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of Ontario



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(Hansard)**

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43rd Parliament
Wednesday
10 August 2022

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43^e législature
Mercredi
10 août 2022

Speaker: Honourable Ted Arnott
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
Greffier : Todd Decker

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CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Wednesday 10 August 2022 / Mercredi 10 août 2022

Members' roll

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott) 11

Leader of the Opposition

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott) 11

Board of Internal Economy

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott) 11

Tabling of sessional papers

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott) 11

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Throne speech debate

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy 11

Ms. Patrice Barnes 16

Ms. Catherine Fife 19

Debate deemed adjourned 21

Independent members

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott) 21

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉES ET DÉPUTÉS

Post-secondary education and skills training

Ms. Patrice Barnes 22

Riding of Toronto–St. Paul's

Ms. Jill Andrew 22

Emancipation Month

Mme Dawn Gallagher Murphy 22

Riding of Toronto–St. Paul's

Ms. Jill Andrew 23

Emancipation Month

Mme Dawn Gallagher Murphy 23

Affordable housing

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong 23

Circonscription de Carleton / Riding of Carleton

Mme Goldie Ghamari 24

Education funding

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo 24

Riding of Kitchener–Conestoga

Mr. Mike Harris 24

Gisèle Lalonde

Mme Lucille Collard 24

Highway improvement

Mr. Anthony Leardi 25

Riding of Eglinton–Lawrence

Mrs. Robin Martin 25

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEUSES ET VISITEURS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott) 25

Ms. Goldie Ghamari 25

Mr. Mike Harris 25

Mme France Gélinas 25

Ms. Andrea Khanjin 25

Ms. Marit Stiles 25

Mr. Mike Schreiner 25

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy 26

Mr. Terence Kernaghan 26

Mme Dawn Gallagher Murphy 26

Mr. Jamie West 26

Ms. Christine Hogarth 26

QUESTION PERIOD / PÉRIODE DE QUESTIONS

Health care workers

Mr. Peter Tabuns 26

Hon. Doug Ford 26

Hospital services

Ms. Marit Stiles 27

Hon. Sylvia Jones 27

Hospital services

Ms. Chandra Pasma 27

Hon. Sylvia Jones 28

Manufacturing jobs

Mrs. Nina Tangri 28

Hon. Victor Fedeli 28

Workplace safety

Mr. Wayne Gates 29

Hon. Paul Calandra 29

Northern Ontario development

Ms. Patrice Barnes 29

Hon. George Pirie 30

Hospital services

Ms. Catherine Fife 30

Hon. Sylvia Jones 30

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria 31

Hospital services

Mr. Adil Shamji 31

Hon. Sylvia Jones 31

Broadband infrastructure

Mr. Anthony Leardi 31

Hon. Kinga Surma 31

Hospital funding	
Ms. Jessica Bell.....	32
Hon. Sylvia Jones.....	32
Automotive industry	
Mr. Ric Bresee	32
Hon. Victor Fedeli.....	32
Hospital services	
Ms. Sandy Shaw.....	33
Hon. Sylvia Jones.....	33
Forest firefighting	
Ms. Goldie Ghamari.....	33
Hon. Graydon Smith	33
Health care workers	
Ms. Jill Andrew.....	34
Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria	34
Legislative building	
Ms. Andrea Khanjin.....	34
Hon. Paul Calandra	35
Hospital services	
Mr. Jeff Burch.....	35
Hon. Sylvia Jones.....	35

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS /
PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEUSES
ET VISITEURS**

Mme France Gélinas	35
Mme Dawn Gallagher Murphy	35

**INTRODUCTION OF GOVERNMENT BILLS /
DÉPÔT DE PROJETS DE LOI ÉMANANT
DU GOUVERNEMENT**

Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act, 2022, Bill 3, Mr. Clark / Loi de 2022 pour des maires forts et pour la construction de logements, projet de loi 3, M. Clark	
First reading agreed to.....	36
Hon. Steve Clark	36

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS /
DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI**

Stay Home If You Are Sick Act, 2022, Bill 4, Ms. Sattler / Loi de 2022 permettant aux employés	
---	--

malades de rester chez eux, projet de loi 4, Mme Sattler	
First reading agreed to.....	36
Ms. Peggy Sattler	36
Stopping Harassment and Abuse by Local Leaders Act, 2022, Bill 5, Mr. Blais / Loi de 2022 visant à mettre fin au harcèlement et aux abus commis par les dirigeants locaux, projet de loi 5, M. Blais	
First reading agreed to.....	36
Mr. Stephen Blais.....	36
Foreign Credentials Advisory Committee Act, 2022, Bill 6, Mme Collard / Loi de 2022 sur le Comité consultatif des titres de compétence acquis à l'étranger, projet de loi 6, Mme Collard	
First reading agreed to.....	37
Mme Lucille Collard	37
Visitor	
Mme France Gélinas	37

MOTIONS

Committee membership and sittings

Ms. Andrea Khanjin	37
Ms. Peggy Sattler	37
Hon. Paul Calandra	39
Mr. Peter Tabuns	40
Mr. Todd J. McCarthy.....	41
Mme France Gélinas	41
Ms. Jennifer K. French.....	42
Mrs. Lisa Gretzky.....	43
Mr. John Yakabuski	43
Motion agreed to	46

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

**Throne speech debate / Débat sur le discours du
trône**

Ms. Catherine Fife.....	46
Mr. Peter Tabuns	48
Ms. Doly Begum	51
Mme Dawn Gallagher Murphy	53
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	55
Hon. Doug Downey.....	55
Mme Sandy Shaw	56
Mr. John Yakabuski	56
Ms. Marit Stiles.....	56

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 10 August 2022

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 10 août 2022

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

MEMBERS' ROLL

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that the Clerk has laid upon the table the roll of members elected at the general election of 2022.

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I also beg to inform the House that Peter Tabuns, member for the electoral district of Toronto–Danforth, is recognized as the leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition.

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I also beg to inform the House that in accordance with section 87 of the Legislative Assembly Act, the names of the following persons appointed to serve on the Board of Internal Economy have been communicated to me as chair of the Board of Internal Economy:

The Honourable Paul Calandra, MPP, is appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council from among the members of the executive council;

John Vanthof, MPP, is appointed by the caucus of the official opposition.

TABLING OF SESSIONAL PAPERS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that the following documents were tabled since the last sitting of the House:

—the Review of the Pre-Election 2022 Multi-Year Fiscal Plan from the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario;

—a letter to the Speaker from the government House leader respecting the dissolution of the Select Committee on Emergency Management Oversight;

—an opinion on the statement regarding the Ontario Liberal Party under section 4(5) of the Taxpayer Protection Act, 1999, from the Chief Electoral Officer of Ontario;

—an opinion on the statement regarding the New Democratic Party under section 4(5) of the Taxpayer Protection Act, 1999, from the Chief Electoral Officer of Ontario;

—the 2021-22 annual report from the Office of the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario;

—the 2021 annual report and statistical report from the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario;

—the 2019-20 annual report from the Chief Electoral Officer;

—the annual report of the review of expense claims covering the period April 1, 2021, to March 31, 2022, pursuant to the Cabinet Ministers' and Opposition Leaders' Expenses Review and Accountability Act, 2002, from the Office of the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario;

—a report entitled Expenditure Monitor 2021-22: Q4 from the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario;

—the 2021-22 annual report from the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario.

And I beg to inform the House that I've laid upon the table the 2021-22 annual report of the Ombudsman of Ontario.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Consideration of the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: I move, seconded by Ms. Barnes, that an humble address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

To the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario:

We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. McCarthy has moved, seconded by Ms. Barnes, that an humble address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario as follows:

To the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario:

We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

I recognize the member for Durham.

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: Thank you, Speaker. I'm going to share my time with the honourable member for Ajax.

It is indeed an honour to address this House as the member of provincial Parliament for Durham, the riding within the region that I have proudly called home for more than 30 years. I thank the citizens of Durham for placing their trust in me as their newest MPP.

I congratulate you, Speaker, on your election on Monday to preside over the proceedings of this House for the 43rd Parliament of Ontario. I also congratulate all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle on your election victories on June 2. I look forward to working with all of you in serving our communities and our fellow citizens. Each one of us, as a member of this House, has been given the honour of representing our communities, and, in doing so, we gather here to engage in debate and discussion toward the passage of laws for the betterment of our province.

There can be no doubt that, regardless of where we sit in this House or the party we are associated with, we are first and foremost members of provincial Parliament, equal to each other in every way and elected to serve with the best of intentions. Accordingly, the standing orders of this House recognize “the democratic rights of members ... to debate, speak to and vote on motions, resolutions and bills, and collectively to decide matters...” When the Speaker is required to make a ruling, the Speaker must have regard to the precedence of this assembly and to parliamentary tradition. That tradition—responsible government or accountable government—is relatively recent as it is a tradition that is less than 200 years old in Canada and predates Confederation by less than three decades.

Now, like all members of this assembly, we have many people—I have many people, like you—in our lives to be thankful for. Allow me to thank and congratulate the previous member, former MPP Lindsey Park. Having completed her term earlier this year, she remains an active and dedicated member of our Durham community.

I would be remiss if I did not reference my campaign team. Now, since my nomination in December 2021, my team was with me every step of the way, knocking on doors across the region in the cold wintry days of January and February, and, as winter melted away into spring, we continued to meet with and listen to the cares and concerns of thousands of people in our riding of Durham. Then throughout the bright sunny days of May, we brought our message and our five-priority Ontario PC plan to the doors during the official campaign leading up to the June 2 election.

I thank my campaign manager, Kai Nademi; my CFO and official agent, Aaron Dias; my campaign chair, Doug Ellis; my office managers, Suzanne Prescott and Sheryl Greenham; my volunteer and canvass chairs, Bryce McRae and Chris McDowell; my Get Out The Vote chair, Quinn Anastas; my communications director, Zoe Waller; my Scugog campaign coordinators, Cearra Howey and Cheryl Doherty; and my sign co-chairs, Larey Reynolds and Glenn Baswick. Thank you, team.

0910

As a new member, I am fortunate to have excellent staff supporting me here at Queen’s Park and at our constituency office in Bowmanville: Doug Ellis, Aaron Dias,

Quinn Anastas, Suzanne Prescott, Trish Martinolich and Sheryl Greenham.

In my professional life, I have been privileged to be a member of the firm of Flaherty McCarthy LLP, with our offices in Whitby, Toronto and Ottawa. I wish to extend my thanks to our managing partner, Frank Benedetto, who, as he leads our team of excellent lawyers and staff, wishes me all the best in my new role. Yes, this is the firm that was founded by the late Honourable Jim Flaherty and our immediate past Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, Christine Elliott. The firm has been more of a family to me for the past 28 years, and I am proud of the work that the firm continues to carry on in advocating for justice across Ontario.

Jim Flaherty was a successful private sector lawyer before entering public office at both the provincial and federal levels. He was a perfect example of professionalism, private sector success and community service. All the members of our firm have tried to follow his example.

It is noteworthy that Jim remarked in his final year of office, during a speech at the University of Western Ontario, “Public service is good for you.” Jim Flaherty and Christine Elliott made a positive difference for Ontario and for Canada, and their example is an inspiration to thousands in our community of Durham and, indeed, across Ontario and Canada.

As a trial lawyer, I was fortunate to have Jim Flaherty’s mentorship and his example as a representative of our community at the federal and provincial levels. But long before that, I was blessed to have the love and support of my family.

My parents, John and Mary McCarthy, raised me with the gifts of faith, hope and love. I was born and raised in Scarborough and I attended Holy Spirit Catholic School and Senator O’Connor College School with my brothers. My parents instilled in us the importance of education and community service. Their example and their support provided me with the opportunity to be educated, to become a lawyer and to give back in every possible way, including involvement in coaching sports and charitable endeavours.

Being a public officeholder, as I was taught, is just another form of community service, and my brothers Gerry and John represent that. Gerry—John Gerrard—McCarthy is a member and adjudicator with the Social Security Tribunal of Canada and John Raymond McCarthy, my younger brother, is a judge of the Ontario Superior Court of Justice. My brothers Gerry and John continue to be among my best friends, and although we lost our father 25 years ago, we remain fortunate to have our mother still with us and to know that we have her unconditional love each and every day. I can say that that is a gift beyond measure.

Now, as many of you well know, it is not just our immediate family that affects us in our lives but the love and example of our extended family can also be invaluable. I was privileged to know and be inspired by the example of my grandparents, John and Francis McCarthy and Ray and Gladys Switzer. Their wonderful legacy of the love of extended family continues with the ongoing

relationships I am fortunate to have with my many aunts and uncles, my numerous cousins on both sides and my sisters-in-law on both sides of the extended family. And when I married my wife Kathy 35 years ago, I was fortunate to have the additional guidance, love and support of her parents and her brothers. Dr. Paul Azzopardi and Maureen Azzopardi were very much like parents to me over the years, and my brothers-in-law, Dr. Peter Azzopardi and Dr. Mark Azzopardi, have been like brothers to me.

Kathy and I have three adult children: Meaghan, Brendan and Jake. Meghan recently joined me in the legal profession, and Brendan has successfully pursued his dream of being involved in sports media. Our youngest son, Jake, is our pride and our joy and our hero, having survived a battle with cancer. Despite his many ongoing challenges with autism, developmental delay and a prosthetic limb, Jake is our inspiration as he has many abilities that we celebrate.

I can say without hesitation that in being blessed as I have been by love and support from within my family and my community, my greatest accomplishment is marrying Kathy McCarthy on July 25, 1987. Kathy's unfailing commitment, love, support and encouragement are what I have cherished the most in my life. Sharing our lives together, raising our children together, encouraging each other in our career and educational endeavours—these remain the greatest joys in my life. This new chapter in our lives is a partnership. Being at or near Queen's Park recently, we have been reminded of our early days together as undergraduates at the University of Toronto—St. Michael's College. I've always been proud of Kathy's accomplishments, including her bachelor's degree in history and psychology, her diploma from the Institute of Child Study at the University of Toronto and her 33-year career as a psychometrist at the Durham Catholic District School Board.

Many in our community and within our extended family who know Kathy have always found her to be consistently kind, generous, full of life and love for everyone—everyone she knows and meets has experienced that. And if, like me, you have ever campaigned with Kathy, you will no doubt be aware that many people who are lucky enough to see her knocking on their door or at community events are much happier to see her than me, quite frankly.

This morning I stand with all of you as newly elected or returning members of this assembly. In that role, I have been informed and affected by my life experiences. All of the members of this assembly bring richness and diversity to their positions because of their life stories, and that is what makes possible the collective decision-making that is the mandate that we are to carry out in this term. This is a true reflection of what parliamentary democracy is all about.

In my case, I come to my new role having been a trial lawyer and advocate for 33 years. I also did win one election before June 2 when I won a seat on the Durham Separate School Board in 1994. I won by three votes and two on the recount—I wouldn't want that to be repeated. This was a little more of a comfortable victory on June 2.

I also served as a deputy judge at the Small Claims Court, presiding at the Durham Region Courthouse from 2002 to 2011. I've had the privilege of teaching courses in evidence, insurance and advocacy at both Durham College and Queen's University faculty of law from 2010 to 2018. The skill sets developed in these various roles will, I hope, bring a helpful perspective in working with all of you in my new role.

I can confirm what many of this House are already aware of, and that is the many aspects of the job of being a member of provincial Parliament. In a single day, we can be engaged in duties here at Queen's Park, learning the standing orders, carrying out our duties on committees as ministers, PAs or critics, and later on a given day or a day that follows, meeting with members of our community to assist in accessing government services, participating in joyous events such as weddings and birthdays, or involving ourselves in the trials and tragedies that our constituents face from time to time, including working with residents and other levels of government in the aftermath of the severe storms that adversely affected, among other areas, the Burketon area in north Clarington in my riding.

It is indeed a job like no other, a job that none of us can be fully prepared for. But I believe that every member of this House, Speaker, is capable of living up to the challenge.

0920

The riding of Durham that I represent is unique and diverse in many ways. My riding is home to north Oshawa, Courtice, Bowmanville, Port Perry, Blackstock, Tyrone, Hampton, Wilmot Creek in Newcastle, Burketon in north Clarington and the Indigenous community of the Mississaugas of the Scugog Island First Nation. My constituency office is located in historic downtown Bowmanville, which hosts many festivals throughout the year, including Maplefest, Applefest and Twilight by Night, an annual shopping event promoting local entrepreneurs and businesses.

In Port Perry this year, the annual Canada Day parade and celebration returned, and I was privileged to gather with all of the families and individuals who were able to come out in person after a two-year hiatus. In doing so, I proudly distributed Canada Day flags and pins and Canada Day cupcakes.

Beautiful Port Perry and its historic downtown is home to many successful shops and businesses. Holly, who operates the Nutty Chocolatier, is just one of our successful entrepreneurs.

Nearby, outside of town, is Sargent Family Dairy, where Bruce Sr. and his family continue the tradition of providing the best Jersey milk in the region.

Further south in Bowmanville, Khurshid and Meena, who have come to Canada from India, opened Momos Eh! This is just down the street from my constituency office, and I can assure the House that they have the most delicious Indian-fusion momos.

Elsewhere in another rural area of my riding, Jack and Rita Hurst operate the Pegasus Animal Sanctuary. They have saved countless abused and neglected animals of all

types. It is a true honour to see their work and the work of their staff in restoring these animals and protecting their dignity.

Nestled in another corner of my riding of Durham, you will find the Tyrone mill. The Tyrone mill was built, Speaker, in 1846 by a local engineer named John Gray and another individual, James McFeeters. That commencement date of 1846 makes Tyrone mill one of Canada's oldest water-powered grist mills. When one visits, one can see the connected belts and pulleys that are still functioning today with little modern intervention. I was proud to have presented greetings to Bob and France Schaeffer and to the community of Tyrone to mark the mill's 175th anniversary recently.

Other special people in our riding most certainly deserve an honourable mention. Port Perry resident Dorie McDonald and her son Bobby own and operate the Sunnybrae Golf Club. This is a 27-hole facility for golf tournaments and other events, including weddings, anniversaries, birthdays and family reunions. Sunnybrae Golf Club has been voted the best business, best patio and best golf club in Port Perry.

Further honourable mentions must most certainly go out to Kirk Kemp and his family, who operate Algoma Orchards, one Canada's leaders in apple farming, packing and juice bottling. Algoma Orchards has over 1,600 acres of land within Durham region and it operates year-round. Within the municipality of Clarington, Algoma Orchards is home to a gourmet market which houses a deli, bakery and fresh produce.

Then there is Randy Farmer and his family, who own and operate Ranfar Steel Ltd., a metal fabrication and supply company operating locally in Courtice within the municipality of Clarington. Ranfar is just another fine example of a local company with a long family tradition. As a local employer, it uses tried and true methods while embracing new technology and while providing apprenticeship and employment opportunities for our young skilled workers.

Speaker, I also want to highlight the invaluable contribution of the post-secondary institutions within my riding: in north Oshawa, Ontario Tech, founded 20 years ago as the Ontario Institute of Technology, and of course Durham College. The creation of Ontario Tech in north Oshawa would not have been possible without the dedication and forward-thinking leadership of Jim Flaherty as a former Deputy Premier and Minister of Finance for this province.

Ontario Tech and Durham College continue to flourish, with enrolment by thousands of students within Durham region, across Ontario and Canada and, indeed, internationally. In offering unique programs to students, many of whom hold degrees and diplomas from both institutions, Ontario Tech and Durham College are set up to match students with jobs consistent with their educations and skill sets.

Durham region, therefore, continues to attract young talent and this is in large part why more and more young families are choosing to call Durham home, and why the citizens of Durham have so favourably responded to our plan to get it done by building more attainable housing.

As just one example of successful partnering between Ontario Tech and OPG, those organizations demonstrated their Ontario spirit and ingenuity by creating face shields during the pandemic. These were widely utilized and distributed across Ontario and the world.

Now, speaking of OPG—Ontario Power Generation—this is located in the municipality of Clarington and Courtice within my riding of Durham, through the OPG Darlington nuclear generating station, a four-unit facility responsible for generating over 20% of Ontario's electricity needs, powering two million homes. OPG is working to build Canada's first commercial-grid-scale small modular reactor. This SMR will be built by the end of this decade at Darlington in partnership with GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy.

According to the Conference Board of Canada, SMR development would create about 600 jobs during project development, about 1,500 jobs during manufacturing and construction, 200 jobs during operations and over 100 jobs during decommission after about 60 years of operation. So, Speaker, Ontario and Canada are leading the way with clean, safe, reliable and steady power. It runs 24/7, 365 days a year, regardless of conditions. Nuclear power generated in Ontario benefits our economy, creates jobs and powers our province.

I also want to highlight the great work of the Courtice masjid, the Bowmanville masjid and the Muslim community in our riding. They have—and continue to this day—supported great humanitarian and charitable organizations like the Muslim Welfare Centre in Whitby, the riding of my colleague the honourable member for Whitby. This welfare centre serves those in need regardless of religion, nationality, caste or creed. In Canada, they are involved in the fight against poverty and homelessness and are focused on providing food, health care services and culturally sensitive shelters for women, their children and families in distress. This is an example, Speaker, of how the Muslim community demonstrates its love for Durham region, by taking care of our less fortunate. Indeed, our many faith communities throughout Durham are essential to the spiritual and practical well-being of our citizens.

As a proud Canadian standing in this Legislature, I want to recognize and honour Trooper Donald White, one of Oshawa's most distinguished World War II veterans. Trooper White joined the Royal Canadian Dragoons and landed in Italy in 1944 before moving with his regiment to liberate Belgium and the Netherlands. Don experienced many months of brutal conditions, having to fight the enemy from house to house and on flooded battlefields.

However, Don is perhaps most recognized for participating in the liberation of the Dutch town of Leeuwarden. Don recalls the feelings of joy in celebrating their freedom, as well as the pains of witnessing a population that had suffered greatly under the occupation of the Nazis.

Don survived the war and is still alive today, approaching his 100th birthday. He works diligently to help preserve and endorse Canadian military history, having volunteered as a guide at the Ontario Regiment RCAC Museum—this is in Oshawa—and he participates in numerous commemorative events and lectures in that pursuit.

0930

Now, Speaker, as an avid sports fan, I also want to talk about our hockey teams. Our Junior C Clarington Eagles, owned and operated by Kirk Kemp, inspired and brought our community together with their stellar record and play by winning the 2022 Orr Division and eastern conference championship for the provincial Junior C hockey league. They went on to the finals and were finalists in the provincial championship series. We look forward to another great season in 2022-23, and, boys, you made us proud.

Another team that I want to give a shout-out to is the legendary Oshawa Generals and the great season they had last year in the Ontario Hockey League—

Interjection.

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: And the member opposite, the honourable member for Oshawa, supports me in that salute.

Speaker, I also want to talk and focus on our recovery plan for the future. This was outlined in the speech from the throne yesterday. I am so proud to have campaigned on the plan of Premier Ford and the Ontario PC Party to get it done and to build our province. Far too often, politicians have had the tendency to say no. But, Speaker, I am proud that our government, through the speech from the throne yesterday, is saying yes:

- yes to rebuilding Ontario's economy by creating new jobs with bigger paycheques;

- yes to Working for Workers by raising the minimum wage and investing in skills training and skilled workers;

- yes to building highways and key infrastructure, including public transit, hospitals and schools;

- yes to keeping costs down and lowering the cost of living by reducing the price of gas, eliminating tolls on Highways 412/418 and eliminating licence plate sticker fees;

- yes to staying open; and

- yes to increasing our hospital capacities and investing in hiring more doctors, nurses and PSWs.

Durham residents have witnessed and congratulated our government for policies and plans that are already being implemented. During the campaign this year, individuals and families warmly welcomed us to their doors and greeted us in parks and on main streets, overjoyed with the reality of Ontario being open again, while congratulating Premier Ford and our government for successfully leading us through the many challenges of the pandemic.

Families and individuals welcomed measures to keep costs down with the measures already mentioned. These make a difference to household budgets. They allow families and individuals to decide for themselves how to spend the extra money available as a result. And, as inflation is now on the rise, they are very confident that our government understands and is sensitive to the need to be vigilant to keep costs down.

Furthermore, Speaker, I am also proud that our government has invested, and is investing, in the expansion of Bowmanville Hospital. This is a much-needed expansion as our community grows and the need for quality public health care increases. We said yes to improving our public

health care system and we will continue to say yes to hiring more nurses, more PSWs and more doctors.

And, Speaker, the GO train is finally coming to Bowmanville. This project will give families the opportunity to hop on the GO train, for individuals to get to and from work faster, for families to attend a concert or sporting event in downtown Toronto without having to do an additional commute to and from Oshawa. This investment in the expansion of public transit within Durham is just one example in my riding of a province-wide expansion and investment in public transit. It was announced locally by Premier Ford, with me, on May 6 in my riding. As a result, we can now get shovels in the ground and move past the endless delays associated with just talking about it. We are saying yes to getting it done in Durham in every possible way.

