home to many

front-line essential workers who sacrificed so much and carried us through the pandemic, while often receiving little in return while putting themselves and their families at risk during the worst of the pandemic.

The pandemic has only highlighted the inequities and disparities that exist. In York South-Weston, families, seniors and young people are struggling. We're in a serious housing crisis where rents are unaffordable. People are afraid to move from their current units, and the dream of owning a home where you grow up is only a dream. Auto insurance rates due to postal discrimination mean we pay some of the highest rates in the country, while insurance companies delivered no relief as cars stayed parked during the pandemic. Gas prices get closer to \$2, and minimum wage is simply inadequate.

1020

Mr. Speaker, the official opposition has tabled many concrete plans on dealing with affordability and cost-of-living solutions, and this government has ignored them. While this current government doesn't want to or cannot get things done when it comes to helping those most in need, we deserve better and the folks of York South-Weston deserve better.

BRANTFORD MUSLIM COMMUNITY

Mr. Will Bouma: This past Sunday, I was honoured to be invited to the grand opening of the brand new north end Islamic centre in Brantford. The Muslim community in Brantford has a very deep and rich history spanning multiple generations, going back into the 1890s.

During this grand opening, I spoke with children and grandchildren of the founders of the Muslim Association of Brantford and learned of the many philanthropic projects that have been spearheaded by Brantford's Muslim community.

This new space will be used by members of the Muslim community for prayers and quiet contemplation, and all will be welcomed to use this space for community purposes, meetings and also moments of self-reflection and sharing what is ailing the community and what is making us happy.

The current president of the Muslim Association of Brantford, my friend Naser Hamed, and past president Anwar Dost repeatedly echoed their community's love and gratitude for Canada, for Ontario and our community, and their wish for unity and understanding among all.

If you're in the north part of Brantford and would like to drop in and say hello, you will be pressed to find a warmer welcome and kinder smiles than here. The association's president, Naser Hamed, said, "Muslims chose Brantford because Brantford is the best place" to live, work, play and raise a family "in Ontario." Speaker, I could not agree with him more. Brantford-Brant is the best place to live, work, play and raise a family.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: Ontario is in the midst of an unprecedented housing crisis. Housing prices have

increased by 44% in the last two years. The average price of a single-family home in Toronto has now passed the \$2-million mark. Affording a home in Ontario is an impossibility for most people.

We know that housing supply is a key part of the solution, but that supply, which right now is limited, is being mopped up by factors that make it impossible for individuals to compete. Transparency International found that in just 10 years, \$28.4 billion of housing in the GTA alone was bought anonymously. Toronto is a global hot spot for money laundering.

Last year, Core Development announced their plans to buy up \$1 billion in single-family homes. How are hard-working people who live and pay taxes here supposed to compete with shady capital from money laundering or capital from corporations who don't even pay the same rates of taxes and have access to cheaper funding sources? It's not an even playing field.

No government, Conservative or Liberal, has done anything to fix this injustice. So yes, supply is key to addressing the housing crisis, but we also have to even the playing field. My bill, the Anti-Money Laundering in Housing Act, targets exactly this. I invite anyone in this House to debate it and tell me what in this bill doesn't make sense. And if you don't find anything there, then pass the damn bill.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr. Roman Baber: The Premier broke every promise he made to voters four years ago. He campaigned on the slogan "For the People," but failed the people.

He campaigned on ending hallway health care. Instead, he ended health care. He promised to reduce hydro rates by 12%, but hydro rates are up. He said that he'll reduce auto insurance rates, but they're much higher. He promised that no parents of children with autism would have to demonstrate on the front lawn. The autism waitlist has more than doubled while families have been waiting for four years for this government to "get it right."

The Premier campaigned with me on the Sheppard subway but agreed to the John Tory light rail. He campaigned on restoring accountability to government. Instead, he invoked the "notwithstanding" clause for the first time in Ontario's history on his self-serving elections legislation. He uses taxpayer dollars to pay for what are clearly partisan ads months before an election. He campaigned on efficiency, but now runs the party of yes. He says he'll stand up for the little guy, but tens of thousands were fired or suspended because of mandates, despite him being against a two-tiered society.

But nothing comes close to the harm he caused Ontarians with some of the harshest and longest lockdowns in the world. The Premier knew the harms since late 2020. He repeatedly said that he agrees with me on COVID response, but he didn't have the courage to oppose the narrative or defend Ontarians. He bears responsibility for the lives lost due to surgeries delayed, cancer

screenings missed and the rise in overdoses. This will be the shameful legacy of this Premier.

BRUCE LEE HOUSE LEAGUE HOCKEY

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Bruce Lee House League Hockey is a recreational league designed to help young families play hockey at a truly affordable price. Karen and Harold Bailey started this league back in 1991 with borrowed sweaters and a 45-person roster of young people.

On May 13, 1993, a tragic industrial accident claimed the life of one of the most popular coaches, Bruce Lee. With the family's permission, the house league was renamed in his honour.

This league has been operating for 33 years. Just think: Karen and Harold Bailey have spent every Friday night possible at the Madoc arena for the last 33 years, continuing to support the youth in our community. What a tremendous accomplishment.

Recently, the league was entered into CARHA Hockey's The Next Stride's #HockeyVaccination campaign, and they won the grand prize of \$10,000. You would think it would end there—not if you know the volunteerism of Karen and Harold Bailey. Last week, they announced that they would be donating a large portion of that prize money to other youth organizations in the community. They presented a cheque for \$2,000 to the Centre Hastings minor hockey Grizzlies. They announced that they would be supporting a local baseball team, a swimming pool, a new ball hockey team, dancing and even their work at the church.

Thank you to Harold and Karen Bailey for everything you do, have done and continue to do for our community. It's my honour to be your friend.

MEMBER FOR ESSEX

Mr. Taras Natyshak: With your indulgence, Speaker, this may be my last opportunity as a member of provincial Parliament, before I leave this distinguished House, to offer a member's statement.

I'd like to thank so many people who allowed me to be here, who worked so hard for me to be here: first and foremost, my parents—my late father, Boris, and my mother, Sheila—who instilled the values in me to fight for those who could not fight for themselves. That's what drives me, and it always has. My siblings—my sister, Susie, and my brothers Michael and Eddie—are incredible people and inspired me along the way. My wife, Jenny, and my kids Airika and Drake gave me nothing but love and support throughout the last 11 years of my career. My constituency team—Jody Percy, Patti Hayes, Nolan Hennin, Katrina Verbeek and Merv Richards—dedicated their lives to supporting our constituents and fighting for them.

To the people of Essex county, who have entrusted me to carry their voice and to fight for their concerns in this place: I am forever honoured by their support.

To my colleagues here on the NDP side, who I have made lifelong friendships with and who have inspired me

my entire life: I am so honoured to have had this opportunity.

To the people who keep this building going—legislative security, our esteemed media, the free press—all of those that keep the building moving: I am so thankful for them.

To my colleagues from all parties: Each and every day, we walk past the marble walls, and we see those who came before us. Sometimes, I rub my fingers across the names, the engravings, particularly the late Bruce Crozier, my predecessor, Speaker, who you served with as well, and the late Pat Hayes. I feel their spirit and I feel their responsibility that they carried, and I know each and every one of you carries that same responsibility.

1030

We are on the cusp of an upcoming election. I wish you all the very best. It has been an honour to serve in this place with you, despite our differences, despite our challenges, despite the conflicts that may be perceived. This small little aisle, this space separates us, but it doesn't separate us between the values that we carry in this House: to serve people, to do our best and to make this province a better place to live. It has been the honour of my life to serve in this House and I wish you all, from the bottom of my heart, the very best in the upcoming election, and I want to thank you all for this experience.

I've learned so much in this place. You cannot give more than you receive. In fact, the more you give, the more you receive. Maybe that is the lesson that I've learned throughout my career. So I ask you all to continue to give more than you possibly can imagine to give, because undoubtedly you will receive more, and the people of this province will be better off because of your efforts.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Since coming to office in 2018, the Ontario PC government, under the leadership of Premier Ford, has remained committed to ensuring strong protections for religious freedoms in Ontario, including the protection of our religious diversity in every corner of this province.

Later today, the House will have the opportunity to debate Bill 89, the Protecting Ontario's Religious Diversity Act, 2022. Speaker, I believe that all of us in this House share a commitment to the protection of our fundamental rights in Canada. We share a common belief in the necessity of protecting Ontarians' rights to ensure they are able to live freely and in peace, while recognizing the importance of personal responsibility for the people of this province.

Now, the way we arrive at promoting and defending these rights and responsibilities varies depending on our political philosophy. The road we believe should be followed in doing so can also vary given our life experiences, histories and backgrounds, but one of the very crucial and fundamental rights that we have as Canadians and Ontarians is the freedom of religion.

Bill 89, the Protecting Ontario's Religious Diversity Act, will add religious expression as prohibited grounds to

the Ontario Human Rights Code, ensuring that all Ontarians can rest secure in practising their faith without fear of harassment or discrimination. Adding religious expression as prohibited grounds for discrimination is broadly supported across diverse religious backgrounds in Ontario, and this addition will testify to our support as a Legislature for the rich pluralism and diversity of religious beliefs in our province, especially for our religious minorities. Adding religious expression to the Human Rights Code as prohibited grounds will provide a meaningful tool for those who are targeted or discriminated against due to their religious expression in a wide variety of contexts.

I know many members will be supporting this legislation, and I look forward to the debate later this afternoon.

HOUSE SITTINGS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 9(g), the Clerk has received written notice from the government House leader indicating that a temporary change in the weekly meeting schedule of the House is required. Therefore, the afternoon routine on Wednesday, March 30, 2022, shall commence at 1 p.m.

MARVIN LEONARD SHORE

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, I believe if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to allow members to make statements in remembrance of the late Mr. Marvin Leonard Shore, with five minutes allotted to Her Majesty's loyal opposition, five minutes allotted to the independent members as a group and five minutes allotted to Her Majesty's government.

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

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I rise today to mark the passing of Marvin Leonard Shore, back on September 26, 2019. I'd like to welcome Marv's loving partner Cecile; grandchildren Shalom and Simcha; great-grandson Noam; friends like Larry, Mark, Stephanie, Andrea, Howard, Alan, Gregg and Steve, who are all in attendance today. I'd also like to recognize Marv's three sons, David, Raphael and Ephraim, and 19 other grandchildren. Shalom aleichem.

It comes as little comfort, but it's been said that the most righteous people pass at the time when Marv did. Marv was a real mensch, a man of character who really marched to the beat of his own drum. In his hyper-partisan, colour-coded political world, people like Marv are refreshing, while perhaps a bit of a headache for the powers that be.

Marv was a member of this great House from 1975 through 1977—a big and positive personality. It came as a shock to many that as a long-time Conservative, Marv decided to run as the star candidate for the Liberals in my riding of London North, now London North Centre. But Marv wasn't afraid of his opinion and backed Stuart Smith from Hamilton in the leadership contest for the Liberal Party and probably made it pretty awkward with London Centre MPP David Peterson.

Marv eventually crossed the floor and was accepted warmly, but, unfortunately, lost his re-election bid. At the time, he stated, "As an economic Conservative, I have found after a year that I cannot be as comfortable as I had hoped with the Liberal Party of Ontario." It's that kind of bold character, that obedience to one's principles and standing up for what he believes that distinguishes him.

In standing up for his beliefs, I can only imagine what he had to deal with. As I reviewed every last word of his through Hansard in the 30th Parliament, I also saw unfortunately many of the negative attacks he endured. I'm thankful that we have the opportunity to review his words in this chamber. You don't necessarily get to know a person from their words, but you're definitely given a sense of them. What is most apparent from his words are his intellect, his wit, his humour and the strength of his beliefs.

He believed that housing and education should be top priorities and that the province should give back to municipalities as much as possible. His words are very true up to this day.

Marv's career was vast. Please accept my apologies as I'm quite certain I will miss some of his extensive service record. As a chartered accountant, he was a member of the public relations committee of the Western Ontario Chartered Accountants Association; elected fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants Association of Ontario; chair of the board of education in London; worked with the Boy Scouts of Canada; member of the London Chamber of Commerce, London Jewish Community Council, London Squash Racquets Club, London Hunt and Country Club, the Masonic Order of Canada, board of governors of Or Shalom Synagogue, Alumni Association of the University of Western Ontario and Big Brothers of London.

It makes you wonder where Marv found the time. Clearly, he believed in giving back to his community. It's through our actions, our dedication to our communities that one may be honoured and remembered.

Upon reading Marv's words in this chamber—and with this House's indulgence, I'd like to let his words ring out here once more. He was a funny man.

When the Speaker said, "Order, please. We are wasting valuable time in the question period here," Marv said, "I'm paid by the season, Mr. Speaker, so I'm okay."

He also had great lines like, "Don't let the facts bother you." I might borrow that one for myself one day. And when a member kept stumbling over his speech, Marv asked, "Who wrote it for you?" And after some interjections and one reply, he said, "Let whoever wrote it for you read it."

In an exchange with David Peterson, the MPP for London Centre, who pointed out the debt burden, the deficit and tried to emphasize Marv's views for him with, "And Marvin Shore agrees with me. Marvin Shore agrees with us." Another MPP stated, "Yes, Marvin is a very agreeable chap," to which Marv replied, "That is the only part I agree with."

As I continue—and there are so many different things I would love to say that Marv had to say in this chamber; unfortunately, I see that the clock is running out of time.

We're joined here today by one of Marv's oldest and best friends, Larry Paikin. Larry and Marv met while attending the University of Western Ontario and lived together in the 1950s while attending school. The fact that they remained so close for so long, even after living together, is a testament to Marv's character. Seventy years is a friendship like no other.

If members haven't already done so, I'd like to recommend the truly beautiful article by Steve Paikin, who is also a guest here in the House today. I've placed some copies in the members' lounges, both on the government side and on the opposition side, because this article really captures the dynamism, humour and heart of Marv Shore.

My only hope today is that the speeches from the government, the opposition and the independent members capture a brief glimmer of what Steve was able to convey in his writing. If we do so, it will be called a great success.

1040

It's a rare, exceptional quality in a person when someone who is your parents' friend also becomes your friend. This rare quality shows Marv's warmth, intellect and genuine good nature. We are made better in this world by the company we keep and the relationships we foster. I think the best measure of a person is in how they are known by the ones who love them most.

While my entire speech today could have been Steve's article, I will leave that to all of you to read and hopefully not spoil some of the best bits. One of the parts I liked best was how the Paikin boys would call each other "Marv," call their father Larry "Marv," and how Steve's kids call him "Marv" to this very day. It speaks to the mark that some people make upon us, our lives and on our hearts. It's as though his humour and character would live on in a simple loving gesture. Good writing captures the quality of a person, while excellent writing captures their essence. It gives a brief glimpse into a life, a heart and what it means to love. I hope that you all are able to get a photo with Marv's engraving on the wall today.

As I begin to close off, I would like to quote another great poet and author, Kahlil Gibran: "When you are sorrowful look again in your heart, and you shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight."

Condolences to David, Raphael and Ephraim on the loss of your beloved father, as well to Marv's many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Thank you for sharing Marv with us, Cecile. Thank you for your tireless campaigning alongside him. From this side of the House, please accept our condolences on his passing and our great

respect for a life well-lived and to a man well-loved, a person all his own.

On behalf of the official opposition and with all of the members today in the Legislature, we'd like to say: Marv Shore, London North.

Interjections: Marv Shore, London North.

Mr. John Fraser: It's an honour to stand and say a few words of tribute to Marvin Leonard Shore, MPP for London North from 1975 to 1977—a Liberal from September 1975 to August 1976, and a Progressive Conservative from August 1976 to April 1977. I just want to make it clear, we're going to lay claim to him because he sat longer as a Liberal than he did as a Progressive Conservative. It's true, folks. You've got to live with it. I do understand, though, that even his family didn't know he was crossing the floor, so Marvin was probably truly a unique individual, very brave, and kept his own counsel.

More important than whatever happened in here and what transpired, Marvin Shore was a loving husband, a father to three boys, had 21 grandchildren and many friends.

There's a wonderful tribute to Mr. Shore from a lifelong friend, Steve Paikin: "Remembering One of Ontario's Funniest MPPs." It really helped me get to know someone that I had never met. I really related to the story of Marvin, as we've just heard, being in campaign mode and answering the door, "Marv Shore, London North," that eventually led to a running joke amongst the Paikin family. Being the object of a number of running jokes in my family and friends, I like to believe that when people tease you while you're not there it's because they really love you, so I'm going to stick with that. It's really quite a heartwarming thing to hear about, and thank you, Steve, for sharing that.

