

Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario



Assemblée
législative
de l'Ontario

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

No. 4A

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

N° 4A

1st Session
43rd Parliament
Thursday
11 August 2022

1^{re} session
43^e législature
Jeudi
11 août 2022

Speaker: Honourable Ted Arnott
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
Greffier : Todd Decker

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House Publications and Language Services
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service linguistique et des publications parlementaires
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

ISSN 1180-2987

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 11 August 2022

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 11 août 2022

The House met at 0900.

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

Prières / Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PLAN TO BUILD ACT
(BUDGET MEASURES), 2022
LOI DE 2022 POUR FAVORISER
LE DÉVELOPPEMENT
(MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Mr. Bethlenfalvy moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 2, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes / Projet de loi 2, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the minister care to lead off the debate?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to note that I will be sharing my time with the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound and the member from Oakville, in that order.

It is my honour to rise on behalf of our entire government and speak to our Plan to Build Act. This legislation underpins our Ontario 2022 budget, which is titled Ontario's Plan to Build. Our government's budget was first released in April of this year, and I'm thrilled for the opportunity to speak to how we are getting to work for Ontario workers and for Ontario families.

It's a budget for rebuilding Ontario's economy; a budget for keeping costs down for Ontario families and putting more money back into the pockets of their families; a budget that is working for Ontario workers; a budget for building highways, for building transit and building key infrastructure across our province; and a budget with a plan to keep Ontario open, today and in the future.

Ce budget vise à reconstruire l'économie de l'Ontario. C'est un budget qui contribuera à garder les coûts bas pour les familles de l'Ontario et à mettre de l'argent dans la poche des contribuables; un budget qui oeuvre pour les travailleurs; un budget qui permettra de construire des autoroutes, des réseaux de transport en commun et des infrastructures essentielles, à l'échelle de notre province; et un budget qui permettra de garder l'Ontario ouvert, aujourd'hui et pour l'avenir.

I will provide an overview of the focus areas of our budget and will touch on some of the highlights of the Plan to Build Act, which supports this plan.

The first pillar of our plan is rebuilding Ontario's economy. Ontario's manufacturing sector is key to the economic success of our province. However, by 2018, the province's manufacturing employment had decreased by about a third since its peak in 2004.

Our government has a plan to make Ontario the workshop of Canada once again, and that plan applies to the whole province. It applies to building prosperity for everyone, in every corner of the province. Our plan to rebuild Ontario's economy will build prosperity in the north. It will include seizing Ontario's critical minerals opportunities and those opportunities therein.

It is time to do more to tap into the enormous resource potential across this province, starting with the Ring of Fire. Canada is the only country in the western hemisphere with all of the raw materials required for a lithium-ion battery. With northern Ontario already being a key global producer and processor of minerals, such as nickel, copper and cobalt, and home to various promising, advanced-stage lithium and graphite mining and mineral processing projects, the Ring of Fire has the potential to bring multi-generational prosperity to northern and First Nation communities while supporting a homegrown supply chain for battery technology, electronics and electric and hybrid vehicles.

In an era of geopolitical instability, seizing our critical mineral opportunity and developing the Ring of Fire is a strategic necessity for Canada. Critical minerals will protect and be part of a clean, environmentally friendly future for Ontarians and for Canadians. It will be part of a future of clean steel, with batteries, hybrid and electric vehicles as the next generation of automobiles built in Ontario by Ontario workers and sold right across North America.

The government's plan includes close to \$1 billion for critical legacy infrastructure, such as all-season roads to the Ring of Fire, building the corridor to prosperity. These roads will help bring critical minerals to the manufacturing hubs in the south, which will bring prosperity to Ontario's north and help improve access to health care, goods and services, education, housing and economic opportunities for First Nation communities.

The plan is supported by a Critical Minerals Strategy, with \$2 million in 2022-23 and \$3 million in 2023-24 to create a Critical Minerals Innovation Fund.

Mr. Speaker, the plan is also helping to create good manufacturing jobs right here in Ontario, as Ontario

becomes a North American leader in building the vehicles of the future.

Over the last two years, Ontario has attracted almost \$16 billion—yes, that’s correct—in transformative automotive investments by global automakers and suppliers of electric vehicle batteries and battery materials. This includes more than \$12.5 billion in electric vehicle and electric vehicle battery-related manufacturing investments.

Our government has partnered with the federal government, municipal governments and forward-thinking partners in key sectors and the auto supply chain, including Honda Canada’s nearly \$1.4-billion investment to upgrade and retool its Alliston plants so workers there can build the next generation of hybrid vehicle models—right here in Ontario, made by Ontario workers, and sold right across North America. That is great news for the 4,200 people who work for Honda Canada’s operation in Ontario.

There is also a more than \$2-billion investment by General Motors to pave the way for GM’s first-ever vehicle production line in Ontario at Ingersoll, while supporting continued vehicle production in Oshawa and Durham region—an investment, by the way, that will support 2,600 jobs in Oshawa.

We’ve also seen the largest greenfield investment in over a decade. That’s an over \$5-billion investment by LG Energy Solution and Stellantis to build Ontario’s first-ever large-scale electric vehicle battery manufacturing plant—an investment that will create 2,500 new jobs in the Windsor area.

0910

And, Mr. Speaker, there’s more. Umicore plans to make an \$1.5-billion investment to build a first-of-its-kind industrial-scale cathode and precursor materials manufacturing plant in eastern Ontario. At full production, the plant will produce annual cathode material volumes sufficient to manufacture batteries for one million battery-electric vehicles—almost 20% of all North American EV production at the end of the decade here in Ontario. So it’s the north, it’s the southeast, it’s the east, it’s the GTA—manufacturing is coming back to Ontario.

Ontario is also supporting investments to help make the province a world-leading producer of clean, low-emission steel to help build automobiles in the province.

But this is not all. Through the Plan to Build Act, we are also proposing an enhancement to the Regional Opportunities Investment Tax Credit. This tax credit was introduced in March 2020 to help lower costs for businesses seeking to expand in areas of the province where employment growth had been slower than the provincial average. The tax credit supports corporations that build, renovate or purchase eligible commercial or industrial buildings in qualifying areas of Ontario. It provides an incentive to bring jobs and growth to these communities. In the 2021 budget, we temporarily doubled the tax credit rate from 10% to 20% until the end of 2022 to provide additional support to businesses in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. This enhancement increased the available tax credit support for regional investment from a maximum of

\$45,000 to a maximum of \$90,000 in a year. Through the legislation we are discussing today, our government is proposing to extend the temporary enhancement to the Regional Opportunities Investment Tax Credit to the end of 2023. This would give businesses more time to make use of the enhanced support, more time to invest in Ontario’s opportunities, more time to encourage a robust economic recovery.

En vertu de la loi dont nous parlons aujourd’hui, notre gouvernement propose donc de prolonger la bonification temporaire du crédit d’impôt à l’investissement régional jusqu’à la fin de 2023. Les entreprises auraient ainsi plus de temps pour se prévaloir du soutien bonifié, plus de temps pour investir dans les collectivités de l’Ontario et plus de temps pour favoriser une reprise économique robuste.

By extending the time-limited enhancement to the Regional Opportunities Investment Tax Credit until the end of 2023, Ontario would be investing an additional \$40 million, resulting in an estimated tax credit support of over \$280 million from 2020-21 to 2024-25. This is real support to encourage growth in regions that need it the most.

In addition to this measure, another way the Plan to Build Act is supporting stronger local economies is by working to bring jobs to provincial agencies in communities across Ontario. Centralizing government organizations in one place misses the opportunity that these jobs can bring to different communities. It’s simply not fair that only select communities should have access to these well-paying jobs.

That is why we are exploring the relocation of the headquarters of the WSIB to London, Ontario. The Plan to Build Act, which we are discussing today, would give the WSIB the flexibility to determine where its head office is located, and this legislation would remove a legacy provision that requires the WSIB’s head office to be in the city of Toronto.

The government will also explore the location for new agencies, including Supply Ontario, Invest Ontario and Intellectual Property Ontario, to help ensure opportunities so all the people and all the communities of Ontario can benefit. Through this initiative, the provincial government can reduce costly third-party leases, make better use of its buildings and unlock the economic potential of smaller communities to help grow regional opportunities.

To bring jobs and prosperity to every region of Ontario, every person must have access to good-quality, high-speed Internet access. It’s an absolute necessity for doing businesses. So our plan includes nearly \$4 billion to support high-speed Internet access to every community in Ontario by the end of 2025.

Of course, this plan builds on many of the actions our government has taken to date. For example, we introduced an accelerated capital cost allowance to help businesses invest in new investment and equipment. We reduced industrial electricity costs, on average, by between 15 and 17%. And we cut hundreds of millions of dollars in red tape.

So, Mr. Speaker, as you can see, Ontario's Plan to Build includes concrete actions and investments to help create jobs and build prosperity everywhere for everyone in Ontario.

I will now discuss the next pillar of our plan, which is keeping costs down for Ontario families. The same day that our government re-tabled the Plan to Build Act, we also released the 2022-23 first quarter finances, which provides updated information about the evolution of Ontario's economic and fiscal outlook since the 2022 budget, and as of June 30, 2022.

The numbers reflect a reality that people and businesses are feeling in their day-to-day lives, and that is, the effects of inflation are being felt in a real way, whether at the grocery store, at the pumps, or when purchasing goods or services to keep one's businesses running. While this economic trend is global in nature, our government is stepping up to do our part to help Ontario families with the cost of living. We're bringing forward actions to help people across Ontario keep a few extra dollars in their pockets right now so they can continue to pay the rent, to pay the bills, to pay for gas, and to pay for groceries, regardless of the curveballs the global economy throws our way.

Mr. Speaker, the Plan to Build Act proposes amendments that would provide relief to families and to workers, especially minimum wage workers and low-income families who are especially feeling the impacts of rising costs for groceries and other essentials.

Beginning with the 2022 tax year, our government is proposing to enhance the low-income individuals and families tax credit, also known as the LIFT credit, to increase and expand this benefit to provide \$320 million in additional tax relief to most workers. The proposed enhancement to the LIFT credit would mean about 700,000 more people in Ontario would benefit from this tax credit in this tax year. Also, with the general minimum wage rising to \$15.50 per hour, as of October 1, 2022, this would help ensure eligible minimum wage workers continue to receive additional tax relief.

So how does this tax credit work? The LIFT credit is a non-refundable tax credit that, since it was first introduced in 2018, has provided up to \$850 in Ontario personal income tax relief each year to lower-income workers. Under the current LIFT credit, the benefit is phased out at a rate of 10% for individual income above \$30,000 and family income above \$60,000. Combined with other tax relief, the introduction of the LIFT credit means that about 90% of all Ontario tax filers with taxable income below \$30,000 pay no personal income tax. Let me repeat that: 90% of all Ontario tax filers with taxable income below \$30,000 pay no personal income tax. Mr. Speaker, our Plan to Build Act proposes amendments to enhance this credit so it can provide even greater benefits to the people of Ontario. So under our proposed enhancement, the maximum benefit would increase from \$850 to \$875, helping to put more money in people's pockets. On top of that, we're also proposing to raise the income thresholds and lower the phase-out rate from 10% to 5%, increasing

and expanding the income ranges over which the benefit is reduced. So what does this mean for the people of Ontario? It means that, with the proposed enhancement, 1.1 million lower-income workers would see an additional \$300, on average, in tax relief this year, in 2022, bringing the total number of beneficiaries in Ontario to 1.7 million taxpayers. That's real relief. That's relief to make life more affordable for people in Ontario.

0920

Mr. Speaker, our plan for keeping costs down also includes cutting fees. We're making it less expensive to drive by eliminating and refunding licence plate stickers, so that for each passenger vehicle, light-duty truck, motorcycle and moped, they get relief. This on its own will save Ontario drivers \$120 a year per vehicle in southern Ontario, and \$60 a year per vehicle in the north. On top of these savings, our government is also helping people who are feeling the pinch at the gas pump. As of July 1, we have cut the gas tax by 5.7 cents per litre and the fuel tax by 5.3 cents a litre for six months. Together, these measures—eliminating and refunding licence plate renewal fees and cutting the gas and fuel tax—will help households save about \$465 on average this year in 2022.

I note the member from Durham is here. We have also removed the tolls on Highways 412 and 418. This especially helps people in the Durham region and benefits every single person who uses these highways.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind members of two new initiatives our government recently announced to keep costs down in Ontario.

First, we announced an increase for Ontario Disability Support Program payments, to bring much-needed support to help offset rising living costs for these families and individuals. And we announced that future Ontario Disability Support Program—ODSP—payments would be adjusted for inflation, to help support these recipients moving forward. This comes in addition to measures we're discussing today to keep costs down, as well as other initiatives such as the Ontario Community Support Program, and providing an additional \$307 million to help municipalities, and Indigenous communities and their partners, deliver critical services that create longer-term housing solutions and keep people safe.

Additionally, beginning in September, the government will increase the maximum monthly payment by 5% for the Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities Program. We also announced an additional investment on top of our government's previously announced tutoring support program to provide direct education supports for students. Our government has committed an additional investment of \$225 million on top of the previously announced tutoring support program, bringing the total investment in tutoring supports to over \$400 million over three years. These additional funds will support a program that provides parents with greater flexibility over how to support a child's specific needs.

Mr. Speaker, the next part of our plan I will cover is highways and infrastructure. As Ontario's population grows, it puts unprecedented pressure on roads, highways,

transit and other infrastructure, so our plan includes building roads, highways and transit for Ontario's needs, getting shovels in the ground and getting to work for the people and the businesses of Ontario.

At the heart of our plan is a capital investment of \$158 billion over the next 10 years, with planned investments of over \$20 billion in this fiscal year, 2022-23, alone. Our plan includes trains, it includes subways, and it includes highways—because you cannot fight gridlock without building highways. That is why we are investing more than \$25 billion over 10 years for highway expansion and rehabilitation projects right across this province, including projects such as Highway 413. Highway 413 will save drivers up to 30 minutes on their commute.

Our commitment also extends to the Bradford Bypass, a new four-lane freeway connecting Highway 400 in Simcoe county and Highway 404 in York region. That's an area of the province expected to experience rapid growth over the next 20 years. The Bradford Bypass will take pressure off of Highway 400 and existing local roads in York and in Simcoe, giving drivers in the region relief from endless gridlock and saving them up to 35 minutes each trip.

In addition to building highways, our capital plan will invest over \$61 billion over the next 10 years to fuel a huge expansion in new subways, GO rail and other vital infrastructure. In the north, we are investing \$75 million to help bring passenger rail service back to northeastern Ontario.

Interjections.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you to the members.

Our plan also is a plan that includes working for workers. To begin, we are putting more money into workers' pockets by raising the minimum wage to \$15.50 per hour, starting on October 1, 2022. Our plan includes attracting and recruiting more workers into skilled trades, with an additional \$114 million over three years in our skilled trades strategy. We have relaunched our very successful Second Career program into Better Jobs Ontario. We're expanding college degree-granting programs to build a pipeline of job-ready graduates in applied fields, helping students get into the workforce faster.

And we are investing \$67 million over three years to fund the Ontario bridge training program to help eligible immigrants bridge their international training and experience with in-demand jobs in their communities. Our economy needs these skilled workers, and our workers need our support. That is why our government is working for workers.

The final chapter of our budget is our plan to stay open. The people and businesses of Ontario have been tested by the pandemic, and those tests continue. Our plan includes investments and actions to help keep our economy open and to invest in our health and long-term-care system.

One such investment is included in the Plan to Build Act, and that is our proposed new Ontario Seniors Care at Home Tax Credit. This new tax credit would help low- to moderate-income senior families with eligible medical expenses, including certified attendant care, assistive breathing devices, and hearing and walking aids. In 2022,

this new personal income tax credit would provide an estimated \$110 million in support to about 200,000 low-income to moderate-income senior families, or about \$550 on average. Senior families would first claim this credit when they file their 2022 tax returns. This proposed measure would help seniors age in their homes, surrounded by their loved ones and their memories.

Our plan to stay open also includes a 10-year, \$40-billion hospital capital plan, which represents the most ambitious plan for hospital expansion in Ontario's history, supporting more than 50 major hospital projects and adding 3,000 new beds over the next 10 years.

The plan also includes investing now in long-term care. Ontario now has over 31,000 new and over 28,000 upgraded beds in the development pipeline to get long-term-care beds built, to get seniors and other individuals the care they need and deserve.

Our government is planning to invest up to an additional \$1 billion over the next three years to expand home care. Our plan to stay open takes immediate action to support the hard-working health care workers who have done so much to keep us safe—a credible recovery plan that will eliminate the provincial deficit two years earlier than projected in the 2021 budget.

While we're doing this, we are providing nurses with a retention bonus of up to \$5,000. We're making the wage enhancement for more than 158,000 personal support workers and direct support workers permanent.

0930

That is Ontario's Plan to Build. It's a plan to invest and invest responsibly, with spending increasing by an annual average of over 5%, with investments in health care, in education and other critical infrastructure. These are the types of investments that will help lead a credible recovery plan and, as I just mentioned, that will help eliminate the provincial deficit two years earlier than projected in the 2021 budget.

The Plan to Build Act is an important piece of legislation that will enable us to put this plan into action. I urge all members—all members—to vote for this plan to build, this plan to get the work done for the Ontario families.

La Loi pour favoriser le développement est un texte législatif qui nous permettra de mettre en oeuvre ce plan. Je demande donc aux députés d'adopter ce plan pour bâtir, ce plan pour favoriser le développement, ce plan qui nous permettra de travailler pour les familles ontariennes.

This is a plan to build Ontario together. This is a plan for all Ontarians. Join us in this plan and do it for all Ontarians.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Next I'll recognize the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

Mr. Rick Byers: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to have this opportunity to rise and speak on our government's Plan to Build Act. As members know, this is the legislation that supports our 2022 budget, Ontario's Plan to Build. We are excited to hit the ground running and get to work on delivering this budget that will help workers, seniors and families in Ontario.

We've made a commitment to this province, a commitment that we will get it done. That is why, through you, Mr. Speaker, I'm urging members to support this important piece of legislation. It's legislation that supports our plan to rebuild Ontario's economy; to keep costs down for Ontario families and put more money back in their pockets; to work for Ontario's workers; to build highways, transit and key infrastructure across our province—and our plan to keep Ontario open today and in the future by investing in hospitals, home care and our health care workforce.

I'm going to use my time today to focus specifically on our government's plan to keep costs down for Ontario families and businesses. We're facing a period of global economic uncertainty, with inflation reaching levels we've not seen in four decades. While this phenomenon is being driven by global economic forces, from geopolitical instability to the effects of the worldwide pandemic, it's nonetheless critical for our government to play its role in keeping costs down for Ontario families and workers.

As such, a key pillar of our 2022 budget focuses on actions our government is proposing to take to make life more affordable and put money back in the pockets of the people of Ontario. I'll be speaking about some of these measures to keep costs down that are detailed in our government's Plan to Build Act.

Specifically, and as the minister has mentioned, our proposed enhancement to the low-income individuals and families tax credit is so important.

In addition to our proposed new Ontario Seniors Care at Home Tax Credit, I'll also talk about our plan to reduce the cost of auto insurance, which is another item featured in our plan to act.

From transportation to groceries to other essentials, rising costs are impacting household budgets. When costs go up, it has a direct impact on families, seniors and the economy. A higher-cost province is a less competitive province, as workers decide to take their skills elsewhere. That's why the government has a plan to keep costs down for Ontario families and businesses so they can reinvest in themselves and in the economy.

The Plan to Build Act proposes amendments that would provide relief to families and workers, especially minimum wage workers and low-income families who are feeling the effects of these rising costs.

Beginning in the 2022 tax year, our government is proposing to enhance the LIFT credit, as the minister noted. What I like so much about the changes that are being made is that the proposed enhancement to the LIFT credit would mean about 700,000 more people would benefit from this tax credit in the 2022 tax year. Combined with other tax relief, the introduction of the LIFT credit means that about 90% of all Ontario tax filers with taxable incomes below \$30,000 will pay no Ontario personal income tax.

Mr. Speaker, our Plan to Build Act proposes amendments to enhance this credit so that it can provide even greater benefits to Ontario, and as noted, it means that, with this proposed enhancement, 1.1 million lower-

income workers would see an additional \$300, on average, in tax relief in 2022—that's very important—and more workers would benefit from the LIFT credit, bringing the total number of beneficiaries to 1.7 million people. That's real relief to make life more affordable for people in Ontario.

This proposed tax credit enhancement builds on the robust suite of tax credits and benefits that are available to support people and businesses in Ontario. I'll spend a moment highlighting some of the other benefits that are available.

Mr. Speaker, most seniors prefer to age in their own homes surrounded by their loved ones. These seniors may require a range of supports to meet their unique needs and circumstances. Our government believes that these seniors should have support to make their homes safer and more accessible. That's why we've introduced the Ontario Seniors' Home Safety Tax Credit, which is a temporary, refundable personal income tax credit available for 2021 and 2022. It's worth 25% of up to \$10,000 in eligible expenses per year for a senior's principal residence in Ontario, with recipients getting back up to \$2,500 per year.

This credit is already helping seniors cover the costs of renovations they make to their homes to make their homes safer and more accessible, such as installing grab bars, widening doorways and installing non-slip flooring. Now, through the Plan to Build Act, our government is proposing to build on this support with a new Ontario Seniors Care at Home Tax Credit. This new, refundable personal income tax credit would help seniors with eligible medical expenses, including expenses that support aging at home. People eligible for this credit would get back up to 25% of their claimable medical expenses of up to \$6,000, for a maximum credit of \$1,500. These are dollars back in the pockets of eligible seniors to support a wide range of medical expenses such as: certified attendant care; care from a provincially authorized medical practitioner—for example, a nurse or occupational therapist—dental, vision and hearing care—for example, glasses, dentures and hearing aids—walking aids such as walkers and canes; wheelchairs and electric scooters; bathroom aids, such as grab bars and rails; and more.

As you can see, Mr. Speaker, this tax credit would provide real relief for seniors and their families. The proposed credit could be claimed in addition to non-refundable federal and Ontario medical expenses for the same eligible expenses, and it would be refundable, supporting low- to moderate-income senior families even if they do not owe personal income tax. In 2022, it is expected that the new credit would provide an estimated \$110 million in support of about 200,000 low- to moderate-income senior families. That will help seniors be supported and stay in their homes.

In addition, through the Ontario Child Care Tax Credit, families can claim up to 75% of eligible tax child care expenditures, including care provided in child care centres, homes and camps. Further, when people filed their 2021 tax returns this year, they benefited from a temporary 20% top-up to this tax credit.

Our jobs training tax credit is helping workers receive training that they may need for a career shift or to sharpen their skills. It provides up to \$2,000 in relief for 50% of a person's eligible expenses for the year. Our government extended this temporary tax credit to the 2022 tax year to help more workers continue to upgrade their skills and transition back to the labour force.