These are the pledges, Speaker, that our government is committed to. Building Ontario is essential because Ontario must be the engine of Canada's economy. When Ontario succeeds, all of Canada can succeed for, as former Premier William Davis once remarked, "I am a Canadian first," even though in that context he recognized that he was representing Ontario on the national stage.

It was Premier Davis's leadership that inspired me to become involved as a student volunteer in the 1981 campaign that saw the Ontario PC Party returned to majority status, and that was in large part because of the pledge, which I remember well, "Help Keep the Promise."

So as we go forward together as equals in this House, let us listen respectfully to each other as democratically elected representatives of almost 15 million Ontarians, being ever mindful of the fragile and precious gift of parliamentary democracy that we have all been so fortunate to inherit. Now more than ever it is our solemn duty, collectively and individually, to uphold, protect and defend parliamentary democracy. Let us together live up to the high ideals of the late Honourable Lincoln Alexander, a federal parliamentarian, cabinet minister and the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario from 1985 to 1991. Lincoln Alexander stated, "Let us not just be average, as it is our duty to set a higher example for others to follow, and to do this job and ... do it well."

There can be no doubt that there will be vigorous debate in this chamber in the context of this 43rd Ontario Parliament. As a trial lawyer for over 30 years, I am well familiar with the fact that in any court—and this House is styled like a court—emotions can get the better of participants, even when they have the best intentions associated with their cause. But let us remember that while fighting the good fight for our respective causes, and being passionate and dedicated as we must be, we must also remember to be wise, to listen to each other in our different points of view and, in doing so, we can set the higher example aspired to by Lincoln Alexander. We can be firm but fair, we can be strong advocates for our side of the debate, but we can and must be civil with each other, to demonstrate kindness and respect to one another. For as Thomas More, the patron saint of politicians, once prayed, please, may I not simply to win a point lose my soul. With

that in mind, let us recognize that each one of us comes to this place with the common belief in the nobility of public service and public office.

Finally, to the residents of Durham, I once again wish to thank you for placing your trust in me. I am here to be a fierce advocate for you and I will do my very best to meet and exceed your expectations and to carry out the mandate that can and will be carried out on the basis of promises made, promises kept.

Premier Ford and our PC team, and I as a member of that team, made solemn pledges during the spring 2022 campaign. Those pledges are now contained within the throne speech read yesterday. It is with great pride that I can state unequivocally that this government and its members, having listened to the citizenry and made pledges to the citizenry, and having received a strong, stable majority mandate from the citizenry, this government will now act based on what has been pledged, and the evidence of that commitment is in this speech from the throne.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll recognize the member for Ajax.

Ms. Patrice Barnes: Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to stand here today and address the assembly as I present my inaugural address to Parliament. I want to start out by congratulating the Speaker on his re-election as the presiding officer of the House. It is a job bearing great responsibility to oversee the work of all the members of this historic chamber.

0940

I'd also like to take a moment to express my sincere condolences to the families of the two construction workers in Ajax who lost their lives on Monday in a tragic trench collapse, as well as the two workers who were injured. It is my understanding that the Ministry of Labour is investigating the cause of this incident. My prayers are with their families today, as well as the brave firefighters and first responders who attended the scene.

I look around today and I see the chamber full of elected members from parties of all stripes. Some of us come from rural communities, others from urban ridings. Some of us are sitting here for the first time; others have seen several Parliaments come and go. No matter the party, each member brings different skills, experiences, backgrounds and beliefs to bear.

However, despite any differences, every member of this House brings with them an earnest desire to seek a better future for their constituents and for Ontario. It is a privilege to be here in the company of such passionate, resilient and hard-working members. I look forward to working collaboratively with all of you in the months and years ahead.

Almost two months ago I walked up the main steps of the legislative building for the first time as MPP-elect for the great riding of Ajax. As I stepped through those doors as a Jamaican immigrant who came to Canada as a teenager in search of a better education and a better life, I was overwhelmed with emotion. I was overwhelmed by the sense of gratitude for living in one of the greatest countries on earth and for being elected by the people of

the province I choose to call home. I was overwhelmed by the feeling of support from the people of Ajax who chose me and chose a responsible Progressive Conservative government led by Premier Doug Ford to serve their interests and to be their voice at Queen's Park.

Greatness is achieved only by standing on the shoulders of giants. In this House today, my giants are the hard-working men, women and children of Ajax. I'm humbled by the support from my constituents. No matter which way each resident voted, I look forward to earning their trust over the next four years.

I also stand astride the shoulders of the dozens of amazing, dedicated people who served in my election campaign. I would like to thank my two campaign managers, Aleem Sufi and Shawn Byron Beckett, who were with me since day one of my nomination. Given a short time frame, they put together an effective and winning campaign, guiding the team all the way through election night.

I want to thank former MPP Rod Phillips for his guidance as I continued on this journey.

I'd also like to thank my campaign CFO, Ms. Mitchel, who kept us on point, and her husband, Rory, who worked tirelessly in more ways than I can count during the campaign.

I was blessed to have a full team of hard-working, upbeat and motivated volunteers throughout my election campaign. Some of these volunteers are the old guard—long-time riding association members and volunteers who have worked on campaigns for many years. My thanks go out to Irv, Lorie, Adrian, Ginny, Nik, Nancy, Kandy, Savona, Linda, Shaima, Dawn, Dameon, Dave, Sameer, Arshad, Marsha and others. Your guidance and wisdom were essential for this first-time candidate.

My thanks go to the president of my riding association, Gaganjot Singh, in addition to former MPP and provincial cabinet minister Janet Ecker and former MP René Soetens, for their leadership and work on my campaign.

Many members of caucus present here today lent their time, effort and volunteers to knock on doors in Ajax on my behalf. As a new member of the PC family, the support shown by my caucus colleagues cannot be overstated.

I was equally blessed to have a dedicated team of new volunteers, many of whom have never worked on a political campaign before. These volunteers were an incredibly diverse group of individuals—from siblings Sydney and Spencer, who rode their bikes to the campaign office every day after school, to 72-year-old Brent Downey, a long-time resident who never previously participated in politics until passing my campaign office during an evening stroll.

Some of our amazing volunteers include Lavan, Harneak, Hajeera, Nadia, Muna, Maria, Reman, Sabrine, Abisha, Sameer, Melissa, Gloria, Ashik, Dylan, Kyana, Caleb, Jared, Ramanjeet, Tarun and many others.

Most of all, I'd like to thank my family for their love, support and patience.

My mother, Valerie, is as strong a woman as God makes. Every day, during the campaign, she sat at the reception desk of the office, greeting visitors and phoning

every household in Ajax to tell them how wonderful her daughter is and to vote for her. No matter the demeanour, no matter how harsh the person on the other line was, she always told them, "Have a blessed day."

My father, Neville, became a Canadian citizen during the campaign. Since I was door-knocking, I was unable to attend the virtual ceremony. Nevertheless, my father was able to take his oath of citizenship in my campaign office over Zoom, which was an incredibly proud moment for our family. I am blessed to have both of my parents living with me, and I'm lucky that my dad got his citizenship just in time to vote for his little girl.

I remember my aunt Juliet, who passed suddenly on July 1. The pride she felt on my win will always be with me. Her words will be my guiding light as I continue to serve.

On the day that our caucus was sworn in, my parents were awestruck by the grandeur of this building, and they could hardly believe that I would be here every day.

Mom and Dad, this House belongs to you, as it does to all Ontarians. Those of us who work within its walls serve the people of this province, whether they've lived here for 50 years or two days.

Public service is the best way of giving back to one's community, and it is a value that my parents instilled in me.

Finally, my husband and two children were the absolute heroes of my campaign. My family is a busy one. Homework, hockey practice and busy careers don't leave room for a mom who runs for office. Putting my name forward as a candidate was not an easy decision, but it was a decision that we made as a family. Once the decision was made, my family threw themselves 100% into the campaign, knocking on doors and installing lawn signs from morning until night.

I would not be standing here were it not for the love and support of my wonderful family, and I will forever be grateful to them.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to represent the riding of Ajax. It is located on the lands that are traditional and treaty territories of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, which is covered under the Williams treaty. Together with my fellow Durham members and our federal and municipal counterparts, I look forward to developing better relationships with and being more aware of the responsibilities owed to people who first lived on this land.

The town of Ajax sits on Lake Ontario, just east of Toronto. The town was officially incorporated in 1955, but its true birth year is 1941, when Defence Industries Ltd. set up its shell-filling plant to produce munitions for the Second World War. Over time, housing, a post office and other services were established to serve plant workers and their families. This community of plant employees became the town of Ajax. One particular group of munitions plant workers who bear mention are the so-called Bomb Girls, young women who moved to Ajax from across Canada to work at the plant in aid of the war effort. Last June, Ajax was proud to celebrate the 100th birthday of one of the original Bomb Girls, Louise Johnson, to whom the town

dedicated a parkette in her honour. Louise is proud to still be living in her original wartime home in south Ajax and is as energetic and feisty as ever.

The town is named after the HMS Ajax, a Royal Navy cruiser that took part in the Battle of the River Plate in 1939, the first naval battle of World War II. Many streets in Ajax are named after crew members who served on the ship, including Harwood Avenue, named after Admiral Henry Harwood.

In June of this year, I was fortunate to attend a reunion of the HMS Ajax and River Plate Veterans Association, hosted by the town of Ajax. The association is made up of British naval veterans of the HMS Ajax, the Battle of the River Plate and their families, who flew in for this event. The veterans were honoured at the 2022 Ajax Mayor's Gala and with new street dedications honouring sailors who fought at the Battle of the River Plate.

Ajax is built on recent but eventful history. It is now a part of the regional municipality of Durham, served by members on both sides of the aisle.

0950

Today, Speaker, if you come to Ajax you won't see a munitions plant, but you will see a mixture of new and old. You will see small businesses, such as Petrina's Billiards, a favourite hangout spot. Businesses like Frank Kakouros are the backbone of Ajax's economy. It is a riding with big-city conveniences mixed with small-town friendliness, a place where you might pick up something from Costco before heading to our local Sal's Grocery Store for deli meat or the Bun King Bakery for fresh rolls.

You will see schools, such as Viola Desmond Public School, which I recently visited with the Minister of Education to announce the government's Plan to Catch Up.

You will see diverse places of worship, led by leaders such as pastors Jason Sabourin, John Kurish, Marie Miller and William and Vanessa Dover; imams Waqqas Syed and Zaheed Rafeek; and, in our Hindu temple, Pandit Rudy Tiwari. These are only a few of the great faith leaders that serve our community. These houses of worship are pillars of the Ajax community and were places of refuge during the COVID-19 pandemic for our most vulnerable.

You will see a vibrant, diverse community of long-time residents living alongside new immigrants in the most diverse municipality in Canada. During the campaign we often provided lunch for our volunteers from one of our many local restaurants. As a testament to Ajax's culinary diversity we rarely ate the same thing twice. We had sushi, Hakka Chinese, Thai, Jamaican—which is my favourite—Indian, Afghan, Sri Lankan, Filipino, Korean and, of course, pizza. There are very few cuisines you won't be able to find in Ajax.

I have a standing order that any member of this House who visits me in Ajax will be treated to brunch at the legendary Angelique's Family Restaurant, owned by Dino and Dimitra Papa. I promise you, you won't leave hungry. The portion sizes are amazing.

Ajax boasts a beautiful waterfront with walking trails near Rotary Park, community gardens and many green spaces.

Horse racing has been a part of Ajax's history for generations and it is proudly carried on by the Picov family.

We are home to the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 322, where I'm a member. The PC government has always supported Legion halls, especially during the COVID pandemic when event restrictions limited their revenue streams.

Speaker, come to Ajax and you'll also see the many ways that our government is building back our province by investing in our communities.

There are investments in jobs. Earlier this year I was thrilled to be joined by the Minister of Labour and the members for Whitby and Scarborough–Rouge Park to announce a \$1.84-million investment in Computek College to help train, license and hire personal support workers free of charge. This investment will help to fill labour gaps in the health care and long-term-care sectors while supporting our most vulnerable populations.

There are investments in seniors. Earlier this year the state-of-the-art Lakeridge Gardens long-term-care home opened its doors. The facility has a 320-bed capacity and was the first in our government's accelerated build pilot program, being completed in only 13 months using modular construction methods. This home represents just one of the several projects under way in Ajax which will add more than 600 new long-term-care beds to the community.

There are investments in recreation facilities. Ajax is an active and diverse town with a variety of recreational interests. The government has invested in renovations for ice pads, basketball courts and cricket fields, so residents can be proud of their recreational facilities no matter what sport they play.

Broader investments in Durham region and surrounding areas will also benefit Ajax residents. Improvements to the Ajax GO will expand transit availability for residents and commuters living in Durham. Our government's recent removal of the tolls on Highways 412 and 418 make it easier and more affordable for drivers and families to get around the Durham region.

Massive investments in the upcoming Tamil Community Centre project in Scarborough, located just minutes away from Ajax, will also serve the very large Tamil community that calls Ajax home.

I would also like to express my thanks to Premier Doug Ford for his guidance and leadership during the pandemic and throughout the campaign. In addition to having the honour of serving as Ajax's MPP, I was appointed by the Premier as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education, along with the member from Perth–Wellington. I cannot begin to express my thanks to the minister for his mentorship during these past few weeks in this role. My thanks also to his team. Those briefing and transition binders have definitely built up my arm muscles.

Students in this province have had a tough couple of years, demonstrating incredible resilience amid disruptions caused by the COVID pandemic. Over the campaign, I met with staff, students and parents and heard their concerns about education and the path forward.

Recently, I spoke to a young man named Mughis, a student in Ajax whose entire high school experience has been marked by disruption. He wanted to know when things will go back to normal, and what things will look like after he graduates.

What is needed now is more than a return to normal. What is needed is an expanded approach to education that helps students catch up and that prepares them for the challenges of tomorrow.

That is why I was proud to join the Minister of Education and my fellow parliamentary assistant to announce Ontario's Plan to Catch Up. The plan will see students back in the classrooms in the fall with the supports they need to succeed.

It begins with keeping students safe. Since August 2020, we have invested over \$665 million on ventilation systems in schools, including 100,000 stand-alone HEPA filters and major upgrades to HVAC infrastructure. The government has also deployed over 293 million masks and millions of antigen tests to staff and students across the province.

Under this minister, we have seen the destreaming of grade 9 courses and steps to address systemic barriers for students. Ontario students will learn the skills they will need for the jobs of the future.

In keeping with our government's focus on building job-ready skills across sectors, students will have access to an expanded curriculum with increased offerings in the skilled trades. They will be able to learn and apply coding skills in their science and math curriculums. They'll see an increase in focus on science, technology, engineering and math. They'll also learn about personal finance and budgeting in the revised career studies course.

The pandemic also highlighted the need for increased supports for students. Expanding mental health care is one of the government's major priorities, which is why it has increased mental health funding by 420% since 2017-18, providing \$80 million for mental health initiatives for students and an additional \$10 million for mental health supports to respond to pandemic disruptions.

We look forward to consulting with parents, students and other stakeholders this fall to better understand how we can continue to support the mental well-being of our students.

Furthermore, I'm particularly pleased by the expansion of literacy and math tutoring made possible by the government's \$175-million landmark investment in tutoring, bolstered by \$25 million in funding for evidence-based programs to promote achievements in reading and an increase of \$93 million to special education for our most vulnerable.

I've spent my time as a school board trustee advocating for better outcomes for students, particularly for those who are vulnerable and racialized. Our government's Plan to Catch Up will ensure that students like Mughis are able to learn in a safe environment, developing skills for the high-wage jobs of the future and are able to access supports needed for their mental well-being and academic success.

Speaker, our Parliament functions well because of the broad spectrum of backgrounds, experiences and passions that members bring. I would like to share a little bit about my own journey to Queen's Park.

I was born in Jamaica and immigrated to Canada when I was 18 years old. While I love my mother country, as any Jamaican will tell you in Patois, "Nuh wey nuh sweet tah dan yawd," but I did not have access to the wide range of the most secondary educational opportunities that were present in Canada.

I got my feet wet in elected politics eight years ago when I decided to run for school board trustee to represent Ajax at the Durham District School Board. I did not run for office because I was a polished politician or had dreamt of being a public figure, but because I was a frustrated mother who wanted a better education for my children and others like them.

As an immigrant and a Black woman in Ontario, my belief in our education system remains unwavering. I believe that we have some of the best schools, teachers and students in the entire world.

I also believe that we can make our education system even better. Many newcomers who land in Ontario come here because of our education system. Education is truly a great equalizer, especially for immigrants and racialized communities.

1000

During my time as school board trustee, I've also had the opportunity to serve on the Durham Regional Police Services Board, on its civilian oversight committee. Vulnerable and racialized people, particularly those belonging to Indigenous and Black communities, have often had strained relationships with police. At the same time, Ajax has been affected heavily in recent years by rising gun and gang violence, necessitating more police resources. I'm proud of our government's recent commitment in April 2022 of over \$10 million to the Durham regional police, which will help combat guns and gang violence, especially human trafficking and other crimes. I'm also pleased with the diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives taking place in Durham and elsewhere to break down barriers between police and racialized individuals.

It's very important for me to rise in this House and to speak to its members as a member of the racialized community for several reasons. Firstly, my riding of Ajax has the highest per capita Black population of any municipality in Ontario at 16%. As the first-ever Black MPP for Ajax, I feel proud knowing that I represent a community that has often felt underserved by the political process.

My campaign office was located close to two of our largest high schools in Ajax, J. Clarke Richardson and Notre Dame secondary, both of which boast a significant Black student body. I lost count of the number of times that students on their lunch breaks would pass my campaign office or wave to me from the sidewalk, telling me how great it was that they had a candidate that looked like them. Several of those curious students ended up volunteering on my campaign, having never been involved in politics before.

Secondly, it is important that I'm standing here as a Black Progressive Conservative member of this House. It is an honour that I share with the member from Brampton Centre and the member from Scarborough Centre to be among the first Black members of the PC caucus of this 43rd Parliament of Ontario. It's not a question of tokenism, but of representation on both sides of the aisle. I want young Black people and anyone who has felt under-represented in the public arena that they deserve to be at the centre of decision-making. This is a Parliament that truly represents the people of Ontario, and the PC caucus demonstrates the incredible diversity of members who embrace Conservative principles.

Racialized Ontarians may feel as though they must speak, act or vote in a particular way, or risk jeopardizing their own best interests. We are sometimes told that the interests of racialized communities do not intersect with the principles of Conservative politics. I would like to dismiss that paternalistic attitude right here. Like my colleagues on both sides, I value a strong public education system, where kids are in class and learning the skills they need for the jobs of tomorrow. I value a strong workforce in the skilled trades and manufacturing, building critical infrastructure and housing needed to support our growing population. I value our province being at the forefront of economic prosperity in Canada, unlocking the value of our resources and building technologies needed for the future of electric vehicles. I value a Premier who gets things done and a government that respects taxpayers. I am a Black woman and I am proud to be a Progressive Conservative member of this House.

This being said, the time for campaigning is over; now is the time to govern. Now is the time for us all to work together on both sides of the aisle to deliver for the people of Ontario. It is my sincere desire that this 43rd Parliament of Ontario is not just a party of rhetoric but a party of decision. There are too many things that we need to do. We're emerging from a pandemic that exposed long-standing vulnerabilities in critical areas of health care, schools, long-term care and the labour market, caused by decades of inaction by successive governments. This is our time to work collaboratively on both sides of this House to build Ontario back up and carry our province forward.

In these unprecedented times, may we be an unprecedented Parliament that inspires unity and confidence in the people we serve.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure to join the debate today on the throne speech. I have limited time because we'll go to question period, but for the time being I want to start off, of course, by thanking the very good people of Waterloo for returning me to Queen's Park for the fourth election. It was a very interesting election, I must tell you, and I'm sure we will be debriefing on that.

I also want to thank the members for Durham and Ajax for your inaugural speeches and for getting the chance to learn more about you. I also share the sentiment from the member for Ajax around collaboration. That said, this morning I just found out that the government House leader

shuffled us around at our committees, so I'm hoping that maybe she could speak to the government House leader around collaboration and around respecting the opposition, because I was really looking forward to serving on public accounts.

I also want to say thank you to my family and my friends and my campaign team. I'm supported—unbelievably, actually—in Waterloo by the community and by the election team that has brought me back to Queen's Park. I hold that trust very closely in my heart. It is a huge responsibility. Actually, it is in the prayer that we start with every day here, where we are called upon to put the people who we serve first in this place. I hope that this is a very different Legislature session than it was last time. One can be optimistic at this stage; it is day 1, and we haven't had question period yet.

With that, I also want to pass on my congratulations to the Speaker. I must tell you, that was a good day for us on this side of the House, for the opposition and the independent members, and I truly enjoyed dragging you to that chair.

I am going to be sharing my time with the member from Toronto–Danforth, who will continue on with the throne speech comments a little bit later on today.

I want to start off by saying it was very noticeable: The tone of the speech from the throne was very sombre, and it was a sharp contrast, actually, to the first throne speech that was given in this place in 2018. There are two notable increases to the budget—the budget that has never been passed and/or debated, because prior to the election the government dropped the budget and then went to an election. That is not, I think and we think on this side of the House, the best way to provide financial oversight and accountability.

Honestly, that budget did not meet the needs of the people of this province. It did not. And it did not address the inflationary pressures that we see in the province of Ontario: 8.1%. As the finance critic for the province of Ontario, I track the money very closely; there is a very disturbing pattern of the Ford government whereby you budget money for health care, for education, for some investments in infrastructure, but the money does not make it out the door, and that is why we actually have a \$4.8-billion contingency fund that is unallocated.

We know that investing in the health and the well-being of Ontarians is good for the economy. We know that because this was a key lesson from the pandemic. When the health and well-being of Ontarians is compromised, we are in a position where the economy comes to a standstill. So I want to preface my comments by saying, Mr. Speaker, that there is a huge disconnect between what happens in this place and how that budget was designed, and the real lived experiences of Ontarians out there.

I'm going to start by saying that there are two additional expenditures that were not in the original budget, and one was around education. I also was a school board trustee for 10 years. I was the president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association. Education brought me into politics because education is always worth fighting for, and if you

get it right, many other factors fall into place. But in the throne speech yesterday, there was a promise of \$225 million to help kids catch up. Now, one thing that we can agree on is that there were serious learning disruptions in our school system because of the pandemic, and that mental health in our system right now, both from a staffing perspective and from a student perspective, has been challenged, and mental health was already a crisis prior to the pandemic, with one in five children suffering from mental health challenges.

1010

This \$225 million—no details were given about it, except that it is called a “tutorial program.” If you do the math, this is approximately \$90 per student. Now, \$90 per student is one tutorial session. That is not a catch-up policy; that is not an earnest policy. That is a gimmick, and it will not work. Not only that, we were very clear yesterday: Our interim leader, when we were asked about this money—that \$225 million would go so much further if it was invested in the public education system. All of us hear the same calls for action: We need more educational assistants; we need more child and youth workers; we need more mental health resources in our system. Some \$225 million is not a lot of money. So let's be clear about the intentions of this. And drawing that money out of public education also does not strengthen those values that we have around public education.

The other issue was ODSP: \$245 million, a 5% increase to those who live on ODSP, and I have to tell you the finance minister was challenged yesterday by several reporters on this. He was asked a simple question: Can you live on \$1,169 a month? The raise will only go to \$1,227, which is approximately \$50.

I'm going to answer the question for the finance minister right here and right now: This is legislated poverty. That is what it is, and there is a cost to poverty. I always try to make the investment case. When people live in poverty, their health care suffers. There are issues with justice, with police involvement. There is housing instability. There are mental health issues. By not investing in the health and well-being of Ontarians, you are actually working against your goals, the goals that were stated in the throne speech so beautifully delivered by the LG yesterday. The 5% is tied to inflation. So not only are you legislating poverty, knowing—because the poverty rate is \$14,724. That's what people on ODSP live on. That's impossible. It is not doable, and we all know it.

When you talk about faith and hope and charity, let's think about this from a moral perspective, because that's what budgets are supposed to be. They are supposed to be moral documents that tell the people of the province who we are as a population. It should explain what our priorities are because everything else is just words on paper.

The other final issue that really was a missed opportunity—I mean, the government had an opportunity to course-correct with this budget, because the inflationary rate was not 8.1% back in May. The health care crisis: We've lost 5,400 health care workers in one year. Wage suppression is undermining our health care system. I

cannot say this any more clearly. You have the numbers right before you.

Bill 124 is an insult to health care workers, education workers and the public service as a whole. In our health care system, you can plan all the beds you want, you can cut all the ribbons you want, but if you don't have a nurse, that bed will not be opened. Bill 124 would have been one hopeful step for the people of this province. If the Premier went to the emergency room, as he's been invited to go, as has the health minister, and said, "Listen, I see you, and I recognize that a 1% cap on your wages for three years is a cut"—it is a 7% cut when you have an inflationary rate of 8.1%.

At the end of the day, if you truly value health care and if you truly value education, then the return on that investment is worth it, and it certainly is worth fighting for. And I'll return to that next time.

Debate deemed adjourned.

INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Being 10:15, I have to interrupt the proceedings and move forward.