Here's a quote from Marvin in a local paper after his victory in London North: "I don't want to just put up my hand when someone tells me to. I'm not built that way."

I spent some time as well reading Marvin's Hansard, and it was clear that he had a strong belief in fiscal responsibility and the importance of education. Hansard also revealed that Marvin Shore more than enjoyed a good heckle. Here are some of Marvin's quotes from Hansard from April 21, 1977. Of course, this is after he went to the dark side. The debate was about rent review, and Ian Deans, who I knew, was involved in the debate, so it's really fun to read that stuff and see what went on. Hansard was really busy in those days; they didn't have the same technology. Here we go:

"You may have to burn this speech afterwards." "You like everything for free." "You've got to read it first before you can see it." Here's my favourite: "Take care of your schools, Remo, they need a janitor down there." And: "First time, eh?" How typically Canadian.

As I said, in the technology of the day, it's incredible to see how many interjections Marvin had and that Hansard actually recorded it, and we're all probably lucky that it doesn't happen with the frequency that it did in those days. I think all of us enjoy a good heckle. I know that I do.

Crossing the floor is not an easy thing to do. Political parties, we're like families, so when someone leaves, it's

not always nice, it's not always pleasant. But to do it twice—to start as a Conservative, go to be a Liberal and then go back to being a Conservative—you've got to have a pretty strong constitution to be able to do that and have confidence in yourself and actually have good relationships with people, because it can be really hard. Just knowing that helped me know who Marvin Shore was.

Although he didn't return to the Legislature, we were happy to have him on our side for the brief time that we did, as I'm sure my colleagues on the other side would be as well. In those brief two years, Marvin Shore left a mark on this place and the people who served with him.

To his wife, Cecile, to his sons, David, Ephraim and Raphael, his grandchildren and his family and friends gathered today, it is a real honour to say a few words about someone who left a mark in this place, although not spending a lot of time here, and I want to thank you for sharing him with us and sharing your stories.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I wanted to rise to share a few words in tribute to Marvin Leonard Shore, or Marv Shore, London North, the former Liberal and Conservative MPP. I want to welcome his family, friends and colleagues who are joining us today.

Marv's accomplishments were impressive. Serving in the House from 1975 to 1977, his son David remembers Marv as someone who "listened to everyone and didn't agree with anyone." Being willing to listen to people I believe is a model quality for any politician, although I do believe now and then occasionally agreeing with someone is also a good attribute, especially when you earn a reputation as Ontario's funniest MPP.

I'm inspired by Marv's commitment to working across party lines, in his case quite literally crossing party lines, and his dedication to this province and to our country. In the cut and thrust of politics, we need more of Marv: more laughs, more fun in this place.

I want to say to Marv's family: Thank you for sharing him with us and with the people of Ontario, his service and his humour.

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'd like to first acknowledge the presence of Mr. Shore's family and friends in the gallery this morning to hear the tributes to their late father, grandfather and dear colleague. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Marvin Shore's official obituary points out that, yes, he was a member of the Ontario Legislature for two years, 1975 to 1977, but he was also the chair of the London board of education and a chartered accountant before that. Like many of us in this place, his involvement with many community organizations in London allowed him to hone his skills, his values coming to Queen's Park, where he was the Liberal critic for finance. He also served on several standing committees of the Legislature: social development, public accounts and estimates—clearly the most demanding to be assigned to, and where Mr. Shore excelled and did an exceptional job.

1050

What stands out for me when reading about Mr. Shore was his love for his family, his staff and the constituents he had the privilege of serving. He clearly strove to

maintain balance in his life, having a strong partnership with his wife Cecile and raising children who were kind, strong, generous. For Mr. Shore, that really was its own reward.

Many will tell you that his modesty made him, you might say, unique in politics. Humility rooted in his strong core values, the values that I spoke of coming out of his community involvement—his strong core values to rise from a humble beginning. Some of Mr. Shore's former colleagues described him as the epitome of public service, who cared deeply about those he was close with, with every fibre of his being.

Former MPP Michael Breugh from the adjoining riding of Oshawa had this to say about Mr. Shore: Marvin had a great personality, had a good intellect, and usually that makes for a great addition to the legislative process. Colleagues, he certainly was that and much more. That's who Marvin Shore was: a man who knew what was important, and didn't believe in dwelling on what wasn't, speaking truth from the heart.

Now, Speaker, whenever my granddaughters Sophia and Annette, who are watching today, visit Queen's Park—and they haven't been here for over two years—we pause for a moment, because they always want to go downstairs. They want to see their grandpa's name on the wall, right? So they want to go downstairs. But we look at all the other names engraved on the walls below this legislative chamber. Speaker, together we say a prayer, thanking individuals like Marvin Shore for their dedication and perseverance to public service. What a privilege we have; what a privilege Marvin Shore had to demonstrate his commitment to public service. What those names demonstrate is their lasting legacy of making our province a better place to live and raise our families.

Farewell, Marvin Shore. London North never had a greater champion. The province of Ontario is forever indebted for your service. God bless you, your family and your friends—public service at its best.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I want to thank the members for their eloquent tributes.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): It's my honour and pleasure to introduce the family of the late Marvin Leonard Shore who, as we know, was the MPP for London North during the 30th Parliament. Mr. Shore's family and friends are here with us in the Speaker's gallery: Marvin's wife Cecile Shore, grandsons Shalom Shore and Simcha Shore, great-grandson Noam Shore, and many friends. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly.

Also in the Speaker's gallery is Ms. Judy Marsales, MPP for the riding of Hamilton West during the 38th Parliament and the chair of the Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians, and Mr. David Warner, Speaker during the 35th Parliament. Welcome.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: I'm very pleased today to welcome a pair of lifelong friends, my neighbours from our local

community, Doug and Martin McCoy. Beside them, of course, is my darling of 51 years, God bless her soul, Carol Ann.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I would like to welcome today some students from Humber College and their professor. Welcome to the Legislature and enjoy your day.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa South has informed me that he has a point of order.

Mr. John Fraser: I'm seeking unanimous consent to move a motion that a meeting of the Standing Committee on Social Policy be convened with regard to the involvement of the Office of the Premier and the office of the Minister of Health with the dismissal of Dr. Brooks Fallis from the William Osler Health System.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa South is seeking unanimous consent to move a motion. Agreed? I heard a no.

QUESTION PERIOD

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My first question is to the Premier. Dr. Brooks Fallis, the respected head of William Osler's critical care department in Brampton, was fired from his position back in January 2021.

The Premier was asked by media about his calls of complaint to the then CEO about Dr. Fallis's tweets. At the time, on February 2, 2021, the Premier said, regarding these calls, "100% ... false" and "It just didn't happen." However, recordings released by W5 clearly show that perhaps this is not, in fact, what happened. They show otherwise, Speaker.

My question is, does the Premier still stand behind those statements today, considering that W5's evidence is clearly contrary to what the Premier claimed?

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

Hon. Christine Elliott: At the time of his claims, neither my office nor the Office of the Premier had ever heard of this individual, and his claims remain categorically false. In fact, William Osler has already publicly acknowledged that at no time has the Premier's office ever given any direction or advice relating to health human resources at the hospital.

Since the onset of the pandemic, our office has and is continuing to rely upon the advice given by the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Moore, and by his advisers with respect to actions that they recommended be taken during the course of the pandemic, and no one else.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Health made the exact same claim, that they had "never heard" of him, but W5's FOI documents show the exact opposite, and the recording that was taken of the CEO of William Osler Health System, Dr. Naveed Mohammad, on November 16, 2020, confirms that "I've been warned a number of times that these guys in the government have a

very, very long memory. These guys remember. That's the first thing we're afraid of." "The first thing we're afraid of" is what Dr. Mohammad was saying.

He also said on the same recording that the Premier of this province had called him multiple times.

So the question is, does the Premier still stand by his claim that none of this happened, that he didn't call the CEO of William Osler Health System multiple times in November 2020?

1100

Hon. Christine Elliott: Well, the Premier may have spoken with the CEO of the hospital, but it would have been about medical issues, pandemic-related issues, not to comments made by someone none of us had ever heard of.

As the leader of the official opposition may recall, there were many doctors in many locations who had lots to say about the pandemic. However, no action was ever taken against them, because they are entitled to their opinion. However, the opinions that this government relied upon were the opinions of Dr. Williams and then Dr. Moore and the other official advisers to our government.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, hospital officials told Dr. Fallis that they were worried funding for other important health initiatives and projects would be at risk. They were feeling intimidated, apparently, and threatened, apparently.

The hospital chief of staff, Dr. David Borts, in fact, told Dr. Fallis on November 16, 2020, "That's how these guys play the game, and whether you like it or not, they are the paymasters. These guys can be nasty in a way that you don't even know they're being nasty." This is what they're saying about the government, about the Premier of this province.

Why would the chief of staff of the hospital believe the Premier and his government, the paymasters, are being nasty if it wasn't because of phone calls from the Premier to the CEO of William Osler?

Hon. Christine Elliott: There is no reason for anyone to have felt intimidated, because there were no actions ever taken, there were no discussions, and William Osler has already publicly acknowledged that there was no direction, no advice—none whatsoever—by the Premier of the province. None of us had ever even heard of this person until he came forward with his allegations. As I said before, those allegations are categorically false, and the only advice that we have relied upon is the advice from Dr. Moore and his advisers. That will continue to remain the same.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also to the Premier. Maybe the Minister of Health might want to consider the fact that they're still afraid of what the government might do, which is why they're perhaps saying that these things didn't happen.

But look, Dr. Fallis said very clearly in his latest interview that after he tweeted about the pandemic on November 5, "The CEO had received a phone call from Doug Ford, who was upset about what I was saying publicly." That's what Dr. Fallis said. Multiple hospital officials said the exact same thing.

The hospital felt such political pressure that they hauled Dr. Fallis into a Zoom meeting over his tweets. They told him they were afraid that these guys were nasty. They said the Premier had been calling. My question is, why would all of these people make this stuff up?

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

Hon. Christine Elliott: I have absolutely no idea, because there were no communications. While the Premier may have spoken with Dr. Mohammad, it would have been about issues relating to the pandemic, not about actions or tweets given by a certain individual. That is not something that the Premier concerned himself with. He's concerned about the health and safety of the people of Ontario. That is why we continue to rely on the advice of Dr. Moore and his advisers—the people at the public health measures tables and other places—to give our government advice, which has served us very well, given the state that we're in right now. We have relied on Dr. Moore's advice and will continue to do so, because he and his advisers know what they're talking about.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: On November 5, 2020, Dr. Fallis was told that the Premier of Ontario called the head of his hospital to complain about his tweets. Dr. Fallis then got a cease-and-desist letter from his hospital to stop tweeting. Yet the government and the Premier deny that any of this even happened. The question here is about the character of our Premier and what he himself has done.

My question is, why would the entire leadership of this hospital believe that they needed to muzzle Dr. Fallis—that's what they believed; they needed to muzzle Dr. Fallis, fearing that their funding would be at risk—if there wasn't any political pressure at all to do so? It does not make sense, Speaker.

Interjections.

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

To respond, the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, listen to what the Leader of the Opposition is saying. She is saying that we were so upset that we wanted to take action. But you're right: We did take action. What we did was we delivered a brand new hospital for Brampton. We were so angry that we decided we were going to give them a medical school in Brampton. We were so frustrated that we said, "Why don't we give them better GO train service in Brampton?" We were so angry we said, "Let's send them millions of dollars more for long-term care in their area."

What we were angry about was the complete failure of the Liberals and the NDP to ever deliver anything for Brampton. That is what we have been doing since day one, isn't it, colleagues? We've been delivering for the people of Brampton every single day, including a new hospital, long-term care, better education, better roads, transit,

transportation, a medical school, a university. I think that's delivering for Brampton. She should get on board and work with us to deliver more.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's very clear that what the Premier of this province should do is admit what he did back in November 2020 and come clean with the people of Ontario. That's what he should do.

Everyone knows how this Premier handled the pandemic, Speaker. Hundreds of thousands of people contracted COVID-19. Thousands and thousands of people lost their lives. Doctors speaking out against this government's terrible pandemic response should be heard. They should be heard, not fired, Speaker. Hospital CEOs should never have to worry that the Premier's vengeance is going to threaten their funding.

My question is, will the Premier do the right thing? Will he just come clean? Will he apologize to Dr. Fallis, to the William Osler Health System, to Ontarians? Not only should he apologize, but we're also asking that he promise to never, ever threaten the health care funding of a hospital because he's unhappy, because he wants to muzzle his critics.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, what the Leader of the Opposition is doing is really highlighting her failure. Look, this is a member who held the balance of power between 2011 and 2014. Did they do anything to help Brampton? No. They set out stretch goals for insurance, and what did they accomplish? Nothing, Mr. Speaker.

So what did we accomplish? A brand new hospital for the people of Brampton. Of course, they voted against that. They voted against it, Speaker. A brand new university for Brampton: How did they vote? Against it. Millions of dollars in long-term care: How did they vote? Against it. We've seen auto insurance rates come down in Brampton. How did they vote? Against it, Mr. Speaker.

When you talk about the pandemic, there is no jurisdiction in North America that has done better than the province of Ontario because of the hard work of this Minister of Health, this Premier and this caucus, who have never failed in supporting the people of the province of Ontario, and especially the people of Brampton.

CHILD CARE

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: My question is to the Premier. Ontario has finally signed on to the federal government's \$10-a-day child care plan at the eleventh hour. But—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. I'm going to ask the government side not to do that again.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'd ask the Minister of Energy to come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I warn the Minister of Energy.

Interjections.

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The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Please restart the clock. The member for Parkdale–High Park has the floor.

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: But will parents actually have a spot for their child? Experts say Ontario's target should be expanded by at least 150,000 spaces to keep up with the increased demand. The Premier boasts that he will create 86,000 new child care spaces, but Speaker, that includes 15,000 spaces that were already created, and 22,000 that are already in process. So the reality is it's only 50,000 new spaces—a third of the bare minimum Ontario needs.

My question to the Premier is, what will you say to the families when there are no child care spaces for their children?

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

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Unlike the members opposite, we didn't sign the first deal. We signed a better deal for the people of Ontario. And we are proud to stand in this province for the interests of families, securing the \$13.2 billion—\$3 billion more than what was initially offered—an additional year of funding commitment and, yes, 86,000 new spaces so that we can create access and affordability. We can finally make child care affordable for Ontario families.

Mr. Speaker, under this plan there will be a 25% reduction, on average, retroactive to April. We will achieve 50%, a net cut to one of the most expensive child care systems in Canada by Christmas of this year, and yes, we will finally deliver \$10-a-day day care by year 2025.

It is a positive deal for families. It will deliver immediate relief. It will increase access and support our recovery as we move forward from this pandemic. We're proud to work with the federal government to deliver a good deal for Ontario families.

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

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: Speaker, I can't believe the minister is feeling pride for being the last province in the country to sign the deal.

Even if the government had done their job and planned to create enough spaces, they still haven't done the work to ensure that those spaces can be staffed. To recruit and retain child care workers, you have to pay them properly. After years of neglecting these workers with low pay and poor working conditions, Ontario has a child care workforce shortage.

Other provinces committed to a wage grid for workers. Without doing the same in Ontario, we will be in the same child care crisis we've endured for decades. Why didn't this government commit to a wage grid and other basic improvements for child care workers?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Under our plan, under this Progressive Conservative government and our Premier's leadership, we are finally cutting child care fees for Ontario families. This year alone families will save, on average, \$4,000. That number will rise to over \$12,000 into year 2023.

These are significant savings at a critical time—the inflection point of our economy, to try to rev-start our economy, move it forward. And to do so, to ensure women can re-enter the labour market, to ensure that families do not have to make the choice between child care and going to work—this is good for the economy. This is good for women. It is good for all families.

We should celebrate this progress as a Parliament, because what we have done today, working across party lines, inter-provincial leadership, working with the federal government to achieve something that families have dreamt of for decades—which is affordable child care and access in communities across Ontario.

CHILD CARE

Ms. Donna Skelly: My question is also to the Minister of Education. In the province of Ontario, child care costs rose to unacceptable highs during the Wynne-Del Duca era. When we came to government, our government faced some of the highest child care costs in the entire country. The Del Duca-Wynne legacy of scarcity and unaffordability left many families in Ontario without child care. But over the past few months, the Premier and the government have negotiated continuously with the federal government to land the right child care deal for Ontario families. Recognizing the unique composition of Ontario's child care system, can the Minister of Education tell us how this government secured a more affordable and sustainable child care deal for Ontario families?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I want to thank the member from Flamborough–Glanbrook for her leadership in this Parliament, representing the people of her community well, demanding that the federal government steps up their investment, and in this deal we have achieved that with more flexibility, a sustainable program and funding that actually gets us to \$10.