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Additionally, our Ontario Staycation Tax Credit is helping families who want to discover our beautiful province this year, while helping tourism and hospitality sectors recover from the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through this credit, Ontario residents can claim 20% of their eligible 2022 accommodation expenses; for example, for a stay in a hotel, a cottage, or a campground, or coming to Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. They can make this claim when they file their personal income tax and benefit return for 2022. People can claim eligible expenses of up to \$1,000 as an individual or \$2,000 if they have a spouse, common-law partner or eligible children, to receive up to \$200 as an individual or \$400 tax relief as a family.

Tax credits are just one of the many ways our government is helping put money back in the pockets of Ontario families to keep costs down and make life more affordable.

Our plan is not only bringing relief to families. Our suite of tax credits also includes measures to help build prosperity for everyone, in every corner of the province. To support this goal, through the Plan to Build Act, we are proposing to extend the enhancement to the Regional Opportunities Investment Tax Credit, as was noted. This tax credit was introduced in March 2020 to help lower costs for businesses seeking to expand and grow in areas of the province where employment growth had been slower than the provincial average. It supports corporations to build, renovate or purchase eligible commercial or industrial buildings to bring jobs and growth to these communities.

In the 2021 budget, we temporarily doubled the tax credit from 10% to 20% until the end of 2022 to provide additional support to businesses in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. This enhancement increased the available tax credit support for regional investment from a maximum of \$45,000 to \$90,000 per year.

Through the legislation we are discussing today, our government is proposing to extend the temporary enhancement to the Regional Opportunities Investment Tax Credit until the end of 2023. This would give businesses more time to make use of the enhanced support, more time to invest in Ontario's communities and more time to encourage a robust economic recovery. By extending the time-limited enhancement through the Regional Opportunities Investment Tax Credit until the end of 2023, Ontario would be investing an additional \$40 million, resulting in total estimated tax credit support of over \$280 million from 2020 to 2025.

As part of our plan to keep costs down for Ontario families, we're putting a specific focus on transportation

costs, as the minister had noted. One way of doing this is, we want to reduce the cost of auto insurance, an initiative that is supported by the Plan to Build Act. While the government has made substantial progress on Putting Drivers First, a blueprint for Ontario's auto insurance system, we know there's still more work to be done. Our plan includes creating more choice, because the current mandatory insurance product may not offer the choices Ontario drivers deserve. We intend to propose changes over time that would give consumers more options when purchasing car insurance.

We're also cracking down on fraud. Our government remains committed to building strong anti-fraud measures into the auto insurance system. That is why, through the legislation we are discussing today, we are proposing amendments to the Insurance Act that, if passed, would require insurers to provide prescribed fraud information on an ongoing basis to the Financial Services Regulatory Authority of Ontario. This would hold insurers accountable for managing, tracking and reporting fraud. FSRA will be consulting on the implementation of a fraud reporting service tool that will better prevent, detect and, ultimately, deter fraud. This is an important step to crack down on fraud and its associated costs. FSRA will be consulting further on proposals for combatting fraud through fraud management plans and removing identified fraudsters through excluded provider lists.

Lastly, our plan to fix auto insurance will also see FSRA implement a new strategy for reforming the regulation of auto insurance rates and underwriting. As part of the new strategy, FSRA will be developing a new framework for ensuring fairness in rates that would replace outdated guidance, including existing guidance on territorial rating.

Additionally, as drivers are required to use workplace benefits prior to making a claim through their auto insurance provider, the government will review how drivers access benefits when extended health plans are involved to ensure the system remains modern and works well for accident victims when they need it most.

Mr. Speaker, here are a few additional highlights of our plan to keep costs down for families. Housing costs are another item we hear about from people across the province. Everyone in Ontario deserves to find housing that is right for them. The government is taking action to increase housing supply and make sure that everyone in Ontario can find a home that meets their needs and their budget. Housing that people can afford is an important part of the strong, stable foundation the government is building for Ontario's workers and families. That's why our government passed legislation to support the creation of all types of housing by speeding up approvals to get more shovels in the ground faster.

Our government is also investing \$19.2 million over three years to increase capacity at the Ontario Land Tribunal and the Landlord and Tenant Board to resolve cases faster, address the significant backlog, and support more housing supply and opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, it has been my pleasure to have this opportunity to discuss the Plan to Build Act, which supports our government's plan to keep costs down for Ontario businesses and workers. We look forward to implementing all measures in our 2022 Ontario budget, which is our government's plan to invest, and invest responsibly; to rebuild Ontario's economy; to keep costs down for Ontario's families and put more money back in their pockets; to work for Ontario's workers; to build highways, transit and key infrastructure across the province; and our plan to keep Ontario open today and in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all members to vote for this important legislation so that, together, we can get to work to support Ontario families.

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

Mr. Stephen Crawford: First, I want to say it's an honour to be able to share my time with the Minister of Finance and the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. I'm on a great, great team.

It's a pleasure to be able to use this time to be able to speak about our government's Plan to Build Act. We brought this legislation forward as one of our first orders of business, because we have already hit the ground running, and are well under way in implementing our 2022 Ontario Budget: Ontario's Plan to Build.

This is our plan to rebuild Ontario's economy; our plan to keep costs down for Ontario families and put more money back in their pockets; our plan to work for Ontario's workers and deliver better jobs and bigger paycheques; our plan to build highways, transit and key infrastructure, and support the building of housing right across our province; and our plan to keep Ontario open, today and in the future, by investing in home care, long-term care and our health care workforce.

"Build": Mr. Speaker, that word appears in our 2022 budget more than 300 times, and it appears in the legislation we are discussing today, whether we're talking about getting shovels in the ground to build highways, bridges, subways and schools; building new hospitals and long-term-care beds, and recruiting nurses, doctors and personal support workers; making investments in the auto sector and in critical minerals to rebuild Ontario's economy; or to build a province that works for workers while keeping costs down for families. Our government has a plan to build, and we have a plan to get it done.

Our government has a plan to build prosperity everywhere, for everyone, for every person and every region across this great province. Our plan will build prosperity for all. For too long, employment growth and opportunities have been concentrated in Ontario's largest metropolitan areas. For example, our government doesn't think it's fair for government organizations to be centralized in one location, typically Toronto. Too many regions have not shared in the prosperity in this province. Every small city, town and village in Ontario has something to offer, and the Ontario government has a plan to make sure everyone can contribute to making this province great.

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That's why our 2022 budget includes a Community Jobs Initiative. Through this initiative, the government is working to bring jobs and provincial agencies to communities across Ontario to spur economic growth throughout the province. This begins with exploring the relocation of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board headquarters to London, Ontario. The Workplace Safety and Insurance Act of 1997 currently requires the main offices to be located in Toronto. Our Plan to Build Act would, if passed, see this section repealed, because we don't believe that only one urban centre should have access to these good jobs and community benefits that they can bring.

Mr. Speaker, another way to build is helping to bring prosperity in all corners of the province through our Regional Opportunities Investment Tax Credit. It is a tax credit that was introduced in March 2020 to help lower the cost for businesses seeking to expand and grow in areas of the province where employment growth has been slower than the provincial average. It supports corporations that build, renovate or purchase eligible commercial or industrial buildings in qualifying areas in Ontario. It provides an incentive to bring jobs and growth to these communities because, as I noted earlier, we believe communities across the province deserve access and opportunity to build and succeed. Members may recall that in the 2021 budget we temporarily doubled this tax credit rate from 10% to 20% until the end of 2022. We did this to provide additional support for businesses in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. This enhancement increased the available tax credit support for regional investment from a maximum of \$45,000 to a maximum of \$90,000 in a year. Through the legislation we are discussing today, our government is proposing to extend the temporary enhancement of the Regional Opportunities Investment Tax Credit until the end of 2023. This would give businesses more time to make use of this enhanced support, more time to invest in Ontario's communities, more time to rebuild our economy.

By extending the limited enhancement to the Regional Opportunities Investment Tax Credit, Ontario would be investing an additional \$40 million, resulting in a total estimated tax credit support of over \$280 million from 2020-21 to 2024-25. As we move forward with our plan to rebuild Ontario's economy, this measure would help bring growth and prosperity to Ontario's diverse communities. From Cochrane to Kenora, from Thunder Bay to Timiskaming, from Manitoulin to Perth, the Regional Opportunities Investment Tax Credit enhancement would support job creation and growth throughout this great province.

Mr. Speaker, our plan to build also includes one of the most ambitious capital plans in our province's history. It includes planned investments over the next 10 years totalling \$158.8 billion, including \$20 billion in 2022-23. This plan is getting shovels in the ground to build highways, hospitals, transit and other critical assets, creating jobs and laying the foundation for a stronger Ontario. It includes \$25.1 billion over the next 10 years to support the

planning and construction of highway expansion and rehabilitation projects across the province, cutting commute times so the people of Ontario can get to work faster and to their families faster.

Additionally, these critical projects will support job creation and drive economic growth. For example, we are moving ahead with building the Highway 413, a new 400-series highway and transit corridor across Halton, Peel and York regions. This highway will support the movement of goods and services across the province, saving drivers up to 30 minutes on their commute, as well as being a relief to the most congested area in North America.

Our government has taken another step towards getting shovels in the ground to build the Bradford Bypass, a new four-lane highway connecting the 400 in Simcoe county and Highway 404 in York region. This critical infrastructure will ease gridlock in the greater Golden Horseshoe area by taking pressure off an increasingly congested Highway 400 and existing east-west local roads. It is estimated that commuters using the Bradford Bypass will save up to 35 minutes in travel time per trip compared to existing routes on local roads.

Our work on expanding Highway 401, an important economic corridor, better connecting eastern Ontario and eastern Canada: This work includes three bridge replacements in Oshawa to facilitate future widening between Brock Road and Pickering through to Highways 35 and 115; bridge replacements in Port Hope to facilitate future widening between Highways 35 and 115 to Belleville; and acquiring land to facilitate future widening of Highway 401 through Belleville and Brockville.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to provide some examples of the highway rehabilitation and expansion initiatives that will help decrease gridlock and increase productivity for the people of Ontario.

In the north, we are widening from two to four lanes on Highways 11/17 from Highway 587 east to Pearl Lake, and this includes new Pearl River bridges for 14 kilometres.

We have also several rehabilitation and resurfacing projects for Highway 417 in Ottawa, Highway 401 in Cornwall, Highways 115 and 7 in Peterborough. In addition, there are bridge replacements on Highway 417 in Ottawa.

In the southwest of the province, the government is improving Highway 401 in Oxford county, Highway 21 in Kincardine and west of Springmount, as well as a bridge replacement on Highway 40 over the CN railway in Sarnia. In central Ontario, we have bridge replacements in Orillia, Barrie and Oshawa and are expanding the 401 from Mississauga to Milton. We are building in the east, north, west and central Ontario—all across this great province.

Mr. Speaker, I'd now like to focus on public transportation. Our plan includes a \$61.6-billion investment over 10 years in public transit. With the Plan to Build Act, our government is proposing changes that will improve local passenger transportation systems because, as we know, a stronger, more integrated transportation network is

absolutely critical and vital to the people of this province. This includes transforming the GO Transit rail network into a modern, reliable and fully integrated rapid transit network through properties such as the Bowmanville GO rail extension, which will provide GO Transit rail services from Oshawa into Bowmanville on the Lakeshore East corridor and help reduce gridlock, and the London GO rail service, which will provide weekday GO train trips between London and Union Station in Toronto.

Our plan also includes the government's historic vision for the largest subway expansion in Canadian history. This includes the all-new Ontario Line that will offer subway service between the Ontario Science Centre to Exhibition Place through downtown Toronto. This new subway line will connect to more than 40 other transit routes, including GO rail lines, existing TTC routes and the Eglinton Crosstown light rail transit line.

Our ambitious vision also includes several extensions, such as the Scarborough subway extension that would provide additional service extending from the existing TTC's Line 2 Kennedy Station with three new stations along the way; namely, Lawrence Avenue and McCowan, Scarborough Centre, and Sheppard Avenue and McCowan Road.

The Yonge North subway extension will extend the TTC's Line 1 service north from Finch station with new additional stations: Steeles, Clark, Royal Orchard, Bridge and High Tech.

And the Eglinton Crosstown West extension will extend the Eglinton Crosstown west of the future Mount Dennis Station, with seven new station stops, from Jane to Renforth, as well as a proposed connection to the Toronto Pearson International Airport.

Additionally, a few examples of new light rail service that connect to stations and lines include: the Hazel McCallion Line, previously known as the Hurontario LRT, that will provide new service in Peel region along Hurontario Street, connecting Port Credit Station in Mississauga to the Brampton Gateway Terminal at Steeles Avenue; the Finch West LRT that will provide new service connecting Finch West Station on the Yonge-University Line to Humber College; and the Hamilton LRT that will provide new service connecting Eastgate Square to McMaster University through downtown Hamilton.

1000

Our transit projects in the GTA will support more than 16,000 jobs annually during construction over the next decade. By 2040-41, the subway projects are expected to have a total ridership of roughly 620,000 and expand the existing network by 50%.

Shovels are already in the ground across the greater Golden Horseshoe region. We have hit some noteworthy milestones, such as preparing the Scarborough subway extension, with the tunnel-boring machines getting into position to prepare for digging tunnels. And we have started the planning for the design and build of three subway stations and related bus facilities. This includes working on all the nuts and bolts for installation, from the tracks to the signals and communication involved. We

want to ensure that once it is constructed, it will continue to be a vital piece of infrastructure.

It is worth noting again that our Plan to Build Act will support this plan through proposed measures that would enable better integration of the services of the local transportation systems to help the people of Ontario get to where they need to go.

Our plans include actions and investments to ensure that Ontario's health system is even more resilient. The pandemic took its toll on health care, but it was not without learnings. With these lessons learned, we can deliver high-quality health care in the face of any future challenge.

Our capital plan for building Ontario also includes more than \$40 billion over the next 10 years in hospital infrastructure, including \$27 billion in capital grants. This is \$10 billion more for hospitals and health care than the commitment in the 2021 budget. These investments will increase capacity in hospitals, build new health care facilities, and renew existing hospitals and community health centres. This funding means supporting thousands of acute and post-acute beds and hundreds of adult, pediatric and neonatal critical care beds.

Ontario is investing another \$3.3 billion for the hospital sector in 2022-23, bringing the total additional investments in hospitals to \$8.8 billion since 2018-19. Funding in 2022-23 includes \$1.5 billion to support the continuation of over 3,500 critical care, acute and post-acute beds. It means increased access to high-quality health care, much-needed surgical and diagnostic imaging recovery, and health and human resources.

With that, my time is expired. I will pass it back to you, Mr. Speaker.

I certainly hope the opposition would see to it that they will support us in this great budget put forward by the Minister of Finance.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. John Yakabuski): Questions and responses.

Ms. Catherine Fife: There are a lot of questions about what's not in this budget, and then there are a lot of questions about what you've floated, particularly Ontario's new \$225-million child benefit. There are no answers thus far, so let's try to get some.

The Minister of Finance has said that this could be tied to tutoring, it could be means-tested; we don't know. But even people who may benefit from this tutorial top-up of \$70 to \$90 per student say, "I'm a little suspicious seeing that there are continuous cuts to education being made."

Let's remember that in March, the province's Financial Accountability Officer reported that the Ford government spent \$5.5 billion less on education than it planned to in the first three quarters.

My question to the Minister of Finance is, given how poorly Ontario managed the pandemic and the negative impact on education, why have you proposed a gimmick? Because that is how we see it. A voucher system is not the answer to address lost learning. When will you be clear with the people of this province that you are truly committed to public education and investment in that sector?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. John Yakabuski): Minister of Finance.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You look a little different, but congratulations.

Thank you to the member opposite for that question.

I don't think the parents of the two million students in this province consider catching up their children's education as a gimmick.

Let me set the record straight for the people of Ontario.

I'm sure the member opposite has looked at the amount of spending in the last full year of the previous Liberal government versus the amount of spending that we're putting—investments into education. It's a massive increase. Why? Because we are investing in our children's future and we're investing today.

Let's take a look at the budget, the 241 pages: a \$3-billion increased investment in our children's education; investments in child care; investments in COVID containment and HEPA filters for our schools; investment in the curriculum; investments in mental health and investments in tutorials—most parents would see that as an important investment in their children's future.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. John Yakabuski): The member for Barrie—Innisfil.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I want to thank the Minister of Finance and his parliamentary assistants for their excellent deliveries and speech.

As the Minister of Finance knows, the seniors' home tax credit is a very important tax credit to my community. I was joined by Gwen Kavanagh, the chair of the Barrie Canadian Association for Retired Persons, also known as CARP; Bob Schickedanz from the home builders' association; John Tom, the owner of Superior Home Health Care; as well as Paul Meredith, the vice-president of a seniors' organization, and all of them said there was an urgent need to extend the tax credit and the importance of making it refundable.

I want to ask the minister, why is it so important for all Ontarians, not just the ones living in Barrie—Innisfil, to extend this tax credit—and the importance of making it refundable?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, through you to the member, for that question.

We have 2.6 million people now in the province of Ontario over the age of 65, and over the next 20 years another two million people will join them. Then we'll have 4.6 million people over the age of 65. What's so important is that they have choice as to where they can age. Part of that choice is aging at home.

So what are we doing today to invest in our seniors for tomorrow?

The member mentioned the home safety tax credit, so they can have their homes retrofitted, who need it—guardrails and so on.

The member mentioned the care at home tax credit so that attentive care can come to the home.

I would add also that through the home and vehicle program, which is administered by the March of Dimes, we increased funding so that lower-income people—

people who couldn't even afford to get the tax credit because they didn't have money—could afford to put infrastructure in their homes.

That's what we're doing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. John Yakabuski): The member for Thunder Bay–Superior North.

Ms. Lise Vaugois: There's great concern in Treaty 9 communities about the potential devastation of their traditional territories and thus their traditional land-based economies.

Ontario already carries the shame of the poisoning of the people of Grassy Narrows because of irresponsible industrial development.

What is the government doing to ensure that any development taking place on Treaty 9 territories meets stringent environmental requirements and is undertaken with the free, prior and informed consent of all the affected Treaty 9 communities?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Through you, Mr. Speaker: Congratulations on your election, and welcome to the House, to the member opposite.

We have so much more to do as a society to support all people in Ontario, including our Indigenous populations. I take the question with great interest and seriousness, because it is so important that we build Ontario for everyone.

That is why we have put more funding in place for economic development, in consultation with First Nations, so that, for example, they can share in the prosperity in the Plan to Build Ontario. That's why, with regard to the Ring of Fire and opening up the prosperity for the north, it is inclusive, that it is in consultation with the people of the north and our First Nations.

This is the way we're going to move Ontario forward together. We're going to do it with everybody, including our Indigenous populations, so that we can have an Ontario that benefits everyone.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. John Yakabuski): The member for Mississauga–Lakeshore.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: During my 2022 debate, I told the people of Mississauga–Lakeshore that Ontario had the best finance minister in Canadian history, and the former finance minister was sitting in the audience.

1010

As the member knows, I used to work at the Ford Motor Co. for many years.

I want you to elaborate on what we're doing more for the building of electric vehicles in North America to make us the number one jurisdiction in the world.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. John Yakabuski): The Minister of Finance.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: I knew there was a reason why I liked the member from Mississauga–Lakeshore.

It's a very important question, and it's a big question, and I'll do my best in the time allotted.

As the Premier said, every car that you'll have a choice to buy in the not-too-distant future will be an electric vehicle. We believe in a clean, green economy in this province. So what are we doing about it? Obviously, not

only manufacturing. We're going to be a manufacturing powerhouse for electric vehicles in this province, but we've got to make sure that the production that goes into those vehicles, be it clean steel in Hamilton or Sault Ste. Marie, is fired by clean energy—that the electricity to charge the electric vehicles is done through clean energy. That's why we're investing in small modular reactors.

There are many ways to improve the environment. We all believe in that. We're all going to do it together.

But let me tell you this: We're also, in the budget, going to put in place the first provincial park in 40 years.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. John Yakabuski): The member for Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: All you guys talked a lot about seniors, and we should be talking about our seniors.

Speaker, right now, in long-term care, close to 100 homes have no air conditioning in their rooms. Much of June, July and August, temperatures were above 40 degrees, with the humidity. Some have died, some have had heatstroke. And you talk about working for workers? Those support staff, the workers in those places, are working in those same conditions, working in those rooms.

Is this how you think that seniors in the province of Ontario should be treated? Why are these rooms not having air conditioners for seniors in the province of Ontario? It's absolutely disgraceful. You need to do something about it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. John Yakabuski): Back to the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you to the member opposite, through you, Mr. Speaker, for that question.

The member is right; there's no daylight between the member opposite and myself and our government with regard to ensuring that all long-term-care homes have not only the proper infrastructure and air conditioning, but the proper supports.

Let me point out that when you don't build long-term-care beds—like the previous government in 2011, in 2014, supported by the NDP. You don't have to air-condition a bed that you don't build.

Mr. Speaker, not only are we putting in air conditioning right across the province; we're also building those beds. We're also putting funding inside—we did in the budget of 2020, almost \$5 billion to hire the personal support workers, the nurses to provide four hours standard of care in this province, which will be leading all of Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. John Yakabuski): That concludes the time for questions and responses.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

GUJURATI SENIORS SAMAJ OF MISSISSAUGA

Mr. Deepak Anand: It is an honour and a pleasure to rise again in this esteemed chamber to kick off my second

term as MPP. I want to extend my sincerest appreciation to the residents of Mississauga–Malton, volunteers, supporters and my family for giving me the opportunity to serve.

Globally, more than one billion people volunteer for community well-being, including members of Gujurati Seniors Samaj of Mississauga. Founded as an informal group in 1990 by late Shri Vishnuprasad Raval, today GSSM has over 550 members, with an aim to preserve rich culture, to stay connected and serve the community. Over the years, GSSM has knitted mats out of plastic bags to support areas struck by natural disasters, organized food donation drives, Anand Mela fun fair, yoga, tai chi, picnics, outings and overseas trips, including cruises for senior members and the annual Diwali gala.

GSSM has also raised over \$420,000 through a walkathon for helping Trillium Health Partners Foundation. I encourage everyone to contact Kanoobhai, Kalaben and Dilip Bhai and join this year's walkathon on September 11 at Mississauga Valley Community Centre.

Thank you to the executive committee, all members, volunteers, sponsors and supporters of GSSM. You are the true definition of Ontario spirit. My best wishes to GSSM.

Remarks in Gujarati.

Keep growing and keep serving the community.

RIDING OF
MUSHKEGOWUK–JAMES BAY
CIRCONSCRIPTION
DE MUSHKEGOWUK–BAIE JAMES

Mr. Guy Bourgoïn: Today I would like to highlight the communities of Mushkegowuk–James Bay that are celebrating their 100th anniversary this summer. These communities all have a heart of gold and display a huge francophone and northern spirit.

The first one, Fauquier-Strickland: a population of just over 500 residents; located beside the Groundhog River, with its annual farmers' market showcasing local products made by its residents. Chez Pepere Groundhog River Farm offers a coffee shop, daily specials, baked foods and a farmers' market. Dépanneur Groundhog store is a one-stop shop as well as a to-go restaurant, with a unique twist on various poutines—one of the best in the region.