Before we begin members' statements, I need to address the House regarding the participation of independent members in this new Parliament. As members are certainly aware, at the time of the opening of the 43rd Parliament, there are 10 independent members of the Legislature. Eight were elected as candidates for the Liberal Party, one is a candidate for the Green Party, and one is without a party affiliation. For the purposes of the standing orders, none of these members belong to recognized parties, since a recognized party is defined by standing order 3 as a party with at least 10% of the total seats in the House, which is currently 12 seats. Accordingly, and pursuant to the standing orders, it falls to the Speaker to determine the appropriate parameters for participation by the independent members in a number of proceedings, including various debates, question period and members' statements.

In exercising my discretion on these matters, I must ensure that each individual independent member has the same opportunities for participation as any other individual member of the Legislature if party status were not a factor. Fortunately, I'm able to look to several precedents from the 42nd Parliament for guidance.

I will start with the independent members' participation in the debate on the motion for an address in reply to the speech from the throne, as it is the first substantive business before the House in this new session of Parliament. Standing order 44(a) provides that there shall be 12 hours allotted to the throne speech debate. Following the mathematical approach that was taken in the 42nd Parliament, as described on July 19, 2018, at pages 26 to 28 of the Journals, in a 12-hour debate each of the 123 individual members of this Legislature could expect to be allotted approximately six minutes of debate time. Accordingly, both the member for Guelph, Mr. Schreiner, and the member for Haldimand–Norfolk, Ms. Brady, will each be granted one six-minute allotment of speaking time for this particular debate.

The affiliated status of the eight Liberal independent members requires a slightly different approach for this and other debates. Consistent with my statement of July 19, 2018, and the subsequent conduct of debate for the duration of the 42nd Parliament, the Liberal independent members will be permitted to pool their speaking time into longer allotments. The eight members will be allotted a total of 48 minutes, which, for the purposes of the throne speech debate, will be broken down into four 12-minute segments.

Further, and pursuant to the precedent established by the statement I made on March 6, 2019, at pages 303 to 304 of the Journals, the Liberal independent members will be permitted to share these 12-minute allotments of debate time with one another if they so wish. This decision conforms to the language of standing order 26(d), which provides that speaking time may be shared among members of the same party during certain debates, including the throne speech debate.

A similar approach will be taken to debates on second and third reading of government bills and on substantive government motions. In calculating the allotment of speaking time for individual members in the 42nd Parliament, I made the assumption that a typical debate is at least six and a half hours long, as that is the point at which the government can allocate time to the remaining stages of the debate, pursuant to standing order 50. Members can therefore reasonably expect that debates on second reading of government bills and on substantive motions will last for at least 6.5 hours, which breaks down to about three minutes of speaking time per individual member.

The member for Guelph and the member for Haldimand–Norfolk will thus be allotted three minutes for all debates on second and third reading of government bills and on substantive government motions. This time may be banked so that if the members do not wish to participate in a certain debate, their three-minute allotments will be recorded in a time bank which they may draw on in future debates in order to permit longer speeches. Over time, this will ensure that these members have approximately the same opportunities to participate in debates as any other individual member.

In keeping with the approach to the throne speech debate and the precedents of the 42nd parliament, the eight Liberal independents will be permitted to pool their speaking time into 24 minutes of total time, or two 12-minute allotments per debate. If the Liberal independent members do not use this time before speaking times are reduced to 10 minutes pursuant to standing order 26(c), then the speaking times will be 10 minutes, not 12. This time may be shared pursuant to standing order 26(d), but it may not be banked.

1020

Moving on now to the conduct of question period: As I did on July 16, 2018, I must consider the opportunities to participate in this proceeding that are afforded to all individual members. In a typical 60-minute question period, following the daily leadoff questions and the supplementary questions that are granted to the official

opposition, there will be approximately 12 questions asked per day, each followed by a supplementary question. Given this total, each individual member can reasonably expect to be recognized to ask a question once every 10 days.

In order for the House meeting schedule to accommodate this expectation, I am prepared to recognize one independent member to ask a question per day with a second question by an independent member every Tuesday. However, in keeping with the statements I made on March 6, 2019, the ability to pool question period allotments is afforded to recognized parties only. In order to ensure that the independent members are not granted a disproportionately high number of opportunities to ask questions, each of the 10 independent members will be recognized a maximum of once during every two-week period of House meetings.

Finally, we'll turn our attention to members' statements. Every day, nine members of recognized parties will make members' statements and be recognized to do so. Each of the 82 members who are currently eligible to make statements can reasonably expect to make one statement every nine days. I will recognize one independent member to make a statement every day, again ensuring that no one member is recognized more than once in every 10-day period.

Before I conclude, I would like to advise the independent members that they will be required to inform the Chair in advance when they intend to participate in a debate, in question period or in members' statements proceedings. I will also take this opportunity to remind members that while the standing orders give the Speaker discretion to arrange the participation of independent members in the way I've described, the House, of course, is master of its own proceedings, and I would welcome any recommendations that the House might have in this regard if it feels that a different arrangement to provide for participation by the independent members would suit it better.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AND SKILLS TRAINING

Ms. Patrice Barnes: I rise today to say that it's an honour to represent the people of Ajax, and I'm looking forward to accomplishing much together.

This past June, I had the privilege of announcing a \$1.8-million investment in Computek College in my riding of Ajax. Computek College is a college that offers health care supports and PSW training. I joined my colleagues the Minister of Labour, the member from Whitby and the member from Scarborough–Rouge Park to announce tuition-free, accelerated digital skills-enabled training for aspiring personal support workers.

Under the Premier's leadership, we are taking the right steps in investing in developing future resources, whether natural, technological or human capital. The pandemic

may have highlighted some of our weaknesses, but these will soon be our strengths. In particular, investment in the skilled trades and jobs of the future will be important to my constituents in Ajax.

As part of the Ontario's Skilled Trades Strategy, the PC government is investing \$1.5 billion between 2020 and 2024. This investment builds on the government's ongoing efforts to attract, support and protect workers. The residents of Ajax and all Ontarians deserve well-paying jobs that allow them to stay close to home. I'm confident that our government's investment in jobs and skilled trades will make Ontario a global place to work.

RIDING OF TORONTO–ST. PAUL'S

Ms. Jill Andrew: I am honoured to return to Queen's Park for a second term to represent my home community of Toronto–St. Paul's. I thank my campaign team, hundreds of volunteers, our donors, my mom, my partner, my closest friends and chosen family, staff—both local and central—my colleagues and every single voter who put their faith in me again or for the first time.

St. Paul's, I promise to continue fighting for a just Ontario for all of us whether you voted for me or not. I will continue to advocate for real affordable housing, rent control for all buildings and an end to renovations—too many of our people are being displaced through demovictions as well and are experiencing homelessness or contemplating MAID due to unlivable ODSP/OW rates that must be at least doubled.

I'll continue to fight for more mental health, addictions, rare disease and eating disorders resources, as I know this pandemic, coupled with insufficient government supports, has exacerbated many of our physical and mental health challenges.

I will also advocate against hate of all stripes and for equity.

We are officially celebrating Emancipation Month this August, for the first time in Ontario's history.

In St. Paul's, at Spadina Museum, reimagined as Mrs. Pipkin's Manor, I invite you all to witness and experience Dis/Mantle, an arts exhibit inspired by the efforts of Black abolitionists. I thank lead artists Gordon Shadrach, Umbereene, the Confronting Anti-Black Racism unit and Cheryl Blackman for their trailblazing work and relentless advocacy against anti-Black racism in the name of positive Black representation through arts, culture and economic development. Thank you for seeing us and for demanding others to see us too.

EMANCIPATION MONTH

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: I rise today to [*inaudible*]. I am proud that our government passed the Emancipation Month Act in December 2021 to ensure people of African descent receive the recognition, justice, and access to opportunities they deserve.

Our goal is to eliminate discrimination by use of educational support systems while continuing to advance the

importance of racial equity. To this end, our government has implemented initiatives like the Black—

Failure of sound system.

The House recessed from 1028 to 1058.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I thank the members for their patience. I want to thank our staff at broadcast and recording services for reinstating the microphone service for all of us.

I'm going to invite the member for Toronto—St. Paul's, if she wishes to do so, to redo her statement now that the microphones are working.

RIDING OF TORONTO—ST. PAUL'S

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I will always advocate against hate of all stripes and for equity. We are officially celebrating Emancipation Month this August for the first time in Ontario's history, courtesy of a bill we all put forward. In St. Paul's at Spadina Museum, reimagined as Mrs. Pipkin's Manor, I invite you all to witness and experience Dis/Mantle, an arts exhibit inspired by the efforts of Black abolitionists. I thank lead artists Gordon Shadrach, Umbereene, the Confronting Anti-Black Racism unit and Cheryl Blackman for their trail-blazing work and relentless advocacy against anti-Black racism and in the name of positive representation through arts, culture and economic development. Thank you for seeing us and demanding that others see us too.

EMANCIPATION MONTH

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: I rise today to acknowledge the month of August in each year as Emancipation Month. I am proud that our government passed the Emancipation Month Act in December 2021 to ensure people of African descent receive the recognition, justice and access to opportunities they deserve.

Our goal is to eliminate discrimination by use of educational support systems while continuing to advance the importance of racial equity. To this end, our government has implemented initiatives like the Ontario Black Youth

Action Plan and the Racialized and Indigenous Support for Entrepreneurs Grant program. These are tangible examples that work toward eliminating race-based disparities and help remove economic barriers by providing funding, training and culturally relevant services to our Black community members.

On August 1, I had the honour to participate at the Emancipation Day ceremony at the Aurora town hall, hosted by the Aurora Black Caucus. I listened to the Black leaders of Aurora as they addressed our town. I recall the words of the president of the Aurora Black Caucus. Milton Hart said, "Black issues are not just Black issues ... they are Canadian issues."

As I commence my work in the 43rd Parliament of Ontario, I remember Milton's words—a great community leader. Black history is Canadian history.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: For decades, the cost of keeping a roof over the heads of Ontarians has skyrocketed. Rent prices in London—Fanshawe are getting higher and higher, and home ownership is increasingly out of reach for the average Londoner.

With wait-lists for affordable housing now running years long, people increasingly have to stay in unsafe situations just to keep a roof over their heads.

Government after government has failed to implement a comprehensive and future-proof affordable housing plan, and because of that, our friends, families, neighbours and communities are in the midst of a homelessness humanitarian crisis.

To bring about action to stem the rising tide of deaths among Londoners experiencing homelessness, The Forgotten 519, a local organizing group, began a hunger strike on the steps of city hall. The city of London has since stepped up to their call to action, but the province, as usual, is not listening to the needs of its people. Instead, we have a government that callously abandoned Ontario's target of ending homelessness. It seems like this government needs a reminder that folks with low incomes, people on ODSP and OW, and adults with developmental disabilities also deserve safe, affordable places to live.

We need to build at least 1.5 million new homes over the next decade, crack down on housing speculation that has been driving up home prices, increase protections and supports for renters and first-time homebuyers.

We need the provincial government to get back to the business of funding and delivering affordable rental housing.

Will this government act urgently? Housing is a human right.

CIRCONSCRIPTION DE CARLETON

RIDING OF CARLETON

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members' statements. The member for Carleton.

M^{me} Goldie Ghamari: Merci, monsieur le Président, et félicitations sur votre élection comme Président.

Je veux remercier les citoyens de Carleton de m'avoir renouvelé leur confiance. C'est un honneur et un privilège d'être capable de continuer mon service aux constituants de Carleton à la 43^e session législative de l'Ontario avec Premier Ford.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and congratulations on your election.

I'd like to thank the people of Carleton for placing their trust in me once again this past election. It's an honour and privilege for me to continue serving my constituents in the 43rd legislative session.

I'd also like to thank Premier Ford for his unwavering support for the people of Carleton and across Ontario.

We were elected on the promise of getting it done for Ontario, and that includes the great people of Carleton—building more schools for a growing province, lowering the gas tax, solving the housing crisis, supporting local fairs like the Richmond Fair and local organizations like the Osgoode Youth Association and Rural Ottawa South Support Services through provincial grants and hiring more essential care workers.

I look forward to working with our government over the next four years, and Premier Ford, to continue getting it done.

EDUCATION FUNDING

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members' statements? The member for Kitchener Centre.

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: Thank you, Speaker, and congratulations on your re-election.

On June 23, I was honoured to be sworn in as the member of provincial Parliament for Kitchener Centre, and on day one I got to work. You see, at the same time, CUPE Ontario was delivering a press conference on behalf of education workers across the province, and with them they brought over 30,000 letters to the Premier, each one calling for Bill 124 to be repealed.

Speaker, after a three-hour standoff in the mailroom, some very hard conversations and, perchance, a dance party, because that is how I roll, we secured those letters, which read in part:

“Even before the pandemic, understaffing among education workers was a problem in Ontario schools. Many school boards can't recruit and retain qualified education workers, in large part because wages are so low and jobs so precarious.”

In a 2021 CUPE education worker survey, the union found the following: 51% worked at least one additional job to make ends meet, 64.5% of these were sole-income earners and roughly 75% of their members identified as women. This means the gender wage gap is widening with each year.

Speaker, this is why I stand with Ontario residents who are calling for the repeal of Bill 124 because “education workers are critical to providing the public services that

must be part of an equitable pandemic recovery plan for children and families across Ontario.”

RIDING OF KITCHENER–CONESTOGA

Mr. Mike Harris: It's an absolute honour and a pleasure to rise in this esteemed assembly and kick off my second term as MPP for Kitchener–Conestoga. I want to extend my sincerest appreciation to my constituents for putting their faith in me and this government, so that we may continue to build on the great work that we have done over the last four years.

On a local level, our government has prioritized Waterloo region by focusing on housing, long-term care, health care and hospital expansion, and we have supported small businesses, local infrastructure and public transit. I could list a number of projects that we've seen throughout Waterloo region over the last four years, but I just want to touch on a few:

- a brand new Wellesley Arena and community centre;
- the New Hamburg arena rehabilitation project;
- long-term-care investments which brought 136 new and 312 upgraded beds to Kitchener and St. Jacobs just this past year;
- the new House of Friendship ShelterCare facility and oneROOF youth housing expansion; and
- just before we wrapped up the last session in May, I was honoured to announce nearly \$85 million in hospital funding for Waterloo region's three hospitals, including a new planning grant for a new hospital.

Speaker, I'm excited to hit the ground running. I look forward to a productive term alongside my colleagues here in the Legislature, both new and returning, in service of the people of Ontario.

GISÈLE LALONDE

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Bien sûr, je veux remercier les gens d'Ottawa–Vanier de m'avoir réélue une autre fois pour les représenter, mais aujourd'hui je veux saisir cette première opportunité qui m'est donnée de me lever devant l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario pour rendre hommage à quelqu'un qui nous a quittés récemment, une personne admirable, une personne que l'on qualifiait de grande dame, et cette dame, c'est Gisèle Lalonde.

M^{me} Lalonde était et sera toujours une icône et un fort symbole de la résilience des Franco-Ontariens. Elle était passionnée et a manifesté sa passion pour notre belle culture francophone de plusieurs façons.

Le départ de Gisèle Lalonde a généré un mouvement de solidarité qui s'est propagé partout à travers la province et surtout dans ma circonscription d'Ottawa–Vanier, car, en effet, M^{me} Lalonde a marqué l'histoire de la communauté de Vanier lorsqu'elle est devenue sa première mairesse, dans le temps où Vanier était encore une ville. Son leadership exceptionnel dans la lutte pour conserver l'Hôpital Montfort, qui est aujourd'hui une institution reconnue pour son offre de soins exemplaires dans les

deux langues officielles, lui vaut une reconnaissance éternelle de la part de la communauté franco-ontarienne.

Gisèle Lalonde est un exemple de persévérance, de détermination et de courage, et son sens de l'humour était contagieux et rassembleur. Elle a su nous inspirer et continuera à le faire.

Grâce à l'héritage de valeurs qu'elle nous laisse, nous nous souviendrons qu'il vaut la peine de se battre pour les choses auxquelles on croit.

Merci, Gisèle. Repose en paix.

1110

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to give this assembly an update with regard to a key piece of infrastructure in the riding of Essex. I'm speaking of course of Highway 3, which stretches from the southeast corner of the riding, near Kingsville, to the northwest corner of the riding, arriving eventually at the international crossing between Ontario and Michigan. I'm pleased to state that the government's commitment to widen this highway to four lanes is ongoing and in full progress.

The four-lane expansion will make travelling safer for thousands of commuters who rely on Highway 3 for safe transportation. In addition, approximately 1,500 trucks per week, from food producers to greenhouse growers in the Kingsville area, rely on this key piece of infrastructure to reach the international border and markets in the United States.

Essex county residents are very pleased with this four-lane expansion and are looking forward to the completion of this key piece of infrastructure.

RIDING OF EGLINTON–LAWRENCE

Mrs. Robin Martin: It is a profound privilege to be able to address this Legislature once more as the re-elected member for the great constituency of Eglinton–Lawrence. I am humbled by the opportunity to serve my constituents and the people of Ontario again, and I am extremely grateful to my dedicated campaign team and volunteers.

As we all know, our summers in Ontario are too short. While the people's business calls us back to the Legislature for the remainder of the summer, I have enjoyed the opportunity in June and July to meet with many people in Eglinton–Lawrence and attend community events. As part of Toronto, of course, Eglinton–Lawrence is a community of diversity: diversity of culture, language and backgrounds, and these past weeks I have really had the pleasure of celebrating all that Eglinton–Lawrence has to offer.

For example, I was inspired at graduations in June celebrating the future of our province with graduates from Dante Alighieri and the Yorkdale Adult Learning Centre. I attended the Columbus Centre for a Ballo Liscio and Sagra della Salsiccia, both of which involved lively outdoor dancing, and I attended the 110th anniversary of

the lawn bowling and croquet club and also local barbecues such as those put on by the Shermount condominium.

I thank the organizers for including me in their celebrations, and I look forward to serving the people of Eglinton–Lawrence and thank them for putting their faith in me once more.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes our members' statements for this morning.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): In the Speaker's gallery today is a former member who served as the member for Nipissing in the 32nd, 33rd, 34th, 35th, 36th and 37th Parliaments and as Premier in the 36th and 37th Parliaments, Mike Harris. Welcome back to Queen's Park. We're delighted that you're here and pleased that you're joined by members of your family.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: It's my pleasure to introduce Corey Scott to the Legislature. Corey is a bright young man with a keen interest in politics, and I'm pleased that I've hired him as my legislative assistant. So welcome, Corey, to the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Introduction of visitors? The member for Kitchener–Conestoga.

Mr. Mike Harris: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You pre-empted me a little bit on one of the visitors we have here today, but I also want to welcome my family: my wife, Kim; and my five kids: Jaxon, Maverick, Emeric, Gemma—she just ducked down; she's hiding—and Ryder. We don't usually get to see them all here at once.

Interjections.

Mr. Mike Harris: And, Speaker, if you'll indulge me for one more second: of course, the 22nd Premier of Ontario, my father, Mike Harris.

Applause.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Speaker, congratulations on your election. On the first day of the Legislature, the Ontario Nurses' Association is here. I would like to introduce their president, Cathryn Hoy, as well as Nour Alideeb and Angela Preocanin. Welcome to Queen's Park, ladies.

Applause.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I'd like to introduce Zoe Bystrov from the riding of Barrie–Innisfil and the founder of Youth for Lake Simcoe. Welcome, Zoe.

Applause.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Mr. Speaker, welcome back. I'd like to introduce the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation's president, Karen Littlewood, and OSSTF legislative observer Paul Kossta, who are here with us today.

Also, I'd like to welcome Matthew Sawaya, Leo Lacroix, Frida Evans and Lourdes David—volunteers from my campaign. Thanks so much for being here. Welcome to Queen's Park, everyone.

Applause.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I'd like to introduce two members of my team, Jess Tan and Dianne Dance, who

are both here at Queen's Park in the members' gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park and thanks for your good work.

Applause.

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: I am pleased to welcome from Durham today: Trevor Hume; Greg Rowden; Larry Reynolds; Glenn Baswick; Cearra Howey; Scott Howey; Randy Farmer; Cris Douglas; Karey Anne Large; and my wife of 35 years, Kathy McCarthy.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Please stop the clock.

I recognize that everyone is enthusiastic about the visitors, just as I am. The prolonged standing ovation is eating into the time that we're going to have. We only have a minute and forty-five seconds, and a number of members want to introduce guests. So if we could just keep the ovations to a minimum from now on, I think we'd all appreciate it.

Start the clock. Member from London North Centre.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Thank you, Speaker, and congratulations on your re-election.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce my brother, James Kernaghan, and his sons Darragh Kernaghan and Tiarnan Kernaghan, who recently celebrated a birthday. Unfortunately, Shauna and Ronan could not join us today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: I would like to thank some of my constituents here: Milton Hart and his son Matthew. Milton is the president of the Aurora Black Caucus, who I mentioned in my member's statement today. Thank you for being here.

Mr. Jamie West: As a Steelworker, I'm very pleased to introduce two amazing Steelworkers. We have Will Foresi from USW Local 7135, Steel Car; and Sylvia Boyce, the Steelworkers District 6 health, safety and environment coordinator. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Mr. Speaker, congratulations on your role as Speaker.

I would like to introduce Natalie, who is returning as a page from the great riding of Etobicoke-Lakeshore. Welcome, and I hope you have a great week here.

QUESTION PERIOD

HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Minister of Health. Bowmanville, Kingston, Ottawa, Toronto, Alexandria, Brampton, Clinton, London, Listowel, Wingham, Perth, Kitchener, Waterloo, Chesley, Red Lake, Kenora: Does the Minister of Health not believe that closed ERs and critical health bed warnings in these communities constitute a crisis?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Premier to reply.

1120

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: First of all, I want to welcome everyone back. It's going to be an exciting session over the next little while. Also, again, I want to acknowledge the former Premier—what a great Premier, Premier Harris was.

Mr. Speaker, I will tell you what we're doing to fix the situation we're facing in health care. We're fast-tracking more health care workers by directing the College of Physicians and Surgeons, along with the College of Nurses, to quickly approve the credentials of internationally trained health care workers. This builds on the 760 internationally trained nurses already deployed. In four years, as the Liberals were firing nurses—to be exact, 1,600 nurses—we're actually hiring and we have hired 14,579 net new nurses. On top of that, we have hired over 10,500 health care workers through the COVID emergency staffing programs. We've also—

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Again to the Premier: Families in each of these communities saw their ERs and urgent care centres close because they didn't have enough nurses, PSWs or health care workers to treat patients. It's clear to me and most Ontarians that we are in a crisis. But just a few days ago, the Minister of Health said it's not a crisis.

How bad does it have to be before the minister and the Premier take action on the solutions that nurses and health care workers are proposing, take action to make sure we can deal with the crisis in our health care system?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker, as I've said, we have hired 14,579 new nurses. And I agree. I agree. Do we need more nurses? One hundred per cent. What we're doing to get more nurses: We're putting hundreds of millions of dollars into a program to make sure that we attract new nurses.

I'll give you one example. We introduced the learn and stay grant for graduating nurses, so we will be taking care of their tuition and any cost if they serve in an underserved area. We're going to focus on that. As I mentioned, we're also investing another \$342 million to add 5,000 more nurses to the system. If there were 5,000 nurses that could fly from the sky, we would be hiring them tomorrow. We're coming up with solutions. We launched the largest medical school expansion in over 10 years—160 undergraduates along with 295 postgraduates. This is what we're doing to make sure that we take care of the health care system.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Again to the Premier: Health care workers have been very clear about the solutions that we need, including repealing Bill 124 and improving working conditions. Bold action starts with support for Ontario's health care heroes. Will this government make changes to improve working conditions for nurses and health care workers by implementing 10 permanent paid sick days and putting in place a robust workplace violence prevention program?

Hon. Doug Ford: As I mentioned, under the NDP and the Liberal watch, they actually fired 1,600 nurses. What we have done—and it's a big thank you, because the nurses are absolutely phenomenal. We gave them a well-deserved \$5,000 retention bonus. I call it the “thank you” bonus. That is an increase of 7.6%, on the average. Right across the country, that is the highest increase any province has ever seen. We're above the national average.

We're always going to make sure we're there for our nurses. They do a spectacular job. We'll always have their backs. But I understand they need to have more support, and that's what we're going to give them. We're going to give them another 5,000 more colleagues. We're going to pour money into the health care system, as we have. We've added billions and billions of dollars compared to the health care system four years ago that the NDP and the Liberals absolutely destroyed.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Ms. Marit Stiles: This question is for the Premier. In July, I shared an internal memo from Toronto Western Hospital, frantically trying to keep their emergency department open. They narrowly avoided that closure that time, but they were just one of 25 hospitals across this province facing emergency room closures on a single weekend. From our smallest community health centres to our busiest urban hospitals, our system is being pushed to the breaking point while this government's budget remains status quo. Speaker, to the Premier: How many more ERs and urgent care centres have to close before he finally admits this is a crisis?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: It's an honour to be able to rise today and talk about this very important issue. In our throne speech yesterday, we mentioned that we will build a health system that better cares for patients and keeps our province open. We are doing that with all of the partners, which is why I have met with the Ontario nurses' union and I have met with the College of Nurses to say we need to expedite internationally trained nurses who are in the province of Ontario here today and waiting for those licences. We will continue to do that. We will work with all partners, including hospital CEOs, to make sure that when they need support to get the health care workers in emergency departments, they will be there and their government has their back.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: The nurses seated right here today beg to differ. Even when the emergency units stay open, wait times are growing. Two-year-old Hareesh and his family were left waiting 11 hours in an ER waiting room with a high fever before leaving without ever seeing a doctor. The family got help for their son from a walk-in clinic two days later. Thank goodness he is safe and healthy now.

