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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 4 October 2018

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 4 octobre 2018

The House met at 0900.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CANNABIS STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE LE CANNABIS

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 2, 2018, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 36, An Act to enact a new Act and make amendments to various other Acts respecting the use and sale of cannabis and vapour products in Ontario / Projet de loi 36, Loi édictant une nouvelle loi et modifiant diverses autres lois en ce qui concerne l'utilisation et la vente de cannabis et de produits de vapotage en Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to the order of the House dated October 3, 2018, I am now required to put the question.

Ms. Mulroney has moved second reading of Bill 36, An Act to enact a new Act and make amendments to various other Acts respecting the use and sale of cannabis and vapour products in Ontario.

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

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

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, it will be deferred until after question period today.

Second reading vote deferred.

ACCESS TO NATURAL GAS ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR L'ACCÈS
AU GAZ NATUREL

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 3, 2018, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 32, An Act to amend the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 / Projet de loi 32, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm very pleased to be able to continue my remarks from yesterday. I was glad to have about a 45-minute head start, I guess, to lead into today's

comments on Bill 32, which is the Access to Natural Gas Act. I'm going to remind folks of a few of the pieces that I brought up yesterday. Hopefully, I can encourage and inspire the government to answer some of the important questions that we have on this bill.

This is a bill that will expand access to natural gas. That is what it purports to do. That is the framework-enabling legislation that we have here. But it's a framework long overdue. We have needed access to affordable energy across this province, especially in our rural regions, especially in our northern communities, especially in our Indigenous communities, but as we see in this bill, we're left to assume that that is indeed the goal.

They say lots of things about assuming. I would feel better about it if, in this actual bill, it were in black and white, if it was actually in writing in this bill that the priority was expansion for our rural communities, our remote communities, our northern communities and our Indigenous communities. Hopefully this government can make that change, make that amendment in the committee time.

I'm going to go back. I'm not going to reread the letters that I've already put on the record from farmers, from communities, from families who through the years have tried to be a part of the natural gas world. That framework—it has been prohibitively expensive for them to get into that; and then, unfortunately, because they can't buy in and they couldn't afford the cost to have the natural gas, to tap into the existing lines, they're left paying the higher cost of energy ongoing.

This is supposed to change all of that, but we have some concerns, not just because we're the opposition, but because we're looking at a landscape here of giving potentially unfettered access, to natural gas companies, to ratepayers' pockets.

As I said yesterday—I mentioned it a couple of times—the government has sold this particular program as a no-cost solution, as a cost savings, because they have axed a \$100-million grant that had been promised by the Liberal government. There were projects that were already being arranged as part of that \$100-million grant, and this government said, "No, no, that's taxpayer money. We are going to save the taxpayer. We are going to get rid of this \$100-million government investment. We don't want any skin in this game. Instead, we are going to say that all of these projects and more projects, and then more on top of that"—which is okay, as long as there is a benefit and they're necessary projects and there's OEB scrutiny on those proposals, on those projects.

There is going to be a significant cost to put those lines in. There is going to be a significant cost, but this

government says, “Not for the taxpayer. Don’t worry, folks. We’re saving you money. There’s no cost to the taxpayer.” But the cost, as is laid out in this legislation, is going to be shifted. There is going to be the subsidy for the new consumers, and then it’s going to be shifted to other consumers, yet to be determined in regulation by cabinet. Cross your fingers. That shifted cost responsibility will go onto, we assume, the ratepayer base, onto the existing ratepayers. So we’re not calling them taxpayers, because that’s what this government has said: They’re not taxpayers. But they are ratepayers.

I’m going to tell you something, Speaker: It’s the same person.

I’m going to explain a little bit about the Ontario Energy Board, the OEB. They have a duty to respect the consumer. Yesterday, I briefly mentioned the core principles. They have to determine whether it’s worth it. They have to look at benefits, they have to look at the potential and they have to make sure that a project that comes to them—an energy project—is worthwhile, and they have measurements.

Something about natural gas that I’ve learned in preparing for this hour lead: Natural gas companies aren’t actually allowed to make money off of the commodity. They can’t make money off of natural gas. They make money off of building and managing pipes—and I understand they need to make money; this is a business. But as I hear over and over from farmers and families and businesses, they also provide access to growth and lower costs. Farmers, our agricultural communities, our industries, our families—they need that. They need lower-cost energy. They also need broadband; I’m just asking while everybody is here. Hopefully we’ll get to that and we’ll have a really fulsome debate about broadband another day.

The OEB is the independent regulator. They scrutinize and regulate. I’m sure that natural gas companies would love to build pipes to everyone, to everywhere and increase the use of natural gas, but that doesn’t make economic sense. These projects need to make sense, be in the best interests of our communities and the best interests of our businesses and our families.