Ensuite, la municipalité de Moonbeam : une population de près de 1 200 résidents; renommée pour ses sentiers de nature, son terrain de golf, le parc provincial René-Brunelle, avec plusieurs choix de camping, à Twin Lakes ainsi qu'au lac Rémi; et le Dépanneur Meilleur avec sa fameuse crème molle et la Della-Pieta pour de la bonne pizza.

La ville de Hearst : une population d'au-delà de 5 000 résidents et renommée pour plusieurs endroits de chasse et pêche, ses sentiers pédestres, la marina Veilleux, les campings Fushimi et le Ranch, ainsi que son Marché Agriva et la Maison Verte. Hearst possède une fierté francophone du Nord, ayant une université francophone et la Place des Arts avec une variété de spectacles.

As you can see, northern Ontario has a rich culture and history, with lots to offer.

Join me in wishing these communities a happy 100th anniversary, and come celebrate with us.

Et encore une fois, merci pour votre support.

RIDING OF SCARBOROUGH–
AGINCOURT

Mr. Aris Babikian: I would like to begin by thanking the residents of Scarborough–Agincourt, my volunteers and donors for putting their trust and support in me to represent them for another term. I am humbled and honoured to serve the people of Scarborough–Agincourt and Ontario for four more years.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate you on your re-election as the MPP for Wellington–Halton Hills and your re-election as Speaker. I would also like to congratulate all my colleagues on their election to this chamber.

Finally, after two and a half years of challenging times, it was a great relief and pleasure to see the residents of Scarborough–Agincourt come together to celebrate Canada Day at my Canada Day community barbecue. It was heartwarming to see the residents come together and celebrate Canada's values, traditions and diversity. I had the opportunity to chat with residents and hear their concerns and get feedback from them while enjoying some burgers and ice cream.

I received lots of positive feedback on the historic investment our government is making in health care in Scarborough; more specifically, the new Birchmount Hospital in my riding. The voice of Scarborough is finally being heard.

Our nation and province have made substantial progress over the past few years.

Wishing you all a happy belated Canada Day as our country adds another beautiful year to its age.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Jeff Burch: We've had record-breaking heat waves in this province this summer, yet many seniors in long-term care are stuck in their rooms without air conditioning. Despite a change in the law requiring resident rooms to be fully air-conditioned by the end of June, 15% of homes have missed the deadline, and the homes that have made the deadline may not be any cooler.

Christine Zuk is sounding the alarm about conditions her mother, Shirley, has been forced to live with this summer in long-term care in Welland. After advocating for cooler rooms, Christine was told that the home was simply "in compliance." Not convinced, Christine began temperature testing her mother's room, and readings showed it was over 28 degrees inside her room.

Cooled public areas do not offer much reprieve when in COVID lockdown or when the residents cannot get themselves out of bed. The heat has been a challenge for Christine's father, Kit, when visiting Shirley. The gowns required during a COVID outbreak are plastic, disposable and inappropriate for the heat.

Shirley is fortunate to have great advocates like Christine, but that is not the case for many seniors living in long-term care. Christine points out that without legislated maximum acceptable temperatures, there is a profit incentive to not use the air conditioning to its full extent.

She says, “It is profit over resident care and they need to be forced to continue to keep their air conditioning working at a reasonable level. I think this underscores the need for the regulations to include a maximum acceptable temperature in resident bedrooms.”

1020

Speaker, I urge this government to follow through on its commitment, look seriously at this legislation and fix the loophole that is causing seniors to suffer in privately operated long-term care.

RIDING OF HASTINGS–LENNOX AND ADDINGTON

Mr. Ric Bresee: Mr. Speaker, let me begin by congratulating you on your election to that seat. I know you will serve us well.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I rise to highlight a few recent events in the amazing riding of Hastings–Lennox and Addington.

I must begin with the devastation created on July 24, when an EF2-class tornado, with speeds of up to 190 kilometres per hour, touched down across the middle of the riding; specifically, with a path about 1.4 kilometres wide across the north end of the township of Tweed. I had the opportunity to tour the affected areas, and I noted many acres of flattened forest, homes destroyed and businesses devastated. As bad as it was, I was so impressed that during the tour, we came out with the mayor and municipal staff, but also representatives from MMAH and other professionals, and a group of volunteers from Team Rubicon to support the residents. We heard a great number of stories where people of the community came together to support each other. Between good fortune and the helping care of neighbours, there were no fatalities and only a very few minor injuries. I’m grateful to live and work amongst such wonderful people.

I’d also like to report to this House that at its meeting of August 8, the council of the township of Loyalist unanimously chose to appoint the deputy mayor, Jim Hegadorn, to his seat as the mayor of Loyalist, as it was recently vacated. I know he will serve that municipality very well.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Catherine Fife: I want to address in my statement today the comments that the Minister of Health made yesterday. Given the context that the Ontario Medical Association has reported that 22 million patient services were cancelled during the pandemic, of which 10 million were surgeries or cancer screening procedures, we were genuinely shocked that the government did not address the

urgency of the medical and hospital crisis that’s playing itself out in Ontario hospitals.

Yesterday, the Ontario health minister said that she is not ruling out privatization as the government looks at ways to deal with this major issue. What is shocking, though, is that the Minister of Health has said that she is looking at innovative opportunities to address this health crisis.

We have a recommendation. Do you know what is innovative? Do you know what is creative? When you actually invest in public health care. And when you repeal Bill 124, you won’t see the mass exodus of health care professionals from this field.

We’re very concerned about the direction and the language that the Minister of Health is using. We are truly committed to strengthening the public health care system. In fact, it has created this narrative in the health care field—is this privatization by design or by neglect? Are you choosing to not invest in health care so that the private sector can move in? This is our concern, and we share that concern with the rest of this province.

RIDING OF BRUCE–GREY–OWEN SOUND

Mr. Rick Byers: I was going to do this in my inaugural address yesterday, but since that got changed, I want to start by congratulating you, Speaker, on your election this past Monday. While I was not a member this past session, I know you performed your duties with energy and dedication. Thank you for agreeing to serve this Legislature again.

I also want to thank those responsible for my being here in this chamber—of course, those are the great residents of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. I am very grateful for the confidence you showed in me as a new candidate in this past election. I will work hard to earn your trust every day.

Third, I want to thank and congratulate the Minister of Infrastructure for her broadband investment announcement yesterday. In Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, we were very grateful. There are 13,870 underserved homes and businesses throughout the riding that will now be serviced better as a result of her announcement. It means a huge amount to our residents, our farmers, our businesses, and our homes and our schools. So thank you, Minister, for that investment.

Finally, members, I’d like you to know that it’s just under six months now until Groundhog Day, and it’s your opportunity to come to Wiarton and see the groundhog Wiarton Willie project the forecast for spring. You’ll love it. There’s nothing like seeing fireworks at 7 a.m. in the morning, in the winter. I look forward to seeing you all there.

GARDE D’ENFANTS CHILD CARE

M^{me} Stephanie Bowman: Comme c’est la première fois que je me lève en Chambre, je tiens à vous féliciter et

à remercier les gens de Don Valley-Ouest de m'avoir élue députée. Je m'engage fermement à les représenter fidèlement et à servir les Ontariens au mieux de mes capacités.

I am speaking today to express the concerns of Don Valley West parents, local businesses and not-for-profits with regard to the implementation of the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care program, also known as CWELCC or \$10-a-day child care.

The Conservative government set a deadline of September 1—only 21 days from now—by when child care operators must sign on to this program to reduce child care fees for parents. As of mid-July, over half of Toronto operators have not yet signed on because they do not yet have the information they need to make an informed decision, like if and when they will be reimbursed for rebates they pay to parents.

The Conservative government's signing of the federal child care agreement was a good first step, but the lateness of doing so has left municipalities, parents and child care operators scrambling. I respectfully ask the Minister of Education to help them get answers.

It would be a shame if families were not able to tap into this great support, especially as the throne speech talked about easing the financial burden for families in Ontario.

MID-AUTUMN MOON FESTIVAL

Mr. Stephen Crawford: It's an honour to rise this morning and give my first member's statement in the 43rd Parliament.

Speaker, I want to take a moment to congratulate you on your re-election as Speaker of the House. Also, I congratulate all the members of this House. It's an honour to serve our constituents, and I thank my constituents for electing me back here to serve them here in the House.

In a few weeks, the Chinese and East Asian communities in my riding of Oakville will participate in the Moon Festival celebration event. In the Chinese community, it is called the Mid-Autumn Moon Festival or Mooncake Festival, and it is the second-most important celebration, after Chinese New Year.

I want to take this opportunity to highlight this important festival and also recognize the incredible work the organizers have had on the Oakville community. On Saturday, September 3, the Oakville Chinese Network Society will be hosting the Moon Festival celebration event. Finally, after two years of virtual events, this celebration will be in person at the Queen Elizabeth community centre. The festival is rich in history and tradition. It is a time to give thanks to the harvest of the past year, while also hoping for a prosperous harvest in the new year.

This important event is thanks to the Oakville Chinese Network Society, which has been an important connection in the Oakville Chinese community, along with other communities, by providing social, educational and rich cultural events. Since 2012, Rena Lu has led the organization.

Thank you, Rena, and all your dedicated volunteers, for all you do.

I want to wish everyone a very happy Mid-Autumn Moon Festival.

RESILIENT COMMUNITIES FUND

Mr. Lorne Coe: Nine Whitby organizations recently received approximately \$680,000 from the Resilient Communities Fund so they can continue to deliver the very best possible service for hard-working families in Whitby. Non-profit organizations like Community Care Durham are a crucial and valued part of the town of Whitby. Countless residents rely on their services and programs every day, and, even facing the impact of the COVID pandemic, these organizations deliver.

1030

In addition to Community Care Durham, other organizations in my great riding of Whitby that received the funding include the Charles H. Best Diabetes Centre, the Sunrise Youth Group, and Participation House.

Speaker, the Resilient Communities Fund provides grants of up to \$150,000.

It has been a priority for our government to fund successful programs like the Resilient Communities Fund, which helps non-profits adapt and grow, ensuring that they can continue providing the best service possible and make a positive difference in the lives of hard-working Ontario families.

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

HOUSE SITTINGS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that pursuant to standing order 9(g), the Clerk has received written notice from the government House leader indicating that a temporary change in the weekly meeting schedule of the House is required. Therefore, the afternoon routine on Wednesday, August 17, 2022, shall commence at 1 p.m.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is my pleasure to introduce nurse Cathryn Hoy, the president of the Ontario Nurses' Association, as well as Etana Cain, who are here today to watch the proceedings.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I'd like to welcome Kelly Harris to the Legislature today. Kelly does corporate and public affairs for PlasCred. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am pleased to welcome to this 43rd Parliament my partner, Jonathan Arnold. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Jill Dunlop: I would like to introduce two of my new policy staff members from the Ministry of Colleges and Universities: Matt Frola and Tay Rubman. Thank you for being here today.

Ms. Lise Vaugois: I'd like to welcome my partner, Maureen Ford, who is in the gallery and drove down from Thunder Bay with me to help me settle in, and my very good friend Diem Lafortune.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Toronto–St. Paul's.

Ms. Jill Andrew: Thank you, Speaker, and congratulations on your election once again.

I am here to welcome, as well, Cathryn Hoy from ONA, along with Etana Cain. Welcome to the Legislature, and thank you for your hard work.

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: I would like to welcome my parents, Keith and Barbara Bowman, as well as some members of my constituency office, Fatma and Caroline. Thank you for being here.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Nickel Belt, I understand, has a point of order.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I seek unanimous consent to move a motion to allow an emergency debate on the health care crisis and that it take place this afternoon during orders of the day.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Nickel Belt is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to move a motion to allow an emergency debate on the health care crisis this afternoon during orders of the day. Agreed? I heard a no.

GISÈLE LALONDE

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I understand the member for Ottawa–Vanier has a point of order.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Je demande le consentement unanime pour que la Chambre observe un moment de silence pour honorer le décès de Gisèle Lalonde, l'une des plus importantes défenseuses des droits des francophones de l'Ontario.

I seek unanimous consent for the House to observe a moment of silence to honour the passing of Madame Gisèle Lalonde, one of the most important advocates for the rights of francophones in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa–Vanier is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to observe a moment of silence to honour the passing of Madame Gisèle Lalonde, one of the most important advocates for the rights of francophones in Ontario. Agreed? Agreed.

I'll ask members to please rise.

The House observed a moment's silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Merci. I'll ask members to please take their seats.

QUESTION PERIOD

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Minister of Health.

Yesterday, the Minister of Health was asked by journalists whether the government is considering further privatizing our health care system. The minister said that the government is exploring all options.

Is this government looking to the private and for-profit sector to take over health care services that are currently publicly delivered?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Thank you for the question.

Allow me to clarify, or to repeat what I said yesterday, which was, in Ontario, you use your OHIP card to access health care services in the province of Ontario, and that will continue.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Well, that was hardly a "no."

Again, to the minister: Reliance on private health care providers will plunge our public hospitals and health care systems deeper into crisis. Bill 124 is draining staff from the public system, and private staffing agencies are gouging hospitals.

Will the minister allow private health care companies into Ontario, siphoning doctors, nurses and health care workers out of the public system?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: To be clear, Ontario has one of the strongest publicly funded health care systems in the world. It is world-renowned, first-class; it's second in terms of how much we spend on publicly funded health care. That will continue in the province of Ontario.

What I referenced yesterday was innovation. We should not be afraid of innovation. We do it very well in the province of Ontario, and we will continue to work with our partners to make sure that that innovation is encouraged and can continue.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: So I take that as a "yes."

Again, to the minister: Private corporations have a financial responsibility to generate profit. That's a direct conflict of interest with their responsibility to offer affordable, accessible and high-quality care, regardless of the patient's ability to pay.

Does the minister think patients should have to start paying for care they now receive as of right?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: No, no, no. OHIP cards are used in the province of Ontario to fund publicly funded health care systems. That will continue under our watch. There has never been a change where—we will continue to fund OHIP services through our health care system. What you are worried about, unnecessarily, is that we would be encouraging innovation.

There are many examples of innovation that are happening in the province today that we want to expand, not the least of which are examples with OHN—Ontario hospital network, SickKids and many others, which I'm happy to highlight if the member opposite is not aware of that innovation that is happening in the province of Ontario today.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll remind members to make their comments through the Chair.

HEALTH CARE

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: My question is for the Premier.

Just two days ago, I received a letter from a nurse in my riding. He shared a story about one of his patients: “My patient has fluid filling up his lungs, and he is less able to breathe. His oxygen is not coming “into his body with each passing day.

“It is not exaggerating to say that he is drowning slowly. He needs an urgent procedure to remove the fluid.”

This should have happened last week: “This was scheduled for last week—it has yet to happen” because of the staffing shortage.

1040

My question: What will the government do to help this suffering patient in the next 24 hours, and what will they do in the next 10 days to alleviate this staffing crisis that we see in our hospitals?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Welcome to the member opposite in her new role as a parliamentarian.

There is no doubt that staffing challenges impact patient care. That is why we have been working proactively to make sure that where we need those services, we have them. We’ve worked with Ontario Health to, for example, ensure that if an emergency department is at risk of closure, physicians who are prepared and willing to travel to other jurisdictions have that opportunity. They may travel for a couple of hours to go to a hospital network that they’re not traditionally tied in to. We’ve done that work. We need to do more of it, of course, but I want to reinforce that we have done a lot already. We have 10,500 new health care professionals working in the province of Ontario that we did not have without the innovation and the proactive approach that we have taken as a government.

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

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Back to the Premier: With respect, the question that I had was really about what you are going to do in the next 24 hours.

My constituent further invites all of us to consider this: Reflect on what it would be like to be unable to breathe during every single breath that you’re drawing. Please think about what it’s like when your lungs are filled with water. Reflect upon that.

Speaker, no one in Ontario hospitals should have to experience that agony because they’re waiting for an urgent procedure.

My question again is, will this government listen to health care professionals and implement the solutions that are needed to address the health care crisis and this understaffing crisis in our hospitals?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Again, through you, Speaker: Of course, we have provided additional funding to hospitals to ensure that their emergency departments and other backlog surgeries can proceed in a faster way. In some cases, that involves additional funding to allow those

surgery suites to be open longer into the evening, over the weekends. That kind of innovation, those kinds of investments mean that we can deal with the backlog and get through the number of people who are waiting for these critical services. We’ll continue that work. We’ll make sure that as hospitals and medical practitioners need the support, they will get it. They have the province of Ontario and the people of Ontario supporting them in that role.

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

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: This issue is not related and restricted to just one patient or one hospital, as we all know.

Another constituent of mine, Gregory, needs urgent abdominal surgery. But because of the surgical backlog that we have already heard a lot about, he was told to find a doctor outside of Ontario, never mind outside of the city or in another neighbourhood. He called my office to say this: “Do they really think someone in my condition is ready to try to find care outside of the province?”

Speaker, health care workers have told the government how to clear the surgical backlog: Hire 30,000 nurses, repeal Bill 124, and fund public health care at the rate of inflation. Will the government put these recommendations into action or are they really just setting up the excuse for privatization?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: As part of our plan to reopen, we’ve actually expanded by almost over 1,000 beds in ICU capacity. It means that things like the surgery backlog can be dealt with proactively.

We understand that there are many challenges that have happened as a result of individuals who could not access their primary care practitioner, who didn’t have the ability to get that diagnostic imaging. We have now essentially eliminated the imaging backlog that we’ve had and the diagnostic piece. We’re working very well with our health care partners to make sure that we focus as equally on the surgery backlog. That work will continue. But in the meantime, I think it’s really important for people to understand that a lot of this work happened because we understood we needed the capacity in the province of Ontario to be able to stay open and to continue to serve the people of Ontario.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Minister of Health.

Chris Hodgins lives in London West and had to take his 84-year-old mother to University Hospital ER for severe hip pain. She waited 16½ hours before being seen and then waited two hours more in the treatment room. Another patient with acute appendicitis waited five hours longer than Chris’s mother.

Speaker, how many hours will Londoners have to wait before this government finally acknowledges that our health care system is in crisis? Or does the entire ER have to shut down?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: It is absolutely critical that we address some of these delays and wait times. It's why, as part of our \$3.3-billion investment into the hospital sector, we also dedicated \$300 million specifically to reduce surgery backlogs from delays or cancelled surgeries and procedures due to COVID-19. That work will continue, but we need to drive that innovation and encourage that so that opportunities can be made available and we can expand, frankly, surgical suite timelines; we can offer incentives to physicians—which we've already done—to make sure that they can operate and get those surgery backlogs down, in the same way that we have, of course, with the diagnostic testing already dealt with.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Speaker, this government may think that privatization is the answer, but Londoners disagree.

Like many Londoners, a constituent told me that she and her husband have been unable to find a new family doctor. After being turned away from overwhelmed walk-in clinics, they felt they had no other option than to pay to join a private medical service in order to access basic medical care. They have the means to pay but feel that this is fundamentally wrong.

Why is this government more interested in promoting privatized two-tier health care than in making the urgent investments that our public health care system and our exhausted health care workers so desperately need?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: It is exactly why we have expanded residency spaces. It is exactly why I have worked with my colleagues to make sure that we have additional health care practitioners, doctors, nurses, personal support workers getting trained right here in the province of Ontario. It is precisely why we have ensured that the College of Nurses, the College of Physicians and Surgeons have been directed to deal quickly with the individuals who are living in the province of Ontario who want that licence, who want to be able to practise as a nurse, as a physician.

We'll continue that work. We are working with the colleges to make sure that they expedite those reviews and ultimately licensures, and we'll continue that work.

But it's not an individual piece. That's why we've expanded the residency. That's why we have expanded the number of students who are being trained. That's why we've encouraged the colleges to expedite those licences.

HOUSING

Mrs. Robin Martin: In Tuesday's throne speech, the government highlighted its desire to put in place the conditions that will lead to the construction of over a million homes.

We have seen that the lack of supply, along with the recent Bank of Canada interest rate hikes, are placing a strain on many young Ontario families looking to buy their first home—but it's not just potential homebuyers; it's

also people looking for rental accommodation in an increasingly tough environment.

More often than not, delays caused by red tape, infighting at local councils or simply bad policy have stalled construction of housing, be it rental, non-profit, long-term-care or even someone wanting to buy a home.

Yesterday, the government tabled legislation that would supplement the powers of mayors in Toronto and Ottawa. Specifically, I want to know how these added authorities help move projects along.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to reply.

Hon. Steve Clark: Yesterday, I was pleased to announce that our government is introducing legislation that is intended to give the mayors of Toronto and Ottawa the ability to move forward provincial priorities, select municipal department heads and deliver budgets.

We know that municipal governments play a crucial role in determining housing supply. And the reality is that over one third of Ontario's growth in the next 10 years will come in the cities of Toronto and Ottawa.

1050

Too many families today are struggling with housing and the rising cost of living. We need to empower our local leaders with the tools that they need to get it done. We are also counting on them to cut red tape, to build housing faster so that more Ontarians can realize the dream of attainable home ownership.

Thank you for the question.

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

Mrs. Robin Martin: In fact, Mr. Speaker, the Toronto board of trade has said, "Toronto faces numerous urgent city-wide challenges, from housing, land use, transit, ... budget" and "economic development.... Effective, timely solutions require a city chief executive with clear authority.... Now is the time to act."

Minister, we have a vibrant province. If our communities are to continue to thrive, people need to be able to stop dreaming of a home and know that they will have housing options—rental, non-profit, single detached, condo—choice and options, timely delivery as well, a clear path for residents and, more importantly, our municipal partners.

Does the minister agree with the board of trade, and does the legislation provide a realistic path to more homes, more choice and housing predictability in Toronto and Ottawa?

Hon. Steve Clark: The member and the Toronto regional board of trade are 100% correct. Urgent action is needed to address Ontario's housing crisis. Too many families are already struggling with housing and the rising cost of living.

We just had an election where we committed to Ontarians that we would build 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years. Increasing housing supply is a priority for our government, and we know that it is a shared priority with our municipal partners.

Speaker, the changes, if passed, would help empower the mayors of Toronto and Ottawa to ensure that they drive priority provincial projects forward. As our province grows, we need to ensure that communities keep pace. This will require bold solutions from all levels of government working together.

I'm proud to support Toronto and Ottawa as they cut through red tape and as they speed up development timelines so that more families can realize attainable home ownership.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Ms. Jennifer K. French: My question is to the Minister of Health.

Critically sick patients had to be transferred out of Bowmanville Hospital when Lakeridge Health had to make the unimaginable decision to close the intensive care unit there because of a staffing shortage.

Shelly, an ICU nurse who worked at Bowmanville, stood on the lawn of Queen's Park and bravely told us what it was like to watch fellow co-workers make the difficult decision to leave the bedside in a health care system where nurses cannot take it any longer.

Bill 124 has unfairly suppressed wages, and exhausted nurses feel devalued, underappreciated and disrespected—and this after two years of COVID. We need the Bowmanville ICU to reopen.

How will this Premier ensure nurses can stay and ICUs can stay open?