The contrast between the Liberal Party and the Progressive Conservatives is that you would have accepted the first agreement that demonstrably would not have gotten \$10 a day by year 2025. That is just a matter of fact. So much so that the federal Liberals accepted that premise that they allowed us to take five years of funding and allocate it in four years to increase the per-year investment by \$600 million to get to \$10.

What we have done is we have preserved parental choice. We respect that parents make the best decision on how to raise their kids. It's why we fought to ensure inclusion for for-profit child care. We fought to ensure more money is on the table, a longer deal, a good deal for the people of this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Donna Skelly: I want to thank the minister for working tirelessly to get this great deal for Ontario families.

Members of the opposition have often tried to pressure this government into signing any deal for Ontario families, but we know that children and parents in this province deserve a deal that will make child care more affordable for decades to come. Ensuring a long-term, sustainable

deal that reflects the heavy investments already made by this province in child care is essential. The opposition kept asking the government to sign the first deal available.

Will the Minister of Education tell this House what he was able to secure for Ontario families by holding firm and standing up for Ontario families?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: What we believe in this Parliament, in this party as Progressive Conservatives, is to protect parental choice, and what we have done—what no province has done—is protect for-profit and non-profit child care for parents to choose where they send their kids to be provided with care. We've also ensured a longer duration of a deal; the only province in this federation to secure six years of investment, \$2.9 billion more added to this deal, and complete flexibility to move the dollars year over year to where it counts to get to \$10.

This is a monumental step forward when it comes to financial relief for the people we serve. Mr. Speaker, \$4,000 of average savings this year, \$12,000 by year 2023, \$10 by year 2025; 86,000 more spaces, 14,000 more ECE workers.

Together, we are restoring hope, we are providing relief and we're getting our economy back on track.

TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le premier ministre.

The government has tried to eliminate the regulatory college of traditional Chinese medicine with Bill 88. When thousands of Ontarians rose up in opposition to this short-sighted move, the government backed down and said they would work with the college to address the concerns that they had heard, but the government has not appointed enough members to the board of the college for the college to actually be able to carry out the tasks that are needed, the tasks that the government said are needed.

When will the government appoint members to the board of directors of the College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists so that they can fulfill their mission?

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

Hon. Christine Elliott: Thank you very much to the member for the question. It is very important to many people, and you will know our government is working to try and get more people working by reducing regulatory barriers to support individuals who do practise traditional Chinese medicine. One of the problems in the past was that many people who were not able to write the exam in English were asking to be able to write it in Chinese. That is something that we agree with and that is something that we are moving towards.

We are moving forward with these appointments and I would expect that we will have people in place within the next very short while in order to deal with this issue to allow more people to practise traditional Chinese medicine and for people to access it across the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: The people practising traditional Chinese medicine in Ontario need a commitment from this government to ensure that their title is protected and that their skills are recognized. People like Anne from St. Jacobs said, “It is also important to me for Chinese and acupuncture practitioners to be regulated by a reputable overseeing body/college. Knowing they are being held accountable to a college, I am confident in receiving treatment. Otherwise I likely would not be willing to use these services.”

These registered health professionals are also small business owners, businesses that need reassurances to be able to operate. What assurance will the minister give us that enough members will be appointed to the board of the College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists before the June election to ensure that these professionals and their patients are not left in limbo?
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Hon. Christine Elliott: We recognize that many people will rely on the college to regulate traditional Chinese medicine practitioners. Four new public members will be added to the board of the College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists of Ontario, and upon approval they should be able to join the board by the end of this week.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr. Roman Baber: My question is to the Premier. Paying for partisan election ads with the money of a political party is protected by freedom of expression, but running what are clearly partisan ads using taxpayer dollars undermines democracy. This Premier, who prides himself in respecting the taxpayer, is running taxpayer-funded government ads telling us that Ontario’s economy is getting stronger, eight weeks before an election—not just on TV or radio; I see them in my condo elevator. Of course, in 2018 the Premier campaigned against taxpayer-funded partisan ads. He attacked the Liberals on changing the rules. But, indeed, the Premier turned out to be a Liberal.

My question to the Premier: Is it appropriate to use taxpayer dollars to advertise that our economy is getting stronger, eight weeks before an election?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Really, the problem that the member has over there is that he’s upset that the economy is getting stronger, he’s upset about the investments that we’re making across the province of Ontario. Look, we’re just coming out of a very challenging pandemic—a pandemic, of course, that the member denies even exists, Mr. Speaker. We are ensuring that the economy is back on track and we’re letting everybody know that the economy is back on track.

The Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade just announced one of the biggest investments in Ontario history when it comes to job creation: 2,500 new jobs, thousands of additional jobs that will accompany this enormous investment. That’s because of a strong, stable Progressive Conservative majority government.

Look, there will be an election, of course, on June 2. I’m happy to hear that the member won’t be running. I know he’ll be busy on a leadership campaign. It is troubling that he uses this House and the resources of this House to campaign federally. I suggest that he maybe should not do that.

But, Mr. Speaker, we’re going to continue to make sure people—

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

The supplementary question.

Mr. Roman Baber: Speaker, we went through a very serious pandemic, but also this government caused a mental health pandemic, an unemployment pandemic, an overdose pandemic, a missed-cancer-surgery pandemic, a missed-and-delayed-surgeries pandemic.

Voters are often upset that the House leader or ministers do not answer the actual question. I’d like to quote your predecessor, who said, “It’s not called answer period. It’s question period.” When the House leader spins or does not answer my question, he tells the voters that he has no answer. But when he makes it personal, especially after the supplementary question, so I’m unable to respond, he demeans the voters of York Centre, the voters of Markham–Stouffville, all voters and this institution. The House leader consistently demonstrates that he’s not just intellectually bankrupt, but he is a mean-spirited—

Interjections.

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

I’m going to ask the member to withdraw.

Mr. Roman Baber: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Please conclude your response. Start the clock.

Mr. Roman Baber: But unlike the members of his caucus, I’m not afraid of him, so I’ll ask him again: Why did the government break a promise to reform advertising rules and—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member will take his seat.

Does the government House leader wish to reply?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Now, that was a balanced question, wasn’t it, Mr. Speaker? Look, I’m pretty confident the people of Markham–Stouffville are being represented well, but ultimately, I’m not afraid to put my name on the ballot on June 2 and let them pass judgment on whether I’m doing a good job or not. I made a commitment to the people of Markham–Stouffville to deliver for them, and I think that’s what I’m doing, because I have all of these great colleagues behind me who are helping me deliver for the people of Markham–Stouffville.

I suggest the reason why the member got so personal over there is because he’s maybe missing delivering what we can deliver. But I tell you what: The people of his riding know that on June 2 they’ll finally have another member sitting with us on this side of the House, and we will continue to deliver for them, Mr. Speaker. We’ll continue to deliver for them. I don’t want to get all mean and nasty. What we’ll continue to do is work on behalf of the people of the province of Ontario.

BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the people of Oxford, I would like to ask a question to the Minister of Infrastructure. For too long, the people, businesses and farmers in southwestern parts of the province have been without the reliable Internet connections they need for their day-to-day lives.

I've been paying attention to debates around Bill 93 to know that little has been said by the official opposition on high-speed Internet in southwestern Ontario. They seem to be more concerned with connecting the province in northern regions. I know, unlike the opposition, our government is concerned with connecting all parts of the province and not just particular regions.

Mr. Speaker, through you, would the Minister of Infrastructure tell us how this funding will benefit the people of southwestern Ontario?

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

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: Thank you to the great member from Oxford for the wonderful question. Our government knows how critical access to high-speed Internet is for families, businesses and farmers alike, which is why we are investing nearly \$4 billion to bring high-speed Internet to every corner of the province by 2025. This is the single largest investment by any province, by any government in the history of Canada.

Through our partnership with the federal government, we're bringing over \$6 million to support high-speed Internet connectivity to 1,191 homes and businesses across rural communities in Oxford county. This will ensure that residents across the county have access to the reliable Internet services they need to learn, work and compete in the marketplace and boost economies. This is just one of the ways our government is addressing the needs of our communities and supporting the people of southwestern Ontario.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to the supplementary question.

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

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Thank you to the PA to the Minister of Infrastructure for that great response. It's great to be part of a government that is so dedicated to connecting Ontarians to critical infrastructure and building the province. This funding will go a long way to improve the lives of my constituents and ensure that business owners and farmers have fair access to explore new markets, expand their services and conduct their day-to-day business with ease.

I know our government has been working day in and day out to ensure our municipalities have the finances they need to support their residents. Mr. Speaker, through you, would the Minister of Infrastructure please provide some additional information on how we are supporting the infrastructure needs in Oxford and in the great province of Ontario?

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: The member is right to say that we are working diligently to build Ontario and support our

local municipalities. In fact, in our fall economic statement, we doubled our OCIF contribution by \$1 billion, bringing the total investment up to \$2 billion over the next five years. This funding will ensure our municipalities have the funding they need to repair and replace their critical infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, waste water and drinking water systems.

Mr. Speaker, through this funding, our government is providing over \$8 million to support 206,000 residents in the Oxford district with safe and accessible public infrastructure. This includes over \$5 million in funding for Oxford county and more than \$1.2 million for the city of Woodstock. By investing in these infrastructure projects, our government is saying yes to creating more jobs, saying yes to increasing economic growth, saying yes to attracting more investments and saying yes to making our province's communities the best places to live and grow.

CANCER TREATMENT

Ms. Jill Andrew: My first question is for the Minister of Health. In 2019, my constituent Margaret Loniewska was diagnosed with stage 4 metastatic breast cancer. That same week, she also found out she was pregnant. Since then, Margaret has been prescribed a cocktail of treatments and medications, some of which are taken in clinic. Others are take-home. Even with a patchwork of coverage, Margaret still pays over \$10,000 per year for cancer treatment—last year alone, it was \$13,000—and she has got to take these for the rest of her life.

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She is not alone. This is the case for thousands of people diagnosed with cancer across Ontario. Without investment, it means they face a lifetime bill of hundreds of thousands of dollars to keep themselves alive and healthy.

My question to the minister: While we, the Ontario NDP, have long called for 100% coverage of take-home cancer care drugs, will this government finally say yes to publicly funded, universal at-home cancer treatments so those diagnosed can live healthily without the financial burden attached?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I thank the member very much for the question. I'm sorry to hear of Margaret's ill health. However, we do have provisions in Ontario for people who are unable to afford coverage or who do not have coverage programs, under the Ontario Drug Benefit Program and under the Ontario Trillium Foundation benefits, that they can apply for to receive assistance in order to be able to pay for care for cancer or whatever other issue they're dealing with.

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

Ms. Jill Andrew: My second question is back to the Minister of Health. Given that breast cancer impacts predominantly women, the financial burden faced by those diagnosed is even higher as they have yet to meet economic equality in this province of Ontario in 2022. This was made worse through the pandemic—which you know, Speaker, disproportionately impacted women.

Therefore, as we speak of an equitable recovery and a just recovery in this province, in the days coming up as we're waiting to see the spring budget, I am asking—again, my question to the Minister of Health, to the Premier, once again to the entire Conservative caucus—will this government commit to 100% universally funded take-home cancer drugs to ensure that women and anyone who is experiencing cancer can survive and can be healthy, without the financial burden? Will we see that in the spring budget?

Hon. Christine Elliott: We recognize that many people do have financial difficulties in paying for some of the drugs and medications that they need. However, we already do have programs for those people in Ontario under the drug benefit program and under the Ontario Trillium program. To have universal coverage is not something that we are looking at right now. We may in the future. However, we do have that assistance in place for people who do need that assistance so that they will be able to access the medications that they need, both now and in the future.

TOURISM INDUSTRY

M^{lle} Amanda Simard: Mr. Speaker, throughout this entire pandemic, the tourism sector has always been first to close and last to open. On September 27 of last year, the Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries touted the tourism recovery program to help Ontario's tourism industry. Now, six months later, not a single penny of the promised \$100 million—which is frankly not even enough—has gone into any applicant's pocket despite being told that they should expect to start spending that money on April 1.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister guarantee that eligible applicants will receive the much-needed funds by April 1?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Yes.

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

M^{lle} Amanda Simard: I want to thank the minister for that answer, and I trust that it is true.

Since 2003, long before this government came into power in 2018, tourism receipts in Ontario from overseas have increased by almost 183% and tourism receipts from the US increased by a little over 27%. And what does this government do? It cuts tourism funding in 2019. We, here on this side of the Legislature, know the importance of supporting the tourist sector, and now more than ever, as many of its small businesses were affected by the pandemic. That's why we're offering a two-year tax holiday under our plan, along with many other measures to support small businesses.

Mr. Speaker, is this government going to support the tourist sector or is the plan to wait until enough businesses close so they're no longer even eligible for help?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: That's a bit rich. The only people talking about tourism for the past two years in this Legislature have been the Progressive Conservative Party under the premiership of Doug Ford. I, personally, have

done over 90 announcements. I've held 44 round tables. I've done 162 tour stops, which is more than every single member on the—

Interjection.

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

The member for York Centre will come to order.

Restart the clock.

I apologize for having to interrupt the Minister of Heritage.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: When I was bringing in the Ontario largest-of-its-time building fund of \$105 million, who voted against it? The Liberals.

When I brought in the Reconnect Festival and Event Program and we brought it from \$19 million to \$50 million, who supported it? Progressive Conservatives. Who voted against it?

Interjections: Liberals.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: When we brought forward the Ontario Staycation Tax Credit of \$270 million, who supported it? We did. Who voted against it?

Interjections: Liberals.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I have another one. We have the Ontario Tourism Recovery Program that they have the audacity to ask about—\$100 million. Who voted for it? We did. Who voted against it? They did.

Mr. Speaker, I will take no lessons from an absent-minded opposition who have been focused on one thing and one thing only, themselves, while this party has been focused on—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

The next question.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Lorne Coe: My question is for the Associate Minister of Transportation. After four years as transportation minister, Steven Del Duca did not get a single shovel into the ground on any new subway lines in the greater Toronto area. The Del Duca-Wynne Liberals were more concerned about building bridges upside down and building unsuitable GO stations—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): This side of the House has to come to order.

The member for Whitby has the floor.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Steven Del Duca's inaction led to even more congestion and overcrowding—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa South, come to order.

The member for Whitby has the floor.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Steven Del Duca's inaction led to even more congestion and overcrowding on the Yonge-University line, where people were spending their commutes packed in like sardines due to the previous decade of Liberal unwillingness to expand Toronto's transit.

Speaker, with the greater Toronto area becoming home to another million people in the next 10 years, people need to get in and out of the downtown core so they can get to

appointments, recreation and, of course, back home to their families.

Can the Associate Minister of Transportation please tell us how this government is actually building transit for the greater Toronto area?

Hon. Stan Cho: That is an excellent member with an excellent question this morning. I'm glad to let him know that while Sunday was cold, our spirits were warm because we broke ground on the Ontario Line at Exhibition Stadium.

The Ontario Line is the crown jewel of our historic \$28.5-billion transit expansion plan in the GTA, fulfilling our promise to deliver transit relief to Toronto's core. Stretching from the Exhibition to Ontario Science Centre, the Ontario Line will stimulate \$11 billion in the local economy, support over 4,700 jobs during the construction, cut crowding across Toronto's transit system, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 14,000 tonnes annually.

Speaker, for 15 years, the Liberals and the NDP coalition said no to delivering any sort of transit relief for downtown on an overcrowded and antiquated subway system. Finally, after decades of inaction from the opposition, our government is getting it done.

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

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you to the associate minister for his response and the terrific news for the people of the greater Toronto area.

Speaker, I'm pleased to hear of this game-changing progress from this government that will finally build transit for Toronto's downtown core.

While the Ontario Line presents a tremendous opportunity to expand transit, it needs to be built the right way, especially after 15 years of the Liberals and NDP twiddling their thumbs instead of getting shovels in the ground.

Can the associate minister explain what this government is doing to ensure that this transit project will be built in a way that truly benefits our hard-working taxpayers?

Hon. Stan Cho: That's a valid concern from the member. The Steven Del Duca Liberals voted against our government's Getting Ontario Moving Act and Building Transit Faster Act. In other words, the Liberals said no to building the Ontario Line, no to reducing gridlock, no to community benefits, no to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and they said no to getting people from point A to point B.

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Then there's the NDP, flipping and flopping like a barrel full of wet fish. The NDP demands more transit, more jobs. But the NDP said no to the Ontario Line, no to keeping good—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to caution the member on his language. I ask him to complete his answer.