Speaker, can the minister explain what she considers acceptable for a child to get emergency care? Is it 19 hours? Is it 11 hours? How is that even remotely acceptable?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Speaker, there is no doubt that when we hear these types of stories of individuals who have had to wait with their loved ones in emergency rooms for services it disturbs all of us. But that is why our government proactively, when we came into government in 2018, ensured that there were 3,500 additional hospital beds that are operating in the province of Ontario today that were not here in 2018. There are 10,500 health care workers who are operating, who are working in the province of Ontario, in community, in long-term care, in our hospitals, who wouldn't have been there, frankly, under the previous Liberal government. We'll continue to make these investments. We'll continue to talk to the partners to get all of those excellent ideas of how we can make sure that the hospital system, the home care system, the long-term-care system, is there when people need it.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Beds don't look after patients; people do. Health care workers do. Ontarians aren't looking for excuses. They just want to know that basic medical care is going to be there when they need it.

I had an ER nurse from my community tell me just yesterday that the ICU they work in is at full capacity with only half the staff to care for a full roster of patients.

How can the Premier look our exhausted and demoralized nurses in the eye—those health care workers who are desperately ringing the alarm on staffing shortages—and tell them that Bill 124 is here to stay?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: The member opposite can talk about problems; I will give solutions. We have added an additional 10,500 health care workers in the province of Ontario who were not there and, frankly, would not have been there under the previous Liberal government. We have already invested in ensuring that we have an off-load nurses program to make sure that when paramedics bring those emergency patients into emergency, there are dedicated nurses who are funded and prepared to take that patient on so that those paramedics can get back out into community and do the critical work that they need. Those are the types of solutions that are coming to us from our partners. We're working with Ontario Health, hospital CEOs and nurses' unions to make sure that the solutions we bring forward actually impact patient care in a positive way.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Ms. Chandra Pasma: It's our health care workers who are putting forward solutions, and it's the government that's refusing to implement any of the solutions that they're asking for.

1130

This past weekend, Montfort and Carleton Place hospitals needed to close their emergency departments due

to lack of staff. The Queensway Carleton Hospital, which has only been able to keep their ER open because of some creative staffing arrangements, has patients waiting up to 12 hours to be seen.

These wait times and closures are unacceptable in Ottawa and across the province. What is the government's plan to ensure that Ottawa-area hospitals have the resources they need to keep ERs open and to provide patients with care in a reasonable amount of time?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: We talk about preparing for, and we have done that. Ottawa is about to see the largest hospital expansion in the history of Ontario. We have made that commitment. We are working towards those solutions because we've worked with the organizations, the OMA.

We want to make sure that when people want to see their family doc, the family doc is available to see them, so we have expanded a program that allows them and funds them to see patients in the evening and on the weekends. Those types of quantitative, real solutions are going to make a difference. We are seeing people get the health care they need, where they want it, when they need it.

There is no doubt that when a hospital has to shut an emergency for four hours, for a shift, it is very challenging for the community. But we work with partners to make sure it is as seamless as possible and patients' lives are protected.

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

Ms. Chandra Pasma: I would invite the minister to have that conversation with my constituents, who are waiting 12 hours for care.

With health care in Ottawa already teetering on the brink, the Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre in my riding of Ottawa West-Nepean is laying off health care workers with years of experience and good performance reviews. This is a tumultuous situation in which one-third of staff have been laid off or have left over the past three years. Community health centres serve some of our most vulnerable members. Now these patients are contacting my office to say they have nowhere to turn.

Will the Minister of Health launch an immediate investigation into the Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre to ensure that funding and staffing decisions are being made in the best interests of patients?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I'm going to reinforce what we raised in the throne speech yesterday, and that was that our government intends to build a health system that better cares for patients and keeps our province open. We should be proud of how we have protected our citizens through a very challenging pandemic. There is no doubt that one of the hardest-hit areas was our front-line nurses, our front-line first responders. We get that. We've invested. We've made those changes.

Specifically related to your question, I think that you have already written me on that. We will look into it to make sure that due diligence has happened in that

particular situation. But I want to reassure the people of Ontario and the people in the House that we are making those investments in Ottawa, in Windsor, in Niagara, in Brampton, to make sure that we have a health care system that is robust and prepared to protect the people of Ontario.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The next question? The member from Mississauga-Streetsville.

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Thank you, Speaker, and congratulations on your re-election as Speaker.

For 42 years, under a Progressive Conservative government, Ontario became a manufacturing powerhouse, able to compete with any jurisdiction. Yet, under the previous Liberal government, jobs began to leave when high taxes, red tape and out-of-control electricity prices made Ontario one of the least competitive jurisdictions in North America. The result: 300,000 people lost their jobs when Liberal policies forced manufacturers right out of Ontario.

Now, Mr. Speaker, my question is a simple one: Can the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade assure my constituents, workers, their families and the communities that rely on manufacturing jobs that they will not be abandoned? And, specifically, will he highlight the measures he is taking to protect and grow the sector in Ontario?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Our government can assure Ontario families of our strong support for advanced manufacturers. We also understand the need to invest in the talent and equipment that they need to be our global leaders. Specifically, our advanced manufacturing and innovation competitiveness fund, or AMIC, does exactly that.

AMIC is our two-year, \$40-million program that supports Ontario's advanced manufacturing sector. Ontario companies are investing millions in equipment, advanced technologies and the skilled workforces they need to be competitive. Every week, you will hear about AMIC and our other investments in automotive, aerospace, life sciences, IT, chemicals, steel. These sectors each employ tens of thousands of workers and are the cornerstones of our economy, and each one is proof that Ontario is open for business.

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

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Thank you, Minister, for that reassurance.

Speaker, this past June, Statistics Canada provided an advance estimate of manufacturing sector sales reports. These reports indicate that manufacturing sales actually fell 1% in June, with the largest decreases in the aerospace product and parts industry.

The throne speech highlighted the need to grow the economy. It talked about risks to the economy. For my constituents, that means lost jobs. It means missed mortgage payments. What is the minister doing to protect families who rely on good jobs, local jobs, with

manufacturers who are so important to communities right across Ontario?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, that's an important question, because it highlights exactly why we stepped up with our \$40-million AMIC fund. We needed this program because jobs left Ontario under the policies of the previous government.

Here's an example of success from the member's own riding: Cyclone Manufacturing is a leading global supplier of aerospace components. They just announced a \$21.4-million expansion at their plants in Ontario to invest in new technologies, including advanced robotics. On Monday, we were at Cyclone to detail our government's \$1.5-million AMIC investment. This investment will bring back—it will reshore—60 jobs back to Ontario to do things that have been done outside of the country, and will provide upskilling for another 100 employees at Cyclone's four plants in Mississauga and Milton.

The Liberals drove jobs away, and this is another example of our government bringing jobs back.

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question is to the Premier. Today in this House, we are joined by members of the United Steelworkers. Those members are grieving, because in June of this year they lost a brother to a workplace death at National Steel Car. His death was the third death in two years at the same workplace; a worker is dying at National Steel Car every seven months. That's three workers whose families will never see them again, whose children will never see them again and whose communities are devastated and grieving their loss.

Mr. Speaker, it could not be more clear that this is an unsafe workplace. Workers do not go to work to die, not at National Steel Car or anywhere. When will the Premier and the minister take this seriously, meet with the United Steelworkers and make National Steel Car a safe place to work?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Let me just thank the honourable member for the question, because it is obviously a very important one for the workers who are here with us today. It probably doesn't matter to them or their family, but I know that for all of us on both sides of the House, our sympathies go out to the worker. I know we are very unified, all of us, in that.

I know at the same time that all of us, regardless of what side of the House we're on, know how important it is to keep our workplaces safe, and that has been the priority of this Minister of Labour. But, Mr. Speaker, let me just say that it has not really mattered who has been serving in government; I would think that all parties, all the time, have put worker safety first.

I know that in this particular instance, an investigation was under way. There have been 75 visits. There are 78 orders with respect to National Steel Car. I know that the ministry has set up meetings with representatives of the

company, as well as the union, and there are actions in front of the court with respect to occupational health and safety.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: Back to the Premier: I have letters here that, since June, haven't been answered by the minister.

Every worker in our province deserves to survive their shift and return home healthy and safe. The United Steelworkers, who represent these workers, have demanded a meeting with the Minister of Labour to hold National Steel Car to account, to protect their members and to ensure people are safe at work.

1140

Do you know what the minister has done with that request? He ignored it.

Just this week, two more workers have been killed at work in Ajax. Under the Westray law, government is supposed to provide training to law enforcement officers to make them aware of their responsibility to investigate workplace fatalities.

Speaker, will the Premier direct his Solicitor General to do this today and ask his Minister of Labour to stop hiding from the United Steelworkers? Above all, will he take any action at all to make workplaces in Ontario safe so workers can go to work to perform a fair day's work for a fair day's pay and go home to their families?

Hon. Paul Calandra: I certainly appreciate the passion that the member brings to it. I can't think of any situation that would be more horrific than for a family to receive a visit when a loved one is at work and to be told that their loved one will not be coming home—somebody who has worked day in and day out. I can't think of something even more horrific than that.

Again, I say to those in attendance, all of us: our sympathies, directly to the families—not only in this incident, but of all workers who have died in the line of duty.

But at the same time, a lot of work has been done here. I know the member wants more, and there will be more because that's what the Minister of Labour has been doing since the day he took the job.

As I highlighted earlier, there have been 75 visits to this facility. There are 73 orders required for National Steel Car and there is action in front of the courts with respect to health and safety contraventions by National Steel Car.

NORTHERN ONTARIO DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Patrice Barnes: Earlier, the Minister of Economic Development touted Ontario's progress in attracting advanced manufacturing to Ontario. However, Russia's unprovoked and illegal attack on Ukraine—along with growing instability in Asia as China attempts to destabilize the region—has left our global partners seeking a strong, stable, reliable source of critical materials.

The Ring of Fire in northern Ontario is that source. Now, more than ever, the world is looking at Ontario and

the Ring of Fire, with deposits of essential, critical materials valued at an estimated \$60 billion.

My question, to the Minister of Mines: At what stage is the development and what is the next major milestone for success?

Hon. George Pirie: Mr. Speaker, through you, to the member from Ajax: Thank you for the questions.

Because of our government's commitment, we are getting it done for the people of northern Ontario. In April, chiefs of Marten Falls First Nation and Webequie First Nation announced that they have completed the terms of reference for the proposed northern road link environmental assessment.

The northern road link project is an Indigenous-led environmental assessment which integrates Indigenous principles with the provincial process. The northern road link will connect two proposed roads—the 200-kilometre Marten Falls to Aroland Community Access Road at the south end, and the proposed 110-kilometre Webequie Supply Road to the Ring of Fire at the northern end.

Our government remains committed to the success of this project, with nearly \$1 billion in funding to support critical legacy infrastructure such as the planning and construction of an all-season road network and investments in high-speed Internet, road upgrades and other community projects.

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

Ms. Patrice Barnes: Respecting and working with our First Nation partners is a key to achieving success for this development project. The minister himself publicly stated the following: “Nothing will be accomplished without the support and participation of First Nations.”

Speaker, the First Nations communities themselves deserve to be part of the success of this project. First Nations want to see their communities prosper. They want to see economic benefits that should occur in any community in Ontario or Canada. They want to provide a better future for their younger generations.

The minister recently met with the First Nation communities of Webequie and Marten Falls. Can the minister please provide the House an update on the nature of these meetings as it relates to the Ring of Fire development?

Hon. George Pirie: Thank you, Speaker, and through you to the member from Ajax: Back in July, I was honoured to accept Chief Wabasse's invitation to the Webequie First Nation Summer Festival and meet with chiefs and councils from Webequie and Marten Falls First Nations. I acknowledged both chiefs for their leadership and resolve that allowed them to make progress on their respective community projects and the northern road link environmental assessments, despite the pandemic. We discussed how important our ongoing partnership is to ensure that these projects get built the right way. We talked about how important all-season roads will be to their communities to have better access for housing, health care, social services and education. We talked about how developing the critical mineral deposits in the Ring of Fire would advance economic reconciliation, creating

prosperity for their communities and high-qualify local employment for their people.

It was a privilege to visit Webequie First Nation, and I look forward to continuing our important work with both communities.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Minister of Health. After spending weeks in hiding, avoiding accountability, the government is downplaying what Ontario Health is calling an unprecedented hospital staffing shortage. Grand River Hospital in Waterloo region was recently forced to close an operating room and postpone elective surgeries because 120 staff members were off with COVID-19. According to Health Quality Ontario, as of April, half of the hospitals whose average ER wait times top the provincial average were in Waterloo region. That average is over 19 hours waiting in an emergency room.

When will this government stop normalizing this grave position our health care system is in and start listening to health care professionals' calls to action? Everything is not okay.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Again, Speaker, I will reinforce that it is deeply disturbing when we have an emergency department that must close, whether that's for four hours, a shift or a weekend. We work very closely with Ontario Health, with hospital CEOs and with management to make sure that they have explored every option to ensure that that does not happen. When it does, we have safeguards in place that include making sure that first responders—paramedics—understand where the redirect is, often within 15 minutes of the nearest hospital. We want to make sure that we build the capacity, and we will continue to do that.

As the member opposite knows, I've spoken to and I have directed the nursing college of Ontario and the College of Physicians and Surgeons to act quickly to make sure that every possible individual in the province of Ontario who wants to work in health care has that opportunity.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: An emergency room should never close. That is unacceptable for the province of Ontario. In the last year we have lost 5,400 health care workers because of wage suppression policies from this government.

If this government was actually concerned about the urgency of what is happening in our health care system, they would listen to the ONA; they would listen to the RNAO and other groups of health care professionals and you would repeal Bill 124. Instead, the Minister of Health says repealing Bill 124 “is a conversation for another day.” That is a direct quote. Well, we think that day is right now. That day is today. Why is this government actively preventing nurses and other health care workers from being fairly compensated in our system?

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

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: We are incredibly grateful to our front-line health care heroes for the contributions they are making across this province. That is why we have made record and historic investments to support health care and health human resources across this province. We have added 10,500 health care professionals to the system since March 2020. The members opposite have voted against each and every single one of those measures. This also includes building capacity for the future, which involves creating the first new medical school in the GTA in over 100 years, in the city of Brampton—another measure that the opposition voted against. On this side of the House this government will continue to work to support health care across this province.

1150

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Adil Shamji: My question is for the Minister of Health. This summer, we have seen unprecedented levels of pressure placed on our hospitals like nothing I've seen in my career. Emergency departments, intensive care units and other critical services are closed due to severe staffing shortages. Nothing on this scale has ever been seen before in our province.

Imagine, Mr. Speaker, that you or someone you love had a heart attack or a stroke. Imagine that you are a mother and your newborn child suddenly seizes before you. And if that isn't bad enough, imagine now that all of this happens in a community that just lost its emergency department. This is the reality for too many Ontarians this summer, and yet we've all heard the minister's comments.

Speaker, through you, I ask: Can the Minister of Health please finally provide her assessment and explain why she doesn't think that the current situation in our hospitals is a crisis?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Thank to the member opposite. Welcome to your new role as a parliamentarian.

Imagine, Speaker, if we hadn't had a government for years ago who had invested in making sure that we have 3,500 new hospital beds operating in the province of Ontario. Imagine, Speaker, if we hadn't taken the time to ensure and expand so that we have 10,500 new health care resource people working in community, in hospital, in long-term care. I worry about that. Imagine if we hadn't had a Premier who had the foresight to say, "We are going to make sure we have the capacity in the province of Ontario to make sure that for any pandemic, any future issues, we have capacity within our health care system." We have that, and we will continue to work forward with that.

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

Mr. Adil Shamji: We are in a growing province with a growing population. Each successive administration brings in more health care workers, more beds, more

hospitals. The question is, is it enough? The reality is that the first thing that this government did when they came into power in 2018 was to go to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario and cancel programs that would have brought more foreign-trained health care workers into this province. The question here is, have they done enough? And I believe, Minister, that the answer is categorically no. Please correct me.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: With the greatest of respect, this member opposite needs to understand the Liberal history in health care in the province of Ontario. The Liberals fired nurses; we hired nurses. The Liberals closed hospitals; we are opening hospitals. We are building capacity. We will continue to do that. We are working with the College of Nurses, we are working with the physicians and surgeons of Ontario to make sure that everyone who wants to practise in the health care system in the province of Ontario has the opportunity to do that quickly.

BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Anthony Leardi: For too long, the people and businesses in parts of southwestern Ontario have been living without access to reliable high-speed Internet. The agricultural sector relies on reliable Internet to operate and to make connections, to make business decisions, market their products, operate on-farm technology and maximize farming techniques, among many other things. Ontario's agricultural business sector is a leader in modern and innovative technological practices and can no longer rely on old and outdated techniques.

The government recently made an announcement highlighting investments in high-speed Internet infrastructure. Can the Minister of Infrastructure please explain how this will benefit the people of my riding in Essex? Will my farmers be able to access reliable high-speed Internet, and will a promise be a reality?

Hon. Kinga Surma: I want to thank the member from Essex for the question. Our government knows how important access to reliable high-speed Internet services is for families, business and farmers, which is why we're investing nearly \$4 billion to make high-speed Internet services accessible in every corner of the province by the end of 2025.

Last week, we announced a huge accomplishment in our broadband strategy that's connecting as many as 266,000 unserved and underserved homes across 339 municipalities. As part of the reverse-auction announcement, we're making Internet accessible to as many as 3,970 homes and businesses in Lakeshore, Essex, Kingsville, LaSalle and Amherstburg. This is just one of the many ways our government is addressing the needs of our communities and supporting the good people in southwestern Ontario.

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

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Speaker, I want to highlight the recent broadband disruption. The outage impacted many Ontarians. It impacted businesses who typically use debit

transactions and point-of-sale machines, forcing businesses to turn to cash until service was restored. The head of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business said small businesses may have lost thousands of dollars because of the service disruption.

Unfortunately, for many of my constituents, that is a way of life. Repeated service interruptions, or areas with little connectivity, is something that we have been forced to live with because of the failures of the previous Liberal government.

Speaker, through you, how are we supporting the connectivity needs in areas such as my riding, the riding of Essex, that may not have been covered through the reverse auction? They deserve coverage, and unlike the previous member from Essex—

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

The Minister of Infrastructure.

Hon. Kinga Surma: Mr. Speaker, we are committed to ensuring every community province-wide has access to high-speed Internet. The results of the reverse auction were extremely positive: 266,000 more premises will be connected. But there is more work to do. While the reverse auction was under way, our ministry, with the help of Infrastructure Ontario, focused on our last-mile strategy to connect the remaining 40,000 to 60,000 homes. We're also engaging with Internet service providers to understand which technologies and business models work best to reach these remaining homes and businesses.

All options are being considered. We are almost at our goal. We will make sure everyone is connected by the end of 2025.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Jessica Bell: My question is to the Minister of Health. SickKids is one of the best hospitals for children in the world, but the hospital's ability to help, see and heal children is being put to the test by this government. Demand at SickKids is skyrocketing. Visits to the emergency room are up 47%, and over 3,400 children are waiting for surgery beyond the acceptable timeline for them to wait. No child—no child—should have to wait too long for necessary surgery, Minister. This is my question: What is this government's plan to address the surgery backlog at SickKids?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: There's no doubt that SickKids holds a very special place in all of our hearts. We know that it leads Canada—and, frankly, I think right now it is fourth in the world—for the innovative, amazing work that SickKids does, so I really appreciate the fact that the member opposite has raised this.

Our government appreciates this, understands it and acknowledges it, which is why we gave SickKids a 4.3% increase to their base operating, which equates to \$22 million. We're going to work with SickKids. We want to make sure that that world-class reputation that we are all so proud of as Ontarians and Canadians continues to be able to offer their expertise to the world.

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

Ms. Jessica Bell: My question is back to the Minister of Health. The leadership at SickKids see it differently. SickKids is facing a huge funding shortfall. They've had \$120 million removed from their budget over the past decade, and this hospital is short \$45 million this year. Open staffing positions are not being filled, and staffing in the critical care units is down by 15%.

1200

Minister, this is my question: Can you increase funding to SickKids to meet the need, to address the staffing shortages, so that children can get the care that they need?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Again, Speaker, I will remind the member opposite: In fact, we have already increased funding to SickKids in the amount of 4.3%, which equates to \$22 million. We're working with SickKids actively to make sure that anything we can do to assist, to find those opportunities that SickKids provides, incredible opportunities across the world and in Canada—we will continue to work with SickKids to make sure that that opportunity is there for us when we need it.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Ric Bresee: The auto industry has long been a vital source of jobs, innovation and prosperity in this province. In communities across Ontario, thousands work in auto manufacturing facilities directly or in businesses, small and large, that supply that sector. Under the reckless policies of the previous Liberal government, a carbon tax, red tape, high taxes and out-of-control electricity prices cost Ontarians jobs and left facilities shuttered.

Uncertainty has long been the enemy of investment, and we are in a period of global uncertainty. Mr. Speaker, can the minister provide any comfort to the thousands employed in the industry and in the communities that rely on it that the government will not abandon this sector, as the Liberals did when they declared manufacturing in Ontario to be dead?

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

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Ford: \$1.8 billion. GM: \$2.3 billion. Stellantis: \$3.6 billion. Honda: \$1.4 billion. LGE: \$5.2 billion. Speaker, what should bring comfort is the fact that over the last 20 months, Ontario has attracted a record \$16 billion in auto investments. These are game-changing, historic investments, ushering in a new era for Ontario's auto industry, providing employment for thousands more workers.

Most recently, Belgium's Umicore announced a \$1.5-billion investment to build North America's first industrial-scale battery materials plant, and they're doing it here in Ontario. The facility will locate in Loyalist township and provide employment for a thousand people, just for the construction phase. Umicore is here because they saw Ontario reduce the cost of doing business by \$7 billion—

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

Mr. Ric Bresee: Ontario should be a leader when it comes to the auto industry, we should be a leader when it comes to emerging technology markets, and we should be a leader when it comes to jobs and innovation. Liberal government policies like taxes, a carbon tax, red tape and high electricity led to the closure of plants and the loss of 300,000 jobs, putting communities at risk.

The auto sector in Ontario thrives when it's integrated—when we produce and supply the products and services for all parts of a vehicle. While the Umicore investment is historic in many ways—and a great privilege to be in my own backyard—history has shown that unless it's integrated into the larger production process, its impact will be limited. I ask the minister: Can you explain the economic spinoffs of this investment?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: The Umicore plant will be North America's first-ever industrial-scale facility to produce these battery materials. These cathodes account for 50% of the value of an electric vehicle battery, and they contain northern Ontario's critical minerals like nickel, cobalt and lithium. When at full production, this plant will produce enough cathode material to produce batteries for one million EVs every single year. That's almost 20% of all of North America's EV production. These materials that we're now seeing built in Ontario were the missing piece of the puzzle—this is all to create our end-to-end supply chain. But now we have all of the core pieces, from minerals all the way through to manufacturing.

So \$16 billion in auto investments in 20 months—Speaker, this government is getting it done.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Ms. Sandy Shaw: My question is to the Premier. The Minister of Health said it would be “completely inappropriate” to say our health care system is in crisis. But, right now in Hamilton health care officials describe the situation as increasingly precarious. Both Hamilton General and the Juravinski are running over 120% patient capacity, forced to pay double just to keep emergency rooms open, and code zero events, where no ambulances are available to respond, continue to rise.

Speaker, I ask: How bad is too bad before this government will acknowledge this crisis?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I am reminded of a visit I made to St. Joe's a couple of weeks ago. It was to be updated on a recent investment that our government has made to ensure that their emergency department is protecting our most vulnerable individuals who have serious mental health illnesses, who need to have that specialized emergency care. Frankly, they are very excited about the opportunity to finally get that expansion.

That is coupled with 52 different hospital expansions that are in process in the province of Ontario. That is unprecedented. When we see the kinds of investments that

we are making in our hospitals, in our health care system, it makes me very proud to serve with this Premier, with this caucus, because it means we understand and appreciate that you need to make the investments. You need to build to make sure that we have the health care system we need when people need it. Thank you.

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

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Speaker, everyone knows—maybe perhaps with the exception of this minister—that the first step to solving a problem is to acknowledge that there is one. The chief of emergency medicine at St. Joe's described what's happening as a “perfect storm leading to a situation we haven't seen in the past.” “A breaking point,” “a disaster,” “unprecedented”: These are words that health officials are using to describe the situation right now.