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

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Our government has a proud record of investments in health care, especially supporting our front-line health care heroes.

Since March 2020, we have added over 10,500 health care workers to the system. This also includes investing in the first new medical school in over 100 years in the GTA to ensure that we have—in Brampton, in the Durham region and in Scarborough—doctors and health care professionals into the future.

The members opposite have voted against each and every single one of those measures to support health care workers and increase health human resources in this province.

We will continue to do what we can and ensure that we support our health care heroes across this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary question? The member for Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Back to the Minister of Health: People admitted to an ICU are really sick. Many have a 5% to 10% chance of survival.

Bowmanville had to close their intensive care unit. They had to transport people sick enough to be in an ICU because they did not have enough nurses. It came with great risks.

There is an easy solution that will keep hundreds of nurses on the job. How much risk is the Minister of Health willing to take before she withdraws Bill 124?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I've said many times, it is concerning, deeply disturbing when an emergency room department or another department in a hospital must transfer patients. The Bowmanville four-bed ICU was, of course, one such example. We don't want that to happen, which is why we have been investing in our health care system, including \$3.3 billion, bringing the total annual investment in hospitals to over \$8.8 billion in the province of Ontario.

Specifically related to acute and post-acute, we've made a historic investment of \$1.5 billion to support the continuation of 3,500 acute and post-acute beds opening during the pandemic. Those beds will continue because we understand our population is growing. That's why we are making these investments in new hospitals in Ottawa, in Brampton, in Niagara. We're doing these investments because we understand the people of Ontario deserve no less.

HOUSING

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Between 2003 and 2018, the previous Liberal government allowed communities to develop webs of red tape, which led to frustration, dis-appointment and, ultimately, drastically reduced housing supply. Our municipal partners, both in Toronto and Ottawa, have been calling our government to help them reduce this red tape while working with them to increase the supply of a mixed range of housing.

It is abundantly clear to anyone that leadership at the provincial level is essential if we are to assist our municipal partners in reaching our goal of over a million new homes, as outlined in the speech from the throne.

As a Toronto member, I'm keenly aware of the challenges of lack of supply, but at the same time I am now more than ever looking for solutions that will have both immediate and lasting impacts.

Specifically, how will a strong-mayor system in Toronto help address housing supply?

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

Hon. Steve Clark: Our government is providing municipalities with the tools they need to get it done, and that includes working with us to build 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years. That's why we're supporting municipal governments which are ready to cut red tape and end the delays that have held back attainable housing for far too long.

We're providing enhanced tools to the mayors of Toronto and Ottawa to get more homes built faster. These mayors oversee the two largest cities in our province, which are projected to have over one third of our province's growth over the next decade. They need the tools to prepare for growth and ensure that the creation of new homes keeps pace with demand.

Speaker, we're going to work with our two largest cities and other fast-growing communities that are shovel-ready, committed to growth and ready to cut red tape.

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

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: We know that more needs to be done to work with our municipal partners to strengthen our infrastructure, expand our transit networks and, most importantly, build more homes.

Empowering strong mayors is a good start to addressing housing needs to help big cities like Toronto and Ottawa, but what is our government doing for the other municipalities across the province? Our government must work with other municipalities to ensure that housing development is a priority for all across this province.

Speaker, is the minister taking any other action to help municipal leaders to identify and resolve problems that stand in the way of building more homes and building them now?

Hon. Steve Clark: Thanks for the question.

To help communities across Ontario build more attainable homes, Ontario is launching the housing supply action plan implementation team. The team will provide advice on market housing initiatives, including building on the vision of the Housing Affordability Task Force, More Homes for Everyone Act and other government consultations.

The government intends to appoint Drew Dilkens, the mayor of the city of Windsor, as chair and Mayor Cheryl Fort from the township of Moosonee. Both Mayor Dilkens and Mayor Fort have excellent track records for their service and success for their residents. Other team members will be appointed in the coming weeks, with the first meeting to take place in the fall.

1100

NURSES

Ms. Lise Vaugeois: My question is to the Premier.

I have been contacted by nurses in my riding of Thunder Bay–Superior North expressing frustration with working in hospitals, continually short-staffed, while nurses from for-profit agencies are working next to them earning two and sometimes three times their wages.

How is it the Ministry of Health can justify limiting public sector nurses to a 1% increase with inflation near 8% while staff from for-profit agencies performing the same duties receive so much more?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I have to say that when I hear the member opposite talk about limiting opportunities, it concerns me greatly. We have a hospital system that has worked very well with their nurses' associations, with their medical associations, to make sure that all opportunities are explored to make sure that they have the appropriate coverage in their departments in their areas. We need to continue that work.

We have—as I've said many times—already expanded by 10,500 more health care workers working in the province of Ontario, including 6,700 to support hospitals in need. These programs support international health

professionals and students, as well as redeploy medical residents and physicians to where they are needed most critically. That work will continue, and we will ensure that we have a partner in our systems.

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

Ms. Lise Vaugeois: This government has created a crisis in health care as frustrated nurses leave the field in droves, frustrated by a two-tier approach to wages, stressful working conditions and the unfair measures of Bill 124. Private agencies, such as that owned by former Premier Harris's partner, profit greatly on public dollars while full-time nurses are made to suffer.

Will this government remove wage caps and end the health care crisis by ensuring we have full-time jobs with benefits instead of temporary and costly agency work?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: The more things change, the more they stay the same with the NDP. It's all about personality, right, Mr. Speaker? If they can't win an election based on policies—and we know that they never can because they've only done it once and people threw them so far out to the curb and never gave them the opportunity ever again. So what do they do? They start attacking the personality of individuals. That's what the NDP is all about. That's why they go from this to this to this to where the NDP leader can't even bring himself to sit in the chair of the opposition leader. He seeks refuge in the middle of his small, tiny caucus.

We will stand up for the workers of the province of Ontario. We'll stand up for nurses. We will build a better health care system, a better long-term-care system, a better education system, a better transportation system. We'll keep the economy moving.

Interjections.

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

Order.

We're ready to start the clock again.

Member for Guelph.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Thank you, Speaker. My question is for the Premier. But first, I'd like to congratulate you and all members in this Legislature for your election. I look forward to serving the people with each and every one of you.

Inflation is negatively impacting all Ontarians, especially the most vulnerable. It's impossible for people with disabilities to live on \$1,169 per month. An extra \$58 will force them to continue to live in legislated poverty. It's wrong. This is a moral issue. The people of Ontario want to care for the most vulnerable, and I would hope that the members opposite would as well.

Will the Premier do the decent thing and double ODSP rates so that people with disabilities can at least live at the low-income cut-off?

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

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you to the member opposite, and congratulations on your re-election and serving the people of Ontario.

There's no daylight between, I think, the member opposite and many of us to make sure that we, in these very difficult times, when people are feeling the pinch—particularly the most vulnerable and people, for example, on disability.

That's why, through the campaign, we said we were going to increase by an historic amount—5%—the Ontario Disability Support Program. That's why we are adjusting it for inflation. That's why we kept that promise after roundly being supported by the voters of Ontario, and we tabled it in the budget bill, Bill 2, the other day. Many Ontarians are feeling the pinch. That's why that's just one part of a suite of measures that we've taken to support the most vulnerable of Ontario.

I'll have more to say in the supplementary.

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Respectfully, Speaker, I don't think the minister fully understands the crushing cost of living in legislated poverty.

Poverty and rising food prices are driving food bank use to all-time highs. Geopolitics, excessive grocery profits and climate-fuelled droughts are disrupting local food supply chains and pushing food prices through the roof.

There are solutions—things like doubling ODSP rates, protecting local supply chains by permanently protecting prime farmland, legislation to stop price-gouging in concentrated grocery retail markets.

Will the minister commit to implementing any of these solutions to make groceries more affordable for people, especially people living with disabilities?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: With respect back to the member opposite, I would just point out that that was the biggest increase in over 10 years for ODSP. So it's this government that acted. We made a commitment to do that. We made a commitment to adjust it to inflation.

It's just one of many things that this government is doing, not least of which is the Ontario Community Support Program, which you know also supports for vision care, for dental care, for health care. It helps with meals, helps with prescriptions.

It's also why we have put in the budget the fifth round of social services relief, under the leadership of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, for supportive housing, to help the most vulnerable, to help people with disabilities in this province.

We're doing many things, and we will continue to do many things to help our most vulnerable in society as we work together to make a fair society.

COST OF LIVING

Ms. Jess Dixon: Inflation continues to negatively impact families across Ontario, with Stats Canada reporting

a year-over-year increase of 8.1% in June. As mortgage rates increase, so too does the cost of basic groceries, leaving many families in my riding and beyond worried about their future.

Soaring costs that put pressure on families is not the way to build a strong Ontario. Carbon taxes, which increase the cost of fuel and virtually every other product a person buys, red tape, and policies that restrict growth, that reduce opportunity, could devastate communities and the hard-working people who are trying to build a life within them.

Can the minister outline what immediate steps he is taking to support families across Ontario?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: I'd like to thank the member for that question.

Our government has been working tirelessly to rebuild our economy. We have lowered taxes for lower-income Ontarians, and we have reduced gas and fuel taxes. We negotiated a child care agreement to reduce costs for young families across Ontario. We eliminated licence plate renewal fees and, for the people of Durham, we eliminated the tolls the previous Liberal government put on Highways 412 and 418.

We have continued to focus on building a strong economy by reducing taxes and fees for job creators. We have stabilized electricity rates. We have continued to invest in our auto, mining, infrastructure and construction sectors.

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The road ahead is going to be uncertain. Global events in Europe and abroad are in our environment right now, but that's why we're making investments to transform our economy and unleash economic prosperity across the province.

Together, let's build Ontario.

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

Ms. Jess Dixon: The impact of these rising prices always is felt the heaviest by the most vulnerable in our communities.

We've already seen reports of increased food bank usage. The Daily Bread Food Bank in Toronto says it saw more than 170,000 visits in June alone—a record-high number that it says is only expected to keep growing, and I've heard similarly from food banks in my riding.

Many of my constituents are now confronting cost-of-living increases that have them worried about opportunities for their children and the stable financial future of their families.

Speaker, can the Minister of Finance please tell us what concrete steps the government is taking to keep costs down and to provide support for those most in need?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Mr. Speaker, the member is right, and this government knows the impact of rising prices is being felt all over Ontario, especially amongst the most vulnerable. That's why we are putting money back into the pockets of those who need it most.

We are increasing—as was just discussed—the monthly amount of the Ontario Disability Support

Program and adjusting future increases to rates based on inflation.

We're increasing the minimum wage, giving over 760,000 Ontario workers an increase.

And in our 2022 budget, Ontario's Plan to Build, we expanded the low-income family and individual tax rebate credit, which will impact people making up to \$50,000. That means, for about 1.1 million people, an extra \$300 in their pockets through a tax break every year.

This government is going to keep costs down for workers, families and seniors, for the people of Ontario, and they can rest assured that this Premier and this government will have their backs.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. Jamie West: My question is to the Premier.

The TSSA is an agency responsible for administering and enforcing the Technical Standards and Safety Act on behalf of the government. Their safety inspectors provide an invaluable service to our province and to public safety. They inspect every propane dispensing station, every amusement park ride and food truck. They inspect hospitals and construction sites. They even inspect nuclear power plants, Speaker.

These workers are members of OPSEU Local 546. They've been trying to bargain their first collective agreement since February of last year. After 17 months of delays and stall tactics, they voted to strike in July.

The TSSA claims that it has a contingency plan in place to ensure public safety. However, they haven't been transparent about this plan, who's doing the work or what their qualifications are.

The question is, has the Conservative government seen the contingency plan from TSSA, and if so, what inspections are being done to ensure the public can operate safely, and what are the qualifications of those conducting these inspections?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery.

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: Thank you to the member opposite for the question.

My ministry is aware of ongoing union negotiations between the TSSA, OPSEU and the Society of United Professionals. The union negotiations process is an independent process between the TSSA, OPSEU and the society. Mr. Speaker, as such, my ministry and I cannot intervene in this process.

The TSSA has advised us that it has prepared plans to ensure public safety in Ontario is not affected and impact to businesses is minimized in the event of labour disruptions.

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

Mr. Jamie West: Back to the Premier: This is a public safety crisis. The strike started three weeks ago, and there have already been numerous safety incidents of concern. These include a fire at Canada's Wonderland; a propane explosion in Sault Ste. Marie; and, just this past weekend,

three children were thrown from a ride due to a malfunction at the Campbellford Fair.

With the CNE set to open next week and agricultural fairs and exhibitions happening across this province, public safety is on the line.

Speaker, will the Conservative government demand the TSSA get back to the bargaining table and negotiate a fair first contract so our province's safety inspectors can get back to work keeping our families and our children safe?

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: As I said, my ministry and I cannot intervene in this process. But I can tell you that TSSA has prepared plans to ensure public safety in Ontario is not affected.

As part of our pandemic response, our government gave over \$2.4 million in financial support to the TSSA. This provided direct relief to businesses that faced significant operational and financial impacts. We also reduced permit and licence fees by 75% for 163 businesses operating almost 1,000 amusement parks across Ontario until the end of this year.

Mr. Speaker, our government is building a stronger Ontario from the ground up, recovering from the pandemic and 15 years of NDP-backed Liberal mismanagement of our province.

HOUSING

Mr. Andrew Dowie: Just recently, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. released a very worrying report. In it, they say that in order to reach housing affordability nationally by the year 2030, governments across Canada will need to take action and up to 3.5 million more homes will need to be built. The report further states that, "Increasing supply will be difficult. Critically, increasing supply takes time because the time to construct is significant, but so is the time to progress through government approval processes. This delay means that we must act today to achieve affordability by 2030."

Many of my younger constituents are concerned about the prospect of home ownership in the future.

Can the Associate Minister of Housing please explain what the government is doing to build more homes, as the CMHC report called for?

Hon. Michael Parsa: I want to thank the member for the question and congratulate him on his election to the people's House.

Ontarians are facing the rising cost of living and certainly a shortage of homes. Our government was re-elected with a strong mandate to help more Ontarians find more homes that meet their needs and their budgets.

We all know that Ontario accounts for two thirds of the population growth in Canada. That's why, under our ambitious plan, our government will build 1.5 million new homes over the next 10 years to keep costs down and make life more affordable for all Ontarians. We're also speeding up the approval process while implementing recommendations from the Housing Affordability Task Force. The steps that our government is taking are working. Over 100,000 homes have been built in 2021—and more than

13,000 new rental starts here in the province of Ontario; that's the highest in over 30 years.

Speaker, next week I'm heading over to AMO in Ottawa to be able to continue collaboration with our municipal governments.

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

Mr. Andrew Dowie: RBC's latest housing affordability report reveals that the housing situation in our province is the worst it has been since the early 1990s. RBC senior economist Robert Hogue stated, "The Bank of Canada's 'forceful' interest rate-hiking campaign will further inflate ownership costs in the near term, putting RBC's national affordability measure on a path to worst-ever levels."

Can the associate minister please outline the immediate action that this government will focus on to restore and safeguard housing affordability in our province?

Hon. Michael Parsa: Again, I thank the member for the question.

Our government's policies have delivered historic results in getting more housing built faster, and they certainly complement our more than \$4.3-billion investments over three years to grow and enhance community and supportive housing for vulnerable Ontarians and Indigenous peoples, address homelessness and respond to COVID-19.

The More Homes for Everyone plan, launched in March 2022, outlines the next steps we're taking to address Ontario's housing crisis, such as accelerating approval timelines and protecting homebuyers from unethical business practices. For example, changes were made to provide an incentive for municipalities to make decisions in a timely manner on zoning and site plan applications. Effective January 1, 2023, if a municipality does not make a decision within the legislated timeline, they would be required to gradually refund the application fee to the applicant. Municipalities could avoid lost revenues by improving processes to support timely decisions.

We remain steadfast—

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

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SERVICES HOSPITALIERS HOSPITAL SERVICES

M. Joel Harden: Ma question s'adresse à la ministre de la Santé. Le 6 et 7 août, l'Hôpital Montfort, l'hôpital francophone de notre ville, a fermé ses urgences, à chaque fois pour une période de 12 heures. Le problème était la pénurie d'infirmières. Cet hôpital existe parce qu'un puissant mouvement communautaire l'a sauvé d'un gouvernement conservateur, en 1997, qui voulait fermer définitivement ses portes.

Monsieur le Président, ce gouvernement a-t-il l'intention de revenir à cet héritage?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: We know that the Montfort Hospital in the Ottawa region is a critical hospital partner that will continue to operate strongly in the province of Ontario and in the Ottawa region.

Specifically regarding the ER closing: As I've mentioned, whether an emergency department has to close for two hours, a shift or, unfortunately, over a weekend, there are processes that are in place to avoid in all possible cases that happening. In some situations, that cannot be the case, and there is a very clear process that lays out what has to happen in terms of notifying first responders, notifying the community. And of course, the hospital continues to operate and have staff there to redirect people to nearby hospitals if and when an emergency does appear at their doors.

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

M. Joel Harden: Pardonnez-moi, mais concernant un hôpital comme l'Hôpital Montfort, il faut parler en français avec des questions qui sont posées en français.

Donc, monsieur le Président, je crois que les francophones méritent le droit à ces soins de santé dans leur propre langue. Qu'est-ce qu'il faut faire pour continuer de la sorte?

Il faut se souvenir des paroles de Gisèle Lalonde, qui était la chef du mouvement SOS Montfort qui a sauvé cet hôpital en 2002. Elle a dit : « Pour faire entendre nos voix, on doit continuer la bataille par ici. »

For the Anglophones in the room, she said, "To make ourselves heard, we had to fight them from here. And Toronto would listen because we'd fight so hard they'd hear" us from Toronto.

Les gens sont là pour défendre l'Hôpital Montfort. Quel est le message de la ministre aujourd'hui—en français?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: It's such a pleasure to have the member back and, in a respectful place, have a conversation about how we can work together to ensure our health care capacity and the people of Ontario are served.

I will say, Speaker, that as I mentioned in my previous answer, Montfort Hospital is a very critical partner in the Ottawa region, serving the people of Ontario.

We will continue those partnerships. We will work with our partners. We are about solutions.

They can talk about the problems.

In the meantime, let's get the job done—which is what we have been doing and what we will continue to do.

ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING

Mr. Rob Flack: For nearly two years, the pandemic has disproportionately impacted significant local events and festivals that brought our communities to life and Ontarians together.

In my riding of Elgin–Middlesex–London, families and friends count on attending exciting events such as the Oxford Renaissance Festival in my hometown of Dorchester.

We missed out on the fun opportunity to share good times with friends, old and new. These local events are always an important part—I repeat: an important part—of social well-being. They also provide valuable support to our local economy and attraction for tourists that our businesses on Main Street always count on.

Residents and local business owners have told me that even though Ontario has opened up, thankfully, they worry that they will never recover from the interruption and our local events won't be as widely attended as they have in the past.

My question, on behalf of residents, festival organizers, local businesses and tourists: What will this government do to support our unique festivals and events after having been shuttered for so long?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Neil Lumsden: To the member: We are investing more than \$48 million to help festivals and event organizers carry out events to encourage people to travel, to participate and rediscover the beauty and diversity that all Ontario communities have to offer.

Mr. Speaker, for this year we have more than doubled the annual funding usually provided to festivals and events. We recognize the hardships and experiences the sector has suffered due to COVID-19, and we are giving a much-needed boost to ensure long-term success.

This investment is a continuation of a historic one-time COVID-19 recovery fund of 2021 and includes \$42.9 million for 547 festivals and events through the Reconnect Ontario program—that's a record number—and \$5.2 million committed to marquee events through Reconnect Ontario.

Reconnect Ontario is supporting events in every tourism region of the province—events like the Oxford Renaissance Festival, Track to the Future Mural Festival, Our House and The View From Here.

Mr. Speaker, this is about driving business to communities and helping businesses get stronger. That's what we're doing.

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

Mr. Rob Flack: I'm very grateful for the successful applicants in my riding. However, I'm also aware that other applicants who did not receive funding are being left feeling discouraged.

There is no question that these events have suffered dramatically throughout this pandemic, and these investments provide organizations a significant boost.

For many individuals, these local community tourism events are the main source of pride and camaraderie. No matter how small they might seem, they play a part in the tapestry of what makes Ontario great.

Can the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport please explain the rationale behind why some applicants did not receive funding, and what we will do as a government to support their efforts in encouraging tourism throughout this great province?

Hon. Neil Lumsden: Mr. Speaker, and to the member: Let's not forget, all events are important to us, large and small.

Given the unprecedented demand for this year, not all events could be supported, even though we doubled the amount of funding available. We ensured festivals and events of all sizes across all regions of Ontario received investments to offer new and improved experiences that will attract more tourists and drive greater revenue from visitors.

Mr. Speaker, when the 2023 Reconnect Ontario program launches, tourism advisers from my ministry are more than happy to sit down and discuss and support bids for Reconnect Ontario to make them stronger and more viable. But Reconnect Ontario is just a part of what the government is doing to support the economic recovery of the tourism industry.

Through the Ontario Tourism Recovery Program, we provided \$100 million in critical funding to key tourism anchors in communities across the province to strengthen local economies and secure critical jobs, including the Ontario Staycation Tax Credit to encourage Ontarians to stay at home, spend money and enjoy the great things Ontario—

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

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is to the Premier.

Windsor has some of the highest wait times for emergency room care across the entire province. I've heard from constituents who are waiting 20 hours to be seen. Nurses and other health care workers are burnt out, working multiple shifts back to back. The minister recently blamed the same health care workers for the government-created crisis that we are experiencing. This Conservative government continues to suppress their wages, forcing nurses to leave the profession in record numbers. Many in Windsor—Essex work in the US, where they are respected, protected and paid appropriately.

Will this government immediately repeal Bill 124 and work to fix our health care system rather than tear it down?

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

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: We are thankful to our health care heroes across this province for the contributions they make.

Our record investments into health care, Mr. Speaker—let's take a look at our record in the city of Windsor. For the first time, a government—this government—is building a new hospital in the city of Windsor. After 15 years of being neglected by the Liberal government—which the members opposite propped up—this government took action to build in cities like Windsor and Brampton that were ignored.

Unfortunately, the member opposite voted against a new hospital in Windsor.

We are going to continue to ensure that we build health care capacity across this province, whether it's building new hospitals in Windsor, in Brampton, in Mississauga, in Niagara or across this province. We hope that the members opposite can support that plan to build Ontario.

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

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Back to the Minister of Health: CBC recently spoke to a Windsor resident who waited 19 hours—

Interjections.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I wish the government side would listen, because this is very serious. CBC recently spoke to a Windsor resident who waited 19 hours to be seen in the emergency department. She has been on a wait-list to obtain a family doctor for a great deal of time now. Suffering from severe back pain, she went to walk-in clinic that, in turn, referred her to the ER. She waited 19 hours to be seen and eventually was told that she has an 8.7-centimetre cancerous kidney tumour and blood clots in her lungs.

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I want to send this over to the Minister of Health so she knows that there is a crisis here in Ontario.