Hon. Stan Cho: The NDP changes their minds a lot. They say no to Canadian jobs, no to the Ontario Line, no to keeping those good-paying jobs in Canada and in Thunder Bay because they just want 25% Canadian content. Well, our government is moving forward with 75% Canadian content on the Ontario Line, 90% of which will be made right here.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: My question is to the Premier. In Niagara, one of the most concerning things we are seeing, post-pandemic, is that the quality of long-term care suffers because we are still in a full-blown staffing crisis. Premier, as you are aware, councils on aging across Ontario point out that four hours of resident care per day is the single most important pillar to transform long-term care, and it cannot wait until 2025. In fact, last October, the family councils of Niagara region's eight long-term-care homes wrote to you about this. It included hundreds of signatures of residents and their families.

Speaker, my question is to the Premier. We cannot keep ignoring the concerns from seniors and their families, and keep kicking four hours of care down the road to 2025. Will this government admit their plan for four hours of care is too long, and commit to more immediate funding today?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Well, Mr. Speaker, the short answer is yes, because in the member's own riding, I have actually committed to \$20 million for more staff. Unfortunately for the people in her community, she voted against that, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure you're as concerned as I am that the member would vote against that.

Now, it's not just about staffing, obviously, because one of the things we did hear as well is that they need new, more modern facilities, and that would help. So I actually announced a new allocation of 13 new beds and 226 upgraded beds in a brand new facility—wait for it, wait for it—in the member's riding, and the member voted against it.

So I'm not going to listen to the member, and you know what? I'm going to continue to provide more funding for long-term care. Thanks to this caucus, thanks to this Premier and thanks to a strong, stable Progressive Conservative majority government, we'll be doing it well into the future.

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

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: May I remind the deputy House leader that beds don't operate on their own; they need people to operate them.

Back to the Premier: I'm hearing about resignations by the handful that come across the desks of long-term-care homes every day in Niagara. These are professionals that got into this work because they love their jobs. The seniors they care for are family to them. However, they are burnt out. Melissa Mathes, the president of a Niagara CUPE Local, is someone with 18 years' experience as a PSW. She has an offer to this government: Come down and do it for one day in Niagara. Because if you are not front-loading four hours of care, then you are not fixing long-term care for seniors.

Through you, Speaker, to the Premier: Will you take up this offer and come to Niagara for one day and let our front-line staff in Niagara show you why your plan is not moving fast enough, and is way too slow?

Hon. Paul Calandra: We knew back in 2018, before we actually took government, that we had to make investments in long-term care. Unlike the NDP, who held the balance of power between 2011 and 2014 and didn't make it a priority, before we were even elected, we said we had to make it a priority. That's why we said we were going to build 30,000 new long-term-care beds, and upgrade an additional 28,000. We've made the commitment to move to four hours of care. And we're not just making the commitment, like we hear so often from the members opposite. We're actually putting dollars behind it.

Now, I've talked about the \$20 million in the member's own riding, but it's \$78 million for Niagara—\$78 million for more staffing in Niagara. That is an incredible amount of funding, and it's not something that we should—look, we're providing the funding, but it's people's money. But you know why we're doing that, Mr. Speaker? Because the people who helped build this province deserve a better quality of care, better than they got from the Liberals, better than they got from the NDP-Liberal coalition, and we will deliver it for them and—

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

AUTISM TREATMENT

Mr. Roman Baber: A question to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services: Autism Awareness Month begins this weekend. One of the most shameful legacies of this government is their handling of children with autism. Lives of tens of thousands of children could have been significantly improved with evidence-based treatment, but the government froze the 23,000 wait-list in early fall 2018 and then decimated the Ontario Autism Program, the OAP. It retreated under pressure, but because of politics, failed to adopt my autism plan, which was in fact endorsed by the Ontario Autism Coalition.

Instead of paying for treatment and moving with the list, for almost four years this government has been consulting and working to "get it right." Four years to get it right. Meanwhile, we have a lost generation of children with autism. The government pays for trampolines and bureaucrats they call coordinators, but four years later they still refuse or are unable to pay for needs-based treatment.

Will the minister explain how it is that we still do not have a functioning Ontario Autism Program?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. Our government is absolutely committed to making sure that children with special needs and with autism receive the supports that they need. That's exactly why we doubled the funding from \$300 million to \$600 million.

The previous government did not address the capacity needed to create the programs necessary for the children to receive their care. That's why we have provided capacity grants to enable the providers to be there to provide the service for these children; that's why we have five times as many children enrolled in a multi-pathway, comprehensive, needs-based system for our children with autism in

this province; and that's why we've invested in the advisory panel, in the integrated intake organization that will respond to the need with care coordinators. This is beyond anything the Liberals ever did. They talked a lot, but they didn't provide the services.

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

Mr. Roman Baber: Care coordinators do not provide treatment. They bounce families around. Speaker, only this government could double the budget and deliver less services. It's their version of efficiencies. It would be funny if it wasn't so tragic for so many families and so many children. Paying for treatment is not just the right thing to do because it can materially improve the life of a child, it's also the fiscally prudent thing to do because you save on support programs down the road.

Four years later and we have 600 kids in a pilot program. That's it. The Premier has said that autism families would not have to protest on the front lawn. So why did the wait-list more than double from 23,000 to 55,000 children? And when can families expect a functioning needs-based Ontario Autism Program? When?

Miss Monique Taylor: NDP government.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Member for Hamilton Mountain, come to order.

The response, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: To the member opposite, we are in fact on track. We have approximately 40,000 children who are receiving multiple services.

The opposition had the chance to support children with special needs and with autism, and they said no. They said no to the children who will be served at the Grandview children's treatment centre in Ajax, they said no to the children who will be served by the Chatham-Kent Children's Treatment Centre and their families, and they said no to the children who were served by 1Door4Care, CHEO's integrated treatment centre in Ottawa. They said no over and over and over again, and they voted against the largest investment to support children with special needs, including autism, in two decades. They voted against these investments, not once, but in two budgets, Mr. Speaker.

Our government is committed to supporting children with special needs. We are putting programs behind our talk, much more so than the previous government ever did, leaving children languishing on the list with no hope of ever receiving the care—

Mr. Roman Baber: Double the children on the list.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for York Centre, come to order.

The next question?

1150

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Premier. It recently became public news through a CBC article that the government is working on a plan to sell clean energy

credits to companies wanting to lower their carbon footprint. But environmental groups say this would do nothing to reduce Ontario's carbon dioxide emissions.

Bryan Purcell, the VP of policy and programs for the Atmospheric Fund, said of the plan, "Whether they know it or not, companies would be buying a credit that does nothing to reduce actual emissions in real life and just simply allows them to claim a lower carbon footprint." This pretty much sounds consistent with this government's overall approach to tackling climate change, allowing it to spin out of control without having the courage to actually address its root causes.

They go on to say that this plan has fundamental flaws that undermine any environmental benefit.

Speaker, can the Premier or the minister just admit that this is a scheme to make companies feel better about their carbon footprint rather than putting in place real incentives to reduce it?

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

Hon. Todd Smith: I'm glad I got to stick around and answer this question this morning. Thanks to the member opposite as well.

When it comes to the clean energy credit program, this is a voluntary registry that's been created—unlike what the previous Liberal government created and what was supported by the previous third-party NDP. It was a cap-and-trade program, which was actually a carbon tax by another name, that was driving businesses out of our province.

The Liberals didn't do much right when they were in power, but one thing they did do when they created the Green Energy Act was to allow for credits to be sold to companies that wanted to purchase them. Now, they never acted on that, which would have been the smart thing to do, but we're doing that. What we're going to do is allow these companies to voluntarily purchase the credits, and then we'll get the money for that, which we're returning to the customers so their electricity bills will be lower. Doesn't that make perfect sense, Mr. Speaker? It took a Conservative government to figure it out, though.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'm glad you got to stick around too for that answer, because actually you're going to be driving up carbon emissions. Your plan is actually worse than the Liberal plan.

Mr. Speaker, I would expect nothing less than a response like this from the government. This is a government that wasted \$30 million on a failed Supreme Court challenge over the federal government's carbon tax. They slashed funding for Indigenous conservation efforts and significant environmental initiatives. This is a government that doesn't even follow the province's own Environmental Bill of Rights.

Lana Goldberg, the climate program manager at Environmental Defence, has also dismissed this credit system: "It allows companies to claim credit for existing clean electricity generation resources instead of actually greening their own power consumption."

Given the scale of the climate crisis in this province, in this country, in the world, we need real action. Will the Premier or this minister be upfront with Ontarians that this program would only enable businesses to further green-wash their practices rather than help them reduce their dependency on gas-powered electricity? Come clean with the people of this province.

Hon. Todd Smith: I will, Mr. Speaker. This is a voluntary credit, a clean energy credit that's been created.

But when it comes to actually making a difference for our environment, our government is doing that. Our government is bringing in concrete measures that aren't only going to clean up the environment here in Ontario, but they're going to make a difference around the world.

That's why yesterday, I was in Regina with ministers from Alberta, New Brunswick and Saskatchewan, talking about our small modular reactor strategic plan that is going to allow us to send emissions-free, reliable power sources to jurisdictions around the world to help them reduce their emissions, to make the transition from coal-fired generation to clean, reliable, affordable nuclear energy.

We're also electrifying places like Dofasco and Algoma Steel, some of the biggest emitters in our province.

We're making tangible differences to our environment, not just blah, blah, blah—

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

The next question.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: My question is to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. Last week, I visited the home of Priyanka Iqbal, a mother with two young autistic children. Priyanka explained that this Ford government's interim one-time funding is not nearly enough for her children to receive the critical core services which are essential for their early development, like what was available under the former Liberal plan, which was co-created by advocates and families with autism. With her young daughters on the wait-list for the needs-based program, along with over 50,000 other children in Ontario, Priyanka has been told by the ministry that only 8,000 spots will be opening in the fall of 2022, but there are no guarantees for her children.

The Ontario Autism Program was created to reduce the wait-list, yet it has done the opposite. The new needs-based program was supposed to be implemented in April 2020; it has then been rescheduled for April 2021, and we are now in April 2022 and still waiting for this implementation. When will the government stop making Ontario families wait?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. I'd like to give you a breakdown of the 40,000 children who are already receiving services under our Ontario Autism Program, which is a multi-pathway plan that provides multiple services, a far broader and more comprehensive program than ever before. This

is a world-leading program that has resulted from extensive consultations, even during COVID, to understand exactly what families needed, what children needed and the importance of early intervention, physiotherapy, behavioural therapy, language therapy, mental health supports—a much broader program.

So 40,000 children are receiving supports through this program right now. We are making good progress and we are on track, as we said we would be before: 32,000 children with that one-time interim funding, 3,665 in the behavioural plans—

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

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: This minister understands the importance of early intervention. She just said it. Priyanka and her family are watching, and they are seeing the opportunity drain. Both of their children are under three, yet the support and the help that they need is simply not available.

In the case of the situation with families like the Iqbals, parents are afraid. They are doing everything that they can to provide the support to their children. They are selling their assets. They are doing everything possible, yet under your government, even though you say the funding has doubled, it has not flowed to the needs of these families. This program is not functioning, Minister. These children are waiting, their window of opportunity is closing and their families are afraid.

Will the minister commit today—with a timeline, frankly—so that parents like the Iqbals can know when they will be registering and getting their children the—

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

The Minister of Children, Community and Social services.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Again, thank you. I certainly want to express how heartfelt this effort is by our government. Over 40,000 children are receiving services right now, five times as many children than under the program from the previous government. That is a very important accomplishment.

The process that was required to understand the needs of the families, to listen to them, to hear them, has required some time, but we are making important progress with the independent intake organization. We absolutely understand the critical piece of this—

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Four years. It has been four years.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Again, I will talk about the 12,914 families who are receiving foundational family services—

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: It has been four years.

Miss Monique Taylor: Fifteen years.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Scarborough–Guildwood will come to order.

The member for Hamilton Mountain will come to order.

The minister will conclude her answer.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: My heart goes out to all the parents, especially under the previous program, who had no chance of getting any—

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

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Premier. Speaker, among other things, this government has a negative reputation for secrecy, for lack of transparency and for wasting public dollars on useless fights in the courts. The most recent example of all three is this Premier's decision to fight the release of his own mandate letters to his cabinet ministers. He has fought and lost court battle after court battle to release these 150 pages of mandate letters. In January, the Ontario Court of Appeal directed him to have those letters released by now.

Why is this government wasting even more public dollars to take his hidden mandate letters to Canada's Supreme Court instead of just releasing them? What is he trying to hide?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Actually, I'm surprised to hear that from the member opposite, to be honest with you. I'm a little disappointed, Mr. Speaker. I thought when she deposited that motion, that I was being and the government was being too bipartisan, that we were working too hard to work together. I thought that was that bridge-building that we had been trying so hard to develop here, a Parliament that works closely together.

I'm very surprised to hear that from the member. It is the same opposition, of course, that deposited a motion of confidence in the government and then voted unanimously to support the government—not only to support us but to beg us to continue in office, Mr. Speaker.

Look, as I said on a number of occasions, I think the mandate has been very clear—for all of us, not only the cabinet members, the parliamentary assistants, the caucus members. It is to grow the economy, to create the best possible province for people to live, work, invest and to raise a family in. I think a strong, stable Progressive Conservative majority government has delivered that, and on June 2, we will continue to deliver that for the people of the province.

DEFERRED VOTES

KEEPING ONTARIO
OPEN FOR BUSINESS ACT, 2022

LOI DE 2022
VISANT À CE QUE L'ONTARIO
RESTE OUVERT AUX AFFAIRES

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

Bill 100, An Act to enact legislation to protect access to certain transportation infrastructure / Projet de loi 100, Loi édictant une loi pour protéger l'accès à certaines infrastructures de transport.

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

The division bells rang from 1201 to 1206.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): On Thursday, March 24, 2022, Ms. Jones moved second reading of Bill 100, An Act to enact legislation to protect access to certain transportation infrastructure.

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

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Gates, Wayne	Pang, Billy
Babikian, Aris	Gélinas, France	Parsa, Michael
Barrett, Toby	Hardeman, Ernie	Pettapiece, Randy
Begum, Doly	Hassan, Faisal	Piccini, David
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Hogarth, Christine	Rasheed, Kaleed
Blais, Stephen	Hunter, Mitzi	Romano, Ross
Bouma, Will	Jones, Sylvia	Sabawy, Sheref
Burch, Jeff	Kanapathi, Logan	Sandhu, Amarjot
Calandra, Paul	Karpoche, Bhutla	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Ke, Vincent	Sattler, Peggy
Cho, Stan	Kernaghan, Terence	Scott, Laurie
Clark, Steve	Kramp, Daryl	Simard, Amanda
Coe, Lorne	Kusendova, Natalia	Singh, Gurratan
Crawford, Stephen	Lecce, Stephen	Skelly, Donna
Cuzzetto, Rudy	MacLeod, Lisa	Smith, Todd
Downey, Doug	Mantha, Michael	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Dunlop, Jill	Martin, Robin	Taylor, Monique
Elliott, Christine	McDonell, Jim	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Fedeli, Victor	McKenna, Jane	Thompson, Lisa M.
Fife, Catherine	Miller, Norman	Tibollo, Michael A.
Fraser, John	Mulroney, Caroline	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
French, Jennifer K.	Natyshak, Taras	Yarde, Kevin
Fullerton, Merrilee	Oosterhoff, Sam	

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

Nays

Baber, Roman	Park, Lindsey
Karahalios, Belinda C.	Schreiner, Mike

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 68; the nays are 4.

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

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Shall the bill be ordered for third reading? Solicitor General.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Speaker, I would like to refer Bill 100 to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The bill is therefore referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

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

The House recessed from 1210 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF GOVERNMENT BILLS

PANDEMIC AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS ACT, 2022

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

Mr. Sarkaria moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 106, An Act to enact two Acts and amend various other Acts / Projet de loi 106, Loi visant à édicter deux lois et à modifier diverses autres lois.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The proposed Pandemic and Emergency Preparedness Act, 2022, would amend the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Act, Ontario Food Terminal Act, Personal Health Information Protection Act, and the Regulated Health Professions Act.