My question to the minister, to the Premier: With Ontario nurses here in the House, why do you continue to deny the reality of the crisis in our health care system?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Speaker, I've said it at the beginning and I will say it at the end: We will work with all partners who have solutions. So far, I haven't heard any solutions from the other side. I have heard solutions from hospital CEOs, from nurses' unions, from the College of Nurses, from the College of Physicians and Surgeons. I have solutions that they are bringing forward, saying, “If we do this, if you allow us to do this, we can make a change.”

Our government has already started those investments. We have the hospital infrastructure that we want. We have already invested to ensure that we have personal support workers in community, in our long-term care, and we will continue that work because we understand how critically important it is.

FOREST FIREFIGHTING

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, and I'd like to congratulate him on his election here to the Legislature.

Summer in Ontario means that it is also forest fire season. Last year, Ontario faced unprecedented levels of forest fires in terms of the number of fires and in hectares burned. This year's fire season has been more manageable, due in part to greater snow melt and rainfall in the spring. However, conditions can change quickly, and we need to be able to respond quickly. Forest fires can be devastating for communities, people and the industry. What steps is our government taking to prevent communities across Ontario from the devastating effects that forest fires can bring?

Hon. Graydon Smith: I want to thank the member from Carleton for the question and congratulate her on her re-election, as well.

Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you that this year we've been able to avoid implementing restricted fire zones, which are an important tool to help prevent forest fires. But, as my colleague reminds us, the situation could change at any time. And, although there are fewer fires burning this year, there are still thousands of hectares at risk across Ontario. We remain at a high level of alert, with ministry fire rangers and our fleet of water bombers and helicopters at the ready.

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

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Thank you to the minister for the response. Mr. Speaker, as you know, many communities across Ontario rely on the summer season for travel and tourism-related jobs and economic growth. Whether it is camping, cottaging or the hundreds of summer jobs for students who work in reforestation, forest fires put all of this at risk.

1210

Often, forest fires are started by human activity. We have all seen media coverage of mismanaged fireworks, simply not making sure a campfire is put out—and who can forget that disastrous gender-reveal party in California that started the destructive El Dorado fire, destroying five homes and, sadly, killing a firefighter?

While it might seem like common sense, can the minister provide some advice to Ontarians who are spending time outdoors this season? And what are the risks to those who are irresponsible with fire?

Hon. Graydon Smith: We all have a part to play when it comes to preventing forest fires, and one thing that's important is good forest management: making sure we have robust forest management plans that don't leave forests with a lot of excess wood.

To the average person out there, I'd say make sure you're following municipal fire bans, never leave your campfire unattended and make sure you put it out properly when you're done. If a person causes a fire, they can be held responsible for the costs of extinguishing that fire or property damage incurred by that fire. With that being said, let's stay diligent. Let's keep this fire season a mild one.

HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Ms. Jill Andrew: My question is to the Minister of Health. Our public health care system is in crisis because this government refuses to respect and protect our front-line health care workers, like Ashley and Laureen right in St. Paul's—and the Ashleys and Laureens across Ontario. Our nurses are run off their feet. Their mental and physical health is crumbling. The official opposition; ONA, here today; RAO; nurses in my riding; patients have sent this government solutions, and we have been ignored.

My question is to the minister: Will this Conservative government repeal Bill 124 and help save our public health care system and the lives of our nurses and their patients once and for all? Will you?

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

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: We look forward to continuing to work with our health care professionals across this province and continue to be incredibly grateful for all the work that they have been doing. That is why this government has made record and historic investments to support health human resources across this province. Since March of 2020, we have added over 10,500 health care professionals across this province. We are also introducing and building across this province over 52 new capital projects to support further health care capacity, including new hospitals in cities like Brampton that were ignored and neglected by the previous Liberal government, building in cities like Windsor, Ottawa and Mississauga. We will continue to invest in health care and health care workers across this province.

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

Ms. Jill Andrew: So I take it that is a no. Anyway, my question is back to the Minister of Health. To overcome the labour shortage, the government has hired private agencies to recruit nurses, a much more expensive option than simply paying nurses fairly. It is this that has many questioning whether Bill 124 was ever about fiscal restraint as much as building a pathway for the private sector, to take even tighter hold of our fragile care system and drive it into the ground.

My question is back to the minister: Will you stop the privatization—yes, the privatization—of health care by investing in public sector workers, patients and families and repealing Bill 124? It's what we're all asking for. Forget about the official opposition; ONA is asking for it, nurses and patients. Yes or no, will you repeal Bill 124?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: We will continue to make record and historic investments in our health care system to support people across this province. This includes, this year, investing over \$342 million to support and add over 5,000 new and upskilled registered nurses and practical nurses as well as an additional 8,000 personal support workers.

On this side of the House, in our government, we continue to look to solutions to support the health care system. The members opposite have voted against each and every single one of those measures, including adding an additional 10,500 health care support workers since March 2020.

We look forward to working with the members opposite and building hospitals across the province, building health care capacity across this province to ensure that people get the care they need—

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

Next question.

LEGISLATIVE BUILDING

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: My question is for the Minister of Legislative Affairs. We have a lot of people who came

to watch question period today, and I want to thank you for coming, but many of you may wonder why we had a delay in question period today. I wanted to ask the Minister of Legislative Affairs if he can explain to us that delay that happened today.

Interjections.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I do appreciate the question from the member, because it is actually a very serious one, despite the catcalling from the opposition.

I want to thank broadcasting services. Trying to keep a building this old running each and every day is truly amazing, and they do extraordinary work.

Just yesterday when you saw the speech from the throne—I'm sure as members were coming here they saw wires all over the place. That's what it takes to keep a building this old operating. That is why the Premier has made the decision, working together with members on all sides of the House, that it is time for us to look at different options to renovate this building, bring it back to the stature it was when it first opened, to provide the people of the province of Ontario a Legislative Assembly that can be here for the next 150 years.

We are going to work very closely with members on all sides of this House to make sure that we give Ontarians the best possible Legislative Assembly, one that they can be proud of. We're well on our way to making that happen.

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

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I want to thank the Minister of Legislative Affairs for that great answer. It really builds on what we introduced yesterday through the Minister of Finance as we introduced the Plan to Build Act. As we're building core infrastructure like highways and core infrastructure like hospitals, as the Minister of Health said, it's also important to build up the foundation of our democracy. I wanted to ask the Minister of Legislative Affairs how he's building up this democratic institution we have and some of the options we're looking at.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Another really good question, because obviously we are intending to be here—

Interjections.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I don't know why the NDP are so upset about a question about democracy and about the House of the people of the province of Ontario. It's almost like they're reliving the election. It's like they're upset that they've now been put into a little corner, because for a lot of time they spent talking about the van party that was the Liberals—but the people of Ontario have almost reduced them to a van party. In fact, it's half a bus now.

The reality is, the Leader of the Opposition isn't sitting in his traditional seat, not because the place is too small but because the NDP caucus is small. But we're going to fix that. We're going to fix that, because this place needs to be here for the next generation of parliamentarians who sit in this place. Regardless of how they feel about it, this side feels that this place needs to reflect the importance of the province of Ontario.

Again, I want to thank broadcasting services for the work that they do each and every day to keep a building 150 years old operating—

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

Interjections.

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

Order.

We'll start the clock.

The member for Niagara Centre.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Jeff Burch: Back to health care: That's what we care about on this side of the House.

In Niagara and across this province—a question to the Minister of Health—health care workers are making immense sacrifices: postponing vacations, taking extra shifts and losing the time off they need to recover from the gruelling work they've been doing since the pandemic began. All the while, the Premier and Minister of Health have been missing in action on summer vacation.

Our Niagara hospitals are so close to the breaking point that our local mayors and regional chair had to release a joint letter to the public asking residents to avoid the ER or risk stressing the system beyond capacity.

Will the minister admit that it is her absence and the absence of her government that is the problem, not workers who are being asked to work through their vacation?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Again, I will reiterate: Ontarians continue to have access to the care they need when they need it. That is our priority as a government. Frankly, I'm surprised that the member opposite isn't talking about the great investments that we are making in the Niagara region with the Niagara hospital. We are making the investments that, frankly, the Liberals and the NDP never did. We're making the investments because we understand that, in order to keep Ontario strong, we need to build Ontario, and we are doing that. We are doing that economically, in our school system and in our health care system, and we will continue to do that. Why, Speaker? Because we want Ontario to continue to be the best place to live, raise a family and stay healthy. We'll do that.

The opposition can fight and talk about issues that, frankly, we have already acted on. We are already building in Niagara a world-class health care system. Come join us.

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

There being no further business, this House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1221 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

M^{me} France Gélinas: It gives me great pleasure to introduce my son, Mike Harris, with two of his children, Maddox and Anika, as well as a friend of Anika, McKinley Fox. Welcome to Queen's Park, guys.

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: I would like to thank my friend Kim Madore, as well as Kim Pyke, as well as

Blake Kohler, for being here today. I have many others here today for my inaugural speech, but I don't see that they're in the House yet. But I do thank them in advance.

INTRODUCTION OF GOVERNMENT BILLS

STRONG MAYORS, BUILDING HOMES ACT, 2022 LOI DE 2022 POUR DES MAIRES FORTS ET POUR LA CONSTRUCTION DE LOGEMENTS

Mr. Clark moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 3, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to special powers and duties of heads of council / Projet de loi 3, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne les pouvoirs et fonctions spéciaux des présidents du conseil.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll invite the minister to briefly explain this bill if he chooses to do so.

Hon. Steve Clark: This bill would amend the City of Toronto Act, the Municipal Act and other legislation.

The bill and the proposed regulations would give new powers to the mayors of Toronto and Ottawa to support our commitment to build 1.5 million new homes to address the housing supply crisis over the next 10 years, and to help advance other priority projects.

The bill would support efficient local decision-making to help our municipal partners cut through red tape and speed up development timelines.

Thank you, Speaker, for giving me this opportunity.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

STAY HOME IF YOU ARE SICK ACT, 2022 LOI DE 2022 PERMETTANT AUX EMPLOYÉS MALADES DE RESTER CHEZ EUX

Ms. Sattler moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 4, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 with respect to paid leave / Projet de loi 4, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi en ce qui concerne les congés payés.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'm very proud, on behalf of the NDP, to bring forward, for the third time, the Stay Home

If You Are Sick Act—legislation that provides all Ontario workers with the paid sick days they need and deserve, not just during the COVID-19 pandemic, but on a permanent, ongoing basis.

The bill requires employers to provide 10 days of paid personal emergency leave that can be used for illness, injury and urgent matters, including caring for family members, and also prohibits requirements for a doctor's note. It gives Ontario workers access to 14 paid infectious disease emergency leave days, an increase from the paltry three that are currently available to cover workers affected by a pandemic now in its third year.

Finally, the bill includes a temporary program of financial assistance to help struggling small businesses in the transition to providing paid leave.

STOPPING HARASSMENT AND ABUSE BY LOCAL LEADERS ACT, 2022

LOI DE 2022 VISANT À METTRE FIN AU HARCÈLEMENT ET AUX ABUS COMMIS PAR LES DIRIGEANTS LOCAUX

Mr. Blais moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 5, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to workplace violence and harassment policies in codes of conduct for councillors and members of local boards / Projet de loi 5, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne les politiques en matière de violence et de harcèlement au travail prévues dans les codes de déontologie des conseillers et des membres des conseils locaux.

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 his bill?

Mr. Stephen Blais: The bill amends the Municipal Act, 2001, and the City of Toronto Act, 2006. It requires that codes of conduct for municipal councillors and members of local boards include requirements for those councillors and members to comply with workplace violence and harassment policies, and creates an integrity commissioner and judicial process to remove them from office for egregious acts of sexual, emotional and psychological misconduct.

FOREIGN CREDENTIALS ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT, 2022

LOI DE 2022 SUR LE COMITÉ CONSULTATIF DES TITRES DE COMPÉTENCE ACQUIS À L'ÉTRANGER

Madame Collard moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 6, An Act to establish an advisory committee for foreign credentials / Projet de loi 6, Loi créant un comité

consultatif pour les titres de compétence acquis à l'étranger.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll invite the member to give a brief statement explaining her bill.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: It is my pleasure to reintroduce a bill that was introduced initially in October 2021. The bill enacts the Foreign Credentials Advisory Committee Act, 2022.

The bill establishes a foreign credentials advisory committee to review the legislation and other rules that govern the recognition of foreign credentials in Ontario, make recommendations on how to improve the recognition of foreign credentials in Ontario, and make any other recommendations to make Ontario more prosperous and more inclusive with respect to the recognition of foreign credentials.

The committee is required to provide its recommendations in a report to the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, which must be tabled in the assembly and published on a government website.

VISITOR

M^{me} France Gélinas: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): A point of order, the member for Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I forgot to introduce my very talented assistant who is also here, Damien Waddell.

Hi, Damien.

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP AND SITTINGS

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Government notice of motion number 1.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll allow the member for Barrie–Innisfil to move the motion.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I move that, pursuant to standing order 110, the membership of the following standing committees be appointed for the duration of the 43rd Parliament:

The Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs: Mr. Hardeman, Mr. Crawford, Mr. Byers, Mr. Dowie, Ms. Triantafilopoulos, Mr. Anand, Mr. Smith (Scarborough Centre), Mr. Cuzzetto, Mr. Kernaghan, Ms. Fife, Ms. Bowman, Ms. Brady.

1310

The Standing Committee on Government Agencies: Mr. Bouma, Mr. Coe, Mr. Jones (Chatham–Kent–Leamington), Mr. Pang, Mr. Sabawy, Mr. Sandhu, Mr.

Harris, Ms. Gallagher Murphy, Ms. Begum, Ms. Pasma, Mr. Fraser.

The Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy: Ms. Scott, Mr. Thanigasalam, Ms. Smith (Thornhill), Mr. McGregor, Mr. Grewal, Mr. Holland, Mr. Sabawy, Mr. Pang, Ms. Lindo, Mr. Harden, Ms. McMahon.

The Standing Committee on the Interior: Mr. Babikian, Mr. Yakabuski, Mr. Flack, Mr. Smith (Peterborough–Kawartha), Mr. Bresee, Mr. Leardi, Ms. Dixon, Mr. Sarrazin, Ms. Shaw, Ms. Stiles, Mr. Schreiner, Ms. Hunter.

The Standing Committee on Justice Policy: Mr. Coe, Ms. Hogarth, Mr. Saunderson, Mr. Bailey, Ms. Kusendova, Mr. Riddell, Mr. Ke, Mr. Jones (Chatham–Kent–Leamington), Mr. Mamakwa, MPP Wong–Tam, Mr. Blais.

The Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs: Mr. Rae, Mr. Harris, Mr. Sandhu, Ms. Gallagher Murphy, Mr. Sarrazin, Mr. McGregor, Ms. Hogarth, Mr. Oosterhoff, Mr. West, Ms. French, Mr. Hsu.

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts: Ms. Skelly, Mr. McCarthy, Mr. Cuzzetto, Mr. Byers, Mr. Kanapathi, Mr. Crawford, Ms. Smith (Thornhill), Mr. Bouma, Mr. Rakocevic, Madame Gélinas, Madame Collard.

The Standing Committee on Social Policy: Ms. Ghamari, Mrs. Martin, Mr. Quinn, Ms. Pierre, Ms. Barnes, Mr. Jones, Mrs. Wai, Mr. Rae, Madame Gélinas, Mrs. Gretzky, Mr. Shamji; and

That these committees be authorized to meet on the following days when the House is scheduled to meet:

Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs may meet on Tuesdays and Wednesdays;

Standing Committee on Government Agencies may meet on Thursdays from 9 a.m. until 10:15 a.m.;

Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy may meet on Wednesdays and Thursdays;

Standing Committee on the Interior may meet on Mondays and on Tuesdays from 1 p.m.;

Standing Committee on Justice Policy may meet on Wednesdays and Thursdays;

Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs may meet on Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and on Thursdays from 1 p.m.;

Standing Committee on Public Accounts may meet on Mondays;

Standing Committee on Social Policy may meet on Mondays and Tuesdays; and

That on the committee's motion, the following committees are authorized to meet from Monday to Friday when the House is scheduled to meet and during adjournments of the House specified in standing order 7(b) or other adjournments of the House which do not exceed one week:

Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs;
Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy;

Standing Committee on the Interior;

Standing Committee on Justice Policy;
 Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs;
 and
 Standing Committee on Social Policy.

Thank you, Speaker. I'll give a copy to page Benjamin to take to you.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Looking at the written version of the motion in comparison to what the member said, the Standing Committee on Social Policy—I believe it's Mr. Jordan who is to be appointed to that committee, not Mr. Jones.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We've got that correct? Okay.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Mr. Speaker, it's Mr. Jordan. Thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Ms. Khanjin has moved government notice of motion number 1—

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for London West has a point of order.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I rise today under standing order 1(c), which calls on the Speaker to decide on all contingencies not provided for in the standing orders. My concern is that government notice of motion 1 tabled by the government House leader highlights a conflict between standing order 110 and standing order 115(a) and raises questions about the committees appointment process.

Standing order 1(a) sets out that the business of the chamber and committees shall be regulated through the standing orders.

Standing order 1(b) outlines that the purpose of these provisions is “to ensure that proceedings are conducted in a manner that respects the democratic rights of members....”

Standing order 1(c) calls on the Speaker to provide guidance on where the standing orders are unclear.

I am requesting your guidance to navigate what we perceive to be a conflict between standing order 110 and standing order 115(a). The intent of standing order 115(a) is to ensure that the distribution of committee memberships is done in a fair and impartial manner that respects the outcome of elections by allocating committee seats to the respective recognized parties in proportion to their representation in the House. By setting aside committee seats explicitly for a recognized party, surely the principles of democracy require that that recognized party be able to determine which members fill those seats.

Instead, with this motion, the government has given itself de facto control over which MPPs are appointed to committees. The motion ignores the official opposition appointments that were communicated by me, on behalf of the NDP caucus, in a letter to the government House leader on July 19. In some cases, this motion actually removes the members we intended to nominate as chairs or vice-chairs—information that was also communicated to the government—from their respective committees.

I should also point out that our appointments were made after extensive consultation between our interim leader

and members of our caucus out of respect for the democratic rights of members. And indeed, in our quick review of past committee appointment motions, we could not find a single example where a motion appointing committee members was brought before the House in a manner that did not follow recognized party recommendations.

Speaker, that is our concern with the motion before us today, and the reason for our request for your guidance. With this motion, the government has unilaterally assigned which MPPs from the official opposition will fill the committee positions that are expressly assigned to the official opposition. One can only imagine the uproar that such a motion would have caused, the indignation and outrage that we would have heard from members across the way—even the government House leader—if this was moved when they were on this side of the floor.

And while the standing orders do not explicitly authorize the recognized opposition parties to name their own members to committee, it is important to note that, in the same fashion, the standing orders do not explicitly give the government such power, either. In fact, in instances where the standing orders intend for the government to have discretion, such discretion is unequivocally provided for. One only needs to look to the next clause, standing order 115(b), where the standing order clearly states that the committee preferences expressed by independent members are not binding on the government.

Historically, committee membership motions are done via unanimous consent because they are brought before the House through a process of collaboration and respect. The fact that I am forced to rise on this point of order shows that no such consensus or respect exists.

Given the unprecedented application of standing order 110 as contained within this motion, it is, at a minimum, incumbent upon the government to convincingly demonstrate to the House why this new interpretation supersedes generations of past practice and interpretation. Several decades of consistent application is neither accident nor coincidence, Speaker.

If this interpretation of standing order 110 is allowed to stand, what is to prevent the government from simply assigning the same two MPPs from a recognized party to every committee, if the standard is narrowed so that only the language of the specific provision matters and the intent, past practice and impact of relevant standing orders are rendered silent when the rules are used in ways they were never designed or intended to be employed?

At a minimum, standing order 110 was not designed to give the House unfettered control over the committee appointments process. It is my hope that we do not establish such a dangerous precedent today.

Before I conclude, I want to offer a brief observation about the context for the motion that was tabled. As the Speaker may know, the official opposition was pressured to support one of the candidates in the recent Speaker election over another and threatened with government interference with our committee appointments if we did not support their desired outcome. This motion follows on the heels of that interaction.

1320

With that, Speaker, I thank you for listening, and I look forward to your ruling on this matter.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Are there any other members who wish to speak to the point of order? Government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I relish the opportunity today to actually stand on this point of order because it really continues a process that we saw started in the last Parliament by the NDP, which was one that was somehow focused on the independents and how we could remove the ability of the independents to participate in committees in this place.

You will remember, colleagues, and, Mr. Speaker, you will remember, how this very same opposition House leader brought a motion to this place suggesting that I was being too bipartisan—you remember that, colleagues—that I was working too hard to make this place work better, that I was working too hard to give the opposition authority, to give opportunities for the independents to serve on committees. And what is this point of order from the member again about? It is about ensuring that the independents don't get an opportunity to participate. It is about the NDP trying to do, through motions and points of orders, what they are incapable of doing at the ballot box, and that is increasing their seat count.

It is very, very clear—standing order 110: “Within the first 10 sessional days following the commencement of a Parliament, the membership of the following standing committees shall be appointed, on motion with notice, for the duration of the Parliament...”

Further, standing order 1(b)(i): “to submit motions, resolutions and bills for the consideration of the assembly and its committees, and to have them determined by democratic vote.”

How is that vote being taken, colleagues? By a motion that was tabled by me, that was on the order paper yesterday, that will be considered today, that the assembly as a whole will vote on—the assembly as a whole. The people who were democratically elected in this place two months ago will have the opportunity to vote on a motion that was brought forward. It's not a unilateral motion by me; it is a motion brought forward, put on the notice paper, and allowing members to decide who will serve on the committees.

The member opposite has made some allegations with respect to being pressured. Mr. Speaker, let me be very, very clear: If the member had truly been disturbed by the meeting that we had on July 7—at that time, you were still the Speaker of this place, although the House had not been called back—she could have sent a letter to you. You were still the Speaker, and she could have outlined her concerns with the meeting. She could have done that on July 14; she could have done it the week after; she could have done it the week after. But what did the opposition House leader do? She walked out of my office and upstairs to the Toronto Star and put down on the table allegations. What was that meeting about? It was a courtesy meeting to try to explain to the NDP how this place would work

following an election. Yet again, we had a situation where there was one official party outside of the governing party and there were a number of independents.

First of all, any point of privilege on this matter, I think, is long since passed.

Again, Speaker, you know very well we had a discussion ourselves. I don't think it's a surprise to anybody in this place that I openly supported the member for Mississauga–Streetsville to be the Speaker of this House. It was not a reflection on you as a Speaker. It was not a reflection on you and the work that you have done in your riding. I felt that this place, after 155 years, would benefit from having a female Speaker for the first time in history.

Interjections.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Whilst members clap, Mr. Speaker, it is, again, not a reflection on the work that you have done as a Speaker. In no way is it a reflection on the work that you've done as a Speaker—it is what I thought I should do.

As a member of the crown, I am incapable of bringing that motion forward. I'm not allowed to do that as a member of the crown. But as a member of provincial Parliament—I think you will agree, Speaker—I have every right, as every other member did in this place, to advocate on behalf of somebody that I thought would also perform the job equally as good as you have done. I never hid the fact that that is what I thought was best for this place.

Ultimately, in a democratic vote, the members of this Legislature, in their wisdom, put you back in the chair, Mr. Speaker. That is what happened in this place.

The member—again, after you were elected—could have raised this point with you but didn't. Instead, she waited until this day to bring forward a motion.

She talks about membership on committees. First and foremost, let me say this: The standing orders don't require me—Mr. Speaker, you will know that because of the diminished representation of the NDP, the people of Ontario so turned their back on the NDP, so reduced the size of that caucus, in giving us one of the largest majorities in provincial history—the reality was that when committees were to meet again, there would be only two members of the official opposition on committees.

Did the opposition House leader provide me with some suggestions? Absolutely. She also provided those suggestions to the media right away. Did we consider those suggestions? Absolutely, we did. I don't know what day the Toronto Star wrote that, but I do have a copy of the letter that the Leader of the Opposition submitted to me. You will see that in the recommendations that we have tabled in this House today, many of those suggestions are actually in this motion. Many of the members the member opposite has suggested will serve on the committees that they had requested.

It is not my job, nor is it her job—the opposition House leader's job—to tell me or a committee who will serve as a Chair or a Vice-Chair. Imagine this, colleagues: The opposition House leader, supported by the Leader of the

Opposition, wants to start Parliament by suggesting that they get to decide who will be a Chair or a Vice-Chair—not the committee, not a democratic vote of the people who will serve on the committee; somehow he, the interim Leader of the Opposition, or the opposition House leader, will make that decision on behalf of the committee. How is that democratic? Not only is it undemocratic and not only do I and all of us have a responsibility to make sure that that doesn't happen, that it is a free vote that committee determines itself—I don't know how the NDP would actually operate if they ever got government. Thankfully, that is not going to happen again in anybody's lifetime, but I think we're getting a clear indication of how it would be. They would bring motions here that would be of no consequence because one or two people would decide how everything would go. That would be the end of it. So whoever he likes—the Leader of the Opposition—bang, you're the new Chair of this committee. Forget about the democratic voice of the members of the committee; they're going to make the decision on your behalf.