We have a shortage of family and emergency department physicians in Windsor and across Ontario.

It is imperative that Ontarians have access to timely medical care, to cancer screenings by family physicians.

Why won't this government finally do something to address the health care shortage, repeal Bill 124 and ensure that people have access to timely medical care?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Speaker, through you: There is no one who thinks that a 19-hour wait in an emergency room, waiting for a physician to see the patient, is acceptable—which is, frankly, why we are doing so much. We have been seized with this. The Premier talked about this.

In the throne speech, we said we are going to build a better health care system in the province of Ontario, because, frankly, the NDP and the Liberals didn't do it when they had the opportunity.

We will make sure that foreign-credentialed health care professionals get the opportunity to get credentials, to get their licence in the province of Ontario quickly. We will expand—we've already expanded—the Learn and Stay program so that nurses who learn in their communities can stay and work in that community. We have expanded the opportunity for residency, for new grads to stay in the province of Ontario. All of this work is ongoing, without a doubt.

I don't find a 19-hour wait acceptable; I'm sure that you do not. But work with us to build up this system and be positive about what we have been able to—

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

EDUCATION

Mr. Deepak Anand: My question is for the Minister of Education.

Minister, in the past, the government has provided direct financial support to hard-working, caring parents. It was music to my ears when I heard in the throne speech that the government is again going to provide financial relief to parents. While the opposition has criticized this relief, we know its importance and its impact to the parents.

Minister, why is this investment critical, especially now, more than ever, when parents are facing economic difficulty?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I want to thank the member from Mississauga–Malton for this question. I think it is timely, with the challenge of national inflation rising and the cost of living impacting every single one of our constituents.

We have an opportunity in this House to provide additional financially—even if it is incremental—to make life a bit more affordable for the moms and dads of this province, who have borne so much of this pandemic.

It's interesting; the member from Davenport, as she criticizes me on the other side, said yesterday, "It's very disappointing." What is disappointing, Speaker, is that when as legislators we have a duty, an opportunity, to provide relief, that we all stand up and we provide it to the parents of this province—every one of us should be united by that mission. It's sad that when we did this in August 2020, with \$200 to every child; and when we did it in February 2021, with another \$200 to every child; and when we doubled it to \$400 in May 2021, in each and every example, New Democrats and Liberals opposed it.

This Premier will continue to make life more affordable. And the message to parents is quite simple: Relief is on the way.

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

Mr. Deepak Anand: Through you, Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Thank you for thinking about the parents. Thank you for supporting the parents. It is the right thing to do, just like getting kids back to school so students can learn important life skills.

Speaker, to the minister: While financial relief is on the way, what can students, like my own high-school-going daughter, expect and look forward to this September?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: In addition to supporting parents, yes, we have a plan for these kids to catch up, and it starts with them being in school this September and staying in school, uninterrupted, for the duration of the school year.

Our mission is simple: It is a normal, a stable and, yes, a more enjoyable school year for these kids. They deserve it, and I know we all believe that. In order to put that vision into practice, it's about having a plan to help these kids catch up. The most consequential policy we can achieve as legislators for these kids is to keep them in school and stand up for stability—be it from the pandemic or from the labour negotiations.

These kids deserve to be in school. In every region of the province I've heard this same message from parents, "Get my kids in school and keep them there," and our commitment is to do just that.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question is to the Premier.

The Premier passed legislation requiring long-term-care homes to have air conditioning for residents in their bedrooms; 15% missed the deadline. Despite this, almost 100 homes across Ontario have no AC at all.

In June, July and August—just days ago—temperatures were in the 30s, with a humidex of nearly 40 degrees. In homes with COVID outbreaks, this meant seniors were roasting in rooms above 40 degrees for several days at a time, some having heatstroke and dying.

Across Ontario, staff were overwhelmed and under-supported. Bill 124 continued to cap their wages and force people out of the profession.

He knew that seniors were deprived of water. He knows they're being confined to their rooms for days and denied air conditioning in a deadly heat wave. Clearly, seniors' care is not a priority for this government.

Speaker, will the Premier finally make seniors in long-term care a priority? Announce today that being the Minister of Long-Term Care will no longer be a part-time job in this government. Our seniors—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. To reply, the Minister of Long-Term Care.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, talk about part-time—let's look at the record of the NDP. The first time they started asking about air conditioning was when we were 90% of the way of getting air conditioning in every single room in the province of Ontario. Then, all of a sudden it became important to the NDP. That's when it became important. But here's the reality, for the new colleagues who might not have been here. They actually voted against air conditioning in every room. They voted against it. They voted against adding 28,000 PSWs and health care professionals in our long-term care. He got up in his seat and voted against it. They voted against 58,000 new and upgraded beds for our seniors. That is the shameful record of the NDP.

Welcome to the party. We're getting it done for seniors. We're getting it done for health care. We're getting it done for the people of the province of Ontario in a way that they never could and they never—

Interjections.

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

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Municipal Affairs has a point of order.

Hon. Steve Clark: Yes, a point of order: I'd like to correct my record. In response to a question regarding our housing supply action plan implementation team, I

referred Her Worship Mayor Cheryl Fort to the wrong municipality. She is the mayor of Hornepayne. I apologize.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: I rise on standing order 59 to outlay the business for the coming week.

Mr. Speaker, I'll congratulate all members on what was a very fun and entertaining and very fruitful first week for the people of the province of Ontario and congratulate all members on their hard work.

On Monday, August 15, and on Tuesday, obviously the House will not be sitting so that members from all sides can attend the AMO conference in Ottawa.

We will be returning on Wednesday, August 17. In the morning, obviously, we will be dealing with Bill 3, the Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act, 2022—again, to remind all colleagues that we will be returning at 1 o'clock on the Wednesday. In the afternoon, we will be dealing again with Bill 3, the Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act.

Then, on Thursday, August 18, in the morning, we will be dealing with Bill 2, the budget measures act—and again in the afternoon, on the budget, Bill 2.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): There being no further business this morning, this House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1139 to 1300.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

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

Mr. Joel Harden: I just wanted to correct my record from this morning. In debate I suggested to the Minister of Health that it wasn't her right to respond in one of Canada's two official languages. That was incorrect and wrong and I apologize to the Minister of Health for making that remark this morning. I've got to be better than that.

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I move that when the House adjourns today it stand adjourned until 9 a.m. on Wednesday August 17, 2022.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Ms. Khanjin has moved that when the House adjourns today it stand adjourned until 9 a.m. on Wednesday August 17, 2022. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Joel Harden: I have a petition here entitled Raise Social Assistance Rates. I want to thank Dr. Sally Palmer from McMaster University in Hamilton for sending these to me.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

I’m happy to sign this petition and send it to the Clerks’ table with page Adam.

INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

Mr. Ric Bresee: I’d like to bring forward a petition.

“Whereas we know that building critical infrastructure is crucial to delivering better services, moving people faster and generating long-term sustainable economic growth; and

“Whereas under the leadership of Premier Ford our government is making historic investments to build and repair infrastructure in every region of Ontario; and

“Whereas at the heart of the plan is a capital investment of \$158.8 billion over the next 10 years, with \$20 billion in 2022 and 2023 alone, and includes plans to invest in trains, roads and subways; and

“Whereas our plan includes \$25.1 billion in capital over 10 years to support planning, building and improving highways, including Highway 413, the Bradford Bypass, the 401 and Highway 7; and

“Whereas part of this capital investment includes \$61.6 billion in capital over 10 years for public transit, including expanding GO rail services to London and Bowmanville; and

“Whereas our government plans to invest in hospital infrastructure with a \$40-billion, 10-year program; and

“Whereas these investments will increase the capacity in our hospitals, build new health care facilities and renew existing hospitals and community health centres; and

“Whereas in education, our government is investing \$21 billion, including about \$14 billion in capital grants over the next 10 years to support the renewal and the expansion of school infrastructure and child care projects;

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

“To urge all members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support Ontario’s historic program to build highways and key infrastructure.”

NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to present this petition on behalf of 224 residents of Gogama in my riding. It was sent to me by Wivine Bruneau, and it reads as follows:

“Gogama Nursing Station

“Whereas Gogama is an isolated northern community with many seniors and residents who need access to primary care;

“Whereas the Gogama Nursing Station provided access to quality primary care for decades but service has been inconsistent and infrequent since ... 2018;

“Whereas residents in isolated northern communities in Ontario deserve equitable access to health care;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“To ensure that the Gogama Nursing Station is funded, staffed and fully functioning to deliver quality primary care consistently.”

I fully support this petition, will fix my name to it and send it to the table with page Pania.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Deepak Anand: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas our government was elected with a plan to stay open by investing in hospitals, long-term-care homes and home care and Ontario’s health care workforce; and

“Whereas to accomplish this our government is:

“—investing \$40 billion in capital over 10 years for hospitals and other health infrastructure to meet the challenges that may lie ahead;

“—spending \$764 million over two years to provide nurses with up to \$5,000 retention bonuses;

“—investing \$42.5 million over two years, beginning in 2023-24, to support the expansion of 160 undergraduate and 295 post-graduate positions, including” the new hospital and the “medical schools in Brampton and Scarborough;

“—investing an additional \$1 billion in home care over three years;

“—shoring up domestic production of critical supplies and ensuring Ontario is prepared for future emergencies by committing, as of April 2022, more than \$77 million of the Ontario Together Fund to leverage almost \$230

million in investments to support manufacturing of Ontario-made personal protective equipment;

“—investing \$3.5 billion over three years to support the continuation of over 3,000 hospital beds put in place during the pandemic, and \$1.1 billion over three years to support the continuation of hundreds of new adult, pediatric and neonatal critical care beds added during COVID-19;

“—a new refundable Ontario Seniors Care at Home Tax Credit to help seniors aged 70 and older with eligible home care medical expenses to help people stay in their homes ... ; and

“—a province-wide expansion to the community paramedicine program, enabling community paramedics to provide key non-emergent health care services within homes for eligible seniors;

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

“To urge all members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to continue to make strategic investments....”

I fully support this petition, and I will send it through page Benjamin.

GASOLINE PRICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Natalie Levellée from Blezard Valley for this petition, and it reads as follows:

“Gas Prices

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

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

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

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

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They “petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

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

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and give it to my good page Zane to bring it to the Clerk.

SÉCURITÉ ROUTIÈRE

M^{me} France Gélinas: J’aimerais remercier M^{me} Carmen Girard de Hanmer dans mon comté pour ces pétitions.

«Rendre l’autoroute 144 près de la rue Marina sécuritaire.

«Alors que les résidents de Levack, Onaping et Cartier, et les gens qui voyagent sur l’autoroute 144, sont préoccupés par la sécurité d’une section de l’autoroute 144

près de l’intersection de la rue Marina et aimeraient prévenir d’autres accidents et décès;

«Alors que trois accidents sont survenus l’été dernier et quatre accidents sont survenus cet été, qui ont entraîné des blessures, le déversement de diesel dans l’eau et la fermeture de l’autoroute 144 pendant des heures, ce qui a retardé la circulation et bloqué les résidents;

«Alors que le ministère des Transports a terminé l’examen de l’autoroute 144 près de la rue Marina, et ils ont recommandé des améliorations et se sont engagés à réévaluer pour que l’autoroute devienne sécuritaire. »

Ils pétitionnent «l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario pour que le ministère des Transports revoie immédiatement l’autoroute 144 près de la rue Marina et s’engage à la rendre sécuritaire, le plus tôt possible, » mais au plus tard, au mois de décembre 2022.

Je vous remercie. J’appuie cette pétition et je la donne à Lucia pour l’amener à la table des greffiers.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Nicole Dupras from Azilda in my riding for these petitions.

“MS Specialized Clinic in Sudbury.

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

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

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

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

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

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

STRONG MAYORS,
BUILDING HOMES ACT, 2022

LOI DE 2022 POUR DES MAIRES FORTS
ET POUR LA CONSTRUCTION
DE LOGEMENTS

Mr. Clark moved second 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): Would the minister care to lead off the debate? I recognize the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Steve Clark: I would love to, Speaker. Thanks so much.

It is a real pleasure and a privilege to rise for second reading of our government's proposed Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act. I want to, right off the top, say that I'll be sharing the government's time with the Associate Minister of Housing and the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. So the three of us will share the government's time.

Speaker, Ontarians re-elected our government at a time when they are facing rising living costs and a shortage of housing. They sent us back to work with a strong mandate, because we promised to get more housing built faster. We know that Ontario is in the middle of a housing supply crisis; people are desperately looking for housing that meets their needs and their budget. Yet today in Ontario, Speaker, too many families are frozen out of the housing market. Young people are searching for their first home, a home where they'll have room to have children and grow their family, while still being close to work, schools and essential services. Seniors are thinking about downsizing and want homes that meet their needs as they age, without having to move far away from the people and the places that they love.

Everyone is looking for something different, and we knew we needed clear support to get the right policies in place to build more homes faster.

Nous savions que nous avions besoin d'aide pour adopter les bonnes politiques afin de bâtir plus d'habitations plus rapidement.

Our government created the Housing Affordability Task Force of industry leaders and experts to recommend additional measures to increase the supply of market housing to address the housing crisis, and that task force stated in their introductory letter of their report—I'm going to paraphrase it for members now, Speaker:

"For many years, the province has not built enough housing to meet the needs of our growing population...."

"Efforts to cool the housing market have only provided temporary relief to homebuyers. The long-term trend is clear: house prices are increasing much faster than Ontarian's incomes. The time for action is now."

Speaker, the task force also pointed out, after meeting with a variety of housing sector partners, that they heard solutions that fit into five themes:

- (1) increasing density across the province;
- (2) ending exclusionary municipal rules that block or delay new housing;
- (3) depoliticizing the housing approvals process;
- (4) preventing abuse of the housing appeals system; and
- (5) financial support to municipalities to build more housing.

I want all members of the House to keep the second and the third recommendations in mind. Those are ending exclusionary municipal rules and depoliticizing the housing approvals process.

Speaker, our government's target is to build 1.5 million homes in the next 10 years. We have and we will continue to explore ways to help municipalities get more homes built faster. As the task force pointed out, there's a bottleneck when it comes to getting shovels in the ground

for new home construction. Development approvals and appropriate zoning are often delayed or, in some cases, hindered because of opposition from some members on local municipal councils. Some projects are even abandoned. Even if the project finally gets a go-ahead, a tremendous amount of damage is done.

The C.D. Howe Institute found restrictions and extra costs on building new housing are dramatically increasing the price of housing developments. These restrictions include delays on projects and also permitting approvals. The institute found, Speaker—you really have to listen to this, because this is staggering—that these barriers add approximately \$168,000 or 22% to the average cost of a single detached home in the city of Toronto. What's more, Speaker, the Ontario Association of Architects concluded that for a 100-unit condominium building right here in Toronto, delayed approvals cost home builders almost \$2,000 per unit per month—unbelievable. These are costs that are ultimately passed down to homeowners and to renters.

Delays are contributing to an unfortunate statistic that was highlighted recently by Rescon, Ontario's leading association of residential builders. Rescon says that we are underproducing housing by about 12,000 units per year here in Ontario. I think we all agree: We need to do everything we can to help ensure that there is unimpeded construction of homes.

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A good step, Speaker, would be for us to tackle the political logjam in getting approvals. As the Housing Affordability Task Force found in its consultations, stakeholders agree with us that ending exclusionary municipal rules and depoliticizing the housing approvals process are good first steps. This is an issue that transcends municipal ward boundaries, yet it can be at the ward level that the logjam begins. In fact, the cost of housing is the top issue for voters in the upcoming municipal elections this fall. People with well-paying jobs are unable to find housing in both urban city centres and communities across the province because of how quickly costs are rising.

In our electoral system, residents vote for the mayor of their lower-tier and single-tier municipality, in addition to their local councillor. They expect the mayor to look after the overall challenges their community faces, including the need for more housing. However, it's often unrealistic for mayors to meet the demands under our current system. I want to quote the Premier. Our Premier has said mayors are "accountable for everything. But they have the same single vote as a single councillor."

In Ontario, a mayor has got one vote on their municipal council, just like all other members. That means the mayor, who could be responsible for three million people, has just as much say on a local issue as one councillor. And yet, despite this, voters have an expectation: Voters expect their mayor to be responsible for all the major city projects and priorities. They're counting on their mayor to get things done. They count on their mayor to find solutions important to them, including housing.

Today, I think we can agree: Priority projects simply take too long to get through municipal councils and through committees. To be truly effective for their communities, mayors need our support. They need to be empowered. That's why, Speaker, I am so very proud that we're leading off second-reading debate on the proposed Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act. The changes would, if passed, give the mayors of the cities of Toronto and Ottawa the ability to drive policy changes, select municipal department heads and bring forward budgets, and it would help our municipal partners deliver on our shared priorities, including housing.

Our government is keeping costs down, and we're going to build 1.5 million homes to address the housing supply crisis. We know that empowered mayors can better help the province and municipalities work together on housing and other initiatives that are critically important to communities. It is something we need to keep in mind as we expect record growth in the province.

The population of our province of Ontario continues to grow. As it grows, housing has to keep up. I said this this morning: The reality is over one third of Ontario's growth in the next decade is going to happen in Toronto and Ottawa. These cities have shown us that they're shovel-ready. They've shown us that they're committed to growth and committed to cutting red tape.

Now I'd like to take a few minutes before I pass the torch along to my colleagues. I'd like to explain specifically how our proposed changes would support growth in Toronto and Ottawa. Our bill proposes changes to the Municipal Act, the City of Toronto Act and other pieces of legislation that, if passed, the changes would provide the heads of council in the city of Toronto and the city of Ottawa with additional governance tools and increased powers to align municipal decision-making with provincial priorities. These increased executive powers would allow them to better organize city hall.

These mayors would be able to hire and fire the chief administrative officer, as well as other department heads. They would also be able to create and reorganize departments, and they would also have the authority to appoint chairs or vice-chairs for committees and for local boards identified in regulation, as well as establish committees. These mayors would also be able to forge a path on the council floor.

If passed, these changes would allow the mayors in both the cities of Ottawa and Toronto to direct provincial priority items for council consideration. This could also include directing staff to prepare proposals. We believe the proposed changes would maintain a solid municipal decision-making framework. Of course, there needs to be a system with checks and balances in place. Mayors would be able to support priority items, as well as their vision for their communities, through the ability to develop the municipality's budget and then table it for council consideration.

Council would be able to propose amendments to the budget, subject to the mayor's veto and the council's override process. Mayors would also have the ability to

veto bylaws passed by council in order to further a provincial priority. But as I mentioned, council would still have a role in amending the budget. They could override a mayor's veto with a two-thirds majority vote.

We're also proposing changes to the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act that would require a mayor to declare any financial conflicts related to the use of the new powers. The changes would also prevent a mayor from using the powers where they have a financial conflict.

Because of this increased authority that we're proposing for the mayors, we also want to ensure that voters have their say if a mayor leaves office earlier than expected. That's why we would require a by-election to replace a mayor with these increased powers if their office becomes vacant, rather than having the current choice of either a by-election or an appointment.

Speaker, we did not take the development of our proposals lightly. We've looked at other cities that provide mayors with executive powers. Cities like Chicago, London, Los Angeles and Paris all have a strong-mayor system that works. The mayors in these cities have strengthened roles and additional administrative and executive powers in developing budgets, and some have the opportunity to veto certain items.

These strong-mayor systems support the needs of their growing communities, just as it can support the needs of growing communities in Toronto and Ottawa. This is why we're putting our trust in local leadership of these two cities, to give the mayors the responsibility to help deliver on our shared provincial-municipal priorities.

Our government believes that a strong-mayor system will help address the housing crisis. We're not alone in our belief. I'd like to share a quote from the Toronto Region Board of Trade:

"Toronto faces numerous urgent city-wide challenges, from housing, land use, transit, transportation, budget, economic development and climate. Effective, timely solutions require a city chief executive with clear authority to set an agenda, appoint senior city staff, and bring forward policy solutions to council."

The board goes on to say that for almost two decades, they have long advocated stronger powers for Toronto's mayor. And they conclude, "Now is the time to act." We're moving quickly on this priority as we want to get our proposed changes in place in time for that council term which begins in mid-November.

Our government trusts Ontarians. The population is growing and housing needs to keep up. We're looking at places that are shovel-ready, committed to growth, and cutting red tape.

Nous envisageons des localités qui sont prêtes pour les travaux, engagées envers la croissance et disposées à réduire les formalités administratives.

That's why we're putting our trust in local leadership by giving the mayors of Toronto and Ottawa more responsibility to develop on our shared provincial-municipal priorities, including our commitment to build 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years. The province

and these two municipalities can work together to ensure housing is more attainable for the people of Ontario.

I'd be more than happy to send things over to my associate minister to continue the conversation. Thank you so much for listening.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Associate Minister of Housing.

Hon. Michael Parsa: I'd like to thank, certainly, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for sharing his time with me today.

I'm very proud to rise in the House today as Ontario's new Associate Minister of Housing to speak to a bill—

Interjections.

Hon. Michael Parsa: Thank you, sir—that is focused on getting homes built and growing strong communities, a bill that's focused on building more attainable homes; a bill that's focused on building more affordable homes; a bill that is focused on ensuring the dream of having a place to call your home is in reach for every person in this province of every walk of life.

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The rising cost of housing has had an impact on so many Ontarians. Families are being priced out of the market, seniors on fixed incomes worrying every month how they will be able to pay their mortgage, and too many members of our next generation feel they will never have a place of their own.

Every single day all of us show up to work here to make choices, tough choices, choices that aren't always easy. Allow me to be crystal clear that this government will always choose the side of hard-working Ontarians. Today the government of Ontario is proposing legislation that will reinforce how committed we are in supporting our municipal partners to deliver on our shared priorities—priorities that matter to the people of Ontario; priorities such as our election promise to build 1.5 million new homes over the next 10 years.

Through this legislation, the government of Ontario will empower our municipal partners to get things done, because the people of Ontario expect nothing less. This includes helping to speed up new home constructions so that we can get more homes built quicker and make sure more families can realize the dream of home ownership. A house isn't just four walls and a roof, it's a home; a place for families to build their futures and make memories. Our government has the firm conviction that everyone deserves to have one of their own.

Since day one of being in power, our government has been laser-focused on tackling the province's housing crisis. In 2019, we released our first housing supply action plan. It was called More Homes, More Choice and provided a road map to help address the housing challenges our province was facing at that time. It was a call to action on the need to build more homes to keep up with the rapidly growing population in Ontario. And it was effective. Since the plan was introduced, the province's actions and close collaboration with municipalities have delivered results. Last year, in 2021, we saw more than 100,000 housing starts in Ontario, and that is the highest

since 1987. Last year also saw more than 13,000 rental starts. Again, the most rental starts since 1991.

Despite our progress, we knew it wasn't enough. Across the province, no matter where you went, one thing seemed to remain the same: Too many Ontarians were still finding the dream of having a place of their own out of reach. We recognized we needed to go further, so we began a three-part consultation with housing sector experts, municipalities and the public to help identify and implement real solutions to address the housing supply crisis.