The Pandemic and Emergency Preparedness Act, 2022, if passed, will also enact the Personal Protective Equipment Supply and Production Act and the Supporting Retention in Public Services Act. If passed, the act would build a stronger, more resilient health care system that is better prepared to respond to future crises as Ontario begins its post-pandemic recovery.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

PETER KORMOS MEMORIAL ACT (SAVING ORGANS TO SAVE LIVES), 2022

LOI DE 2022 COMMÉMORANT PETER KORMOS (SAUVER DES ORGANES POUR SAUVER DES VIES)

Madame Gélinas moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 107, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to the removal and use of tissue from a human body for therapeutic purposes, medical education or scientific research / Projet de loi 107, Loi visant à modifier diverses lois en ce qui concerne le prélèvement et l'utilisation de tissus d'un corps humain à des fins thérapeutiques, pour l'enseignement de la médecine ou pour la recherche scientifique.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you, Speaker. Tomorrow will be the ninth anniversary of Peter Kormos's death. The

bill is called Peter Kormos Memorial Act (Saving Organs to Save Lives).

The Gift of Life Act currently requires that consent be obtained before tissues can be removed from a human body and used for therapeutic purposes. Under the proposed amendment, consent is no longer required, except from parents or guardians on behalf of children under the age of 16, but a person may object to the removal and use of the tissue prior to the person's death, or a substitute may object on behalf of the person after his or her death. If an objection is made or there is no consent on behalf of a child under 16, no tissue should be removed from the body.

In part II of the act, it sets out the manner and circumstances in which an objection or consent may be made by or on behalf of a person. Obligations are placed on facilities designated under the act, including our hospitals, to notify Ontario Health when a patient dies or if death is imminent.

The proposed amendments are also made to the Connecting Care Act, 2019. The objectives of Ontario Health are amended to provide for the planning, coordinating, undertaking, supporting and promoting of activities related to the removal, donation and use of human tissues, including the coordination and supporting of designated facilities in connection with the removal and use of human tissue for transplant.

The act is also amended to provide that Ontario Health should establish and maintain a registry of objection and consent made by a person or the person's substitute decision-maker for the removal and use of the tissue from a person's body after the person's death.

Some 36% of people have signed the Be a Donor, but 90% of Ontarians want to be a donor. I hope this will move us forward.

201827 ONTARIO LIMITED ACT, 2022

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

Bill Pr59, An Act to revive 201827 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.

ACCESS TO SEXUAL ASSAULT EVIDENCE KITS AND PROVISION OF SEXUAL ASSAULT EDUCATION ACT, 2022 LOI DE 2022 SUR L'ACCÈS AUX TROUSSES MÉDICO-LÉGALES EN CAS D'AGRESSION SEXUELLE ET LA DISPENSE DE FORMATION SUR LES AGRESSIONS SEXUELLES

Madame Collard moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 108, An Act to amend two Acts with respect to sexual assault evidence kits at hospitals and education about sexual assault in nursing programs / Projet de loi

108, Loi modifiant deux lois en ce qui concerne les troussees medico-légales en cas d'agression sexuelle dans les hôpitaux et la formation sur les agressions sexuelles dans les programmes en sciences infirmières.

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 care to briefly explain her bill?

M^{me} Lucille Collard: The bill makes amendments with respect to sexual assault evidence kits and sexual assault education.

The Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000, is amended to require persons who grant degrees in nursing under that act to provide sexual assault nurse examiner training free of charge to nursing students.

The Public Hospitals Act is amended to require hospitals to have at least 10 sexual assault evidence kits available for patients at all times and to provide them to patients who are in need of them free of charge.

1510

ELEANOR FULCHER LIMITED ACT, 2022

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

Bill Pr71, An Act to revive Eleanor Fulcher 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.

PETITIONS

PUBLIC SECTOR COMPENSATION

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank people from all over the province for signing this petition.

“Repeal Bill 124.

“Whereas Bill 124 removes the rights of public employees to negotiate fair contracts;

“Whereas Bill 124 limits the wage increase in the broader public sector to a maximum of 1% per year at a time of unprecedented inflation;

“Whereas Ontario's public servants have dealt with two years of unheralded difficulties in performing their duties to our province;

“Whereas those affected by Bill 124 are the people who teach us, care for us, make our hospitals and health care system work and protect the most vulnerable among us;

“Whereas the current provincial government is showing disrespect to public servants to keep taxes low for some of” the country's “most profitable corporations;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“Immediately repeal Bill 124 and show respect for the public sector workers.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and send it to the Clerk with page Rhythm.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to thank the residents of London who have signed this petition for affordable housing. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas for families throughout much of Ontario, owning a home they can afford remains a dream, while renting is painfully expensive;

“Whereas consecutive Conservative and Liberal governments have sat idle, while housing costs spiralled out of control, speculators made fortunes, and too many families had to put their hopes on hold;

“Whereas every Ontarian should have access to safe, affordable housing. Whether a family wants to rent or own, live in a house, an apartment, a condominium or a co-op, they should have affordable options;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately prioritize the repair of Ontario's social housing stock, commit to building new affordable homes, crack down on housing speculators, and make rentals more affordable through rent controls and updated legislation.”

I fully support this petition. I will affix my signature and deliver it through page Vivian to the Clerks.

GASOLINE PRICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Mark Stewart from Garson in my riding for these petitions.

“Gas prices....

“Whereas northern Ontario motorists continue to be subject to wild fluctuations in the price of gasoline; and

“Whereas the province could eliminate opportunistic price gouging and deliver fair, stable and predictable fuel prices; and

“Whereas five provinces and many US states already have some sort of gas price regulation; and

“Whereas jurisdictions with gas price regulation have seen an end to wild price fluctuations, a shrinking of price discrepancies between urban and rural communities and lower annualized gas prices;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“Mandate the Ontario Energy Board to monitor the price of gasoline across Ontario in order to reduce price volatility and unfair regional price differences while encouraging competition.”

I fully support this petition. I will affix my name to it and ask my good page Molly to bring it to the table.

ABORTION IMAGES

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to thank members of the Viewer Discretion Legislation Coalition for getting

signatures from across the province, including London, Toronto, Brampton, Tillsonburg, Ottawa, Woodstock, Milton, Fort Erie and Oakville, just to name a few. The petition reads:

“Call on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to Block Disturbing Anti-Abortion Images.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas an anti-abortion group, the Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform, is distributing unwanted flyers to people's homes and displaying placards on major streets in London featuring horrifying and graphic images of aborted fetuses;

“Whereas regularly displaying graphic images on our streets and in our homes is traumatizing, difficult and misleading for women, children, and other vulnerable members of the community;

“Whereas the display of these images at crowded intersections creates a hazard and distraction to drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians;

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

“To support calls for an injunction based on the need to prevent a public nuisance, and should it not be possible to proceed with an injunction, to develop and bring forward legislation to prohibit the use of such graphic and disturbing images on flyers dropped in people's mailboxes or exhibited on placards used in the street.”

I fully support this petition. I will affix my signature and deliver it through page Pallas to the Clerks.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Kyle Kowaluk from Lively in my riding for signing this petition. It reads as follows:

“MS Specialized Clinic in Sudbury.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas northeastern Ontario has one of the highest rates of multiple sclerosis (MS) in Ontario; and

“Whereas specialized MS clinics provide essential health care services to those living with multiple sclerosis, their caregiver and their family; and

“Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is recognized as a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario;

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

“Immediately set up a specialized MS clinic in the Sudbury area that is staffed by a neurologist who specializes in the treatment of multiple sclerosis, a physiotherapist and a social worker at a minimum.”

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

AUTISM TREATMENT

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: The petition I am reading today is entitled “Support Ontario Families with Autism.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas every child with autism deserves access to sufficient treatment and support so that they can live to their fullest potential;

“Whereas the Ontario Autism Program was badly broken under the Liberals, and the changes introduced by the Conservatives have made it worse;

“Whereas the new funding caps are based on age and income, and not the clinical needs of the child;

“Whereas Ontario needs a true investment in evidence-based autism services that meets the needs of autistic children and their families;

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

“To direct the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services to invest in equitable, needs-based autism services for all children who need them.”

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

HIGHWAY SAFETY

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

“Make Highway 144 at Marina Road Safe.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas residents of Levack, Onaping and Cartier, as well as individuals who travel Highway 144, are concerned about the safety of a stretch of Highway 144 in the vicinity of Marina Road and would like to prevent further accidents and fatalities; and

“Whereas three more accidents”—now four—“occurred in summer 2021 resulting in severe injuries, diesel fuel spilling into the waterways, the closure of Highway 144 for several hours delaying traffic and stranding residents,” as well as the deaths of two people and their dog; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Transportation has completed a review of this stretch of Highway 144, has made some improvements and has committed to re-evaluate and ensure the highway is safe;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“That the Ministry of Transportation review Highway 144 at Marina Road immediately and commit to making it safe, as soon as possible....”

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

TUITION

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: The next petition I would like to read is “Support Our Students: Stop Cuts to OSAP.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario has the highest tuition rates in Canada, lowest per-student funding from the province and highest student debt, and the government’s changes will only make the situation worse;

“Whereas removing the interest-free six-month grace period means students will end up paying more, and are pressured to pay their loans even before finding a job or starting a career;

“Whereas the Conservatives’ decision to cancel grants and force students to take loans instead is another barrier to college and university;

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

“Direct the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities to reverse the recently announced OSAP cuts, protect the existing tuition grants and reinstate the six-month interest-free grace period after graduation.”

I support this petition. I will affix my signature and give it to page Stanley to deliver to the Clerks.

1520

WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Jeanne D’Arc Audette from Val Therese in my riding for these petitions.

“Improve Winter Road Maintenance on Northern Highways....

“Whereas highways play a critical role in northern Ontario;

“Whereas winter road maintenance has been privatized in Ontario and contract standards are not being enforced;

“Whereas per capita, fatalities are twice as likely to occur on a northern highway than on a highway in southern Ontario;

“Whereas current MTO classification negatively impacts the safety of northern highways;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows: “to classify Highways 11, 17, 69, 101 and 144 as class 1 highways; require that the pavement be bare within eight hours of the end of a snowfall and bring the management of winter road maintenance back into the public sector, if contract standards are not met.”

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

CHILD ADVOCATE

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: The next petition I have is on the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas children and youth are Ontario’s most valuable resource and deserve the best start in life we can provide;

“Whereas Ontario’s most vulnerable children and youth are too often underserved by our child welfare, mental health, youth justice and special-needs sectors;

“Whereas that lack of service can result in health challenges, lower educational outcomes, reduced opportunity, injury and sometimes even death...;

“Whereas the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth is charged with the responsibility of providing an independent voice for children and youth by partnering with them to bring issues forward;

“Whereas the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth provides a necessary focused approach, putting children and youth at the centre of all their work, that cannot be provided by any other office;

“Whereas the closure of the Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth represents a step backwards for Ontario that will harm our most vulnerable children and youth;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the ... government to reverse its decision to close the Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth.”

I support this petition. I will affix my signature and give it to page Molly to deliver to the Clerks.

PRÉVENTION DU VAPOTAGE CHEZ LES JEUNES

M^{me} France Gélinas: J’aimerais remercier Estelle Rainville, de Hanmer dans mon comté, pour les pétitions.

« Protéger les jeunes du vapotage...

« Alors qu’on en sait très peu sur les effets à long terme du vapotage sur les jeunes; et

« Alors que la commercialisation agressive des produits de vapotage par l’industrie du tabac, fait en sorte que de plus en plus de jeunes deviennent dépendants de la nicotine par l’utilisation de cigarettes électroniques; et

« Alors que les leçons importantes apprises sur les effets du tabagisme sur la santé ne doivent pas être répétées avec le vapotage et le principe de précaution doit être appliqué pour protéger les jeunes contre le vapotage; et

« Alors que plusieurs agences de la santé et les Médecins pour un Canada sans fumée appuient pleinement les propositions concrètes visant à réduire le vapotage chez les jeunes » dans mon projet de loi;

Ils et elles, soussignés, pétitionnent « l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario de demander au gouvernement Ford d’adopter immédiatement le projet de loi 151, Le vapotage n’est pas pour les jeunes, afin de protéger la santé des jeunes de l’Ontario. »

J’appuie cette pétition, je vais la signer et je demande à Callum de l’amener à la table des greffiers.

FRONT-LINE WORKERS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Melissa Wood from my riding for these petitions. Melissa works in a long-term-care home.

“Make PSW a Career....

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

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

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

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“Tell Premier Ford to act now to make PSW jobs a career, with” permanent “full-time employment, good wages, paid sick days, benefits, a pension plan and a manageable

workload in order to respect the important work of PSWs and improve patient” and resident care.

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for Perth–Wellington.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice respecting the expedited passage of private bills.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Perth–Wellington is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to move a motion without notice with respect to the expedited passage of private bills. Agreed? Agreed.

The member for Perth–Wellington.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I move that the orders for second and third reading of the following private bills shall be called consecutively and the questions on the motions for second and third reading of the bills be put immediately without debate:

Bill Pr54, An Act to revive 2492725 Ontario Inc.;

Bill Pr62, An Act respecting Groves Memorial Community Hospital;

Bill Pr64, An Act to revive Navigation Project Management Inc.;

Bill Pr66, An Act to revive 2704395 Ontario Inc.;

Bill Pr67, An Act to revive Frolander Island Resort (2003) Ltd.; and

That Mr. Mantha may move the motion for second and third reading of Bill Pr54, An Act to revive 2492725 Ontario Inc., on behalf of Mr. Yarde; and

That Mr. Mantha may move the motion for second and third reading of Bill Pr64, An Act to revive Navigation Project Management Inc., on behalf of Ms. Fife; and

That Mr. Mantha may move the motion for second and third reading of Bill Pr66, An Act to revive 2704395 Ontario Inc., on behalf of Ms. Berns-McGown; and

That Mr. Pettapiece may move the motion for second and third reading of Bill Pr67, An Act to revive Frolander Island Resort (2003) Ltd., on behalf of Mr. Dave Smith, Peterborough–Kawartha.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Pettapiece has moved that the orders for second and third reading of the following private bills shall be called consecutively and the questions on the motions for second and third reading of the bills be put immediately without debate:

Bill Pr54, An Act to revive—

Interjection: Dispense.

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

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY2492725 ONTARIO INC.
ACT, 2022

Mr. Mantha, on behalf of Mr. Yarde, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr54, An Act to revive 2492725 Ontario Inc.

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

Second reading agreed to.

2492725 ONTARIO INC.
ACT, 2022

Mr. Mantha, on behalf of Mr. Yarde, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr54, An Act to revive 2492725 Ontario Inc.

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

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

Third reading agreed to.

GROVES MEMORIAL
COMMUNITY HOSPITAL ACT, 2022

Mr. Pettapiece moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr62, An Act respecting Groves Memorial Community Hospital.

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

Second reading agreed to.

1530

GROVES MEMORIAL
COMMUNITY HOSPITAL ACT, 2022

Mr. Pettapiece moved third reading of Bill Pr62, An Act respecting Groves Memorial Community Hospital.

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

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

Third reading agreed to.

NAVIGATION PROJECT
MANAGEMENT INC.
ACT, 2022

Mr. Mantha, on behalf of Ms. Fife, moved second reading of Bill Pr64, An Act to revive Navigation Project Management Inc.

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

Second reading agreed to.

NAVIGATION PROJECT
MANAGEMENT INC.
ACT, 2022

Mr. Mantha, on behalf of Ms. Fife, moved third reading of Bill Pr64, An Act to revive Navigation Project Management Inc.

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

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

Third reading agreed to.

2704395 ONTARIO INC.
ACT, 2022

Mr. Mantha, on behalf Ms. Berns-McGown, moved second reading of Bill Pr66, An Act to revive 2704395 Ontario Inc.

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

Second reading agreed to.

2704395 ONTARIO INC.
ACT, 2022

Mr. Mantha, on behalf Ms. Berns-McGown, moved third reading of Bill Pr66, An Act to revive 2704395 Ontario Inc.

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

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

Third reading agreed to.

FROLANDER ISLAND
RESORT (2003) LTD. ACT, 2022

Mr. Pettapiece, on behalf of Mr. Dave Smith, moved second reading of Bill Pr67, An Act to revive Frolander Island Resort (2003) Ltd.

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

Second reading agreed to.

FROLANDER ISLAND
RESORT (2003) LTD. ACT, 2022

Mr. Pettapiece, on behalf of Mr. Dave Smith, moved third reading of Bill Pr67, An Act to revive Frolander Island Resort (2003) Ltd.

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

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

Third reading agreed to.

ARMENIAN HERITAGE MONTH
ACT, 2022

LOI DE 2022 SUR LE MOIS
DU PATRIMOINE ARMÉNIEN

Mr. Babikian moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 105, An Act to proclaim the month of May as Armenian Heritage Month / Projet de loi 105, Loi proclamant le mois de mai Mois du patrimoine arménien.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the member for Scarborough–Agincourt care to lead off the debate?