What did I do? I referenced earlier how, under the reduced representation by the NDP—it doesn't take much to figure it out. The Leader of the Opposition won't even sit in the traditional seat of the Leader of the Opposition, across from the Premier. He won't do that because his caucus is so diminished, so reduced, that he feels he has to be over more. And I thought—we thought, the Premier thought—that the best way to ensure a vibrant democracy, despite the fact that the people of Ontario gave us such an overwhelming majority, was that this place had to function well, and that is why we took the unusual step of adding a third member of the NDP—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I must interrupt the government House leader and remind the House of standing order 14(d): “A member raising a point of order or point of privilege, and any member permitted by the Speaker to speak to it, must put the point tersely and speak only to the point raised. A point of order or privilege is heard in silence by the House.”

1330

The government House leader to wrap up his statement.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Thank you, Speaker. I'll be even more specific because I think once even more specificity is there, it will certainly help you in bringing forward a decision. So let's speak specifically to what the members are raising.

With respect to committees, there is no standing order requiring me to accept or even solicit recommendations from the NDP on the assignment of members to committees. I'll repeat it, Mr. Speaker, and you will know that. There is absolutely no requirement that I do that. I have put forward a motion which I think best reflects the appropriate committee assignments.

With respect to independent members, I have satisfied my obligations under standing order 115(b) to appoint independent members to committees upon their request. The independent members did indicate their desire to serve on committees in this Legislature. Unlike the NDP,

I feel it's important that they get to serve on committees, and that's what this motion reflects. I have satisfied that obligation.

With respect to the substantive motion I have put forward, I believe that despite the NDP's poor electoral performance, limiting opposition members on committees to only two will not allow the fulsome study or vigorous debate that we expect at our committees in this House, especially given the new committee structure of this place that we voted on as an assembly in the last Parliament.

As for the orderliness of it, Mr. Speaker, it is a substantive motion which clearly seeks an exception from the standing orders, which is required to exceed the proportionality rule which normally applies. There is nothing to prevent a substantive motion from overriding the standing orders, and I would think, in this case, the NDP would in fact be happy to have more of their members actually engaged in committees and working on behalf of their constituents.

So let me say very clearly, Speaker, in conclusion that I reject the Leader of the Opposition's summation that I—that I or she or their leader should appoint a Vice-Chair or a Chair; I think committees should do it. I further reject the premise that I should reduce the people who are serving on committees to two and eliminate half of that caucus from participating in the democratic responsibilities that they were sent here to do. So if she again, if they again—the leadership of the NDP will not stand up for their members, will not stand up for the people who sent them here. I say very sincerely and very clearly to all of those members who were ignored by your leadership, we will stand up for you. We will make sure that you have an opportunity to serve on committees, like we did in the last Parliament. We will do it again. So I hope that you will reject the criticism of the Leader of the Opposition outright.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Are there any other members who wish to speak to the point of order? Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity. I want to thank our House leader for a very, very substantial, logical and powerful presentation. She has asked for your guidance. I know you'll have to think about it. I look forward to what you have to say.

I'm sorry that the government House leader is leaving, because I have to say—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to remind the members not to make reference to the absence of any other member.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Fair enough, Speaker.

I have to say that the operation of the House is critical to the function of democracy in this province. There are traditions in parliamentary democracies that assist in the thoughtful—sometimes—deliberation of substantial issues in a society. It is important for all of us in this chamber to defend democratic traditions and to ensure that there's the ability for impartial operation and for, to the extent that it's possible, collegial work between governments and opposition parties.

I have to say that when I was first approached by my House leader to say that we were told that if we did not vote for the member the government House leader wanted for Speaker we would have our recommendations for committee chairs and for Deputy Speakers thrown out, I was totally taken aback. I have not dealt with a government before—and I've been here since 2006, so I've seen Premiers come and go—even with this Premier in 2018, I have never seen a government act in this way. It's extraordinary to me. The selection of the Speaker of this House is a profoundly important matter and, as you're aware from previous elections, often we've had multiple candidates running.

I know we'll get into this further when we talk about the other motion before us, but I want to say to you, when we were told, "If you don't vote this way we are going to punish you in that way," we had a substantial decision to make.

I know a number of you in the caucus—those of you who are new, I'm going to get a chance to meet you. I've been with a number of you now for quite a few years and I've seen how you've stood up when you've been pressed by governments that have acted in unfair ways. I won't single out any member, but some of you are willing to stand up and fight back. You have stood up and you have fought back. Well, we're doing the same thing.

When a government comes and says, "We will punish you and this is the way we'll punish you, unless you vote the way we directed"—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to again remind the members that we have to speak to the actual point of order, tersely.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, I appreciate the recommendation and commentary.

If in fact you set up a situation where there is not collegial agreement between the parties as to who is on committee, and if you set up a situation where recommendations from the opposition for Chairs and Vice-Chairs are thrown out by the government, you have diminished democracy within this province. You have undermined a principle that I think everyone in this House subscribes to. I look forward to your ruling on that.

I want to say to you, in terms of committee appointments, I don't know about everyone in this chamber, but I been through a number of changes of governments, and I've been there when committees have elected their Chairs. I have to say, in 2018, this Conservative government was no different from the previous Liberal governments—and that's that I walked into a committee meeting knowing who was going to be the Chair because the government of the day had already dictated that. If you and your caucus have not had discussions or have not been told "You're going to be a Chair or a Vice-Chair," I'm surprised, I'm shocked, I may be disbelieving, because, in fact, governments of all stripes decide who they want in those very powerful positions.

Historically, the opposition has been able to appoint Chairs of committees—the estimates committee; public accounts. It is simply something that is seen as being

reserved for the official opposition—and, frankly, Vice-Chairs.

We have operated within the democratic traditions of this House. What is being proposed by the government is contrary to those democratic traditions.

I will say to those of you here today—and I said this to the Liberals before—don't assume you're going to win the next election. If you undermine the structures that allow the opposition to do their job you may, in the future, be in that position of being in opposition and you will want those structures to be protected. The government of the day will not be happy with the structures. That's life. But the people of Ontario expect that there will be a structure that reflects their democratic values. People died in large numbers to protect democracy in this society; we fought for it, and to see it undermined, in my opinion, is disgraceful.

1340

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Are there any other members that wish to speak to the point of order? The member for Durham.

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: Speaker, this point of order can be summarily dealt with, I respectfully submit. The basis of it, as I understand it, is that you are being asked to rule on standing order 1(c)—"In all contingencies not provided for in the standing orders...." But then, of course, in making any rulings, you are to be governed by the precedents of this assembly and parliamentary tradition. Parliamentary tradition is responsible government. It's the members of this assembly voting on matters, including motions just tabled about the committees, and having a vote of the democratically elected representatives of this House respected.

Motion on notice has been given. There are 147 standing orders. Standing order 110 provides—and we are within the first 10 sessional days of this new Parliament—that the membership of the committee "shall be appointed, on motion with notice...." That has been done.

The procedures and practices of this House and parliamentary tradition have been respected by this motion. The standing orders provide for this motion. There is nothing for you, Speaker, I respectfully submit, to rule on because all of what has been done is provided for in the standing orders. All that's left to be done is to respect parliamentary democracy and have a vote on this motion. That's what this is about, and I urge you to dismiss this out-of-order point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Are there other members who wish to speak to this point of order? The member for Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: J'aimerais clarifier un peu ce qui s'est passé aujourd'hui. La députée a présenté un texte de motion qui ne tient pas compte de traditions qui datent de générations ici à l'Assemblée législative. Ce qu'elle a présenté c'est vraiment un texte qui n'a pas respecté ce qu'on a fait à l'Assemblée depuis des décennies. Ce qu'on leur demande, tout simplement, c'est de démontrer un peu de respect.

On est en train de nommer les gens qui vont siéger à des comités importants. Ici, du côté de notre caucus, notre chef a pris le temps de parler à chacun d'entre nous pour voir qui avait le « background », qui était intéressé, qui serait la meilleure personne pour bien faire le travail des différents comités.

Comme vous le savez, monsieur le Président, on a de nouveaux comités sur lesquels personne n'a jamais siégé; ils sont nouveaux. Donc, on a pris le temps de faire ce travail-là et on a soumis par écrit les noms des personnes qui sont les plus aptes à bien faire le travail qui doit être fait par les parlementaires de l'Assemblée législative. Mais il n'y a rien de ça qui a été respecté, bien que ce soit dans les lignes directrices de l'Assemblée législative que ce processus-là doit être respecté.

J'aimerais qu'on commence cette nouvelle Assemblée, le 43^e Parlement, d'une façon positive et d'une façon respectueuse—respectueuse des traditions, respectueuse des droits. C'est tout ce qu'on est en train de demander, monsieur le Président : de prendre en ligne de compte la communication écrite qui a été faite entre le leader de notre parti et le chef parlementaire du gouvernement pour lui indiquer quelles seraient les meilleures personnes pour nous représenter. D'ignorer tout ça, quand on sait qu'une conversation a eu lieu entre la chef parlementaire néo-démocrate et le chef parlementaire du gouvernement, qui nous disait clairement : « Si vous ne votez pas pour une certaine personne comme Présidente de la Chambre, vous allez payer les conséquences, et les conséquences seront qu'on va ignorer les personnes que vous nous recommandez, que l'on va ignorer tout le travail que vous avez fait pour vous assurer que l'Assemblée législative travaille le mieux possible. » Bien, là, ce qu'on est en train de vivre c'est vraiment—on le savait que ça s'en venait. Il nous l'a dit que si on ne votait pas de la façon qu'il voulait, ils étaient pour nous punir, ils étaient pour nous ignorer. Ils étaient pour ignorer les règles de l'Assemblée législative juste pour nous punir. En français, on appelle ça un peu un bébé lala. C'est ce qu'on est en train de vivre en ce moment. Ce n'est pas correct. On devrait commencer de façon positive, de façon respectueuse. Il n'est pas trop tard pour le faire.

J'ai bien hâte d'entendre ce que vous allez avoir à dire là-dessus, monsieur le Président. Merci.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Are there any other members who wish to contribute? The member for Oshawa.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Thank you very much, Speaker. I'm pleased to stand, as always, and rise in my place. I don't know that folks were expecting me back, but still I rise and congratulate you on your re-election.

We're debating a point of order that has all of us quite worked up today, and for good reason. We throw around the word "democracy" in this space and leave it subject to our own personal interpretation, but it isn't. It is a binding idea that our whole society has historically defended and should continue to defend. We talk about a lot of things that happen in this room to be in the weeds; that folks outside who are worried about our collapsing health care

system, or public education on the brink, or other real issues—folks outside of this space may not be following along, or think, "What are they talking about? They're elected to serve their communities. All of this is gravy, all of this is extra, all of this—how does this affect me?" And I recognize that and appreciate it.

But I want to speak and say that the last four years before this—if we're talking about proud traditions, the last four years were not a part of those proud traditions. I would say much of the last four years—not all of them; wonderful moments from the last four years, but some really controlling and toxic take-aways from the last four years.

And I would say this is an inauspicious start. Here we are, on the first day, talking about how we, as members, can best serve this House.

To this point of order with the committee makeup—and we can dance around with all of the words and whatnot, but I appreciated the conversations that I had with our interim leader and with my colleagues, frankly, about the role that I would serve, the role that they were hopeful to serve.

I had a fantastic conversation, actually, with the member from Toronto—St. Paul's about the chair in which you sit. We talked about the traditions of this space and place.

And for some of the new members I haven't had a chance to work with or meet—I had the esteemed privilege to serve as a presiding officer for the last four years with a great team in that chair. I'm a rule person and I like my structure and I like my rules, and I come to this House by way of the classroom, and I also like colour-coordinated, alphabetized—that's how I roll, Speaker. Oddly enough, I didn't want the job, initially, when our former leader talked to me about it and I took it. I'm awfully glad I did, because, man, I loved it. That's personal, but what I loved about it was that I sat in that chair, as you do, as others have—very few others have sat in that chair. And as the new members who have been—some appointed by surprise, maybe the others knew; but for those who will serve in this chair, the motto of this Legislature is to hear the other side, and you have to in that chair. You can't be on your phone. You can't send that burning email. You don't even know what's happening outside this space. But you listen. I learned a lot, and I was hopeful to do it again.

This isn't the Jennifer story, but it is something to bear in mind as a point of reference. Whether it's a committee Chair or a committee appointment—which I just found out today—surprise—my name is on the motion and I've been randomly allocated to some committee that, if I have the pleasure to serve, I will be glad to—but, surprise. And we, as a caucus, had discussed our strengths, our interests, what we wanted to do, what we had a burning desire for which committee to serve on, or who would, potentially, be appointed to that chair.

The member for Toronto—St. Paul's: I think you would have been fantastic in that chair. The member from Parkdale—High Park and myself were names put forward to the government. For whatever reason, in their ultimate

wisdom, we are not allowed—and it's disappointing on a personal level, but, more importantly, I stand in this House today as a pawn of the government, unwillingly. I'm a bold and strong woman with a heck of a voice and I'm going to use it. Now that I've been taken out of Chair circulation, my voice has been put back into this space for another day each week, so I'll use it—because, of course, when you're in the chair, you have to be impartial.

1350

I'm disappointed that the Chair is being used in such a partisan way. The games have been really disappointing, but, more important than that, I think it's dangerous and we should support the traditions. I heard some of the new members—old habits die hard. I was sitting here giving them my full attention this morning. It was great. We get to learn from each other in our inaugural speeches, but talking about parliamentary traditions and precedent, and the Clerks can correct me—I have no idea—I don't think there has ever been a precedent for the opposition to put forward their choices and the government to say, "Nope." But to be picked up as a pawn, and many of the other—especially for the Speakers, the game of pawns here, it's all women who have been just picked up and maneuvered, I would say, without involvement. I'm forced to accept it today, but it is not the precedent I believe we should set in this House.

So the committee work is a separate part of the Chair, but all of it is the same because we talk about Deputy Speakers, but really they're Chairs—Chairs of the Committee of the Whole House. It's all just moving things around without member engagement. When we talk about the core principle of democracy and member involvement, member voice, I'd say that we're violating that.

I don't know whether I've spoken tersely to the point of order, but I will relinquish my time now. I do encourage all members to listen to what I've said. Pretty words come from your own benches, from our benches, but listen to them. We are all here fundamentally to serve our communities. So anything extra we get to do is just that, but we should do it well. We should do it respectfully, respecting this place as well as each other.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Windsor West.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It is my pleasure, but it's unfortunate that I feel compelled to have to get up to speak to this motion and to the point of order. I'm going to follow along the lines of my colleague from Oshawa, as having been a woman who was the first Vice-Chair of the Committee of the Whole House who had the honour and the opportunity—one of few women to ever sit in that chair and listen to all sides of the House—to impartially listen to all sides of the House, to get to understand procedure. And I have to give credit where credit is due, to the Clerks, because they do the lion's share of the work, keeping the Speakers on track and knowing the rules.

Speaker, this morning during question period and during some of the inaugural speeches of the member from Durham and the member from Ajax and the government House leader—who talked about the history and tradition

in honouring that in democracy. What we are seeing today is a government House leader—and, I have no doubt, the Premier, as well—who is exacting revenge and using the rules to their advantage in the most egregious manner in order to get back at this side of the House for following our democratic right to vote by secret ballot for our choice of Speaker, and that is all this is. The government House leader stood here earlier to defend and deflect—because there was a lot of spin and a lot of deflecting, and at my house we call that a whole lot of horse hockey—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Two members have a point of order.

We're debating a point of order.

The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I heard something there that clearly, to me, impugns the motive of not only the House leader but the Premier. When the member for Windsor West says "exacting revenge"—that is not parliamentary to me. I shouldn't even be repeating it, but because no one else brought it to your attention, and I know some time has passed—I was not in my seat when I heard it—I'm saying it now.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): It is in the standing orders that you can't impute motive in any way, shape or form in debate in the Legislature. I'm going to ask all members to watch their language.

We have to conclude this soon, and then I'll have to have a chance to deliberate.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: What I'm going to say is this: The government House leader, during his time, during his remarks—so I believe this is in line with the conversation we're having—talked about how this would have made history, to elect the first woman Speaker to the Legislature. I put this back to you: You had that opportunity during your first term in government, when Jane McKenna put her name forward.

So to you, sir, and everyone else on this side of the House, through the Speaker, I say this: As my colleague mentioned, it feels like the government is making pawns of not just the members on this side of the House, but the women on this side of the House. What I think should happen is that the government House leader should not only rethink the fact that he just wants to control and stick it to this side of the House, but actually look at what he has been doing when it comes to the advancement of women running for elected office, to be in this place in the first place.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I think I have heard the basic points on the issue from both sides—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I would ask the House to come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke will come to order. The member for Toronto–St. Paul's will come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke will come to order. The member for Toronto–St. Paul’s will come to order.

Having heard both sides of this discussion, I now require a few minutes to deliberate. I will recess the House and return when I am ready to rule.

This House stands in recess.

The House recessed from 1357 to 1414.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Having taken a few moments to consider this matter, I want to thank the member for London West for raising this point of order, and the other members who spoke as well. The member for London West is requesting that the Speaker provide guidance on the matter of a motion which was tabled yesterday and has been moved this afternoon regarding the composition of standing committees in this 43rd Parliament.

I want to begin by saying there is nothing procedurally out of order with government notice of motion number 1, and to suggest that pursuant to standing order 1(c) this is a contingency not provided for in the standing orders is simply not the case. The motion is, in fact, compliant with the standing orders and is properly before the House.

I want to thank the members again for their contributions to this important matter.

The member for Barrie–Innisfil has moved government notice of motion number 1. Would she care to begin the debate?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Speaker, I just want to thank you for your ruling. With that, I do not have any further debate. I think this motion stands for itself.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Any further debate? The member for London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Thank you very much, Speaker, for listening intently to the point of order which I raised and considering the concerns that I put on the record, and for providing your ruling. I recognize that you have determined that the motion is procedurally correct within the language of the standing orders, but I do want to echo some of the comments that were made by my colleagues during the debate on the point of order.

In particular, I want to start with reference to what we heard yesterday in this place at the opening ceremonies of the first session of the 43rd Parliament of Ontario. You, Speaker, provided a very powerful reminder to all of us as to why we serve in this place. The words you used: “Give to each member of this Legislature a strong and abiding sense of the great responsibilities laid upon us. Guide us here in our deliberations. Give us a deep and thorough understanding of the needs of the people we serve. Help us to use power wisely and well.”

I would contend that this government’s decision to completely ignore three decades of parliamentary precedent and tradition in terms of the membership-of-committee recommendations that are brought forward by recognized parties, and to unilaterally determine which members of the official opposition are going to sit on the committees of this place—I would contend that that is not using power wisely and well. To me, that is an abuse of

power and it offends the very fundamental purpose of the standing orders that govern our conduct in this place.

Standing order 1(b): “The purpose of these standing orders is to ensure that proceedings are conducted in a manner that respects the democratic rights of members.” This government’s dictatorial approach to pick and choose which—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I’d ask the member to be careful with her language.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Thank you very much, Speaker.

This government’s approach to pick and choose which members of the official opposition are going to sit on which committees, without any regard to the recommendations that the government House leader received in a communication from me earlier in July as to the membership of the committees that had been determined by the interim leader in extensive consultation with members of our caucus, so that members of our caucus could utilize their skills and interests and passions in a way that best help them serve the people of their communities—which is why we are here. Instead, this government has gone ahead and brought forward a motion that, as I said, disregards the advice, the recommendations that were provided.

We cannot support this motion. It sets a very dangerous precedent in this place when the government House leader is permitted to make these kinds of unilateral decisions. It is anti-democratic because it does not respect the rights of members to participate in this chamber as they would like to do so.

1420

I did want to comment on something that was said by the government House leader, who was outraged that the official opposition would provide the government with information about the members we intended to nominate as Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the committees on which our members were prepared to serve. And I wanted to point out that there was a media report on July 4, well before the infamous meeting which was held with the government House leader in which we had a conversation about the election of the Speaker and about what would happen to the Vice-Chair and Chair positions on all of the committees in this Legislature if we did not support the government’s preferred candidate. But anyway, prior to that meeting, there was a media report in which it stated all of the government members who are going to be chairing each of the standing committees that are to be chaired by government members.

I heard the government House leader say that this was disgraceful, that the official opposition was somehow trying to usurp the democratic rights of committee members to determine who was going to serve as Chair and Vice-Chair, and yet on July 4, they had already determined each of the Chairs of the standing committees that the standing orders specify are to be chaired by government members. Speaker, we were being transparent. We were providing the government with information about the MPPs, the caucus members we were prepared to nominate

as Vice-Chairs, and we would have hoped for that party's support.

Speaker, I did want to refer to the letter that the government House leader also mentioned in his remarks. I sent this letter to him because he had invited me to a meeting and had put on the table this proposal that the NDP unite with the government and unanimously vote for their preferred candidate in the election for Speaker of the assembly.

I want to quote from this letter. I said to the government House leader, "You requested that the official opposition urge all NDP caucus members to vote in favour of Ms. Tangri as Speaker, and to join you in issuing a joint public statement in support of Tangri before the vote is held. If those conditions were not met, you threatened to ignore 30 years of tradition and disregard the advice of the official opposition House leader on the appointment of three Deputy Speakers. Further, you referenced the government's ability to use its majority on committees to ignore caucus recommendations for the two committee Chair and six Vice-Chair positions as outlined in the standing orders, and appoint independent members as Vice-Chairs instead. You stated that if the NDP complies with your request, you will not block official opposition recommendations for these 11 positions."

Speaker, far be it from me to impute motive. I would not ever do that. But I do find it somewhat striking that the names of the members that the official opposition put forward for all of the standing committees have been completely mixed up by this government House leader. He has made decisions, picked and chosen which members are going to sit on which committees. In some cases, he has removed the member that—we had actually said, "That is the member we're going to nominate as Vice-Chair or Chair of that committee," and this government House leader has removed that member's name from the motion that is before us.

We are on a very slippery slope right now, I would argue. The government in the last four years made more changes to the standing orders than we have seen in the 15 years prior to that, and each one of those changes did more and more to centralize power in the hands of the government.

And now, here, today, we don't see a standing orders change brought before us, but we see a completely unprecedented interpretation and application of the standing orders which, once again, helps to centralize power in the hands of the government. For that reason alone, Speaker, we cannot support this motion, because of the very dangerous precedent that it sets.

As I pointed out in my remarks on the point of order, taken to its logical end here, the government House leader could appoint the same two members from the official opposition to every committee if they have the power to pick and choose who's going to sit. The government House leader pointed out that in some cases they wanted to appoint three, but whether it's two members or three members, the fact is that this government House leader wants to consolidate, to keep all of the power to himself as

to who those members should be. The functioning of this House and the deep traditions of democracy upon which this Legislative Assembly was established require that there be respect for the democratic rights of members to participate in this House as they see fit.

The other thing we heard yesterday in the throne speech that is reflected in the words of that very powerful prayer that I mentioned at the beginning is about the need to cooperate, to collaborate. We're dealing with huge issues. Our health care system is unravelling as we speak. The people of this province are expecting us to work together to solve some of these huge issues, and that requires collaboration. It requires some kind of process of give and take. This government decided they couldn't even do the minimum amount of collaboration that would be necessary to just, as every previous government has done, take the names of the members that the official opposition wants to appoint to committees and write them into the motion. That would have been the very, very minimum sign of respect and demonstration of engagement with the official opposition, to try to move forward together, to start to deal with these very big issues that we are facing in Ontario.

Speaker, with that, I conclude my remarks.

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: I have very limited time, so I'll speak quickly. The opposition House leader did send me some names. On the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, she sent me two names; both are in this motion and on that committee. On the Standing Committee on Government Agencies, both requests are on. On the Standing Committee on Heritage and Infrastructure, both requested are on. On the Standing Committee on the Interior: requested and on. On the Standing Committee on Social Policy: requested and on the committee.

Just to confirm, how much time do I have, Mr. Speaker? Do I have the full 19 minutes?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): At 2:46, the standing orders will compel us to call orders of the day.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity, then, to speak even more at length on this.

What we heard from the Leader of the Opposition, then, colleagues—for colleagues on all sides of the House—was that somehow there was no respect given for the suggestions that the member opposite gave. Now, it's quite clear that had the opposition House leader actually read the motion and compared it to the letter that she sent to us—what you do, colleagues, in this instance is that you get the motion, you get your letter, you put them side by side like this. And you say, "Okay, who did I suggest for finance?"—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the government House leader not to use the documents as props.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I wouldn't want to use props, more just for illustrative purposes. Because there seems to be a challenge in how they compare, Speaker. So I would say this, Speaker—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I apologize to the government House leader; I made a mistake. It is actually 2:30, and we now need to call orders of the day, as a matter of fact.

Pursuant to standing order 32(b), the time allotted for the afternoon routine has expired. I am now required to put the question on government notice of motion number 1.