First, we conducted an online public consultation through which we received more than 2,000 submissions. Second, we brought together municipalities and municipal associations to hear from leaders on the ground about what needed to be done for us to be able to build more homes. We conducted these consultations through the Ontario municipal housing summit and rural housing round table. The third part of government's thorough consultation was the creation of the Housing Affordability Task Force.

The task force was made up of a diverse range of experts in non-profit housing, Indigenous housing, real estate, home builders, financial markets and municipal governments. We knew that for this task force to put forward the most fulsome recommendations it needed to include every voice and needed to represent all voices across the province.

Through their engagement with stakeholders, including municipalities and advocacy groups, they developed thought-provoking and detailed recommendations in their report. These recommendations ranged from proposed changes to the planning policies to ways to lower costs for development and to aligning efforts between all levels of government to incentivize building more housing.

Along with the dozens of recommendations provided by the task force, they again issued an urgent call to action. They told us that our province does not currently have enough housing to meet the needs of Ontarians, and that if we didn't act we would not have enough housing to meet the needs of our growing population tomorrow. So we used the task force recommendations, along with other consultation feedback, to get to work and to take bold actions. We used the task force report as a foundation to craft a new housing supply action plan designed to make sure all Ontarians can find a home that meets their needs and their budgets.

We passed More Homes for Everyone, the next step to help boost housing supply in our province. The legislation laid out ways to get rid of the red tape and bureaucratic inefficiencies that are driving up the cost of homes, all while creating more housing options for renters and buyers. More Homes for Everyone delivers real solutions and addresses the province's housing crisis.

It includes the new community infrastructure and housing accelerator, which is a tool that helps municipalities expedite approvals for housing and community infrastructure such as hospitals and community centres.

It also made changes to the site plan control decisions. Site plan control is a planning tool that municipalities use

to manage development on a parcel of land. What we saw, Mr. Speaker, was that too often, politics was getting in the way of good planning. So we made sure that our plan requires local council to delegate site plan control decisions to municipal staff.

We also extended the timeline for municipalities to review the site plan applications before appeals can be launched, from 30 days to 60 days, to make sure municipalities have the time they need to review projects while preventing unnecessary delays.

In the interests of transparency, we now also require municipalities and development charge bylaw to make their annual reporting on these charges available to the public on the municipality's website.

These are just some of the ways our comprehensive More Homes for Everyone plan is helping us to get shovels in the ground.

But we knew we couldn't stop there. Housing affordability is one of the greatest challenges of our time and it must be treated as such. How we, as elected officials, choose to tackle this challenge over the coming years will determine whether an entire next generation will be able to own a home, start a family and build our communities to be even stronger. As a result, we must take bold, decisive action to address the housing shortage. We mustn't be afraid to challenge the status quo, and we must work with every partner willing to help us get shovels in the ground.

We must deliver real, long-term solutions to ensure home ownership is in reach of all Ontarians. We're going to use the Housing Affordability Task Force recommendation as a long-term road map to help us get there, a road map that will allow us to work with our partners to develop a new housing supply action plan each year over four years. This includes our municipal partners, each with unique circumstances on the ground and in their communities.

We believe taking a long-term integrated approach will give our municipal partners the time and flexibility they need to work with us to be able to achieve our ambitious goals, because solving the housing supply crisis is a long-term mission and it certainly won't happen overnight. It requires long-term commitment, partnerships at all levels of government and a solid plan, all three of which will happen in spades.

As the minister outlined when speaking to today's proposed legislation, Ontario is a growing province. It's a place where good people of all backgrounds come to begin a new life. As Ontario grows, we must help communities across the province to grow as well. That includes building more attainable homes, because addressing the housing supply issues in our communities is a critical issue and we need to have success. The time for talk is over. The time for action, the time for cutting through red tape and the time for getting shovels in the ground and building the dream of home ownership is now.

To help us get there, we committed to establishing a housing supply action plan implementation team this summer. I'm honoured to stand here in this House and give

you the details of this team. The team will be a formal advisory body made up of a volunteer chair and up to eight other members representing key sectors. The team will provide expert advice to the government on implementing and recommendations on the Housing Affordability Task Force. They will help us take decisive action to get more homes built and they will make ongoing improvement to our annual housing supply action plans. Mr. Speaker, they'll be laser-focused on market housing initiatives and will provide confidential advice to the minister on an ongoing basis about measures to increase housing supply and attainability.

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I want to be crystal clear: The core mandate of this team is to get the job done. No more talk, no more reports, no more committee to study the findings of a working group to study the findings of a consultation table; this team is an action team. They will examine the commitment we have made under the More Homes for Everyone plan, as well as the vision and objectives of the Housing Affordability Task Force report and help us implement that, and they will be there to react to any emerging housing priorities and issues identified by our government.

We're going to count on the expertise of this team to weigh in on a wide array of market-housing-related issues over the next four years. This includes helping us assess any initiatives that our government is considering towards increasing market housing supply. The team will also provide feedback on the best way to roll out our planned initiatives.

Speaker, I'm a results guy. Measuring our success and constantly keeping track of our progress is crucial. As I just mentioned to you earlier, the time for talk is over, and the time for action is now. As such, team members will provide advice on how we can measure the success of our plans when it comes to increasing the amount of attainable housing. This team, made up of some of the province's foremost experts in the housing sector, will be a crucial part in helping us reach our goal of ensuring every Ontarian has a place to call home.

Because of how serious an issue this is, we ensured that the Housing Supply Action Plan Implementation Team has access to every tool necessary to carry out their mandate. That's why the team will be supported by topic-specific expert ad hoc consultation tables. These additional groups will include other housing experts who will weigh in on very specific topics and provide expert technical advice. They will be formed on an as-needed basis and will be dissolved once the needs of their main team are met.

In order for the Housing Supply Action Plan Implementation Team to provide its best advice to market housing initiatives, our government knew we needed a strong voice to sit at the head of the table. That's why I'm proud to say that the minister and I will be appointing Mayor Drew Dilken from the city of Windsor as chair. Mayor Dilken is a fierce and strong champion for getting homes built. After a successful career as a lawyer, Mayor Dilken stepped up to serve his community, first as a

councillor before being elected as mayor in 2014. He understands the challenges families face accessing the housing market, and is ready to get to work to help our government get shovels in the ground. Undoubtedly, his expertise and passion for solving the housing supply crisis will be a major asset as the team begins its work.

We're also proud to announce Mayor Cheryl Fort of the town of Hornepayne as the vice-chair.

Interjection.

Hon. Michael Parsa: Yes, absolutely she deserves it. As the second female Indigenous mayor to be elected in Ontario, Mayor Fort knows how to get results and brings an impressive background to the team. Before serving as mayor, she served as a school board trustee, library board chair, hospital board member, town councillor and Legion youth education chair. She's also the northern zone director of the Ontario Good Roads Association.

A dedicated public servant, Mayor Fort has stood up for women as part of our government's task force on women and the economy, where she played a leading role in ensuring women who were disproportionately affected by the economic impacts of COVID-19 were able to bounce back stronger than ever. Mayor Fort brings a unique perspective to the team, with intimate knowledge and experience of the unique needs of northern and rural Ontarians. Simply put, Mayor Fort is someone you want to have in your corner fighting for you. For those who are counting on our government to deliver results, I know she won't stop until the job is done.

Mayor Dilkens and Mayor Fort will be complemented by team members with a range of backgrounds and expertise, all ready to work for Ontarians. We look forward to sharing details of the remaining members of the team in the coming weeks. Once the selection process is complete, the team will hold their first meeting in early fall to get to work immediately.

I have said this earlier, but it really needs to be repeated: Every Ontarian deserves a place to call home, period. Right now, the lack of attainable housing is a long-term problem in our province, and that's why we are standing here today: because right now in Ontario, too many families are frozen out of the housing market. Too many Indigenous Ontarians, too many newcomers, too many people, too many women, too many gig-economy workers, too many people who put in an honest day's work to achieve their dream are being shut out of the housing market. That must and will change.

We made an election promise to build 1.5 million new homes over the next 10 years so that more of these families can realize the dream of home ownership. One way we're doing this is by introducing key legislation that will help empower the mayors of Toronto and Ottawa. This will help drive provincial priorities forward in two of the province's largest cities: priorities like increasing the amount of available housing. We're also doing this by establishing the Housing Supply Action Plan Implementation Team to provide advice on market housing initiatives, a team dedicated to action and results. Their expertise will help us continue to work with our partners

to deliver a new housing supply action plan every year over four years. This will help us deliver those real, long-term housing solutions we need here in Ontario.

We're confident we will succeed, Mr. Speaker, because our government's policies are already delivering real results. We have seen record housing construction because of the initiatives that we put forward in 2019, by this amazing minister. We will continue to make it easier for all people in Ontario to find a home that meets their needs.

Ontario is the greatest province in the best country in the world, a beacon of hope in a troubled time, a place of opportunity and prosperity, and everyone who works hard and does their part must be able to have the dream of home ownership in reach. This government, our Premier and our entire team will not stop until we get shovels in the ground to build the homes we need in order to achieve the dreams that Ontarians have for themselves, their families and their communities. Enough talk; let's get to work.

With that, I would like to invite the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan, to continue to speak to our government's commitment to our municipal partners and housing. Thank you very much.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

Mr. Kevin Holland: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I offer my congratulations to you on your election to the Speaker's chair—

Interruption.

Miss Monique Taylor: Take your phone off your desk.

Mr. Kevin Holland: I don't have my phone on my desk.

Miss Monique Taylor: Somebody's phone is buzzing.

Mr. Kevin Holland: Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to thank both the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Associate Minister of Housing for sharing their time with me today. I am very grateful for this generous gesture.

I'm happy to be speaking as a newly appointed parliamentary assistant to this great ministry. That's because I'm delighted to have the opportunity to speak about the fine qualities of our government's bill and its obvious benefits and timeliness.

As you have heard, our proposed changes would provide the mayors of Toronto and Ottawa with additional governance tools, as well as increased powers to align municipal decision-making with provincial priorities. Because our changes are so important, I would like to remind you of them again. These changes would give these two mayors the power to hire and fire the chief administrative officer of the municipality as well as its department heads, and the mayor would be able to create and reorganize departments.

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The mayor would also be able to appoint the chairs and vice-chairs of committees and local boards if any are identified in regulation. They would also be able to establish committees. In addition, the mayor would have the power to direct matters of provincial priority for

council consideration, and be able to direct staff to prepare proposals.

Perhaps most importantly, the mayor would have the power to develop the municipality's budget, and then take it to council for consideration. Council would be able to propose amendments to the budget, subject to a mayor's veto and council override process.

At the same time, the proposed changes in this bill would make the mayor more personally accountable by giving them veto power over bylaws passed by council if, in the mayor's opinion, it did not further a provincial priority. To counter this, council would be able to override a mayoral veto of a bylaw with a two-thirds majority vote.

The proposed changes would also affect the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act by requiring the mayor to declare any financial interests related to the use of the new powers. They would be prevented from using these new powers where any financial conflict exists.

Our bill, if passed, would also require a by-election be held to replace the mayor if the office becomes vacant. Currently, municipal councils have the choice of holding a by-election or appointing a new mayor.

I want to emphasize that all of the powers and rules I've mentioned so far would apply to Toronto and Ottawa only. However, the proposed changes would give the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing the regulatory authority to designate other municipalities that these powers could apply to. The minister would also have the regulatory authority to set out in more detail how the new powers can be used.

As the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has explained, Toronto and Ottawa were chosen because over one third of the growth in Ontario over the next 10 years is forecasted to take place in these two cities. What's more is that we were looking for municipalities that are shovel-ready, committed to growth and committed to cutting red tape.

I now want to address some points that have been raised about our government's proposed legislation. Some have asked why our government is introducing the bill at this time, immediately before a municipal election. The reason is that we need to move quickly to address the province's housing crisis. Ontario has a housing supply crisis, and we have no time to spare. We also want to ensure that these proposed changes are in place before the new term of council begins in mid-November, so they can hit the ground running.

Some have asked if other municipalities would get these new powers. I must emphasize again that Toronto and Ottawa are the selected municipalities at this time because of their expected growth and because they are shovel-ready. Our government is always open to, at a later date, assessing opportunities to extend these new powers to other growing municipalities where housing is needed.

There are also questions arising about the mayoral veto of bylaws. For that, we have ensured that a system of checks and balances is in place. This includes the tool for two thirds of a council to override a mayoral veto.

Please remember that the mayoral powers to veto by-laws and bring matters forward to council meetings would apply only if related to provincial priorities such as building 1.5 million new homes by 2033. It would also pertain to priorities that revolve around construction and maintenance of critical infrastructure to support accelerated supply and availability of housing, including but not limited to transit, roads, utilities and servicing.

Speaker, these proposed new powers for the mayors of Toronto and Ottawa are needed now. Passage of this proposed legislation will further empower these newly elected mayors when they begin their term of office. It would give them more opportunity to help achieve our shared municipal-provincial priorities. If passed, this legislation would allow us to work more effectively with our municipal partners as we move toward our shared goals of helping more families reach the dream of attainable home ownership.

The fact is, there simply are not enough homes that are attainable for the families who want to call Ontario home. Across the province, no matter where you go, one thing remains the same: Ontarians are having difficulty finding housing that meets their needs and their budgets. We need to help boost housing supply in this province. We need to help our municipal partners get new housing projects approved quicker and empowering mayors to take more responsibility in their communities can help us do that.

I'd like to add that strong-mayor systems work very well in other jurisdictions. The minister referenced some of this in his remarks, but I'd like to take a deeper look at some of those jurisdictions.

Let's start with New York City. The mayor acts as chief executive officer and does not sit as a member of council. I want to add here that if our proposed legislation is passed, a mayor will still sit on council and every council member will still have one vote. However, similar to what we are proposing, the mayor of New York City may appoint and remove heads of administrations, departments, all commissioners and all other non-elected officers, except as otherwise provided in the law. Also, the mayor of New York City has the power to create or abolish departments or positions within the mayor's office.

When it comes to budgets, the mayor of New York City develops the budget and any accompanied financial plans and submits them to council for consideration and approval. With regard to veto powers, the mayor of New York City can veto any council decision to add to, increase or place terms on budget items. Council can override a mayoral veto related to the budget with a two-thirds majority vote.

Now, let's look at Chicago. Just like in New York City, the mayor is the chief executive officer of the city and does not sit on council. However, unlike New York City, the Chicago mayor must obtain council consent to appoint and remove heads of all city departments and officers of the municipality, all commissions, all boards and all agencies, except as otherwise provided in the law. As in New York City, and as proposed by our bill, the mayor of Chicago directs the city's budget process and submits the city's

annual budget to council for consideration and approval. In Chicago, the mayor can veto any changes council votes to make to the budget and council can override the mayoral veto with a two-thirds majority vote.

Now let's look at Los Angeles. Again, the mayor of Los Angeles is the chief executive officer of the city and does not have a seat on council. The mayor in Los Angeles has the power to create or abolish bureaus, divisions or positions within the executive office of the mayor, including having power to remove certain city officials. Just like in New York, Chicago and our proposed legislation, the mayor of Los Angeles directs the budget and sends it to council for approval. The mayor can veto any changes or additions council makes and, in turn, council can override a mayoral veto with a two-thirds majority vote.

So you see, our proposed legislation is not new or untried, and frankly it is not something we can afford to wait another minute on.

Of course, these proposed changes are part of our government's greater strategy to increase the supply of attainable housing. We have introduced two housing supply action plans: More Homes, More Choice in 2019, and More Homes for Everyone earlier this year. Both of these plans put forward a list of policy changes to help address housing supply shortages with the aim of getting housing built faster in the province. We also conducted a three-part consultation with industry, municipalities and the public to help identify and implement more solutions to increase housing supply.

One element of our government's thorough consultation was the creation of the Housing Affordability Task Force. The task force was made up of experts from all across the housing sector. There are representatives from not-for-profit housing, Indigenous housing, real estate, home builders, financial markets and economics. We wanted to ensure everyone was represented.

After speaking with a variety of stakeholders, they developed a thought-provoking report. The list of recommendations in their report focused on the best ways the province can help support the creation of more housing all across Ontario. We know that we have to look further ahead than just the here and now; we have to look at ways we can catch up to the future growth.

As the associate minister pointed out, our goal is to deliver real, long-term solutions using the Housing Affordability Task Force's recommendations as our housing road map. It will guide us as we work with our partners to develop a new housing supply action plan each year over four years.

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Addressing the housing supply crisis is a long-term strategy that requires long-term commitment and partnership at all levels of government. We must ensure municipalities actively support our housing-related policies, and we must look to the best way we can work with our municipal partners to support more residential projects in the years to come. That is why we committed to establishing a housing supply action plan implementation team.

As the associate minister detailed, this new team would be made up of a volunteer chair and up to seven other members representing key housing sectors. The group members will provide advice to the government on monitoring progress and supporting improvements to our annual housing supply action plans. The team members will be tasked with advising on the implementation of our More Homes for Everyone plan, as well as other measures that achieve the vision and objectives of the Housing Affordability Task Force's recommendations.

The team will also be there to react to any emerging housing priorities and issues identified by our government. We will count on their expertise to help us determine how the initiatives to increase market housing supply would impact the people of Ontario and the best way to implement them in the years ahead.

We want to achieve the best results from our policies, and the Housing Supply Action Plan Implementation Team will help us get there. In addition to the main team members, they will be supported by additional consultation tables of housing experts who provide technical advice and insights on specific topics.

With all of these layers of expertise, the Housing Supply Action Plan Implementation Team will provide ongoing confidential advice on market housing initiatives to the minister. We believe this would be the most beneficial way to deal with the ebbs and flows of the ever-changing housing market.

Mr. Speaker, we are standing here today to underline our commitment to help build more homes in communities across the province, faster than we have been seeing in recent years. Strong-mayor systems will empower municipal leaders to work more effectively with the province to reduce timelines for development, standardize processes and address local barriers to increasing the supply of housing.

We are in a housing crisis and we know that every move we make right now is critical to addressing it. We have set out a clear goal: We are building 1.5 million new homes over the next 10 years. We will do this through yearly action plans, as well as our newly created Housing Supply Action Plan Implementation Team to support our initiatives. We are also doing it through other pieces of proposed legislation like the one my colleagues and I have spoken on today.

As the population of Ontario grows, housing needs to keep up. By empowering the mayors of Toronto and Ottawa to move forward on shared priority items, we will be doing just that.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll now invite questions to the government members who made the presentation.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I would like to start by congratulating the PA being elected in this House and the job you've done.

I would say that we do agree that there is a housing crisis in Ontario. We know there's homelessness. People are struggling to keep a roof over their head. I agree with that. You also talked a lot about supporting our municipal

partners. So not only are people struggling to put a roof over their head, they're struggling to pay their property taxes, and municipalities are drowning in infrastructure deficit. In Thunder Bay, for example, there's about a \$50-million infrastructure deficit. In Hamilton, it's like a \$2.5-billion, pushing \$3-billion infrastructure deficit to keep in good working order our bridges, our roads.

We know that development does not pay for itself. So what are you doing to ensure all of this development doesn't end up putting the burden on hard-working Ontarians, hard-working taxpayers?

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, through you to the honourable member: We're supporting municipalities in many, many ways. Unconditionally, we have a program called the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund that supports our municipalities. In terms of a conditional grant, obviously, the provincial gas tax program.

The member opposite mentions infrastructure. The Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund—the province is doubling its annual investment to nearly \$2 billion over five years, and then there are other cost-sharing programs that the member is aware of. We support municipalities in many, many ways: land ambulances, public health, child care. There are a lot of supports that our government has given and continues to give our municipal partners.

During the pandemic, we made a significant contribution. We continue to. My Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing—this morning in question period, there was a reference to the Social Services Relief Fund. I've travelled all around the province. I've travelled in your city with the Minister of Tourism, and saw our investments and saw how municipalities were able to make our investments work in their communities to help fight homelessness.

But make no mistake, Speaker: Municipalities also have tools. They have a range of opportunities through revenue tools that they have, through development charges—many, many other opportunities for them.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Barrie–Innisfil.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I want to thank the minister and his excellent associate minister and parliamentary assistant for their speeches.

This past summer, I had an opportunity to speak to one of the local Barrie Rotary clubs about More Homes for Everyone. They're really excited about the expedited approval process, because of things taking so long, and creating affordability not only for their kids, but for their companies and their businesses that rely so much on the housing sector.

But a clear thing that council complained about when they talked to their colleagues in the cities of Ottawa or Toronto is just the delays, and the fact that there's a huge affordability crisis on our hands. Our government has done a lot to do things to keep costs low, but housing is a big part of it. We have local manufacturers, for example, in my constituency of Barrie where they're attracting talent, but then the talent goes out to the housing market to try to see what they can get and it becomes very unattainable.

I want to ask the minister, on all the work that he has done to date: How is this going to build on that work, as well, to create that great attainable housing so people can actually work and live in the same community?

Hon. Steve Clark: I want to thank the member for the question—a very, very good question. We were clear with Ontarians prior to the provincial election in June. We indicated very strongly that in a re-elected government under the leadership of Premier Ford, that Housing Affordability Task Force would be our long-term road map moving forward. We also made a commitment to Ontarians. We had More Homes, More Choice, as the member said, and More Homes for Everyone. We indicated that in a re-elected government under the leadership of Premier Ford, that we would bring housing legislation through every year of a four-year mandate.

So we know that there's no silver bullet that is going to solve the housing supply crisis. We know that there have to be a number of measures done both by legislation and by regulation. We need support from our municipal partners, and we also need support from our federal colleagues. I know the members opposite have heard me talk about our desire to have them support us when we go to the federal government for additional funds; I think we have a really good case to make.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I would like to thank the government members for their presentation. My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

When we take a look at this legislation, there's a curious omission—in fact, a glaring omission: Nowhere in this document, despite it being about building homes, is there any mention of rental affordability. We know that rental is a necessary step in the housing spectrum. In fact, it was this government that created legislation that removed rent control from buildings created after November 2018. Will this government admit that this was a mistake and that it did not create more affordable housing, and will you fix it?

Hon. Steve Clark: I want to remind the honourable member opposite that every time we put a measure down to help tenants to make the system fair between landlords and tenants, or provided opportunities to build more rental accommodations, his party voted against it every single time.

We're very aware that our Housing Supply Action Plan transcends all of the types of housing. I've been very clear in this House and outside of this House: When we talk about the 1.5 million homes that we need to build in the next 10 years, it means every type, every shape, every size and every price range, including a strong increase in rental accommodation. That's what Ontarians need; that's what they deserve: a house, whatever form it takes, either rental or home ownership or attainable ownership, that meets their price and their budget.

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

Mr. Stephen Blais: It's interesting that in a bill that is about the expansion of housing, the words “home,”

“house,” “zoning,” “land use,” “affordability,” “planning,” “development” and “density” do not appear once in the bill, nor were these powers requested by either municipality.

Something that the city of Ottawa and other municipalities—I think Brampton—and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario have asked for is a process to remove bad actors from municipalities across Ontario, to remove city councillors who abuse their colleagues, who abuse staff sexually, emotionally and psychologically. So I’m wondering why the minister chose not to include those powers in this bill which is about increasing municipal powers.