Mr. Aris Babikian: It is my honour to stand here today to sponsor Bill 105, An Act to proclaim the month of May as Armenian Heritage Month, and to initiate the second reading debate.

I am proud of my Armenian heritage and of my compatriots. I am also proud to be the first Ontario MPP of Armenian descent.

If Bill 105 is passed, it will be the first time a Canadian Legislative Assembly acknowledged the Canadian Armenian community's contribution to Ontario, Canada and, indeed, the world.

I am also proud of my predecessor compatriots who helped build this community and became integral members of our province and society. The efforts of the community pioneers made our community what it is today, as a model and envy to many newly established ethnic communities.

Mr. Speaker, the first recorded Armenian to have settled in Canada, in 1887, was Garabed Nergarian, from the village of Keghi in the province of Erzerum. He settled in Port Hope.

Most of the early settlers were casual workers who came to work on farms or in the factories of Brantford, St. Catharines and Hamilton. They were also construction workers on the Canadian Pacific Railway. They had not planned to settle here permanently; they came to Canada to help their impoverished families in the Ottoman Empire. They saved money to go back and look after their kin.

By 1892, there were 37 Armenians in Ontario. After the Hamidian massacres of 1894 to 1896, Armenian families from the Ottoman Empire began settling in greater numbers in Ontario.

By the time of the 1915 genocide of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, there were close to 2,000 Armenians living in Canada. In the aftermath of the genocide, some 1,500 survivors, mostly women and children, came to Canada as refugees.

The settlement of the survivors of the genocide was largely due to the groundswell of sympathy and support of Canadians who were eager to help the surviving victims of the genocide. The Anglican church, the Presbyterian church, the Methodist church, the Toronto Globe, the mayor of Toronto and many prominent people and organizations launched a fundraising campaign to help the survivors, particularly orphans who were scattered in the eastern Mediterranean countries. They raised \$300,000 for their humanitarian campaign.

In 1922, the Armenian Relief Association of Canada, an ecumenical organization, was established to bring some orphans to Canada. The Governor General of Canada was the patron of the organization. Between 1922 and 1924, close to 120 orphan boys and girls ages 8 to 12, later known as the Georgetown Boys, were brought to Canada and settled in Georgetown, Ontario. The humanitarian mission, dubbed the "Noble Experiment," was considered one of the first Canadian humanitarian acts on an international scale. In 2010, the Georgetown farmhouse, now the Cedarvale Community Centre, was declared a historic and protected municipal site. I believe, Mr. Speaker, you know the farm very well, because it is in your riding, and we were there together at the 100th anniversary commemoration of the Armenian genocide.

In appreciation of Canada's generous support of Armenians and for providing them a new lease on life, many Canadian Armenians volunteered in the First World War and the Second World War. Quite a number of the Georgetown Boys volunteered to defend Canada during the Second World War. The Georgetown Boys served in our air force, navy and army. Many were killed in action, especially those in the air force.

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Two of the Georgetown Boys had a tremendous effect on my life. Kirk Magarian was the first. He was a political mentor and father figure to me. Kirk had vast political experience and massive contacts within the three levels of government. When I landed at Toronto Pearson International Airport, I claimed refugee status. After two years of waiting, I approached Kirk for his assistance. He immediately made arrangements for me to see MPP Margaret Campbell. Kirk was a good friend of Margaret's. After I briefly told her my plight, she called Lloyd Axworthy, the Minister of Employment and Immigration at that time. She asked him why my application had been delayed. She demanded that he address the issue immediately. Within a week, I received my permanent resident status. Margaret was a feisty lady and earned the respect of everyone. What an ironic twist of fate—who would have believed that the refugee she helped would some day serve in the same institution she had? Thank you, Margaret, and thank you, Kirk.

The second Georgetown Boy was Paul Adourian. Paul helped me secure my first mortgage. At a time when I did not even have money for a down payment, Paul helped me achieve my dream of owning my house. Years later, when I was manager of the Armenian Community Centre, I worked with his wife, Lily. On many occasions, when he came to visit Lily at the community centre, we had Armenian coffee together. He often recalled the challenges of the Georgetown Boys all those years ago, the early days of the establishment of the Armenian community and how the community had grown.

Since then, tens of thousands of Armenians from Iran, Syria, Iraq, Turkey, the Soviet Union, Egypt, Lebanon and many other places have migrated to Canada, mostly to flee political upheavals. Most recently, Syrian and Iraqi refugees who were sponsored by the Armenian community

and churches became, within four short years, productive members of our community and the province. Many of them are now successful business owners and homeowners. They are model citizens who volunteer their time and support to many other causes.

Today, close to 100,000 Armenians call Ontario home. They live in Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton, Windsor, Cambridge, St. Catharines, Mississauga, Ajax, Pickering, Oshawa, Richmond Hill, Kingston, Aurora, Brampton, Penetanguishene, Guelph, Kitchener, Oakville, Markham, and so many other places. The communities are well organized and self-sufficient. They have centres, churches, schools, cultural hubs, seniors' homes, youth and social services, and professional organizations.

Over the years, Armenians have made significant contributions to Ontario's economy, society, politics, academia, sport and culture, in addition to many other fields of endeavours. Among them are:

- world-celebrated photographer Yousuf Karsh, who was also the honorary president of the Canadian Armenian Congress, which was the first Armenian organization;
- equally renowned film director Atom Egoyan;
- nuclear physicist and executive vice-president for research and development at Atomic Energy of Canada, Dr. Ara Mooradian;
- former Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario Ann Cavoukian;
- children's singer Raffi;
- actress and comedian Andrea Martin of SCTV.

Some might wonder why an Armenian has the name Martin. A few years back, when I met Andrea, I asked her that same question. She said, "When we fled the genocide to the United States, we had an Armenian last name. We had difficulty finding jobs. We had difficulty getting integrated into the community. So my father was quite depressed. One day, a furniture truck passed by that said 'Martin's Furniture.'" So her father changed their name to Martin.

Other famous Armenians:

- Toronto Symphony Orchestra director Peter Oundjian;
- medical scientist and head of the department of anatomy at Queen's University, John Basmajian;
- Canada's leading rug importer, Aris Alexanian;
- star restaurateur Harry Barbarian;
- Canadian women's chess champion Natalia Khoudgarian;
- Order of Canada recipient Vahan Kololian;
- developer and philanthropist Varoujan Van Lapoyan;
- historian Professor Isabel Kaprielian-Churchill;
- founder and president of the Zoryan Institute, Kourken Greg Sarkissian;
- chief of cardiovascular surgery at University Health Network, Dr. Maral Ouzounian;
- poet and author Keith Garebian;
- journalist and magazine editor Jerry Tutunjian;
- builder Garo Bostajian;
- former Waterloo police chief Matt Torigian;
- Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony conductor Raffi Armenian;

—Professor A. Edward Safarian of the University of Toronto—by the way, he was also the economic adviser to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and many world leaders around the world;

- opera singer Isabel Bayrakdarian;
- magazine publisher and art director Georges Haroutiun;
- painter and newspaper caricaturist Raffi Anderian;
- the founder of Can-Ar Coach, Vahe Tokmakjian;
- associate professor of music at the University of Oxford and violinist Gascia Ouzounian;
- famed news photographer/documentarian Roy Tash;
- painter Gérard Paraghmanian;
- Royal Military College of Canada professor Alan Whitehorn;
- photographer Onnig Cavoukian;
- Miss Universe Canada Alice Panikian;
- actress Arsinée Khanjian;
- MP Sarkis Assadourian;
- poet and professor emeritus of literature Lorne Shirinian; and
- cellist Karen Ouzounian.

It is worth mentioning that Noubar Afeyan, a Canadian Armenian entrepreneur, inventor, philanthropist and co-founder of the biotechnology company Moderna, helped save the lives of hundreds of thousands of Ontarians with his vaccine.

May 28, 1918, is celebrated by Armenians around the world as the day the Armenian people regained their sovereignty over their historical territory after 600 years of colonization, occupation, subjugation and genocide. The 1918 declaration to establish the Armenian republic is a symbol of Armenians' aspiration for freedom, democracy and independence. This is one of the most important Armenian holidays, and many parades and festivities take place in May.

By proclaiming the month of May as Armenian Heritage Month, the province of Ontario recognizes the impact that Armenian Canadians have had on Ontario's history, culture, education, art, science, literature, economy and democratic institutions. Armenian Heritage Month is an opportunity to educate Ontarians of all ages about the hardships, struggles and achievements of Armenian Canadians in this free and democratic society that respects human rights and the rule of law. These core values have contributed to the strength and diversity of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the House leader, Minister Paul Calandra; Professor Isabel Kaprielian-Churchill, Mr. Jirair Jerry Tutunjian and Ms. Hasmig Kurdian for their valuable assistance in helping me research the historical facts. Thank you very much.

1550

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

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I'm proud to rise today to speak about this legislation, because it provides the space to talk about rewarding experiences St. Catharines and Niagara have had because of having such a vibrant cultural and economic community. It appears clear to me that we will see legislation like Bill 105, the Armenian Heritage Month Act, 2022, pass with both

parties' support. This is because Ontario is home to more than 100,000 people of Armenian heritage, and that history stretches all the way back before the 19th century.

This legislation will enshrine the month of May as Armenian Heritage Month. May is a significant month for all Armenians. That's because May 28 is celebrated by the Armenian people around the world as the day they were able to regain sovereignty over their historical territory after half a century of occupation. The 1918 Armenian declaration of independence is a symbol of Armenians' aspiration for independence and freedom.

I am familiar with the Armenian community in St. Catharines, because when I was a city councillor, I would regularly sit on the board of the Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Centre, which is an organization for settlement services in the region. The Armenian community has been a fixture that has given the folk arts events and charitable and education work energy and vibrancy. It should be of no surprise, since they are one of the founding communities of the Niagara Folk Arts. In fact, when I sat down with the members of the Armenian community board, they were proud to highlight how deep the roots in St. Catharines actually go with our Armenian community. I have to say, they go really deep. St. Catharines is the oldest continuous surviving Armenian community in all of Canada, since the original wave of immigration happened in the early 1890s. The first Armenian church in Canada was established in 1930, on Carlton Street. And up until the 1960s, when a second wave of immigration was occurring across Canada, St. Catharines was considered one of the main hubs for the Armenian community across this great country.

Speaker, I will speak a little to how the Armenian community has grown in St. Catharines. A lot of the growth can be attributed to the spirit of the Armenian people; also, however, secondly, because the community in St. Catharines was able to build something sustainable. Starting in 1895, five to six families came to this area to work. In 1906, the community centre was built in St. Catharines. I will speak a little bit more on this in a little bit. This really created a sense of community that allowed the Armenian community to grow in St. Catharines until the late 1960s, when another wave of immigration occurred.

The type of community we see in St. Catharines is one with a hybrid identity, where half of the community members in St. Catharines are second- or third-generation, while the other half are relative newcomers that have arrived in the last 30 to 40 years. The positive side to the coin of the immigration is that Canada was able to gain this vibrant cultural community settling into the city of St. Catharines and across all of Ontario. But the darker side is why the community came to Canada in the first place. Armenian immigrants settled in St. Catharines after escaping persecution in their homeland. They created organizations to preserve their culture and heritage and to remain connected with the millions of Armenians spread throughout all of Ontario and the world.

Honouring the Armenian community with this legislation today also has to include, in equal measures, respecting the history of the community. It would do the community across Ontario a disservice if we did not talk about and commit to learn from the genocide that the Armenian people had to endure throughout and prior to the First World War by the Ottoman Empire. Let me be clear that this was an attempt at the systematic destruction of the Armenian people and identity. It led to the mass murder of around one million Armenians during that time.

This legislation presents an important platform for education and the memorialization of this history. Armenian Heritage Month is an opportunity to educate Ontarians about the struggles of Armenian Canadians just as much as it is a celebration of the achievements that they have created in a society that respects freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. These core values have contributed to the strength and the diversity of all Ontarians.

Speaker, the Armenian people have endured unspeakable horrors throughout history. Their trauma is still so raw. At the peak of World War I, the Ottoman Empire forcibly expelled and massacred Armenians in immense numbers. By the 1920s, up to 1.5 million Armenians had been killed, with many more displaced. Consider that the population today of Armenia is just over three million people.

I heard some of the recounted horrors Armenians have faced. People were taken from their homes and marched across the desert. No food was given, or water, or clothes. Those who didn't die on the way were housed in camps in the desert, where many starved to death and many others were massacred. I will not continue to describe the atrocities, but it is clear that this legislation is about reflection on them. The now-empty homes of those families who experienced these atrocities were seized. They experienced genocide. Canada has recognized it as such. Ontario has recognized it as such. It has been reaffirmed multiple times through this legislation, speeches and more. The Armenian community, a people who have suffered so brutally there, are reaching out, desperately calling for an end to this hostility. Many already lost loved ones, be it friends or families, and every day, more are displaced, injured or killed.

Referencing these darker histories is important to acknowledging the experience of survivors of the Armenian genocide who would have landed in St. Catharines. This is because Armenian Canadian veterans, despite this history, have numerous times defended our great country, Canada, through peacekeeping missions and more, sacrificed and contributed in a way that deserves recognition, in ways that deserve great honour. It is the positive side that needs to be highlighted the most, however.

Speaker, that brings me back to the community centre that was built in St. Catharines in 1906. The Armenian Community Centre is proud to be a predominant fixture in the St. Catharines community. It has once moved, to its current location, in 1991. I am proud that this was built

with support from both the federal and the provincial governments at the time, working together to provide a grant. At that time in Ontario, that would have included the NDP government. As the MPP for St. Catharines, it is nice to see that the former NDP government had a small role in supporting this great community.

Since its inception, the hall has—

Hon. Paul Calandra: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order, the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Let me just apologize to the member. I have to do this before 4.

Pursuant to standing order 9(f), I wish to inform the House that no business will be called during orders of the day during tomorrow morning's meeting.

I should have done that before the member started. I apologize. You're giving a great speech, and I apologize for interrupting.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. The member for St. Catharines has the floor.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: As the MPP in St. Catharines, it is nice to see that the former NDP government had a small role in supporting this community.

1600

Since its inception, the hall has fulfilled a double role as both a beautiful event venue for members of our community and also a place of friendship and fellowship for the members of our Armenian community. They have a well-established recreational program with over 100 members called the Homenetmen, which was established in 1986. They have an active chapter of the Armenian Relief Society that was established in St. Catharines in 1923 that supports educational efforts and humanitarian efforts globally.

In 1934, they established an Armenian Youth Federation that strives to carry on the legacy of their ancestors. Over a hundred years later, we want to continue the legacy that the Armenian ancestors started and use this community centre to celebrate their unique Canadian Armenian identity. As such, the Armenian culture community of St. Catharines sponsors and encourages many, many different organizations, which work together to not only serve and support the Armenian community, but also the community at large.

Speaker, as you are aware, when you honour heritage, culture and the community, this honour never occurs in a vacuum. That is because people are at the centre of this work. It is not only the spirit of the Armenian people that has contributed so much to our community in St. Catharines and across Ontario, but it is the people who manifest that spirit.

I would make an error if I do not mention some of the people who have supported and currently support the Armenian community in St. Catharines. This is where you can get into trouble, however. Highlighting one family or business or individual from the Armenian community will always leave out too many to say—other good people who made great contributions, as well, to the city and to Ontario.

However, I would like to take this moment to honour and thank the current board members of the Armenian

community for everything they do. I would like to thank Joe Kasardjian, Sam Tokadjian, Lucy Okdjian, Sev Belian, Ani Kasardjian, Ani Khatcharian and Gary Kavazanjian.

I originally spoke with Gary, who is the main administrator of the community centre and has been involved since 1972. Although I recognize him from many times at the Niagara Folk Arts, I never fully got to see how he lit up when he was able to talk about his community, which evolved in St. Catharines. I could tell the heart that he, Sev and the rest of the board members have for their community. The legislation goes a long way in supporting them, recognizing this great community.

I am happy to support good legislation like this that reflects on the past, the good and the bad, and celebrates what is to come. St. Catharines is one of the oldest Armenian communities in Canada, and it has been well over a century since they have been part of Niagara. Here's to supporting legislation that honours those contributions and looks forward to what they will do in the next 100 years.

Speaker, I want to finish my reflections on the Armenian community and this legislation by adding a caveat to this disclosure: When I speak to the community members and I ask them what they might need to continue to support their community and heritage, I know all of their members are happy with this type of recognition. However, they also talk about matters that allow for one family to keep their families close from one generation to the next. In Niagara region, the big potential issue that pushes out members of the community is housing or, more specifically, the lack of affordable housing and the affordability gap for younger families. Simply, they just want their children to have the opportunity to raise their families close to home—to stay in Niagara, buy a home, start a life, if that's what they want. When I talk about the Armenian community and all the communities—it's always a problem in Niagara. It's always the gap. I recognize that the scope of this legislation precludes those measures and all elected representatives are doing what they think is best to support communities, but I would be remiss if I did not highlight this gap and relay this concern from the Armenian community.