Ms. Khanjin has moved government notice of motion number 1. 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.

This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1431 to 1501.

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

Ms. Khanjin has moved government notice of motion number 1. All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be acknowledged by the table.

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Rae, Matthew
Bailey, Robert	Ghamari, Goldie	Rasheed, Kaleed
Barnes, Patrice	Gill, Parm	Rickford, Greg
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Hardeman, Ernie	Riddell, Brian
Bouma, Will	Harris, Mike	Romano, Ross
Bowman, Stephanie	Hogarth, Christina	Sabawy, Sheref
Bresee, Ric	Holland, Kevin	Sandhu, Amarjot
Byers, Rick	Hsu, Ted	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Calandra, Paul	Jones, Sylvia	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Jones, Trevor	Saunderson, Brian
Cho, Stan	Jordan, John	Scott, Laurie
Clark, Steve	Kanapathi, Logan	Shamji, Adil
Coe, Lorne	Kerzner, Michael S.	Smith, Dave
Collard, Lucille	Khanjin, Andrea	Smith, David
Crawford, Stephen	Kusendova, Natalia	Smith, Graydon
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Leardi, Anthony	Smith, Laura
Dixon, Jess	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Todd
Dowie, Andrew	Lumsden, Neil	Surma, Kinga
Downey, Doug	Martin, Robin	Tangri, Nina
Dunlop, Jill	McCarthy, Todd J.	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Fedeli, Victor	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Thompson, Lisa M.
Flack, Rob	Pang, Billy	Tibollo, Michael A.
Ford, Doug	Parsa, Michael	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Ford, Michael D.	Piccini, David	Wai, Daisy
Fraser, John	Pirie, George	Williams, Charmaine A.
Fullerton, Merrilee	Quinn, Nolan	Yakabuski, John

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

Nays

Andrew, Jill	Gélinas, France	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gretzky, Lisa	Stiles, Marit
Begum, Doly	Harden, Joel	Tabuns, Peter
Bell, Jessica	Lindo, Laura Mae	Taylor, Monique
Bourgouin, Guy	Mantha, Michael	Vanthof, John
Burch, Jeff	Pasma, Chandra	Vaugeois, Lise
Fife, Catherine	Rakocevic, Tom	West, Jamie
French, Jennifer K.	Sattler, Peggy	Wong-Tam, Kristyn
Gates, Wayne	Shaw, Sandy	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 78; the nays are 26.

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

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

DÉBAT SUR LE DISCOURS DU TRÔNE

Resuming the debate adjourned on August 10, 2022, on the motion for an address in reply to the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): When we last debated government motion number 1, related to the throne speech, the member for Waterloo had the floor. She still has time on the clock. I recognize the member for Waterloo.

Ms. Catherine Fife: As I said this morning, I'll be sharing my time with the member from Toronto—Danforth.

Earlier this morning, I raised the two major issues that were contained within some of the language of the throne speech. One of those issues was the small, insulting increase to the ODSP levels, tied to inflation. This is a total of \$245 million from the government. The other issue was this \$225 million contained within the tutorial promise by this government, which, interestingly enough, will be money that is not being put—

Interjections.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'm sorry. It's pretty loud, eh? It's pretty loud.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Speaker, point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'd ask the House to quieten down. We've started orders of the day.

The member for Oshawa has a point of order.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I can't flip fast enough through the standing orders to figure out which number it is, but I'm pretty sure that as a member I have a right to hear what is being said, and I can't, so—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Certainly we want everyone to be able to hear what's being said. Again, thank you very much for that intervention. It's helpful.

The member for Waterloo has the floor.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

As I was saying: The \$225 million is this promise to offer cash for tutorial programming. It's interesting, because when you do the math on this promise, it could come up to maybe \$90, which is one tutorial session in the private sector, for instance. It could have been so much more of value to the people who are committed to public education in Ontario than one private session of tutorials. Quite honestly, Mr. Speaker, this is not a plan to help students recover from a very devastating interruption in

their learning through the public education system and through the pandemic; this is simply a gimmick.

Yesterday at the press conference, I found it incredibly interesting when Colin D'Mello asked the finance minister a question around the deficit reduction. You'll know, of course, that the deficit reduction is going to be \$1.1 billion this year. There was an increase in some taxes. I beg the government to have another look at this \$1.1 billion, because this is cold comfort to the people who are waiting over 19 hours in an emergency room. This is cold comfort to the 911 operator from Dundas who was, at one point, not able to send and dispatch an ambulance to a crisis. She was on the line with a woman whose baby was choking, and she was also on the same line trying to help a family deliver CPR over the phone. Those are the choices that are being made right now in our health care sector.

1510

When we say that these are life-changing decisions, there's truth to that. And I want the government members to hear this because both the Ontario Nurses' Association, the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, SEIU and the Ontario health sector helped put forward very good recommendations around investment. The \$1.1 billion in an increase in tax revenues going down to a deficit when the health care system is in crisis is a choice that this government is making, and it is not centred on the people we serve. The 19.1 hours that folks are waiting in emergency rooms is an issue that is affecting all of our ridings across the entire province. No one is exempt from this kind of pain, Mr. Speaker.

The finance minister said that the entirety of the new net revenue would be put against the deficit and no new funding so far to overcome the ongoing hospital closure crisis. This is a quote from yesterday.

I also want to point out, because I am the finance critic, that the proposed increase around health care funding according to the Q1 quarter was 5.92%, when inflation is at 8.1%. That is a cut to the health care sector. So you cannot say to the people of the province, as the Premier did earlier today, that we are investing historical amounts of money into the health care sector when you proposed a budget that did not recognize the inflationary pressures, and at 5.92% when the inflationary level is at 8.1%, you are actually admitting that you are cutting health care.

This is why the morale and the energy in the health care sector is so challenged right now, and it's so stressed. This goes from midwives to the paramedics—interestingly enough, paramedics, you've given them a greater scope of practice. You've said, "Oh, you can do more, paramedics." Paramedics are waiting in emergency room drop-offs in the hospital bays waiting to drop off people they've gone to pick up, and there's no nurse for the pass-off to go to.

In fact, when the Liberals had this problem which I do want to point out—when the Liberals froze hospital funding for five years, that was a cut, a cut, a cut, a cut, a cut, and those cuts were never addressed. But at the very least they actually created a new position in the health care system called the "hallway nurse." You have created a position called "batching" where you can actually drop off

multiple people with one person, which is completely unsafe. Paramedics across the province have said, "Yes, great. You want us to do wellness checks? We're stuck in hospital drop-off bays because there are no nurses to be had."

The children's and social services sector is also seeing a 1.8% cut. When you look at the most vulnerable—and as I said this morning, that is why we are all here. We are here to fill that gap and to make sure that when we invest tax dollars in the health and well-being of the people of the province, the return on the investment is for the province as a whole. After this pandemic, all of us should have a clear understanding that the health and well-being of the people we serve is directly connected to the economy. If you think that a company is going to relocate to the province of Ontario when the health care system is in shambles, I have news for you: This is a direct disincentive for companies to come to Ontario.

The other point that I wanted to make is that—especially after question period this morning, Mr. Speaker, because the disconnect of what we are hearing from the government side of the House around what is actually happening in our health care system is truly alarming. As my colleague here has said, in order to address a problem, you have to admit that the problem exists. A GTA emergency physician is inviting the Premier and the health minister for a tour of her emergency department, so that they can witness first-hand the staffing shortages and crises facing the province's health care system. I'd like to urge the Premier and the Minister of Health to actually take this extra step.

There has been some language used in the hallway right outside here where the Minister of Health has said that she takes exception or she rejects the premise that there is a crisis. We have so many examples from our ridings—so many examples—that indicate that the crisis is real. Perhaps you are using a different definition of "crisis," but this doctor has said, "This is a true open invitation. I'm a professional, respectful person. There will be no hate, nothing but professional. I just want you to see what we are seeing."

This is what they're saying: "Emergency departments normally equipped with three doctors are sometimes down to two, and with nurses also in critically low supply, patients are not getting the attention or care they deserve."

She goes on to say, "The waiting room is packed. There are people waiting on the floor. There's blood on the floor from patients who are bleeding. There's a long triage line, meaning there's a lineup of people we don't even know how serious their illness is."

This is Dr. Nour Khatib. Dr. Khatib said that even after ER patients wait hours to be admitted to the hospital, she'll watch them wait up to two or three days for a bed. I, and we on this side of the House, would describe this as a crisis.

And then, to add insult to injury, this is the truth around wage suppression: Your policy on wage suppression in the public sector is undermining the strength of our health care system, since, in the last year, 5,400 health care workers

have left that profession. We cannot retain health care workers when the government has a bill on the books that limits those wages to 1%, especially when we have an inflationary rate of 8.1%. As Doris Grinspun from RNAO said yesterday, this is a 7% cut to nursing.

So those nurses are going elsewhere. Many are going across the border to the States. They'll still live in Windsor, but they'll go across the bridge and get a really good job in the United States. They're getting incentives, they are getting perks and they are getting working conditions that provides them integrity and dignity, not only to those patients, but to their colleagues.

Interjection.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's interesting that a nurse on that side of the House is heckling me, because I believe you take an oath—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I believe you take an oath, as a nurse and as a doctor, that you put the patients first. Bill 124 is wage-suppression legislation. It is hurting the nursing profession. It is hurting our health care system. The results are indisputable, and yet you continue to disrespect the very people who saw us through a health emergency and a global emergency through the pandemic.

I do want to say one final thing on that, because until you actually acknowledge that this is the reality in our health care system, I worry. The mental health piece was mentioned in the throne speech yesterday, Mr. Speaker, and I just want to finish on this point. I started the first day of the election attending a visitation of a young woman who died by suicide. That was day one. She waited for two years for mental health supports. Her name was Kaitlyn Roth. She was a friend of my daughter's.

The mental health funding that was in the budget that you tabled—and then you ran away to an election—is insufficient. It is insufficient, because this young woman came into contact with 27 police officers. Think of the cost to the Halton police services and the Waterloo police services, and the cost to her family, and the lost productivity, and the fact that she was stuck in a hospital that was not prepared for or equipped to deal with mental health.

So when I say that budgets are moral documents, I mean it. This budget and the throne speech and the language within that throne speech, which only addressed in a very insulting and demeaning way the ODSP rates, which are legislated poverty for the people of this province, and the fact that you are continuing to undermine public education—this does not instill confidence in us as legislators or in the finances of the province of Ontario. When you do that, you hurt our democracy and you hurt the people of this province. I would urge you to course-correct. You have time to do it, and we want to help you do it.

1520

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

Oh, are you sharing your time? I apologize. I didn't hear that.

The Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Before I start, I want to note as well that I'm sharing the time remaining with my colleague from Scarborough Southwest.

I also have to say that it is a privilege, it's an honour, to rise to speak today, as the interim leader of the NDP, to talk to the speech from the throne, to talk to the budget.

But before I get into that substance—Speaker, first of all, welcome back and congratulations, and to all of you in this chamber who have come back or arrived here new. I disagree with a lot of people, and I'm sure a lot of you will disagree with me. But you don't get here by sitting on a couch; you get here by doing work, and whatever your opinion or your perspective, you deserve respect for that. So to all of you, congratulations.

That said, back to business.

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: You know exactly, Mr. Harris.

I am privileged to stand here, as the leader of the official occupation, with my colleagues. We're here, each of us, because we think that this province has extraordinary promise. It has the potential to make for extraordinary lives for people across this whole territory. It's a place of opportunity and, frankly, it is a province of plenty. It's extraordinarily rich—rich soil, rich minerals and richness in the people who live here. People come here because they understand the quality of life and the opportunities that are presented. That doesn't mean it's perfect—far from it. But the potential and the promise are extraordinary, and we have a responsibility, I think, to live up to that potential, to make use of that promise.

Since this government first tabled its budget in April, things have changed, things have moved on. We're seeing inflation at over 8%. My colleague from Kitchener-Waterloo has spoken to this quite eloquently, quite movingly, if I may say. That's having a huge impact on people's lives, and it needs to be taken into account in the planning that this government engages in, going forward.

I think most of you in this chamber will have constituents who are having a very hard time. I would say it's not just low-income constituents; I've talked to my middle-income constituents who feel that they're treading water, that they can't get ahead, that they're constantly being knocked back by higher prices and more difficult situations. It means—that more-than-8% inflation—that their purchasing power has been reduced by almost a tenth. That's an extraordinary impact on people's ability to live, to provide for themselves and their families, to have hope for the future. It means a number of people are using their credit cards to balance out their finances. That, as you're well aware, Speaker, is not a sustainable way to go forward. It doesn't work. It means that people are making really tough choices about whether or not kids will go to summer camp or even go to the CNE. People in my riding are facing a very tough time about paying rent or buying groceries.

As I've seen on Cosburn, as I've seen on Gerrard, outside the food banks and the churches on those streets, the lineups get longer and longer. People are pressed to their limit.

Frankly, in a number of places—I'm talking about rent—people are having to bring in roommates to make things work.

Again, as my colleague from Kitchener-Waterloo was saying, our neighbours on Ontario Works or the Ontario Disability Support Program were already living in legislated poverty. They were having a very tough time.

It was interesting to me, even just going to public events, wherever there was any barbecue set up by a politician, the rate at which food would be consumed. It is not a theoretical, distant or rhetorical thing to talk about; it is a very real need and very real desperation. This government absolutely has the power to change that.

As my colleague was saying, the Minister of Finance, who is an intelligent guy, by the way—people have talked with him; he's no slouch—was asked repeatedly if he could live on \$1,200 a month in Toronto. He's an intelligent guy. He knew that there was no answer to that that wasn't no, so he dodged the question. But that's the reality—1,200 bucks a month. That's barely a room, let alone groceries, let alone medication, let alone transportation. When you talk to people who are trying to live on those sorts of amounts, there is a desperation that is very real that has not been addressed by this budget. The 5% increase does not address that. Connecting the rates to inflation is not going to correct that.

There is no good reason, in this extraordinarily rich, extraordinarily powerful province, that people should regularly be going hungry—no reason at all. It is within our power to correct that. This government can correct that. This government should correct that. But for the moment, Speaker, that is not in their budget, and I have to say that is something that they have to correct.

I also have to note that since April, the strains and the stresses on the health care system have become so much more paramount, so much deeper. We had three representatives from the Ontario Nurses' Association here today listening to questions about health care, shocked and staggered by the answers they were getting.

I used to work for the Ontario Nurses' Association back in the 1990s, and I had a chance at that time to talk to nurses. Nurses have a very dark sense of humour, and I think you need it to get through some of what they see. Unfortunately, that very dark sense of humour is still there, because when you say to people that they have to try to make an emergency department work or an intensive care unit work and there are not enough people to do it—and the ones who are there got the message clear, they got it loud, that they don't matter. Sweet words are one thing, but actually clearing out the obstacles to giving them proper income is not something this government will do. I hear it all the time: "We're doing everything we can." What about getting rid of Bill 124? Silence.

I think if you want to send a message out to health care workers, education workers, public sector workers across Ontario that, in the end, they don't matter, Bill 124 is one of the most effective tools I'm aware of.

If you actually want to have retention of nurses, if you want to have retention of health care workers, if you want

to end the demoralization, abolishing that bill—and we would be willing to sit through the weekend; we would be willing to sit through the night. If you wanted to do that, we would do that. That would send a tremendous signal.

Speaker, there are 5,400 fewer health care and social service workers in Ontario today compared to just one year ago.

I asked a question today about all those places where emergency rooms have been closed. They have been forced to close in Red Lake, Perth, Clinton, Listowel, Seaforth, Wingham and other communities. Hospitals in Toronto have been on the brink of ER closures and have issued bed alerts for their ICUs. Hotel Dieu urgent care centre in Kingston has been forced to cap the number of patients it can see and turn everyone else away. Twenty-five hospitals were impacted by August long weekend closures.

1530

Our health care system has not seen this kind of crisis in generations, and it's not just because of COVID, although COVID is a factor. It's not because of a lack of beds, because, physically, beds are easy to make and put in a room. It's because of beds without nurses, beds where we don't have doctors. It's because of a lack of staff.

It's quite correct to say that we can't get 10,000 new nurses tomorrow, but I'll tell you, if we continue to discourage and demoralize the nurses who are there, the health care workers who are there, then the crisis we see today could be far worse in the near future. Frankly, that demoralization and that driving people out of the health care system that we're seeing in Ontario right now is something the government could work on immediately and is not. It is not addressed in the speech from the throne. It's not addressed in the budget. It's not addressed in response to questions that we've asked, and it's not addressed in response to questions that are posed by reporters.

What I do hear is, "We're going to build more hospitals." Putting up a shiny, well-stocked new building that's empty is not going to solve the health care crisis in any community in Ontario. This government needs to both recognize that and act. It's scary to think that if you needed an emergency room, you would go there and it would be closed, locked, lights off—absolutely not something that we want to see.

Since the government tabled its budget in April, inflation has gone up and health care has gone down the tubes. People want a sense that there is hope. They want to see even a flicker of light at the end of that tunnel. As long as the government is not acting on those twin crises of health care and inflation, they aren't seeing that hope. They deserve to see it. They need to see it.

Speaker, just last month, there were 3,400 more workers in health care and social services—just a month ago. These are big losses. They need to be addressed. The government can address them. It must address them.

Health care experts and experts such as Cathryn Hoy of the Ontario Nurses' Association say Ontario is 30,000 nurses short of what it needs to actually function—30,000.

That is a lot of nurses. That didn't happen overnight, but I have to say, in the last four years, it got a lot worse. Government needs to take steps now to correct that.

We've been seeing cuts in education. My colleague from Davenport can speak about that extensively and in depth. That makes a huge difference in terms of what happens to our children. They have gone through one of the most brutal two-year periods of their lives. Many have fallen far behind in school. I talk to teachers who recognize that, for a lot of kids, they lost two years, and I talk to parents who are worried about those children. We're not seeing the investment in schools; we're not seeing the investment in smaller classes that are needed to actually make that right, to help those children get the education they need. That is a dereliction of duty, because we have a responsibility to that next generation. We have a responsibility to give them the best possible start so that this society will actually be able to function. You cannot function in this society without a well-educated population. You can't function as an individual without a good education.

One of the things that's frustrating about inflation is the failure on the part of the government to take on gougers. When we talk about inflation, we have to recognize that there are companies that are surfing on top of inflation and taking maximum advantage. My colleagues from northern Ontario can talk about how much it costs them to get around, because they get around in vehicles that burn gasoline.

I just want to note, some companies—ExxonMobil earned US\$18 billion in the second quarter of this year; Chevron: C\$15 billion; Shell: \$22 billion. BP oil just saw its biggest profits in 14 years. All of those companies more than tripled their profit from a year ago. And when we say, "You should be regulating gasoline and fuel oil the way we regulate natural gas or regulate electricity," the performance of these companies says—and it screams it—"They're making a fortune, you're getting beat up, you're getting your wallet emptied, and these companies need to be brought to heel." This government has the legal power to do that if it wants to do it, and if it doesn't have all the legal power it needs, it can enact legislation. It needs to act.

People need the support from this government to protect them against gouging and to help ensure that they can live their lives without being in want.

Does this budget, does this throne speech actually stand up to profiteers and gougers? No. I remember during one of the periods in the pandemic that the Premier said that he wouldn't stand for gouging. I look forward to being corrected, but I don't remember there actually being any action that followed those words. No, I suspect there was no action that followed those words. Well, you've got a second chance. You've got a budget before us. You can amend that budget so that there's a focus on dealing with gouging and a focus on protecting people. The Premier should be standing with the people of Ontario; he's not.

Speaker, I also want to talk about the impact that this budget has on our action to deal with the climate crisis. I

know many people talk about the future for our children and our grandchildren, and we should, because I'd say that things are looking pretty rough. But the crisis is not distant. The crisis is here. The member from Ottawa West–Nepean, the member from Ottawa Centre—they can talk about the lights out in Ottawa after the line of thunderstorms that went through in May. The head of Ottawa hydro said that they—well, I think the figure was that storm snapped off hydro poles at an unprecedented level. They had never before had to deal with this. Well, I think that's the reality we're facing.

Every day, we're seeing extreme weather events that put us in a situation where we get to spend our time in the dark, where people's lives are threatened by floods, are threatened by heat waves, are threatened by wildfires, and frankly, their food sources are threatened by droughts. And yet, this government is not taking the action to actually reduce our emissions—is not happening. If we want to protect ourselves from flooding, from blackouts, from heat waves, it needs to act, and I'm not seeing it in this budget.

We are paying a very high price for the climate crisis today; we are going to pay a staggeringly higher price in the future. The government has to act. It should have been in the speech from the throne. It should be in the budget. You don't call it a climate crisis because it's a minor item; it is, in fact, a crisis. It's affecting food prices, and it's causing people to have to move away from their homes because they are no longer viable places to live.

The budget that came forward in April was not acceptable. The budget that's before us now just replicates the problems that we had before and fails to deal with the larger crises of affordability in health care today. So, Speaker, we want this budget to take action, to help end the hospitals crisis. And there are a few things that could be done—I've said it before: scrapping Bill 124; lifting up wages; making sure that nurses and health care workers know the investments are going to be made; fixing working conditions. The idea that you go into work and you fear violence from the patients who come in and there is no program to actually deal with that—that's crazy. No wonder people leave. Why would you put up with that?

1540

Obviously, the accreditation of internationally trained professionals in the health care field needs to be accelerated—there's no getting around it—but you're going to have to put the money into it. You're going to have to make the openings for people. We're not seeing that in this. We need a blitz to retain people. We need a blitz to pull them back into health care. We need a blitz to bring new people in, but I'm not seeing it. I'm hearing a lot of talk. But I'm not seeing it in terms of budgets or the throne speech, and that is a profound failing.

Speaker, I also want to talk briefly about COVID, because we've had a very tough time, and the Ontario science table has expressed concern about what's coming in the fall. I'm not seeing the push to expand vaccination. I don't know about other people—maybe I missed something—but I'm not seeing the push that's needed. I'm

not seeing the push to bring in ventilation in schools, hospitals and public buildings.

We know what it costs when the COVID pandemic gets running really strong, and we don't want to go through that, so we need the action now, and we need the statement clearly in the speech from the throne. We need it clearly in terms of the allocation of resources to up vaccinations dramatically, to change the ventilation systems, to have smaller classes so that kids can be distanced.

Speaker, I'm going to give my remaining time to my colleague, but I want to say this now: This government is in power at a very difficult and risky point in the history of the province. It could, with proper action, make a huge improvement in people's lives, but if it doesn't do that, the consequences will be disastrous for everyone.

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

Ms. Doly Begum: Speaker, before I begin, I want to say congratulations to you. Welcome back. It's good to have you in this chair.

I also want to congratulate all the new members. We've got some incredible members on our side here, who I'm so proud of.

To the rest of us coming back—it's an honour.

Regardless of political stripes—I listened this morning to the member from Ajax's stories about her parents. It reminds me of myself and the campaigns that we ran, which are sometimes filled with your parents, your family members, your friends, and new friends and allies that you make over the weeks and months and years. It's really incredible for us to be here, because a lot of people put their heart and soul in the work that they do to bring us here. A lot of people in our ridings put their faith in us to come back here and serve them, to serve our communities, to serve the ridings that we represent and to serve this amazing province that has given us the opportunities.

When I was listening to the throne speech—first, I want to say that I appreciated the way it started, because it talked about the people of this land, the Indigenous people, and the work that we need to do to reconcile. I am so privileged and honoured to sit next to my colleague from Kiiwetinoong, who teaches all of us and teaches me about not just the history but the realities that people continue to face in some of the regions in Ontario, in our province, in many of the communities; we don't have to go far.

I have a healing lodge that's going to be built in my riding of Scarborough Southwest, so I understand a little bit, working with the community, in terms of the work that we need to do to really look at truth and reconciliation. I don't think the word "reconciliation" itself has been defined in the way that a lot of Indigenous leaders and community members want it to be defined, to see the action that's necessary.

I was impressed to see that there was a good start, because it understood or at least reflected on the realities and acknowledged the hurt and pain that have been felt by many of the parents and grandparents of the Indigenous community members. However, when I talked to my colleague and we listened to the rest of the throne speech, we were, I think, shocked—maybe not fully shocked, fully

surprised. Because when we heard about the Ring of Fire and the way that we need to talk to, we need to consult with, we need to take the leadership of Indigenous community members—that still needs to be done by this government. There is a lot of work that's missing when we do any sort of work.

Something that we have fought for and we continuously fight for is the work that needs to be done to provide clean drinking water, to provide housing, to provide mental health support. I could not find a lot of those words that were necessary in the throne speech. That is so urgent, that is so critical, to make sure that—talking about reconciliation, talking about truth. You have to have that. You have to make sure that you are providing the day-to-day things that are the basic human rights. I mean, clean drinking water—come on.

Those are the commitments that we should have made not just in the previous terms, but before that. So I expect some of that in this government, and I hope that we can work together to make sure that we take the leadership from those who are in those spaces and do the necessary work that everyone across this province has entrusted us to do, has sent us here to do.