Hon. Steve Clark: The honourable member opposite knows we’ve been absolutely clear that we’ll not tolerate any workplace harassment or discrimination of any kind. We expect that our mayors and our councillors will carry out their duties as elected officials in our province in an ethical and responsible manner.

I’m very interested—I’ve been a bit busy this week because of this bill. I understand the member opposite has either tabled his private member’s bill or re-tabled it. I haven’t had a chance, to be honest with you, to see whether you’ve changed it in any way, but the member opposite knows that the last time his bill was on the order paper, we supported that initiative. I appreciate that he’s put it back on the order paper. I’ll make him this undertaking that I will look at his bill to see if there have been any changes. But our government has been crystal clear, full stop: We’re not going to tolerate any of this activity by any councillor in the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Markham–Thornhill.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and on your election, congratulations for your leadership and the passion for the Speakership. It’s good to see you in the chair.

Through you to the minister: I know you’ve covered a lot of ground, and we have a few minutes left. Could you explain—I know the red tape and the bureaucracy is a huge issue in any municipal government—moving one file to another, one table to another table, all pieces of the plan. I know it’s a huge issue, zoning and building permits. How is this bill going to address those issues?

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

Hon. Steve Clark: That’s a great question. Through you to the member: You are a former councillor. You were a budget chief in York region for many, many years. You know how important this is.

The stat that I want to talk to members about that I haven’t tabled yet was this OECD report where Canada ranked 34 out of 35 countries—Slovakia was the only one worse than Canada—that couldn’t get shovels in the ground fast enough. So we know and we acknowledge that, collectively, our country needs to do a better job. This was a topic that we talked to mayors and regional chairs about—the Premier and I did in January. One of the things they said was it’s not just us. They felt very strongly that

there were some changes that they needed by the provincial government so that they could get shovels in the ground faster. That’s exactly what this is going to be doing to our two largest cities: It’s going to give them the tools to help get shovels in the ground. Yes, some of this is going to be done through regulation, but we want to be in a position where, after the election, when that new council in Toronto and Ottawa gets sworn in, they’re shovel-ready, they’re committed to growth and committing to cut red tape. So, excellent question.

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

Mr. Jeff Burch: It’s an honour to rise today and speak to the newest municipal affairs legislation, Bill 3, Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act, although we’re having trouble on this side of the House determining exactly how this is going to result in more homes.

It’s a real experience of déjà vu standing here. I was almost in this exact place at almost the exact time of year four years ago in 2018, after being elected and named as municipal affairs critic, when the government decided to interfere in the Toronto election and cut the number of councillors in half in the midst of candidates for mayor and candidates for council already being nominated, organizing their campaigns.

I can remember standing here and, actually, the government—this is going to sound familiar to my colleagues—was ramming through the legislation, so they had midnight sittings, and my friends on the opposite side may learn what those are because this government is not shy about using them. I remember standing here at about 4:15 in the morning delivering my first speech as an MPP and as a critic, and, behind me in the gallery, a citizen of Toronto who was protesting this undemocratic move was being handcuffed and dragged out of the gallery while I was trying to speak. So some real feelings of déjà vu here. Here we are again seeing this government, very soon after being elected and in the middle of an election, dictating to municipalities what they need to do in the middle of an election when folks are in the midst of preparing their campaigns.

Not to say there’s not a legitimate debate to be had around the issue of strong mayors, although the government’s own comments seem to indicate that they don’t appreciate its application or have considered all the consequences, and they’ve consulted with almost no one. This idea was never mentioned in relation to housing until now. It wasn’t brought up during the housing task force last year. It was never mentioned in the election. It has not been thoroughly explained. The opposition has not been provided the time and information to vet the legislation. So it’s interesting that in introducing a bill about governance, this government can’t seem to bring itself to show good governance. It begs the question as to how that encourages trust in what the government’s doing in relation to governance.

I came across an article, and it was written by Ken Greenberg on August 2. Ken Greenberg is not only the former director of urban design and architecture for the city of Toronto, but also worked in the United States in a

strong-mayor system. I thought he had a really interesting perspective having worked as a municipal official both in Toronto and under a strong-mayor system in the United States. I wanted to get his comments into the record.

Mr. Greenberg says, “By the time the next municipal elections take place in Ontario on Oct. 24, the province may change the governments Toronto and Ottawa so that each will be led by a ‘strong mayor,’ with power to decide key matters such as budgeting regardless of the wishes—or votes—of those cities’ elected council members.

“The idea of a strong mayor has supporters and detractors on all sides of the political spectrum, but there’s not a lot of clarity on what it means. Based on my work experience with strong-mayor systems in the US, I can tell you that the system is not a panacea and it comes with risks.

“Supporters of a strong-mayor system see it as a way to ‘get things done’ in key areas that have been bottlenecked. Even as the housing market cools, Toronto and Ottawa still face an acute shortage of affordable homes”—as the government has pointed out. “Transit projects take decades to build, and developers complain that city governments tie their plans up with endless debate.” As a former city councillor and budget chief, I am familiar with those complaints.

“Those against having a strong mayor see the move as a sinister plan by” the “provincial government to ignore the wishes of elected city councils.

“Ford’s record is already alarming on this front. His previous government sliced the number of councillors in half just before the last municipal elections in 2018, and his cabinet has had a field day issuing ministerial zoning orders ... to let developers”—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I have to interrupt the member and remind the House that we refer to other members by their ministerial title or by their riding name as applicable.

I’ll ask the member to continue his remarks.

Mr. Jeff Burch: Thank you—“build sprawling projects slicing up Ontario’s much-loved greenbelt and unsustainable hyper-dense towers that don’t help with housing affordability.

“Critics also worry about what might happen if a strong mayor comes to power who is ... a populist bent on crushing the careful official plans drawn up by cities for sustainable smart growth. When he was a Toronto city councillor,” the Premier “himself”—

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order: The member for Barrie—Innisfil.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: The speaker is implying characteristics to the Premier of Ontario that are unparliamentary.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I would ask the member to be cautious with his language in terms of comments about the Premier.

I would ask him to continue his remarks.

Mr. Jeff Burch: Thank you, Speaker—“actually road-tested this scenario when he tried to strike a unilateral deal

to undermine Waterfront Toronto and get hand-picked developers to build a luxury yacht club, megamall and Ferris wheel by the lake with little or no parkland.

1420

“Thankfully, his scheme failed.

“I have worked in the US for strong mayors,” says Mr. Greenberg. “Municipal government is different there, as is the definition of ‘strong mayor.’ US cities typically operate with party politics at the municipal level”—something this government should look at—“since the mayor and councillors run on party platforms. They also have taxing powers we do not have.

“But these same powers also can let them back dubious schemes, such as massive ‘urban renewal’ projects that destroy neighbourhoods. Many big American cities have faced bankruptcy too.

“An American mayor’s biggest rival for power is not the city council, it’s the city manager”—and that’s a very important distinction between the Canadian and American systems—“an appointed bureaucrat who has vast power and can make elected councils weak or irrelevant.

“Canadian cities have chief administrative officers, but they’re not really the mayor’s rival; they’re professional civil servants who have only a fraction of the powers that many US city managers enjoy.

“I worked in Boston for former mayor Tom Menino as interim chief planner. He was a relatively good mayor according to many, but all decisions happened in his offices. I rarely had any interaction with the councillors.

“While it is true that a ‘good’ strong mayor may be able to accomplish more things more quickly, what happens when we elect a bad one who tries to run the city with hare-brained slogans and schemes?

“My concern is that under the guise of seeking to ‘get things done,’ Doug Ford’s strong-mayor move”—my apologies, Speaker; the Premier’s strong-mayor move—“to centralize power may undermine a critical virtue of Canadian cities: the need for consensual city building.

“Democracy, in cities and everywhere else, relies on hearing many voices—not just the strong one—and having a non-partisan group of civil servants who are loyal not just to a single politician, but to the city itself.”

I thought that was an important article that was written, Speaker, because not only does it point out the differences between the Canadian and American system, which this government doesn’t seem to appreciate, but it also talks about the issue of mayors using precedents and convention, not just what’s written in legislation.

Now, this Premier’s history with local democracy, we all know about, and I have mentioned what I was doing four years ago when Bill 5 was tabled to cancel regional chair elections and cut the size of Toronto city council with municipal election campaigns already under way. When a lower court found Bill 5 to be unconstitutional and granted a stay, the government passed Bill 31, which was another series of all-night sittings, which invoked the “notwithstanding” clause to bypass charter rights. After an appeal—expensive for the people of Ontario—the court overturned the stay and Bill 5 went ahead. Bill 5 is still the

subject of a constitutional challenge before the Supreme Court.

Then, of course, we remember that the former government tabled Bill 218, a COVID recovery bill which included a clause that repealed the legislation allowing municipalities to use ranked ballots in municipal elections. The opposition of course questioned what that had to do with COVID. This government, this party, has not been shy about drafting omnibus bills and slipping things in, as new members to this House will learn.

I'm going to talk for a moment about the weak- and the strong-mayor system. In what's often referred to in the media as the weak-mayor system—Toronto, Ottawa and all other Ontario municipalities currently have what's referred to as a weak-mayor system, where only council, and not the mayor, is authorized to exercise municipal powers, and the mayor is just one more vote on council. As a result, to implement their agenda, the mayor must obtain the votes of the majority of council.

In Ontario, the formal roles of councils and mayors are described in sections 224 and 225 of the Municipal Act, and similar sections of the City of Toronto Act. Section 132 of that act says, "The powers of the city shall be exercised by city council," except during declarations of emergency when the mayor assumes many of these powers. While council wields the powers of the municipality, the mayor's statutory role includes providing leadership to council, representing the city at ceremonial functions and promoting the purposes of the city.

Something we don't discuss at great length in this House is the role that informal powers play in governance. Just yesterday, we saw the impact of formal and informal rules on the debate on official opposition Speakers and Vice-Chairs in this House. Mayors wield additional informal powers by virtue of being directly elected, granting them legitimacy to speak on behalf of the city as a whole through what David Crombie has called the "bully pulpit."

For example, in 2011 the Ontario Liberal government agreed to cancel the council-approved Transit City plan and support the transit plan proposed by newly elected Mayor Rob Ford, even though Rob Ford had not obtained the authorization of council, which would later reaffirm its support for the earlier Transit City plan.

The council may also delegate some of its formal authority to the mayor. For example, Toronto council delegated to Mayor David Miller the power to appoint the executive committee and chairs of standing committees, which grants the mayor additional formal powers. Because executive committee roles are desirable to councillors, the power to appoint or fire committee members tends to ensure that the mayor can usually count on close to the majority of council votes. In other words, Toronto mayors already informally wield many strong-mayor powers. The caveat is that they can be taken away by council. I would suggest that this could be an important check and balance to a mayor who is out of control or involved in corruption.

For those who may be wondering, "Why a strong-mayor system, and why now?", some of our answers may go back to the Premier's time at the city of Toronto. In

2011, over a decade ago, the Premier said in an interview, "I believe in a strong-mayor system, like they have in the States. The mayor should have veto power ... so he has enough power to stop council." He also said: "The mayor should be the mayor. At the end of the day ... the mayor's responsible for everything."

That article can give us a lot of insight into the legislation before us. The Premier, then a councillor, outlined that it was a challenge to get legislation passed with 23 votes to woo. The Premier expressed admiration for the mayor in Chicago and Mississauga mayor Hazel McCallion. My friend across the way mentioned the city of Chicago, which I'll get to.

It would appear that the strong-mayor system is one that the Premier has been considering for some time. It's interesting to note that the Premier himself acknowledged how important informal powers were to building a cohesive unit on city council, like Mayor Hazel McCallion has done.

We've heard a lot about the mayoral system in Chicago, in the Premier's comments from 2011 and over the past few weeks. What's interesting is that Chicago is a charter city, first of all—an issue that we floated in this House previously. We've met with members from charter city groups across Toronto and Ontario and many of the mayors, through municipal associations, who have raised the issue in our delegation meetings with them. Charter cities give cities more independence, not less.

To complicate matters, Chicago, which the Premier touted as a great example of municipal governments, is actually a weak-mayor system under its charter. In an article by Mari Cohen in the Chicago City Bureau, she says, "In terms of official structure, Chicago is considered a 'weak-mayor' city when compared to other cities.... That's because the city council has certain powers, including voting on the budget that Chicago is required to pass each year and approving certain administrative appointments, that it can use as leverage against the mayor. But despite what's on paper, Chicago mayors have historically exercised significant authority in practice by working the political system.

"Structure makes the mayor weak, politics make the mayor strong," said the author.

In practical terms, Chicago has an extremely powerful mayor. Chicago shows how informal rules in practice are often vastly more relevant than the formal ones.

In our initial reading of the bill—and I have to note that I raised the issue of how this government is exercising governance. We had a ministerial briefing yesterday at about 4 o'clock, and at 10:45 last night, the opposition was informed that this would be debated today at 1 o'clock. That's an interesting side note to "Is a government interested in debate?" They control those levers, as they've demonstrated over the last couple of days. Those levers can be used responsibly, or they can be abused.

1430

As a former city councillor and budget chair, I'm very familiar with city budgets and the work that it takes. In the time that I did it—and it wasn't in a city the size of

Toronto; it was in a large urban municipality, St. Catharines. There's a lot of transparency to the budget process. The press are usually present. Boards and groups make presentations in front of the press. Citizens make presentations. Things are debated, things are considered, and they're voted on. It happens out in the open.

We had a ministry briefing, as I mentioned, yesterday evening, and it's our understanding that under this new legislation, the mayor can draft a budget and present it to council. Council may pass amendments, but these amendments can be vetoed by the mayor. Presently, Toronto has an executive committee which oversees setting strategic priorities and fiscal policy. The process of a budget committee is allowed under the bill, but it's not required. In practical terms, a lot will depend on a mayor's personal commitment to democracy and accountability—something not provided for in the legislation, obviously. There is no guarantee of a transparent budget process. The only requirement is that the budget be tabled at a meeting for council's consideration. The mayor is only required to make changes if more than two thirds of a council override the mayor's veto. There's also an issue of committees of control, which can be utilized by a mayor by stacking a committee they form with an appropriate number of friendly councillors and directing important decisions to that committee.

I want to talk for a moment about an Ombudsman report that we had in the Niagara region, because it's directly relevant to part of this legislation which gives mayors and possibly regional chairs the power to appoint the chief administrative officer and hire and fire city or regional department heads. It's important to note that this power does not extend to statutory appointments, like the chief of police, the fire chief, the medical officer of health, Auditor General and the head of the transit commission or the integrity commissioner, but it does apply to the very important job of CAO. To most, the power to hire and fire a CAO may seem innocuous. But if you're from Niagara, you will immediately see a red flag on hearing of this provision in this bill.

When I was first elected, in 2018, a tremendous amount of scrutiny was being placed on our regional chair in Niagara at the time and his senior executive team, particularly the CAO at the time. Myself, many community members and my predecessor MPP Cindy Forster had been at work for years, calling for accountability at the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, where the CAO worked before being hired as CAO in the Niagara region.

Local journalists like Grant LaFleche had some incredible award-winning journalism uncovering all that went on with corruption and abuse of power in Niagara. In April of 2018, the St. Catharines Standard published its first exposé on the hiring of the Niagara region CAO, who they revealed had obtained confidential documents, including the names and biographies of other candidates and interview questions written by the staff of the regional chair during the hiring process.

Following the election, we were able to get the Ontario Ombudsman to investigate the hiring, which culminated in

a report entitled *Inside Job*, published in 2019. That's online, for folks if they want a very interesting read. In the report, the Ombudsman, Paul Dubé, called on the regional municipality of Niagara to improve its practices after his investigation found its hiring of the former CAO was compromised by confidential information leaked by insiders in the regional chair's office.

"The regional municipality of Niagara's hiring process was an inside job, tainted by the improper disclosure of confidential information to a candidate ... who was ultimately successful and became the region's most senior administrator," Dubé writes.

He found that the CAO was provided with confidential documents. These included a report on the makeup of the recruitment committee, the names and biographies of potential candidates and questions and suggested answers for the interview. Several of the documents originated in the office of the regional chair, whose staff also helped this applicant and played a central role in the hiring process.

The CAO was "provided with this ... content to be used in application materials by insiders who had access to information not available to the public or other candidates," the Ombudsman notes. "The lack of fairness and transparency in the hiring process created controversy and distrust within the region and served to undermine public confidence in local government," Dubé said.

I can't express to you, Speaker, how much public confidence was undermined by this example which would seem to become more possible under this government's legislation.

The scheme went back years. The Ombudsman even found a spreadsheet on the CAO's computer entitled *CAO Critical Path*, which predicted the day that regional council tried to fire the former CAO and set the time of recruitment for the new CAO.

But after a year on the job, the contract was extended for three years by the regional chair—and this is where the financial part comes in—without council's knowledge and amended it to include a provision where he would receive 36 months' notice of termination, even if it were for cause—taxpayers' dollars in the millions. Notably, the contract would have extended beyond the next term of council with the municipal decision in 2018.

It was a hard time for Niagara. Trust in our local government was at an all-time low. These are some of the dangers that this government should be considering with this legislation.

The Ombudsman suggested several recommendations to ensure the municipality preserved the integrity of the hiring process in the future, which include—and would seem to contradict the government's legislation:

—ensuring that staff in the chair's office do not usurp or undermine the role of professional staff, especially when those roles have been set by council or a committee;

—adopting a policy setting out the process for hiring a chief administrative officer, including the appropriate roles of staff and their accountability to council or a committee of council charged with the hiring—this is

coming from the Ombudsman and contradicts what this government wants to do with this legislation;

- adopting a bylaw setting the parameters of the relationship between council and the CAO, including the role of council with respect to amending the CAO's contract and salary; and

- ensuring that staff and officials act in accordance with the direction of council and committees of council.

A CAO has incredible power, particularly in larger municipalities. I think it's important that this House is thoughtful about the implications of this legislation and its impact on the public trust in a municipality.

Another power in this bill is the authority to appoint the chairs of council committees and create and reorganize city departments. The power to appoint/dismiss committee and board chairs and vice-chairs already exists in Toronto. However, as I've mentioned, these powers are currently delegated by council, not granted by a statute. The bill before us would remove council's ability to withdraw these powers as Toronto council did previously in 2013 under that mayor.

In Bill 3, a mayor could veto any bylaw passed by councillors if it "could potentially interfere with a prescribed provincial priority." This would include bylaws affecting housing developments and critical infrastructure projects like highways or public transit, and it would take a two-thirds majority vote of council to overrule the mayor within 21 days of the veto.

I think this clearly demonstrates, Speaker, that there are some real pitfalls and a real need to examine this legislation further and understand its implications. I can tell you from our briefing yesterday and the questions that were asked and the lack of answers that existed in even that briefing, there's a lot that has not been considered by this government.

1440

It's called building homes—is that it?—Strong Mayors, Building Homes. But as I mentioned, a lot of people, a lot of us—not just us on this side of the House but mayors across Ontario and experts and planners—can't figure out how exactly more homes are going to get built. We all know housing is one of the largest issues in this province. I've stood up in this House many times to speak this government's housing legislation. Four years later, we're still in a housing crisis.

When information on this bill was leaked a few weeks back, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing said, "The Premier and I are both of the same mind. We need to make sure that especially in major cities that those mayors and those councils have the tools they need" to get "shovels in the ground" and help with the housing crisis.

The media then spoke to the Premier, where they asked, "What is it about the current makeup of council right now" in Toronto "that is preventing affordable housing from being built?" And the Premier said, "I don't remember anything regarding affordable housing."

So there's some confusion, even in the government ranks between the Premier and the minister, as to whether the bill actually has anything to do with housing. The

minister thinks it does. The Premier doesn't think it does. But we think it's about the Premier giving mayors the power to help him bypass local bylaws and stifle consultation.

When asked about how this will impact housing, no one has been able to give a clear answer. The minister was asked about this at length in his press conference yesterday, and let's just say he had great difficulty.

The Housing Affordability Task Force report, which this government commissioned, never mentioned strong-mayor powers as a solution to housing affordability. It did mention ending exclusionary zoning and enabling more missing middle housing, but this bill does not include any of this, nor does it facilitate it. The word "housing," as my friend from Ottawa pointed out, does not appear at all in the bill.

If this minister is serious about housing, I would suggest—again, as we on this side of the House have been suggesting for years—end exclusionary zoning, allow municipalities to build missing middle homes, open up public land for affordable housing, put in real rent control, clamp down on speculation, fund community housing and expand inclusionary zoning. Those are real measures that will help with the housing crisis.

Back when we were debating Bill 108, I said to this House that it stated a vision of affordable housing but introduced measures that would actually make housing less affordable. Bill 108 has nearly completely clawed back the ability for municipalities to pass inclusionary zoning policies. Now inclusionary zoning can only apply to a protected major transit station area or to an area where a development permit system has been required by the minister. That's a step backward, not a step forward.

Just prior to Bill 108, the government announced that rent control rules no longer would protect tenants that move into new residential units coming on to the market. If you move into an apartment, a condo or basement unit that was first occupied as a unit after November 2018, there's no legal limit set on how much your landlord will be able to raise your rent—no limit: a step backwards, not a step forward.

This government puts in measures designed to speed up development—More Homes, More Choice—while simultaneously gutting the protections that would make those units affordable once they're built.

Just before the election, I spoke to the government's other attempt at housing, Bill 109, the More Homes for Everyone Act. The bill set timelines for municipalities for rezoning applications, and if they fail to make a decision within 90 days, refunds start at 50% and rise to 100%. There are similar consequences for municipalities that fail to approve a site plan application within the stated deadlines, but no penalties or no sunset period for developers who have used the official planning process and the planning process but are sitting on approved permits, which the large urban mayors have pointed out is a significant problem.

The bill created a new tool, the community infrastructure and housing accelerator, which formalizes

municipal requests for minister's zoning orders, which this government has used very aggressively to allow well-connected developers to pave over prime farmland—which we are losing at a shocking rate—and protected wetlands and build warehouses and often unsustainable sprawl. And in that bill, after all the lessons learned over the past few years, it still failed to eliminate exclusionary zoning and allow for missing middle housing.

Speaker, unquestionably, housing is a crisis in this province. The number one issue in my riding of Niagara Centre is the severe lack of affordable housing, as many of my colleagues will tell you about their own ridings. A modest one-bedroom apartment in Welland right now: \$1,400 a month. A basement one-bedroom apartment in Port Colborne: \$1,300 a month. ODSP is—as the opposition has been raising—under \$1,200 a month. Rents have risen across Ontario over the past 20 years, particularly since 2011.

In an article in the CBC, they explored why Canada is losing affordable rental housing units faster than they're being built, and it's not because of weak or strong mayors.

“According to research from Steve Pomeroy, a senior research fellow at Carleton University in Ottawa, rentals that were once considered affordable are seeing significant price increases.

“He estimates that between 2011 and 2016, the number of rental units that would be affordable for households earning less than \$30,000 per year” declined by 322,000.