This beautiful building, the Legislature of Ontario, is in Toronto. Toronto is a beautiful city, but for many families in Niagara, it is not their home, so losing their sons and daughters to work and housing outside of Niagara means there is more work to be done in this chamber—more work to create an accessible and culturally respectful province that allows its residents the hope for home ownership and affordability for their families.

When I was speaking to the Armenian community, the matter of housing and affordability came up, and I think it is valuable to mention when we are talking about honouring and supporting communities in Ontario.

Speaker, I am so proud to have risen today to speak on this legislation because it provides space to talk about rewarding experiences that St. Catharines and Niagara have had because of having such a vibrant, cultural and economic community. It appears clear that we will see

legislation like Bill 105, Armenian Heritage Month Act, 2022, pass with all-party support, and I look forward to seeing that.

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Again, sorry to the member for St. Catharines for interrupting her speech. Anyway, it was a wonderful speech, and it's always nice to hear when the NDP are able to support things, even that long ago.

I also want to thank the member for Scarborough–Agincourt for bringing this bill forward and, obviously, all members for supporting it. The member for Scarborough–Agincourt is somebody who has been a very, very passionate advocate for the Armenian community—but not just for the Armenian community. Honestly, for all communities, he is an incredible advocate. In my time when I was in Ottawa, he advocated for all communities that found themselves disadvantaged or had suffered under other regimes. I really have to congratulate him for that. He has been somebody whom I know all of us have turned to for a better understanding on how we can do better in communities—not just the Armenian community, but a number of communities.

The member for Scarborough–Agincourt and the member for St. Catharines talked about amazing Armenians in culture, in business, in government.

I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the first Armenian I ever met was back in 1984. It was at 8:30 in the morning, at Pope John Paul high school in Scarborough, and my very first class was typing. In those days, we actually had typewriters and there was a room full of typewriters. Thank God Mr. Parks put me beside Jack Garabedian. I had struck up a really good friendship with him. I didn't know what an Armenian was at that time; I actually thought everyone was just Italian or wanted to be Italian. I had no idea, but Jack set me straight. I was literally, and I still am, the worst typist in history. Thank goodness for Jack Garabedian, because I was failing typing. It's a burden I've carried for all of these years. Thankfully, Jack would finish every assignment for me and every test in class. I would be on page 1 and Jack would be finished and then would type out page 2, 3, 4 and 5 for me. If it wasn't for Jack, I would have failed my grade 9 typing class. So thanks to him.

I have to tell you, I really started to get a better understanding of just how important the Armenian community is, how great this community is and how much I liked this community when I became a federal member of Parliament and was invited to the Armenian genocide remembrance ceremonies. I know a lot of members on both sides of the House have participated and have been there. The first time you go, you can't help but leave a little bit different. This is a community that remembers and is fierce about remembering what happened. They retain that. They are fiercely proud about who they are, about what they endured, how they were able to get beyond that, and how

they were able to continue to build and become strong—not only seeking independence and fighting through a terrible Soviet occupation for all of those years, and getting over the genocide, but remembering.

1610

You can't help but have a little bit of envy for a community that, even despite all of the things they have suffered, all of the things they have endured, they have never stopped moving forward. From generation to generation, if there's one thing that I am most jealous of, I would say, it's that ability for the Armenian community to honour who they are. I say it very sincerely.

I have two daughters, and I'll never forget that when one of my uncles asked my youngest how she felt to be Italian, she started to cry. She said, "I don't know what you're talking about. I'm Canadian. I'm not Italian." Then my uncle turned to me and said, "What the heck has gone on here? How, in the span of one generation, is it that your daughter is crying because she's not Italian anymore?" After holding my head in shame for many hours and then trying to explain to my daughter and catch up—that is something that never happens within the Armenian community. From generation to generation, they hold true to who they are, while still being the most incredible group of Canadians who, the member for Scarborough–Agincourt has highlighted, have meant so much to this country, have helped build so many communities, have made us better.

I can't do justice to just how important this community is to my community of Markham–Stouffville, how important they have been to Ontario and to Canada. I think the member for Scarborough–Agincourt did that very well, and I think other members will probably do a better job than I can do. But I very sincerely say to the community, thank you so much. We don't often have an opportunity to do something like this. It is very infrequent that members on all sides of the House speak with one unified voice—and it's not because of us; it's because of what you and the community have done and how great a community you are.

We certainly will never forget—and I know very well that you will ensure that Canadians never forget—how hard and how much you sacrificed to make this the best country in the world in which to live, and to also never let anybody tell you that you can't be a strong, independent, fiercely proud Armenian and be a strong, fiercely proud Canadian at the same time. Thank you so very much for all that you've done, and thank you to the member for Scarborough–Agincourt.

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

Mr. Gurratan Singh: It's an honour to rise today to speak in celebration of this amazing piece of legislation, the Armenian Heritage Month Act.

I often share this story: The first time I ever interacted and connected with the Armenian community was because

I ran across what I then learned later on was a very passionate and committed Armenian music group called System of a Down, which in the 1990s was a really prolific group of performers. They sang about everything around social justice, and also, particularly, they brought a lot of light to the issues that the Armenian community has faced and the intergenerational trauma they continue to face as a result of that. It was through that music group that I got to first get introduced to this amazing and dynamic Armenian community.

Whenever you speak to the Armenian community, it is so true that they are so committed to their culture, their history, to who they are, and to also never forgetting the injustices that they have faced and the impact that those injustices have today. It's important to always recognize the trauma of the Armenian genocide—1.5 million Armenians massacred, countless more displaced in the most terrible and savage of ways; death marches into the desert that left Armenians without food and water to die; Armenians killed and brutalized in the most terrible ways through an organized genocide. It was this genocide that resulted in the diaspora of Armenians we see across the world today. Something like eight million to 10 million Armenians are in the diaspora and call a variety of countries home, and we're so blessed to have such a vibrant and contributing Armenian community here in Ontario and throughout Canada.

It's actually really interesting as well, because there's almost a historic Brampton story—me being an elected official from Brampton—to the Armenian community, as well with the history of the Georgetown Boys, which was a situation in which Armenian boys who were fleeing the genocide came to Canada, were given refuge here in Canada. Upwards of, I think, more than a hundred boys fleeing the Armenian genocide came to Canada and were settled in Georgetown, and they became known as the Georgetown Boys. Brampton and Georgetown being neighbours, there's that connection there as well.

When I think of the impact of this trauma, to me, it demonstrates or it provides background to why the Armenian community is so committed now to their history and to their roots. When you have that taken away through a genocide; when you have a direct attack upon your culture, your way of life, your people, it then creates a sense of the community being resolute in who they are and a way of fighting back. If a community has faced genocide for being who they are, their best form of resistance, then, is to love themselves even more. That's what we've seen with the Armenian community—a community that has, despite these terrible injustices, now come back through not just a love but also a deep act of service that permeates every action that the Armenian community does.

Whenever you see the Armenian community set up in a different area, you always see three things come alongside. They set up schools, they set up churches, and they set up community centres. That's their way of providing for the community, to ensure that their community has a direct link to who they are and to their roots. The result of that

has been what we've seen across the world, really: a vibrant, dynamic, amazing community that contributes wherever they go. They are also so committed to social justice. I think any community that has faced such terrible injustices like a genocide then become themselves committed to social justice, exactly as we've seen.

That's why it's so important that we as Ontarians, as Canadians, across the world must stand in solidarity with the Armenian community and continue to support the recognition of the Armenian genocide, because we know that there are still places across the world that do not recognize this genocide. In the process, for any community to heal, we need recognition of the harm done. For the Armenian community, that starts with recognition and acknowledgement of this terrible and tragic and unjust genocide.

I think it's so beautiful and fantastic that we have this month. I look forward to connecting with Armenians throughout Ontario to celebrate this amazing month, a month that really is so necessary to provide a platform for Armenians across Ontario to come together to celebrate their dynamic heritage, culture, history and more.

Thank you so much, Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to speak today.

I would like to once again wish all Armenians, all Ontarians and all Canadians across the board a very happy Armenian Heritage Month, for the historic passing of this bill.

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

Mrs. Robin Martin: It's a great honour for me to rise today in the House to speak in favour of this bill brought forward by the member from Scarborough—Agincourt. I have been very lucky to sit in this Legislature with the member from Scarborough—Agincourt, to get to know him, and to call him a friend. We've spent some time together travelling, and we always get along very well. He also happens to be the first-ever Armenian member to sit in this chamber. I want to thank him for championing this bill, as I know that the Armenian community welcomes it.

The Armenian community has been part of Ontario's cultural tapestry since the 1880s when many Armenians emigrated after the Armenian genocide. During this period, they have had a great impact on the social and economic fabric of Ontario.

I am proud to be a member of this Legislature, as it was one of the first bodies in Canada to recognize the Armenian genocide in 1980. In this regard, I am a steadfast ally of the Armenian people, and will proudly remain so.

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Today, I have the pleasure to shine the spotlight on the Armenian community. It is a community that I know to be courteous, industrious and strong, and dedicated to the well-being of our province. My constituency of Eglinton—Lawrence is blessed to have approximately 100 Armenian families and a number of Armenian small businesses. I have personally seen how hard-working, determined and career-driven the people of the Armenian community are.

As a member of this Legislature, I have had the privilege, on many occasions, to meet with many Armenians. Some

were small business owners, while others, leaders at the Armenian Community Centre, for example, or the Armenian church, where I have even had the honour of attending a beautiful wedding ceremony. From the community leaders and business owners, I have learned about the rich tapestry of Armenian heritage, culture and history. They spoke to me about the hardships that they faced as they first arrived in Ontario. However, these hardships did not stop these new Armenian Ontarians from making a strong contribution to the growth of their new home.

Many Armenian Ontarians continue to make a difference in Ontario, such as Harout Matossian, who stepped up during the worst days of the pandemic and provided thousands of bottles of hand sanitizer to long-term-care homes and hospitals.

A constituent of mine, Jack Torossian, came to Canada less than two decades ago, and during that time he has managed to build his own thriving business—a business that continues to play an important role in the local economy in my riding of Eglinton–Lawrence. This is the Ontario dream strengthened by this Armenian community.

Many Armenian Ontarians have aided in our fight against COVID-19, such as Dr. Maral Ouzounian, the first female Armenian appointed as the head of cardiovascular surgery at UHN. Joining her on the front lines of the pandemic is Dr. Natalie Ternamian of Mount Sinai and Sunnybrook Hospital, who steadfastly has assisted COVID-19 patients during the peak of the pandemic. These Armenians are leaders in our province. They are Armenian leaders in Ontario who continue to ensure our safety, even if it means sometimes sacrificing a little bit of their own.

Mr. Speaker, in recognizing how rich and important Armenian heritage is to Ontario, we also recognize the richness of Ontario's diverse heritage. By acknowledging the contributions of the Armenian community, we acknowledge their continuing contributions to Ontario's growth and prosperity. I am proud to stand here in this chamber with my colleagues to call the Armenian community and its members my friends.

And as my colleague from Scarborough–Agincourt mentioned, Andrea Martin—a person who shares my last name, apparently a last name she assumed for convenience—is somebody that I met many years ago. She actually taught me, when I was a teen, how to do soft shoe, something I was practising recently in the halls here. She was a wonderful lady whom we surely miss. But I'm not surprised to learn from my colleague today that she is an Armenian.

I will remain unwavering in my commitment to the Armenian community and I will continue to acknowledge and promote their cultural and economic contributions to our province and to Eglinton–Lawrence.

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

Mr. Vincent Ke: It is with great enthusiasm that I stand in the House today to add my unequivocal support of Bill 105, an act to proclaim the month of May in each year as Armenian Heritage Month, from my good friend the member from Scarborough–Agincourt.

Speaker, as we reflect on the great contributions Armenian Canadians have made and continue to make to advance the growth and prosperity of our province, we must acknowledge that they not only helped build this country, but they also influenced the content and character of our culture. Armenian Ontarians help shape our society culturally, economically and politically.

Celebrating the culture and heritage of Armenian Canadians gives us the opportunity to enlighten and enrich all Ontarians about the importance of the Armenian story. It is a story of suffering and survival, and also of hope. The Armenian people's history and heritage are entwined in our success and entrenched in the prosperity we all experience in Ontario.

History provides us with an opportunity to acknowledge painful truths and to learn from them. History tells us that Armenians were subjected for years to Ottoman occupation. Ultimately, they suffered the ultimate loss through the trauma and shock of genocide. When we witness conflict in the world today, we empathize with the plight of those in sovereign countries whose lives are senselessly sacrificed. Armenians know first-hand how that feels.

It was on May 28, 1918, that brave Armenians regained sovereignty over their historical territory after 600 years of colonization. May 28 marks the celebration of life, freedom and triumph over adversity by the Armenian people. Today, with Bill 105, we have the opportunity to join them.

Speaker, I have the pleasure of knowing many Armenian Canadians in the community. Despite their harsh history, they are resilient and optimistic people. They are not embittered by hardships or jaded by memories of past cruelties. They are valiant survivors, not victims. They are the first to extend their hands and open their warm hearts to embrace friendship.

I welcome each opportunity to attend many of their joyful celebrations and church services, where the atmosphere is always positive and inclusive. They do not dwell on their painful past, when Armenians' lives were at risk and freedoms were compromised. They are a people of humility and hope, faith and forgiveness, courage and compassion, and they exemplify the meaning of Ontario spirit.

Speaker, given the significance of the month of May to Armenians, we should dedicate the month of May to join their celebration of freedom, democracy and independence. It is our chance to pay tribute to the Armenian community. I appreciate and acknowledge Armenian Canadians who add to the great value of heritage, culture and diversity in Ontario. The achievements and contributions of Armenian Canadians are worthy of recognition, and I stand in staunch support of Bill 105 to declare the month of May as Armenian Heritage Month.

1630

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

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: I'm very pleased to rise today to speak on behalf of Bill 105, An Act to proclaim the month of May as Armenian Heritage Month in Ontario.

I know that this bill is very dear to the heart of my good friend the member for Scarborough–Agincourt, and I'm happy that we will be able to get the opportunity to debate it in this House.

The member spoke on my bill to establish Hellenic Heritage Month in Ontario three years ago yesterday. When he made his remarks, he reminded us of the very strong ties between the Hellenic culture of the Greeks and the culture and society of Armenia. These strong ties include those of a common resistance to the oppressive rule of the Ottoman Empire, as well as bonds of faith, family and freedom.

Armenia is one of the world's ancient nations. The legendary founder of Armenia, Hayk, is recorded as fighting a battle more than 3,000 years ago to establish the first Armenian state, although archaeologists have discovered remains dating back to 4,000 BC.

Armenia was the first nation to adopt Christianity as its state religion, in 301 AD, even before the Roman Empire. Over the centuries, Armenia had been an independent state but often was under the rule or influence of its imperial neighbours: the Roman and Byzantine Empires, Persia, the Mongols and the Ottomans.

During World War I, as the Ottoman Empire was crumbling, the world saw the greatest tragedy in the nation's history, the Armenian genocide. Between one million and 1.5 million people died at the hands of the Ottoman state with only the part of Armenia then under Russian rule remaining Armenian.

This genocide is commemorated every year on April 24 in Armenia and around the world.

As my friend from Scarborough–Agincourt has pointed out in this House in the past, the victims also included Greeks, Assyrians, Chaldeans and Syrians. It is an unbreakable bond that all of these peoples share.

The many struggles over Armenia, and the genocide, have led to an Armenian diaspora spread around the world, with 100,000 people of Armenian origin here in Canada.

In the preamble to this bill, the member mentioned the 100 orphaned Armenian children in the 1920s who were brought to Georgetown, then in Halton county, by the Armenian Relief Society of Canada. I would like to think that there are many of their descendants living in Halton region today, perhaps even in my own community of Oakville North–Burlington.

Armenians Canadians have contributed greatly to the culture and economy of our country and province, excelling in many fields. Yousuf Karsh of Ottawa was one of the world's greatest photographers, and I am sure that many here know of the director Atom Egoyan, the singer Raffi and the actress Andrea Martin. They are only a few of the Armenian Canadians who have made our country better.

I congratulate my colleague from Scarborough–Agincourt for introducing this important bill, and I give it my full support.