In the throne speech, there are also quite a few other topics that I think sometimes have a really good—it's sort of buttered, in a way. It sounds beautiful. This government is really good at that. We saw this in the previous government as well, where you see the name of a bill and you think, "Well, there might be something that's working for workers." But then you look at the real meat of that and—surprise, surprise—it does the exact opposite of what the title even says to do.

I hope I have enough time to talk about this, because I have to begin with the health care system. It's the crisis that we're facing right now. Some time ago, I was reading a book about the health care systems across the world and some of the countries that see Canada as to be envied. They envy the system, this pride that we have. Just this afternoon, I believe, or after question period, one of the things the health minister said was that all options are on the table when she was asked about privatization, when she was asked about what kind of options are available in terms of what you would do to address the health care crisis. I have to say it is very concerning to hear the Minister of Health even hint towards privatization, because what we really need right now—we have the solutions available to us. We have the ideas. We have the leaders in our health care system telling us exactly what we need to do. And here we are. We have a Minister of Health and we have a government that's looking at—I don't know why.

I don't want to anticipate anything, but in the way it's going, the way that this government looks at this crisis, or denies that there is a crisis, and then hints towards privatization—there is something inherently wrong with the way of our thinking, our psyche. There is something really wrong about that, because so many people across the world see our health care system as a model, and here we are with ER closures. We had, I think, 24 or 25

hospitals that had closures over the long weekend—we had SickKids hospital, a kids’ hospital. The fact that children have to not just wait for hours—we were already bad. And trust me, I know someone is going to heckle and say, “Well, it was the Liberals’ fault.” We had an emergency that was already in long wait times, but the fact that right now we’re facing ER closures is problematic. We’re talking about children.

My colleague from Waterloo talked about the fact that there was someone on the phone trying to figure out whether they were going to provide support to someone giving birth, or CPR for a choking baby. Those are the choices you’re asking a health care worker to make, and those are the options that you’re giving the people of this province, who have entrusted you to represent them. When you look at that and you think that there isn’t a crisis, there is something inherently wrong about that.

1550

I was at the OFL rally just the other day—and I know that CUPE Ontario has given over, I believe, 30,000 letters. There were so many workers from across the health care sector and other sectors. Every single one I have talked to has asked for a few things, and one of them is to repeal Bill 124. It is fundamentally wrong to call these people essential workers—health care workers who have been working day and night, who have sacrificed their lives to protect us—and here we have a government that’s telling them, “Even though we call you heroes, you’re not good enough to have a raise. You’re not good enough to benefit from the basic things that you need: health care benefits, good benefits so that you can have a good life and a good wage for your family. You’re not good enough. You’re heroes when it comes to providing the care, but we’re not going to pay you enough.” That is fundamentally what this government is telling them.

When we talk about paid sick days, I have heard from members opposite who talk about solutions. We are giving you solutions right here. These are specific things this government can do right now. They can do them today. Repeal Bill 124. Give them paid sick days. We’ve been calling for it over and over. I believe the member from London West has now proposed it a third time. Many of us on this side proposed it in the last term, and I know there are so many people across this province who have called for it. So many health care workers, so many doctors and nurses, on national media, have called for it. And here we are—“Nope, you can’t have paid sick days.”

Another solution I can give you is making sure that you actually give them good working conditions. It’s just mind-boggling; I can’t even believe that’s actually something I have in my notes, because it should be common sense.

I have proposed a bill in this House—Bill 98, which this government passed on second reading and then just stalled—to recognize internationally trained workers who have come here with a dream and hope, who have been given that hope by the federal government and been recognized by the federal government through the point system, but then when they come to the province, the

province tells them no. “That recognition that you got from the federal government—those points? They don’t count. Your skills and your credentials are not good enough.” Not only that, but they have many barriers that they have to go through in order to be recognized, in order to get the credentials necessary. Some of those barriers include the fact that they have a huge financial cost. You’re telling a new immigrant who is trying to survive on a wage, trying to put food on the table, trying to pay rent, trying to provide for their family—on top of that, you’re telling them to get re-educated and get the certificates, and the experience, by the way, in order to get a job in a field that they have worked in for, let’s say, five, 10, 15 years. That is the cycle that we go through. We tell these people that they have to get experience, but then when they try to get that experience, they’re told to get experience.

Do you see, Speaker, where this doesn’t make any sense? I know many of the members opposite will also hear from community members who go through this. I know you’re sitting on the chair right now, Speaker. You have community members who have gone through this, who come with the hopes and dreams of practising.

There are a lot of health care workers who are nurses, who are doctors, who have the skills that we need right now. We have a shortage in our communities right now.

In 2020, this government promised that they were going to recognize internationally educated nurses. Let me tell you, Speaker, what happened. Of these IENs who were promised that they would go through it, only 2,000 actually became registered nurses, from the 14,633 who tried. That is the gap we face when we give these people this hope. And the continuous announcements, by the way—this government is great for radio commercials. They’re great for propping themselves up. But when it comes to the reality, this is what actually happens. These are the real numbers of people who actually get through the actual roadblocks. You’re not recognizing them fast enough.

The other day, the Minister of Health decided, “Do you know what? I’m going to just leave it on the colleges and say, ‘Well, recognize them’”—how do you say this word?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Expediently.

Ms. Doly Begum: “Expediently.” Pardon my English.

You’re telling them, “You have two weeks to come up with a plan,” when we on this side—I know that the member from Nickel Belt and I have worked together on this. We have worked together with stakeholders. We have worked together with nurses, with the internationally trained professionals’ network, with so many different stakeholders and colleges, and have asked them, “What do you need? How do we do this together?”

That’s exactly what Bill 98 asked for, as well, Speaker. It said, “Here are the types of people who are included, who are involved in this. Let’s come up with a solution and make sure that we can provide the exact steps that they need. Let’s give them practice-ready assessments. Let’s make sure that they’re able to get some real training and

experience that they need in order to work. Let's make sure that we get rid of the financial barriers they have."

Instead of providing any of those, here you are, making announcements and telling the colleges to come up with something overnight, when again and again you're hearing about ER closures across this province. In Toronto, there's Michael Garron Hospital and SickKids hospital. We have heard from the University Health Network. We have heard from other parts of the province who have gone through this. We heard it in Ottawa. It is just continuously happening, and here we are, not even recognizing that it's a crisis, let alone coming up with the solutions or implementing any of the solutions we have proposed.

Unfortunately, I don't have enough time, but I wanted to talk more about the fact that this throne speech didn't even touch on the climate crisis, the fact that it didn't even have the words "climate crisis," and the reality that we're facing across this province. There are countries that have flooded, there are provinces that have flooded, and the reality that we are facing—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Further debate?

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: Speaker, I am honoured to rise today in this historic building, in this extraordinary chamber—this chamber that serves the great people of Ontario—to deliver my inaugural speech. There are many people to thank and many to congratulate today. My sincere congratulations to you, Speaker, on your reelection to this distinct role.

To my colleagues, newly elected and returning members on both sides of the aisle: Congratulations to you all. Putting your name forward on a ballot, going through the election process and receiving the support of your family, friends and volunteers is truly a unique experience, one I believe is a test of our dedication and commitment to our communities. Bravo to all of you for your strength, both mentally and physically. Well done.

I recall being a young girl and always having the desire to help others. As I reflect on those early years, I realize the impact my father had on me. He was an Anglican priest, and I recall listening to his sermons every Sunday and watching him care for his parishioners and his most vulnerable community members: the sick, the suffering, the hungry, the homeless. I was always in awe of the profound, positive impact he had on the lives of others.

I believe that at my core, I knew I wanted to make a positive impact on others, albeit from a different perspective. For me, it was how I could help others achieve their goals, to be the best possible person they could be while making our community stronger.

1600

Speaker, the community I am proud and honoured to represent in this chamber is the riding of Newmarket–Aurora. I have called this community my home for over 13 years. It is where my husband and I have raised our son. It is where our son learned how to ice skate and swim at the local community centre, the Aurora Family Leisure Complex. This is where our son met his best friend when

he was three years old and our families became fast friends.

My riding has a population of more than 115,000 and is located in central York region. It has an urban feel with an amazing small-town charm which propelled my husband and I to settle in this great community. On a historical note, during the 1820s, the village was transformed into an extensive market centre for the settled region, thus the name, "new market." Newmarket's historic downtown Main Street was named the people's choice best street in Canada in 2016. It is identified as one of the Golden Horseshoe's 25 urban growth centres in Ontario's A Place to Grow growth plan. Main Street is a great attraction for shopping, dining, for great parades and festivals, like the Santa Claus parade, York Pride parade and the Canada Day Kanata festival.

There are many features that I love in my community. I will raise two of my favourite features. Firstly, the historical significance of my riding, from the notable architecture and heritage sites, like the Newmarket's Old Town Hall that serves as a community gathering location today, to the Canadian National Railway building and former station that serves as the office of the Newmarket Chamber of Commerce today, to the Elman. W. Campbell Museum, formerly the North York Registry Office, and to the Hillary House built in 1862 and is a national historic site known as one of Canada's best remaining examples of Gothic revival architecture. Please come and visit the Hillary House as you will have the opportunity to see original instruments and equipment used in medical practice from the era of leeches and bloodletting to the development of antibiotics by the Canadian physicians who inhabited this home over a century ago.

The second great feature is the love of sports. Aurora is the home of its very own sports hall of fame. They have 42 honoured members, including four new inductees in 2022. Some of our local famers include Mike Murphy, who played on the Canadian hockey team, the New York Rangers and the LA Kings; to Dan Thompson, a butterfly specialist who has won many swim medals, including gold in the 1978 Commonwealth Games, silver in the 1979 Pan Am Games and was the team captain of the 1980 Canadian Olympic team.

Yes, I am very proud of my community, from our local history, culture and diversity with a visible minority population of more than 28%. I am also so happy to share that we have the very first Black community centre in all of York region. This is the result of the successes of NACCA, Newmarket African Caribbean Canadian Association; and to an association that celebrates sport in all its forms, including age, gender and ability, thank you, Sport Aurora for recognizing and promoting sport in our community.

Our local hospital, Southlake Regional Health Centre, has advanced regional programs in cancer care and cardiac care.

And to our local businesses: Restaurants like Wicked Eats in Aurora, who opened in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Owner Robert Stewart was that brave

entrepreneur who had a vision. He included in his business plan a catering food truck service to compliment his restaurant services.

Cachet Supper Club: Great restaurant in the heart of Newmarket, at the bottom of Main Street. Owner Jenn McLachlan pivoted during COVID to provide online cooking classes and developed an application to support the “deliver eh” business model.

Our great retailers and our manufacturing businesses: One of many great examples is Wolfpack Packaging Inc., who has been in Newmarket for 20 years producing corrugated box manufacturing while inspiring eco-consciousness by working with moulded fibre to make their products fully recyclable and biodegradable. Happy to say, this business is growing as they recently acquired another business positioning itself as a top leader in Canada’s packaging industry.

This is just a very small sampling of the innovation, creativity, entrepreneurship and investments in a sustainable future that are happening in my riding—businesses providing jobs and helping our local economy grow.

Yes, this community has given me and my family so much, especially a sense of belonging. I thank my great community for their support and for entrusting me with this phenomenal honour to be their voice at the provincial table. I would like to thank Ivan, my husband, and Robert, our son, for their support over these years, especially during the election campaign. They are, and will always be, my rock.

There are many people from my campaign who stayed here today all this time—thank you very much—who helped me achieve this honour: Ryan Puviraj, Blake Koehler, Sandra Manherz, Paul de Roos, Marisa Patricelli, Angelica Cruz, Daniel Goutovets, Bruce Yu, Sharada Sunil, Daniel Zhang, Mary Rice, Novelette Hart, Matthew Hart, Richard Wells, Katie Gilligan, Mike Vasiliou, Joanne Beatty, Darryl Wolk, Adam Mobbs, Karen Hall, Rachel Song, Aamir Khan, Toni Akalu and Ava and Mahta Gharai. And, to my amazing girlfriend support: Teresa Kruze, Marcia Mowatt and Kim Madore, as well as many others.

I must also give a shout-out to my sister Kerry Lubrick for her support. We do not see eye to eye when it comes to politics; however, she set party politics aside and helped my team get out the vote. That is true sisterly love.

Speaker, today I would like to provide a distinctive thanks and special appreciation to my predecessor, Christine Elliott. I know this house is very familiar with Christine. She served the people of this province for 14 years and earned many accolades. For the past four years, she represented our riding of Newmarket–Aurora. I met Christine in 2018 and got to know her during the 2018 election. She is truly kind, intelligent and the most humane person I have ever met. She always thinks of others and worked hard to advocate for persons with special abilities. Over the past four years, I had the honour of working alongside MPP Christine Elliott. There were many great opportunities to connect and support local residents and non-profits.

1610

I think about the priorities our government made in February 2021 to combat human trafficking, protect victims and potential victims, and provide supports for survivors. As part of this strategy, the province invested more than \$3.8 million over five years to create two new community-based programs in Newmarket–Aurora. These programs are being delivered by BridgeNorth and Cedar Centre and will provide specialized supports to help children and youth heal and rebuild their lives.

In June 2021, I supported MPP Elliott as she announced our government’s plan to build a modern, connected mental health and addiction system that serves Ontarians. We expanded mental health services for children and youth in Newmarket–Aurora by providing more than \$668,000 to five support centres in our community to add counselling and therapy staff to support high-needs therapy, prevention work and crisis counselling. In addition, Southlake Regional Health Centre received an investment of \$6.5 million to support the expansion of the adult in-patient mental health unit, which added 12 new beds that will better address the demand for mental health supports and services for patients and families in my community.

Other great occasions included the Ontario Trillium Foundation Resilient Communities Fund grant announcements, some of which went to helping our local York Curling Club, our local arts organization Shadowpath, and the John Howard Society of York Region, as well as the Newmarket Food Pantry, who used the funds to install a community kitchen. All these organizations were supported with this special funding, as they provide important services to our community members.

Just this past April, our government announced how we are working for workers locally, by investing a total of \$3.9 million in two Newmarket organizations offering innovative projects to train and upskill workers in our community. The Newmarket Chamber of Commerce developed a program to support new and existing entrepreneurs to ensure acceleration and growth. Fair Chance Learning developed an online learning program platform enabling participants to earn in-demand, industry-recognized micro-credentials. These types of resilient programs support individuals to be more employable, with future-ready skills that respond to labour market demands.

I commit to building on the strong foundation Christine left us, and I will work with community members, not-for-profits and local businesses to make sure that Newmarket–Aurora is the best place to live, work and raise a family.

Monsieur le Président, il y a quelques semaines, j’ai eu une conversation avec une résidente locale au sujet du bilinguisme. Depuis que j’étais jeune, j’ai bien aimé la langue française. Dans ma 11^e année, à l’école secondaire, j’ai visité Montréal avec ma classe de géographie. C’était une visite géniale. À ce moment-là, j’ai décidé que je voulais devenir bilingue pour bien communiquer avec les francophones. J’avais complété quelques programmes d’immersion au Québec, j’ai étudié le français à l’école et puis j’ai passé un an à Paris afin de bien améliorer mes

compétences en français. Franchement, c'était la meilleure année de ma vie—bien entendu, avant ma vie avec mon mari et notre fils.

Dans ma circonscription électorale de Newmarket–Aurora, nous avons un taux de bilinguisme qui est de plus de 8 %. Cela veut dire qu'il y a plus de 10 000 personnes qui sont bilingues dans ma communauté. Un très bon exemple, c'est un organisme incorporé sans but lucratif qui s'appelle Communauté du Trille blanc. Ils ont commencé en 2019 avec le but d'offrir un environnement et une qualité de vie en langue française aux personnes âgées de la grande région de York.

Je voudrais remercier notre ministre des Affaires francophones pour tout le support donné à notre communauté francophone.

En décembre 2021, la Loi sur les services en français modernisée reçoit la sanction royale. Nous avons voulu améliorer l'accès aux services de qualité en français pour la communauté francophone de l'Ontario, qui est en pleine croissance.

En mars 2021, j'étais tellement heureuse que notre gouvernement ait investi plus de 2 millions de dollars pour soutenir le tourisme francophone, aidant ainsi la communauté franco-ontarienne à continuer de contribuer au secteur touristique diversifié de la province. Il y a plus de 620 000 francophones vivant en Ontario. Il s'agit de la plus importante population de francophones au Canada à l'extérieur du Québec. L'Ontario continue d'être une destination de choix pour les voyageurs francophones nationaux et internationaux. Selon les données les plus récentes de 2019, l'Ontario a enregistré 232 000 visites touristiques en provenance de la France et 4,5 millions de visites touristiques en provenance du Québec.

Alors, voilà la raison pour laquelle je crois que le bilinguisme est important et fort en Ontario, même dans ma circonscription de Newmarket–Aurora.

Speaker, I believe that my education and life experiences, coupled with my 25-plus-year private sector career and the past four years working alongside my predecessor, have afforded me and led me to this great opportunity to be standing here in this awesome chamber today.

To the residents of Newmarket–Aurora, I think back to that young girl who wanted to help others achieve their goals. I am honoured and privileged to realize my dream of serving you and ensuring our community grows stronger.

I would like to close my inaugural speech today by quoting a great role model in my life, Ruth Gallagher, my mother, who was always full of life and radiated positive energy, "Count your many blessings. Count them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord has done." Speaker, I have more than 115,000 blessings that I can count who are dwelling in my great community of Newmarket–Aurora. Thank you. Merci.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Questions and responses?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: First, I want to start off by congratulating everyone back in the chamber but

especially the new members who are here with their inaugural speeches. The member for Newmarket–Aurora, I did listen intently to your inaugural speech. You had mentioned that you had 25 years of experience in the private sector. As a question, what was that career and how does that experience inform you in the work that you'll be doing in the Legislature?

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: Thank you for that question. Yes, for over 25 years, I was in an industry which we referred to as secure payments. That afforded me the opportunity to work with our large financial institutions, here in Canada, Quebec and internationally. I would say the skills—and this is a great question because when I think about those years, I always wanted to be in politics and help others.

What I was doing over the past 25 years was, I was helping others, making sure they could get their credit cards and we could have new payments on our mobile phones and things like that. It was more technology, but I have to say that I was really pleased that with the relationship skills and contract negotiations, everything you could think of which has led me here today, because it's our government that we are focused on now, looking at how we can recover our economy, and my background has rendered me the ability to help with that process.

1620

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): I recognize the member from Barrie–Springwater–Oro-Medonte.

Hon. Doug Downey: What a lovely speech. I listened intently, and it was wonderful. As somebody who was born at the Newmarket hospital, I would like to say that I really appreciate your representation there. I spent a lot of time in the Newmarket area when Green Lane was a dirt road and went down to one lane there. Those who are from there will remember that; it's not anymore.

I went to high school in Bradford, but spent some time at Huron Heights hanging out with friends. We won't speak of what we did in particular; it's probably not fit for public consumption. But I would like to hear from you some of the wonderful things from your riding that you really appreciate in the Newmarket–Aurora area.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Response?

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: Thank you for your question. I'm happy to hear about your lovely experience of being born at our Southlake hospital. In fact, I'd love to make a comment about one of the great things our government just announced in April: a \$5-million planning grant for Southlake hospital, to plan towards a two-site location. Our community has been growing immensely, and I'm sure my colleague is aware of that. Our community has grown immensely, and the hospital has not grown with it. Our government has put the funding in place to help Southlake regional hospital realize the next step of where we need to go to support our growing community.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Question?

M^{me} Sandy Shaw: Premièrement, c'était un grand plaisir de vous entendre cet après-midi. Félicitations d'avoir été gagnante ici. Vous m'avez donné le courage d'essayer de parler en français. J'aime la langue, comme vous. C'est quelque chose que tous les députés doivent pratiquer, même si leur niveau n'est pas aussi haut que le vôtre.

Aussi, c'était une grande surprise d'apprendre que votre sœur est Kerry Lubrick, parce que nous avons travaillé un peu ensemble à Hamilton. C'est une famille que je voudrais travailler avec parce que je sais que vous avez le cœur pour les gens et aussi le courage de suivre vos convictions—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): Question?

M^{me} Sandy Shaw: Ma question. C'est à propos de Paris. Je voudrais savoir un peu plus de l'année que vous avez passée à Paris. Merci.

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: Bon, merci pour la question. C'est une très bonne question. J'aime bien parler de Paris et de la France—tout le temps si je le peux.

J'ai étudié le français à l'école depuis que j'étais jeune, mais je suis allée à Western, à London, Ontario. Avec les deux programmes d'immersion que j'avais faits au Québec, j'ai toujours senti que mon français n'était pas assez bien. Donc, je me suis dit : « Comment est-ce que tu vas apprendre le français très, très bien? Ah, je vais aller à Paris. » Mes parents n'étaient pas trop contents avec cette idée-là. Cependant, moi, j'ai pensé que c'était génial de le faire. Donc, je suis allée à Paris. J'étais une fille au pair pour m'aider à payer les dépenses. Donc, voilà. J'ai passé une très bonne année là.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Amarjot Sandhu): I recognize the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you very much, Speaker. First, I want to congratulate the new member from Newmarket–Aurora. Not only was the member from Barrie–Springwater–Oro-Medonte born there, but on July 1 of last year, our youngest granddaughter was born at Southlake. Ruby Alice Yakabuski was born there, as our son and his fiancée live in Newmarket as well.

You and I really hadn't met at all until you became a candidate. I remember asking the former MPP and our deputy leader and health minister, Christine Elliott, "Are you happy with the candidate?" A big smile came across her face. And now, when you talk about the long-term relationship and the friendship that you've had, I understand it perfectly. I'm just glad to have you here, and

if you would like to expand a little bit more on your relationship with Christine Elliott, I'd love to hear that as well.

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: I appreciate the question, to my great colleague.

Christine and I met in 2018. We didn't know one another, but we had so much in common. We became, how shall I say, fast friends. I would put it that way. She asked me to work for her, to support her in the community, and right away, I said yes. What a great way to get to know my community but through the constituency office. It afforded me the great opportunity to be at her side throughout our community: these funding announcements I've mentioned, to also meeting George Markow, a gentleman who was turning 100 years old. He made a decision that he wanted to raise \$100,000 by the time he turned 100. Well, sure enough, Christine and I went there. We heard his stories of how he came to Canada. It was back in the 1940s. He got away from Russia and the German camp. I'll tell you, it was an amazing story. Christine and I were just in awe.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Questions and responses?

Ms. Marit Stiles: I just want to welcome the member for Newmarket–Aurora into this House, this very special place. I was in Newmarket–Aurora just a couple of months ago for a Pride parade, a Pride march. I was invited by the Newmarket–Aurora NDP. It was lovely, a great event. It's also a really great, beautiful community. It was fun to see that.

I wanted to ask the member if she might comment. I know she was the office manager for the former MPP. I wonder if she might give us advice, particularly for some of the newer folks here as well—her number one piece of advice for serving the constituents in the community.

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: I think that's a great question, because I could probably put on a class about constituency management 101 and how to manage situations. I'm so happy to have my two constituency people here today, Paul deRoos and Marisa Patricelli. I would say, and they would probably echo my comments, that it is all about customer service. It is all about hearing your constituents, prioritizing their needs. It's really getting out into the community and ensuring the good citizens of my community, all of your communities, know you are there for them and that they can count on you to be there for them.

Report continues in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Ted Arnott

Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Valerie Quioc Lim, Wai Lam (William) Wong,

Meghan Stenson, Christopher Tyrell

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergente d'armes: Jacquelyn Gordon

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Barnes, Patrice (PC)	Ajax	
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Bowman, Stephanie (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Brady, Bobbi Ann (IND)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Bresee, Ric (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Byers, Rick (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	Minister of Legislative Affairs / Ministre des Affaires législatives Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)	Willowdale	Associate Minister of Transportation / Ministre associé des Transports
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Dixon, Jess (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Dowie, Andrew (PC)	Windsor—Tecumseh	
Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
Flack, Rob (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Michael D. (PC)	York South—Weston / York-Sud—Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiques et du Multiculturalisme
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Fullerton, Hon. / L'hon. Merrilee (PC)	Kanata—Carleton	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Hon. / L'hon. Parm (PC)	Milton	Minister of Red Tape Reduction / Ministre de la Réduction des formalités administratives
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Grewal, Hardeep Singh (PC)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Holland, Kevin (PC)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	
Hsu, Ted (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
Jones, Trevor (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	
Jordan, John (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karpoche, Bhutika (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	
Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Kusendova, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	
Leardi, Anthony (PC)	Essex	
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean	
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
McCarthy, Todd J. (PC)	Durham	
McGregor, Graham (PC)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Associate Minister of Housing / Ministre associé du Logement
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
Pierre, Natalie (PC)	Burlington	
Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)	Timmins	Minister of Mines / Ministre des Mines
Quinn, Nolan (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Hon. / L'hon. Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Northern Development / Ministre du Développement du Nord
Riddell, Brian (PC)	Cambridge	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
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
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Saunderson, Brian (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shamji, Adil (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, David (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Smith, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
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	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Tangri, Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	
Vaugeois, Lise (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity / Ministre associée des Perspectives sociales et économiques pour les femmes
Wong-Tam, Kristyn (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	