“Because many provinces control how much rents can be raised on tenants who stay in the same unit, most of these increases occur when the unit turns over.”

But “in the current rental environment, ‘there is a tremendous incentive to remove that sitting tenant.’”

My colleagues have talked many times over the last four years about renovation and all of the problems that are associated with that. That's what we're seeing here in Ontario. When housing costs more than 30% of a person's income, that housing is considered unaffordable.

In Niagara, we're seeing people spend upwards of 60% of their take-home income on housing. According to the Niagara Workforce Planning Board, Niagara's average home price was \$450,000. This price increased 37.2% in 2021 to \$620,000. As our housing market continues to get hotter and hotter, investors are seeing housing as an investment as opposed to a home, and this mentality has become more and more prevalent. Thank goodness, we are seeing a bit of a cooling off in the housing market, but that's not helping people who can't afford a place to live.

Speaker, if you have spoken to anyone who has tried to buy a house over the past few years, they'll tell you it's an incredibly frustrating process. We on this side of the House agree on one thing: Yes, we need more homes. But we need more affordable homes.

In an interview with the CBC, Ron Butler, one of the founders of Butler Mortgage, spoke about his experience with clients and about the price increases that are resulting from speculation.

Back in 2019, I spoke to the House about the wait-lists for affordable housing in my community—and it's the

same across the province within the ridings of many of my colleagues—anywhere from a six- to 10-year wait. In St. Catharines, it's three to 13 years; in Welland, two to 15 years; in Port Colborne, three to 13 years; in Niagara Falls, up to 18 years' wait through the Niagara region for affordable housing.

We all agree it's a crisis. What we've disagreed on in this House is the path to fixing it. But what we would expect is that this government, at this juncture in time, if they really agree that this is a crisis, would come up with real solutions—at least some of the solutions their own task force recommended.

Strong mayors, weak mayors—not a solution. It gives municipalities no additional funds to build affordable housing, something which is desperately needed. It gives them no new revenue tools for raising capital, which large urban municipalities have been requesting for many years. It does not allow them to use inclusionary zoning to ensure affordable units are part of new builds. What it does do is allow a strong mayor to veto a democratically elected council's decision if they think it may not be in line with provincial priorities as decided by the government.

1450

I'd like to talk about some stakeholder response now, Speaker. The minister talked about some of those who support the bill, but if you listen in the media and you talk to municipal leaders, there's an awful lot of concern out there. In my time as municipal affairs critic for the official opposition, something I've heard routinely is that this government likes to present that they consult on issues, and then when you actually speak to the stakeholders, we hear that they were not consulted at all—or, what's worse, they were consulted and their recommendations were ignored. Not long ago, this government commissioned a report on regional governance review. Ken Seiling, who co-chaired the review, said that he was disappointed the minister and Premier refused to adopt his recommendations, which remain a secret to this day.

Toronto councillors presented a motion recently to express the city's opposition to a strong-mayor system, including the mayoral veto, but also including any additional powers beyond what is already in the City of Toronto Act. The text of the motion—I want to read this motion by councillors Josh Matlow and Mike Colle:

“(1) City council request the province of Ontario not to implement a ‘strong-mayor’ system in Toronto with legislation that includes a veto over the city's budget, or other items before council, or any other legislative measure that would grant additional mayoral powers over city affairs than what is already granted under the City of Toronto Act.

“(2) City council request the city clerk to report to the first meeting council meeting of the next term on a governance structure that will enable the current model of mayoral powers under the City of Toronto Act, in relation to any changes to that act or others.

“(3) City council affirms its position that any changes to Toronto's local elections or its governance structure should be decisions made by Toronto's city council.”

What they're clearly saying is, "Stay out of our business." Look, this government has been meddling in the affairs of municipalities far too much. Councillors and councils are elected municipally in municipal elections. For a government to come out in a press release and inform a council that this is what they're doing, something that's going to drastically affect the business that they conduct, without even speaking—ironically, they spoke to the mayor, let's say, a member of their own party or a former member of their own party, but they didn't speak to any of the city councillors. Just about any government that I've ever heard of, before they're making a major change, especially a governance change, will put that out and will at least ask for feedback, for consultation. They don't inform a council just before an election through the press.

The summary of the motion I found important. "On July 19, the Toronto Star reported that" the Premier "will move forward with legislation to install a 'strong-mayor' system in Toronto. While there are few details in the article, mayors in many American cities under this governance model have the final say on the budget and other important matters.

"Such a move would erode democracy by stifling local advocacy on the most important issues affecting Torontonians. That's why this motion sends a strong message to the provincial government that city council does not support a 'strong-mayor' system in Toronto with legislation that includes a veto over the city's budget, or other items before council, or any other legislative measure that would grant additional mayoral powers over city affairs than what is already granted under the City of Toronto Act.

"Our city's governance structure should be designed for not only what we aspire to be, but to take into account what guardrails are necessary to protect a healthy local democracy. In Toronto's case, we don't need to look very far back in our own history to see how important the ability is to hold the mayor's power in check. In fact, it was absolutely necessary. As they say, 'hope for the best and plan for the worst.'

"This motion is urgent because there will not be another council meeting prior to the introduction of this legislation that will have significant impacts on the city's governance structure."

That's a city council that is shocked by a government that did not consult with them, that is bullying just before an election, and I think that our elected councils across Ontario deserve much more respect than they were paid in the announcement of this initiative.

Burlington mayor Marianna Meed Ward said back when the strong-mayors story was leaked, "This came as a surprise; we were not consulted through either the Ontario's Big City Mayors caucus (of which I am a member) or the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (where I serve as a member of AMO's Large Urban Caucus). OBCM is calling an emergency meeting to discuss this.... Whatever changes the province proposes should be available equally ... to all municipalities, not just Toronto and Ottawa.

"I've been a strong advocate in the past for more powers for municipalities and their councils as a whole through the charter cities movement. Municipalities would negotiate a 'charter' with the province, giving them more powers over matters including planning, electoral reform and taxation. This is similar to the City of Toronto Act already in place, but would be available to any municipality on an opt-in basis.

"I will continue to advocate for more powers for municipalities and our councils as a whole, with or without any changes made to the role of mayor. The bigger opportunity than a 'strong-mayor' system to advance and deliver affordable housing (if that's what's being proposed....) is to reform and ultimately eliminate the Ontario Land Tribunal—an undemocratic, costly and time-wasting body that adds millions of dollars and, in some cases, years to development approvals that vary only slightly from the initial proposals. The OLT is the definition of red tape and it's gridlocking the development in Ontario—the only province with this type of system."

So there are two things that this government could have looked at after being elected: charter cities and the OLT, things that they could have engaged in meaningful dialogue with municipalities on, not announcing something like this just before an election through the media.

David Miller, mayor of Toronto in 2006 and a recipient of additional powers granted by council, said, "The province needs to stop interfering with Toronto and return to the principles underlying the City of Toronto Act—of mutual respect. The city of Toronto is the fourth or fifth largest government in Canada by budget and population and is more than capable of self-government.... I always said, 'You don't need a strong-mayor system, you need a strong mayor,' a statement which has stood the test of time."

Toronto councillor Josh Matlow said in a tweet, "Doug Ford's 'strong-mayor' legislation doesn't create housing or strengthen Toronto. It weakens our local democracy, diminishes councillors' ability to hold a mayor to account" and "with a veto for provincial objectives, in the wrong hands the mayor becomes a servant of Queen's Park."

My colleague from Toronto Centre, former councillor for Ward 13 in Toronto, said, "Why does Toronto need a 'strong-mayor' system? Mayor already wins city council votes nearly 98% of the time."

With respect to the question of housing, I'd like to also talk about some feedback from another group that wasn't consulted and that's More Neighbours Toronto. I think they expressed the feelings of many in Toronto who are struggling:

"Today, in just the third day of the Progressive Conservative government's second mandate ... the minister for municipal affairs tabled a much-anticipated bill that would provide the mayors of Toronto and Ottawa with extra powers....

"While there is little in this bill that would directly address the province's housing supply crisis, some of the

powers that will be given to the mayor could be used to hasten construction....

“Whether these powers would be used effectively remains to be seen.... What doesn’t change is the fact that there is still an anti-housing majority on Toronto’s city council.”

The article goes on to talk about the difference between legislation and the effects of a mayor who uses the current system to get their council to vote in a way that encourages affordable housing, and the desire of the city of Toronto to get the appropriate funding and the appropriate level of co-operation from the province, something they haven’t up to this point received.

1500

David Crombie: “You Don’t Need a Strong Mayor System to Have a Strong Mayor.”

“A former Toronto mayor is weighing in ... ‘The more power you give to the mayor to act on his or her own, the less public discussion you’re going to have, and to me, you lose the juice of democracy by doing so.... We need strong mayors, but you don’t need a strong-mayor system to have a strong mayor.’

“Crombie served as mayor of Toronto from 1972 to 1978....

“The current mayors of Toronto and Ottawa are divided.... Ottawa’s Jim Watson says he does not see how the so-called strong-mayor powers will help build more housing in his city, calling instead for more provincial funding.” I think the mayor of Ottawa has been very clear in the last couple of days what he thinks of this proposal, Speaker.

In conclusion, I see nothing in this bill that will achieve the minister’s stated priorities. I do not think that this government has been able to demonstrate clearly how strong-mayor powers will create housing or make it more affordable. Once again, this government has shown that in the time of a crisis, it cannot offer solutions. Municipalities have routinely articulated to the province that the housing crisis does not solely fall on their shoulders, and what they need to address it is support and financial assistance.

Instead, what this government offers is sweeping new powers encouraging mayors to veto council priorities, hire and fire senior staff, and unilaterally create budgets. This bill does not create housing or strengthen democracy; it weakens councils and entrenches the notion that mayors should be sledgehammers for provincial priorities.

While we do not yet know the full details, we know that this bill has the capacity to make municipal decision-making less transparent and less accountable. If this government was interested in creating housing, not just enriching their friends with high-priced development and MZOs, they would listen to and work in partnership with municipal councils, and give them the legislative and financial supports they need to move forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Thank you to the member from Niagara Centre. We’ll now start with questions. We’ll start on the government side, the member from Mississauga–Lakeshore.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: On this side of the House, we know that we need homes in this province. As you know, two million people will be moving into the Golden Horseshoe in the next 10 years, and we need approximately 1.5 million homes.

To the member from Niagara Centre: During the 1990s, Bob Rae removed rent control on new builds. Do you remember that? If you do, do you support what Bob Rae did at that time and what we’re doing today to build more rental for this province?

Mr. Jeff Burch: I thank the member for the question. I was alive at the time; many voters weren’t. But I appreciate the question. I don’t agree with removing rent controls, no matter who does it. I think rent controls are incredibly important, and they’ve never been more important than right now, because we’re in a housing crisis. It’s a crisis because people can’t afford their rent. If we really want to do something to help keep people from hitting the streets, maybe your government will consider more than a 5% raise to ODSP.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Stephen Crawford): The member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I really want to thank the member from Niagara Centre for your hour lead here. I learned so much. You have a lot of experience to bring to us.

I also want to thank the members on the other side, who—I watched—did stay and paid attention, because we can see that it’s an important bill. We have a lot to learn from one another and respect the experiences that we all bring to this House, so I want to thank you for that.

The dangers here in a bill that has potential to bring in authoritarian rule at a municipal level—these dangers are quite significant. I was wondering if you could just expand a little bit further on your disappointment and my disappointment that we have short-circuited this debate on such an important piece of legislation. We haven’t talked to all of the stakeholders and we haven’t given us, as legislators, adequate time to bring to this House the information that we need.

Mr. Jeff Burch: Thank you to my colleague for the question. It’s a very important question. I think I spoke quite a bit in my presentation about the lack of consultation. You’ve heard it loud and clear from Toronto council: It was not consulted at all. This is going to affect them. The mayor of Ottawa is clearly not thrilled with this and was not consulted.

We don’t believe that this is going to do anything for housing. But if the government truly believes that this bill is going to do something to increase housing, especially affordable housing, they should explain that and they should be meeting with housing advocates and explaining to them how that’s going to happen.

I listened to the minister’s press conference the other day. He was asked, over and over again, by journalists. He couldn’t answer the question. You’ve got to have your facts straight if you’re going to put a bill and make a claim like that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Stephen Crawford): The member from Hastings–Lennox and Addington.

Mr. Ric Bresee: To the member from Niagara Centre, thank you for your presentation. This legislation, at its core, is quite simple. We need to support efficient local decision-making to help cut through the red tape so that we can build more homes. Why doesn't the opposition trust Ontarians, our local citizens, to elect their own efficient local leaders?

Mr. Jeff Burch: Thank you to the member for the question. I would just turn that right around and ask the government the exact same question. I mean, we're talking about the city of Toronto. This is the second time, as I mentioned, that I've had to stand here—at least it's not 4 o'clock in the morning—talking about the government interfering in people's democratic rights to elect their councillors and to understand what the rules are before an election, not have them change drastically during an election with no consultation—

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Point of order, the member from Barrie–Innisfil.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: The member opposite is imputing motive when he is speaking about municipal elections in terms of what the government bill does or does not do. I just wanted to correct the record and withdraw the comment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Stephen Crawford): I appreciate the comment. If the member from Niagara Centre could be cautious in his language, please.

The member from Toronto Centre.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: There has been much speak from the government side about making sure that the strong-mayor program, the bill, is going to be aligned with provincial priorities. Therefore, the mayor of Toronto and the mayor of Ottawa would be acting on behalf of government priorities. And yet, as far as I know, the ministers' mandate letters have been kept secret, to the point that we need to go to the Supreme Court to find out the contents and the direction from the Premier to the ministers.

So I'm just very curious: How will residents of Toronto, as well as Ottawa, know what the provincial priorities are when the public and members themselves don't know what is contained in the mandate letters?

Mr. Jeff Burch: That's an excellent question, and I want to congratulate my colleague on their election. It's great to have them here in the House with us.

The mandate letters have been kept secret. Yesterday, when we asked for a definition of "provincial priorities" at the ministerial briefing, we got, "Ask the minister." When the ministry is unclear about what those priorities are—I didn't hear a clear explanation. I was listening intently to the minister today. I think that's something we're sure going to have to ask him over the next few days.

Of course, they only told us we'd be talking about this at 10:45 last night, so it's a little tough to ask those questions when you've got no notice of debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Stephen Crawford): The member from Kitchener South–Hespeler.

1510

Ms. Jess Dixon: There's growth happening all across [*inaudible*], and most of that growth is anticipated to be happening in Ottawa and in Toronto. For years, we've failed to plan for that, even though arguably it could be seen coming. Now, of course, we have a shortage of housing. There's no disagreement on any side of this House that we need more homes, and that's homes of all different types.

Why does the opposition oppose giving municipalities the tools they need in order to cut red tape and plan for the efficient building of new housing?

Mr. Jeff Burch: Congratulations to the member on their election to the House.

We're not; we want to cut red tape. Our version of red tape and the government's version are quite different. I mentioned, for example, the Ontario Land Tribunal. There's a whole whack of red tape right there, and municipalities all across Ontario have been asking this government to do something and deal with it. Both developers and councils and citizens want something done about the Ontario Land Tribunal and this government absolutely refuses to deal with that issue. We're in favour of cutting red tape as long as it's done responsibly and there is demonstrated need for it. The minister could at least explain how the legislation will result in that happening.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Stephen Crawford): The member from London North Centre.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to thank the member from Niagara Centre for noting that this legislation is part of a broader pattern where we've seen the Conservative government interfering in Toronto city council elections in 2018, as well as stepping over London's successful and widely popular ranked balloting system.

I'd also like to thank the member from Niagara Centre for pointing out that the antithesis to this legislation would be to enhance democracy, to strengthen municipalities with charter cities.

My question is, is this bill yet another attempt to contain, curtail and control democracy as well as other levels of government?

Mr. Jeff Burch: Thank you to the member for the question, and thank you for mentioning charter cities. That's something that we've been really interested in. Talking to the folk from Charter City Toronto, we've had some great conversations between them and our caucus and between other mayors who are talking to us about ways that we can actually enhance municipal governments, such as taxation powers that they've asked for. I think Mayor Crombie says, "We're asked for 21st century results with 19th century tools." Municipalities are asking for these things, but this government instead brings in a piece of legislation that they can't really even explain.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Further debate?

Mr. Rick Byers: Thank you to the member for his remarks, full and considered. I think we all agree that more housing is needed, but across this province housing starts are at an all-time high. Last year, Ontario had over 100,000

housing starts, the highest level since 1987, and more than 13,000 rental starts.

Interjection.

Mr. Rick Byers: I'm a new guy. I'm sorry.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: You're sharing your time with the member for York South–Weston—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Stephen Crawford): The member has 20 minutes.

Mr. Rick Byers: Okay, and I'm sharing my time with the honourable member from York South–Weston, the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism. I really appreciate that, and I'll be real quick.

We know we still need to build more homes. Does the opposition not agree and does the member not agree that we need to accelerate the construction of all kinds of homes for all kinds of folks in Ontario?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Stephen Crawford): The Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism.

Hon. Michael D. Ford: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is my great honour to stand up in the House for the very first time to be speaking on Bill 3, the Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act. I'd like to start off by acknowledging one of my city hall colleagues previously, the member from Toronto Centre who is also in the chamber. I know we may not agree on many things, we may not have at city hall, but it's great to be joining you as well.

As I stand in the House for the first time, I want to thank the great people from York South–Weston as they've entrusted me to represent them here at Queen's Park and deliver for our community. Today, across the GTA and the entire province, we are facing a housing crisis, where too many hard-working families are struggling with housing and the rising cost of living. This is no different in my community of York South–Weston.

Recently I chatted with a young university student named Ben, who grew up in the riding and continues to live there with his family, friends and neighbours. He loves the area, but is frustrated and anxious about whether he can ever move out after he graduates this year and eventually own his own home in our community. Ben isn't alone. This is something I've heard time and time again from young people and young families in my riding.

The reality is that our population is growing rapidly, with over a third of growth over the next decade expected to happen in our province's two most populous cities, Toronto and Ottawa. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, housing construction is not keeping pace with the rapid growth of our province and these communities, after years of inaction. There is just not enough supply of homes to meet the growing demand, which is pushing the dream of home ownership too far out of reach and making affordable rentals harder to find for so many hard-working families.

It shouldn't be this way. Ontarians from all walks of life should be able to work hard, save up and eventually own a home when the time is right. We understand that with inflation driving up the cost of living even higher, Ontarians need their government to be all hands on deck and implementing new, bold solutions. It is critical that we continue to build on our bold vision for the future and for

the province to keep costs down and ensure Ontario communities continue to be the best place in the world to live, work and raise a family.

That is exactly what we are going to do. It starts with building more housing supply that everyday people— young families, renters, newcomers and seniors like those in diverse communities such as York South–Weston—can afford and access. Because no matter where you go, people are looking for housing that meets their needs and their budget.

I am proud of the progress that our government has been able to accomplish under the leadership of the Premier and Minister Clark. I welcome the good news that our government's policies have helped get shovels in the ground for more than 100,000 homes in the last year alone, which is record-setting over the last 30 years.

I know there is still more work that needs to be done to deliver on our commitment to build 1.5 million new homes in our province. However, unlike my opposition colleagues, who say no to housing and the policies our government has put forward, our government is supporting our municipal partners, improving planning policies and cutting red tape to say yes to building more homes faster for everyone.

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As a former Toronto city councillor, I know first-hand how it takes way too long to get things built and how frustrating long, drawn-out processes and red tape can be. For example, in Toronto's northwest community, getting necessary permits, studies and zoning changes to potentially build thousands of new homes can take years, even to be able to get shovels in the ground. There are too many hands in the pot, with too many layers of bureaucracy, studies, permits that are delaying and driving up the cost of housing, construction and other critical infrastructure projects being built across our city.

There are too many delays, whether it's responding to meeting requests, communications and points of clarification—which is a very much on-the-ground experience that I have seen, being a city councillor—and too many silos and layers that make it challenging for the development community to navigate and move their projects forward.

The people of my community and communities across Ontario, especially in Toronto and Ottawa, are tired of the countless studies and bureaucracy. Change can be slow and challenging at city hall. That is why they need and deserve action now, which is why we are introducing this critical piece of legislation to empower our municipal partners to get it done.

The new strong-mayor system will support better and faster decision-making at a local level and ensure Ontario's two biggest cities are equipped with the powers they need to cut through red tape and get shovels in the ground. As I've mentioned, as a former city councillor in the city of Toronto, I know these municipalities can benefit from these changes presented in Bill 3. The new legislation will help drive up housing supply and speed up local planning approvals, driving policy changes and enabling mayors to build the right team to get the job done and develop budgets to make it happen.

Unlike the federal and provincial elections, where constituents directly vote for their local representative, municipal electors are also able to vote directly for the mayor whose vision, priorities and commitments best align with their values and what they would like to see for the future of their city and community. Although the mayor receives the direct endorsement of the people from across the city, they are stuck with one vote, similar to the rest of the council. The mayor should have more influence over the direction and the future of the city, over one individual city councillor.

However, that does not take away from the importance of city council as a whole, and we are empowering that through this bill. We are setting the bar higher for mayors and making it easier for them to deliver results based on the vision that they were elected to execute for their communities, and better hold them accountable for the decisions they make.

The legislation we are enabling the mayor to direct city staff to develop and bring forward proposals for city council consideration—sorry.

Interjection: Are you okay?

Hon. Michael D. Ford: Yes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Can we stop the clock?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Stephen Crawford): Yes, the member from Barrie–Innisfil?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I seek unanimous consent to let the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism do his speech.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Stephen Crawford): The member for Barrie–Innisfil has asked for unanimous consent to have the member be able to continue speaking. Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed.

The Minister of Multiculturalism and Citizenship.

Hon. Michael D. Ford: I thank the House for that—and sorry, I do get dizzy spells once in awhile and I guess I was trying to battle through that. So thank you to both sides of the House.

We are setting the bar higher for mayors and making it easier for them to deliver results based on the vision they were elected to execute on for their communities and to better hold them accountable for the decisions they make. This legislation will enable the mayor to direct city staff to develop and bring forward proposals for council consideration that advance provincial priorities such as building more housing, transit and transit-oriented communities.

Mr. Speaker, again, we understand that there is no silver bullet to solve the housing crisis that has been decades in the making in this great province, but this bill is yet another step in the right direction and part of our long-term plan to build all kinds of homes, address the missing middle and help all Ontarians find a home that meets their needs.

Our government is about finding solutions and putting these solutions into action. There is no more time to waste. That is what our communities expect of us as elected officials. I am proud to be part of a government that is tirelessly working for the people and putting these ideas into action.

By building faster, adding more housing supply and making municipalities more accountable we can bring the dream of home ownership closer to reality for all people, including the very diverse communities and new immigrants from around our province who call Ontario home for the very first time, and give them a better life.

Together, let's build more homes that people can afford. Let's get it done.

Report continues in volume B.

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Meghan Stenson, Christopher Tyrell

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Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
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Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
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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	
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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	
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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	
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Jones, Trevor (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	
Jordan, John (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	
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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	