As a proud daughter of Greece who brought Hellenic Heritage Month into law, I am happy to honour a proud son of Armenia who will put Armenian Heritage Month

into Ontario law. I look forward to celebrating May as Armenian Heritage Month every year in Ontario.

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

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: It's an honour to rise today and speak in support of Bill 105. I would like to thank my colleague and friend the member from Scarborough–Agincourt for introducing this bill and for his passion and dedication and commitment for the Canadian Armenian community. I'd also like to thank all the community leaders and spiritual leaders and friends for being present to witness this historic celebration.

Mr. Speaker, the Armenian population within our beautiful country and province is strong and vibrant, yet the history of such a population has been stained, as more than 1.5 million Armenians were killed due to Turkish government-aided genocide. This was a crime against humanity, a deliberate attempt to destroy the Armenian people, their culture, identity, language, religion and more, including killing countless women and children.

Many Armenian people had fled from persecution, mass killings, state-sanctioned massacres and genocide by the Turkish Ottoman Empire in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Many people had died and hundreds of thousands had been displaced and had lost their homes and livelihood within this large-scale violation of international human rights and law.

Mr. Speaker, as many of you would know, I am a political refugee from Sri Lanka; I have seen first-hand the symptoms of war and genocide when one's own government senselessly kills its own innocent citizens. Many women and children are the most prevalent victims, internally and externally displacing countless families, creating orphans and widows, destroying homes, infrastructure and more. I escaped from Sri Lanka because of the fear of persecution. Here I am, in the beautiful country of Canada, and the province of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, being a former city councillor for Markham for 12 years and a member of the provincial Parliament today, it's one of the most ethnically diverse municipalities in all of Canada. I am proud and humble to have taken part in the passing of the resolution with respect to the Armenian genocide in the city of Markham. In addition, several years ago—four years later—the Markham council dedicated the Forest of Hope, which is located at Ashton Meadows Park in Markham, in regard to recognizing 100 years of remembering their centurion genocide. One of the only parks for this is in Ontario, Mr. Speaker.

My experience, close ties and friendship with the Armenian community go far back when I used to be in business. While in my business, I had met some very hard-working, wonderful Armenian colleagues: Abraham Jakarsezyan; Theresa Jakarsezyan; Murat Parnakoglu, and Diran; Hirtch, a businessman in Markham; Mark Atkian, one of the leaders from Markham; and many more, who became and still are very close friends of mine. Through them, I got to learn very much about the Armenian community.

Mr. Speaker, because of the brutal state-sanctioned killings against the ethnic Armenian populations, many

Armenian communities and families have regarded Canada, especially Ontario, as their home too. The Armenian Canadian population has influential motivations and goals to preserve and enhance their ethnic heritage and recognize the deep and irreparable scars of their past, here in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 105 and its tenets proclaim the month of May as Armenian Heritage Month, aiming to help Armenian communities to attain such goals. Allowing for awareness, recognition, appreciation of both struggles and achievements, creation of learning opportunities on the struggles and achievements of Armenian Canadians, and reflection for current and future generations to come. May is celebrated notably by the Armenian people, who had regained their sovereignty and self-determination over their historical territory after 600 years of genocide, colonization and more. To all Armenian Canadians, your countless cultural, economic, political and social contributions need to be acknowledged and recognized within our province.

Mr. Speaker, my fellow members, all Canadians and Ontarians, let us bring awareness by proclaiming May as Armenian Heritage Month in the province and this beautiful nation. I wholeheartedly support this bill and the community of people that it recognizes. I will ask all members in the House to stand by Bill 105.

1640

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

Mr. Babikian has moved second reading of Bill 105, An Act to proclaim the month of May as Armenian Heritage Month. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 101(h), the bill is referred to the Committee of the Whole House.

The member for Scarborough–Agincourt.

Mr. Aris Babikian: Before I make my reference to the Committee of the Whole, may I take the opportunity to recognize some of the leaders of the Armenian community who are here today with us? No? Okay. So I refer it to the Committee of the Whole.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): It is referred to the Committee of the Whole House.

Orders of the day? I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Thank you, Mr. Speaker: Committee of the Whole House.

House in Committee of the Whole.

ARMENIAN HERITAGE MONTH
ACT, 2022

LOI DE 2022 SUR LE MOIS
DU PATRIMOINE ARMÉNIEN

Consideration of the following bill:

Bill 105, An Act to proclaim the month of May as Armenian Heritage Month / Projet de loi 105, Loi proclamant le mois de mai Mois du patrimoine arménien.

The Acting Chair (Hon. Ted Arnott): Are there any questions, comments or amendments to any section of the bill? And if so, to which section?

Shall sections 1 to 3 carry? Carried.

Shall the preamble of the bill carry? Carried.

Shall the title of the bill carry? Carried.

Shall I report the bill to the House? Carried.

Shall the bill carry? Agreed.

Government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I move that the Committee of the Whole House rise and report to the House.

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

The Committee of the Whole House begs to report one bill without amendment and asks for leave to sit again.

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

Committee of the whole report adopted.

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

Orders of the day.

ARMENIAN HERITAGE MONTH
ACT, 2022

LOI DE 2022 SUR LE MOIS
DU PATRIMOINE ARMÉNIEN

Mr. Babikian moved third reading of the following bill:
Bill 105, An Act to proclaim the month of May as Armenian Heritage Month / Projet de loi 105, Loi proclamant le mois de mai Mois du patrimoine arménien.

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

Mr. Aris Babikian: I am humbled today by the support my colleagues showed on both sides of the aisle in supporting this important bill. I would like to especially thank the members from St. Catharines, Markham–Stouffville, Brampton East, Eglinton–Lawrence, Don Valley North, Oakville North–Burlington and Markham–Thornhill. I would also like to thank the House leader for his unwavering support in navigating this bill through the legislative process.

Furthermore, today we have representatives from the Armenian community with us to witness this historic day. As I mentioned, this bill is the first time that a Legislative Assembly federally, provincially or even municipally has recognized the contribution of the Armenian community in Ontario.

First of all, I would like to recognize the vicar of the Armenian Diocese of Canada and pastor of the Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church, Rev. Archpriest Father Zareh Zargarian. I would also like to recognize Father Elias Kirijian, St. Gregory Armenian Catholic Church; Rev. Father Vartan Tashjian, St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church; Deacon Arthur Vardanyan; Vahan Ajemian, board member of the Armenian Community Centre; Sevag Kupelian, chair of the Armenian National Committee of Toronto;

Professor Stacy Churchill; Professor Isabel Kaprielian-Churchill, author of *Like Our Mountains: A History of Armenians in Canada*; Betty Doghramjian, my constituency office manager; and finally, last but not least, Meghri Hajinian, a volunteer and also my niece.

Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity and for the support from my colleagues. I am humbled.

As I mentioned in my speech, 42 years ago I came to this country as a refugee. I hardly spoke a word of English. When I landed at Toronto Pearson airport, the only words I could say were, “I am refugee.” I found a police officer and I went to him—my brother was with me and another friend—and told him, “I am refugee.” He said, “Okay. Come with me, guys.” Suddenly I saw four or five police officers surrounding us. They thought that maybe we were trying to harm the airport or the country. So they took us and interviewed us. A long story short, here we are after 42 years.

1650

This country provided me with the opportunity of a lifetime. It provided me with opportunities that my home country in the Middle East could not provide me. When I was a citizenship judge, I used to go to schools and community centres and youth organizations and speak about Canadian citizenship and its values. I would talk to the kids, the students, and tell them: “You have the opportunity to achieve whatever you like. The sky is the limit for you. Regardless of your colour, race, religion or ethnicity, you can achieve whatever you want. Look at me. I am here in front of you. I am an example that if you put your heart and mind to something, you can achieve it”—

Interjections.

Mr. Aris Babikian: Thank you.

“Don’t listen and don’t let the small, bigoted minorities dissuade you from your dreams. These small, bigoted minorities are the minority. The overwhelming majority of Canadians are fair-minded and don’t share these bigoted people’s opinion and approach.” I would tell them that if you don’t succeed in Canada, don’t blame Canada; blame yourself.

Speaker, I am fortunate, I am proud and I am humbled to be here in this House, standing and sponsoring this bill. Thank you very much to all of you.

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

Hon. Stephen Lecce: It is a great honour for me to rise in the chamber today to speak strongly in support of private member’s Bill 105, introduced by my friend and colleague the member from Scarborough–Agincourt.

This proposed legislation, An Act to proclaim the month of May as Armenian Heritage Month, is something we strongly support. The member is the grandson of Armenian genocide survivors. He just spoke about the humility of being an immigrant and refugee to this country, and what that represents and the promise that this country provides to the next generation of people who seek opportunity and who are rewarded by hard work.

He was the first Armenian Canadian elected in this Legislature. We owe him a great deal of gratitude for his service to Canada. An accomplished citizenship judge, a

World Vision Canada multicultural council ambassador, chair of the Levant Settlement Centre, and a board member of the National Ethnic Press and Media Council of Canada, this member has inspired Armenian Canadians and all Canadians in this Legislature. Throughout his career he has upheld the importance of human rights and the importance that our country places on the promotion of those values.

May is a significant month for the Armenian community. I know this, having so many Armenian Canadians in my riding of King–Vaughan. May 28, 1918, it is widely celebrated around the world as the day Armenians regained their sovereignty over their historic territory after 600 years of colonization, occupation and genocide.

Speaker, by recognizing Armenian Heritage Month, we honour the victims of the 1915 to 1917 genocide, and we celebrate the inherent goodness of Canada itself as a beacon of hope for those fleeing persecution.

Armenians began to settle our country as late as the 1880s, but in the years following the Armenian genocide, Canada opened its doors to approximately 2,000 survivors. As was noted by the member from Scarborough–Agincourt, over 100 orphaned Armenian children were known as the Georgetown Boys. And, Speaker, this was considered one of the first Canadian humanitarian acts on an international scale. I’m incredibly proud of this country for welcoming those people who faced difficulty, persecution and violence around the world.

That said, we should not forget that it was not until April 2004 when this country officially recognized the Armenian genocide. On that day, the House of Commons adopted a resolution that condemned the genocide as a crime against humanity. That resolution received all-party support in the Commons, although it is regretful and it is shameful that it was opposed by the then Liberal Prime Minister, Paul Martin.

Preventing future acts of mass murder begins by not allowing acts of evil ever to be able to take place amongst our eyes—be it the Holocaust, the Holodomor, the Armenian genocide—to vanish unremembered by history. That is our obligation in the torch of remembrance.

In closing, Speaker, to the member representing Scarborough–Agincourt, I thank him for bringing forward this bill for representing the best of the Armenian Canadian diaspora and I thank the Armenian community for giving back and for doing so much, not just through this pandemic but throughout Canada’s history as a nation of freedom, democracy and opportunity.

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

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: What an honour to be able to be participating today in third reading of the Armenian Heritage Month Act. I want to thank my colleague Aris Babikian for bringing this not only to the floor but for telling his story and for sharing his culture with all of us in this assembly. I want to thank all colleagues on all sides of the aisle who have spoken with great eloquence about the importance of voting for this piece of legislation and speaking with one united voice in terms of our support for the Armenian community.

I want to welcome those here today—those trailblazers—who have supported the Armenian community here, have grown the Armenian community in Ontario and in Canada and have never let us forget the tragedy of the genocide that occurred in 1915 bringing almost 2,000 Armenian refugees to this province and to this country, enriching each one of us.

I have the privilege, Speaker, of representing a very diverse riding in our nation's capital. And one of the things that I think about as the MPP for Nepean is how very rich and fortunate we are to learn from others. As Ontario's heritage minister, I think each and every day about the cultural heritage that is brought by so many people from so many parts of the world who have settled here, whether because it was their choosing or because of necessity. I think about the social fabric that it has created. As Ontario's tourism minister, I often talk about Ontario being the world in one province. Where else can you go to see this much diversity and feel, no matter where you are in the province of Ontario—because wherever you've come from in the world, you can see yourself right here?

My colleague who became the first Ontarian of Armenian descent to serve this assembly, I believe, is a beacon of what we can aspire to in this province. Regardless of where you've come from or the circumstances on how you arrived here, Aris Babikian has proven that you can do anything you set your mind to and that this is a land of true opportunity, that if you choose to take that path of opportunity, you can aspire and achieve almost anything.

As the Minister of Culture, I am so proud of the contributions of Armenian Canadians. You only have to look at some of the great poets, like Keith Garebian; or the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, which I have the opportunity to work with—there obviously is a wonderful, wonderful example there. Growing up, every child in Canada, not just in Ontario and probably children around the world, know the single name: Raffi. He's right up there with Madonna and Cher; and, of course, someone I had the privilege of meeting at the Toronto International Film Festival prior to the pandemic: Atom Egoyan. Some really great, historic important names that remind us who we are as Canadians and as Ontarians but also of their Armenian background. And as a member for the city of Ottawa, when you hear the name Karsh—the great, famous Karsh—and works of art that have been created as a result of his eye and his ability to capture the essence of the moment—those are the contributions.

While I agree it's really important for us today to acknowledge, recognize and condemn the genocide, there is also a hopeful message in this piece of legislation as we are reminded not only of the heritage and the history that brought us to this point, but from such a tragedy has made so many great Canadians who have found this place to be their home.

1700

I often have the opportunity, as the minister responsible for the Heritage Trust and Remembrance Day, to talk about Canada's war history and our military service. Recently we've asked the Heritage Trust to start marking a lot more of our military heritage and start supporting our

Canadian regiments. When you think about the Georgetown Boys in the First and Second World Wars and their contributions to make sure that this land remains free and strong, I think that that's an excellent example of what happens when people from all over the world come to settle in Canada, and in particular here in Ontario.

I think some of the finest moments this Legislature has ever had are the moments when we do two things. The first is when we recognize, as we did earlier this morning, former parliamentarians. We forget about the partisanship and the politics of the individual. We think of their accomplishments, what they meant to their family and what they meant to their community. The second is when we come together in absolute unity, from whatever part of the province you're from, from whatever political stripe you're part of or from whatever side of the aisle—government or opposition—to talk about our heritage and our diversity.

This piece of legislation obviously is one: the Armenian Heritage Month Act. I think another that we recently had the opportunity for was the anti-Asian hate, where we were able to not only condemn that, but to talk about some of the strong Chinese Canadians that are in this community.

I know that as we look a world away and we think of what's happening in Ukraine, no matter who you are in the province of Ontario and what your ethnic background may be, we all stand with the people of Ukraine and freedom-loving people everywhere. And so I think today this piece of legislation is important in many ways: by recognizing an atrocity that happened years ago and by celebrating the cultural and societal accomplishments of so many with Armenian heritage, but it also continues to showcase the diversity that we have in this province as a welcoming society.

With that, Speaker, I would like to conclude and just say to my colleague that 42 years ago, when you arrived here, Mr. Babikian, as a young man who knew only a few words—"I am refugee"—today you are right up there with Karsh, with Raffi, with Egoyan. You are a true Canadian statesperson who has brought your views and your values to the floor of this assembly, and you have made an indelible mark on what we have done here. I want to congratulate you for bringing this forward.

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

Seeing none: Mr. Babikian has moved third reading of Bill 105, An Act to proclaim the month of May as Armenian Heritage Month. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: On a point of order, Madam Speaker: Pursuant to standing order 7(e), I wish to inform the House that tonight's evening meeting is cancelled.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I appreciate the government House leader's point of order.

Orders of the day? Government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Madam Speaker, I believe that if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to see the clock at 6.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to see the clock at 6. Is it agreed? Agreed.

Report continues in volume B.

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Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day

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Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
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Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
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Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	

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Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Hon. / L'hon. Parm (PC)	Milton	Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiles et du Multiculturalisme
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
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Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hassan, Faisal (NDP)	York South—Weston / York-Sud— Weston	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor—Tecumseh	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Solicitor General / Solliciteuse générale
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karahalios, Belinda C. (NBP)	Cambridge	
Karpoche, Bhutilla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
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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	
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McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Miller, Norman (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (IND)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	
Mitas, Christina Maria (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough- Centre	
Monteith-Farrell, Judith (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Morrison, Suze (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	

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Nicholls, Rick (OP)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
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Park, Lindsey (IND)	Durham	
Parsa, Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Hon. / L'hon. Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	Associate Minister of Digital Government / Ministre associé délégué de l'Action pour un gouvernement numérique
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines, des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Roberts, Jeremy (PC)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
Romano, Hon. / L'hon. Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Simard, Amanda (LIB)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Singh, Gurratan (NDP)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Singh, Sara (NDP)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
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Wilson, Jim (IND)	Simcoe—Grey	
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Vacant	Elgin—Middlesex—London	

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