0910

So back to the core principles for the OEB: You can’t charge different amounts to different classes. I’ll come back to that. The other one is: You can’t expand if it doesn’t benefit existing consumers. That has been a measure for new projects: Is everybody benefitting equally? No? It’s not going to go ahead. I’m oversimplifying, but this is the gist of it—and that everyone has to pay the same, because it’s not fair if someone has to pay more. Well, I think we all recognize that in some of our rural and northern and remote communities, it is going to cost more. If they need it and they are demanding it and they are asking for it, and have been for years and years and years, and they’re willing to pay more and there’s a way to work with them, then by all means I don’t think we should hamper their growth, their development.

So that’s why in 2016 the Liberals had decided that rule number one isn’t fair. As I said, if a community or a family

is willing to pay the difference, to pay more to have it, then case by case we should be able to override this principle. Okay. The bill we have here, Bill 32, overturns the OEB rules that were based on the principle that people who benefit from natural gas investments should be the ones who pay for them. This is shifting the cost to the existing ratepayer base, so that overrides rule number two. I’m not even arguing that that’s a problem, but I’m saying that when we’re getting into territory here that is overriding the OEB and we have a bill that doesn’t explicitly state and reassure us as to what the OEB’s role is going to be with all of these new projects, we have concern. We want to know that the OEB will be able to scrutinize these decisions; that projects that are proposed and that hopefully are able to go forward do indeed meet some cost-benefit threshold. I don’t want to leave that up to cabinet, no offence; I want to leave that up to an independent body to make the decision.

Currently we have limits, and we want assurances that we still will, because despite the fact we’ve heard this is a no-cost solution, there is a cost. As the minister had said the other day, with the \$100-million grant that they have cut, that \$100 million was only going to cover, as he said, 12 projects. I don’t know; I don’t know what those projects are. I’m using his numbers. So as I’ll ask again: If \$100 million gets you 12 projects and this government has been talking about 80 projects on the horizon, that quick math looks like about \$700 million right out of the gate that we have on the table here.

What will that look like? How quickly will that happen? Are we talking about those numbers? Are they legit? During questions and comments, I would love to have clarity on what that cost will be; and borne by whom? It says “a class of consumers.” I can assume it’s the entire natural gas ratepayer base of Ontario. Those costs spread over the entire province—I don’t know what that will look like on a bill; maybe significant, maybe not, arguably not. I don’t know. But are we talking about this over the next couple of years, the next 10, the next 20? We don’t know, and we want protections for Ontarians.

So again it’s not clear whether the OEB will still have authority to review and approve natural gas expansion proposals. We want to know that. We want to strengthen rural energy infrastructure, but this bill cuts \$100 million to the natural gas expansion grant—just gone. The government is not putting any money in. So they’re saying—what? What does that mean? To me, they’re saying: “We’re washing our hands of this. We’re just going to leave it up to the private sector and cross our fingers that it goes well.”

Speaker, perhaps you remember that was a great Liberal idea when it came to Hydro One, when it came to energy: Let them look after it. We’re still feeling that. So I caution the government. Do you want to take all of your responsibility out of this conversation? I don’t think so, because if this doesn’t go well, you’ll wear it regardless.

But there are other pieces that I didn’t have a chance to talk about yesterday. You might remember that Greenpeace recently sued this government for failing to post Bill

4, which was the Cap and Trade Cancellation Act, to the Environmental Registry. Okay, why am I mentioning that? Well, maybe they can clarify, because when I prepared these remarks last week, when I thought I'd be doing the lead, at that point this government hadn't posted this bill to the Environmental Registry as required by law. So if that has since been done, since last week, please let me know. But otherwise, why are we going down the same path? We do have environmental responsibilities, and laying pipe across the province falls under this.

Again, something that I have—I'd say I've belaboured this point, but I'm hoping that by the hundredth time I say it, one of them will hear it. There is no mention of the words "rural" or "northern," so what is the goal? If the goal is to subsidize suburban sprawl for the benefit of developers having that discounted natural gas installation that's funded by the ratepayer, then let's have that conversation. We're all for responsible development, but I don't know that this is the way to approach that.

If this is indeed like we're hearing in debate, for the folks who have been asking for it, for rural, remote, northern and Indigenous communities, great. Put that in the bill, please. I'd like to know who the actual beneficiaries of Bill 32 are. As I said, this can't be a "maybe" for northern and rural.

Another assurance while we're talking about those communities—which is nice, because often we don't—some northern industries and municipalities have sought assurances that the Northern Industrial Electricity Rate Program will continue. That's \$120 million a year in funding. It was reaffirmed in the 2018-19 budget. There is always a fear it will be cut. This would be a great opportunity for government members to stand up and say: "Don't worry, Jen. You can reassure all of those industries and municipalities that it's still a go." So, food for thought.

Anyway, one other thing: In the spirit of working together, I had requested a briefing on this particular bill. I haven't had it yet, and maybe I won't, but anyway I figured it out myself. The one thing the government did give me was a handy consolidation of acts, the Ontario Energy Board Act. This is just a fun fact as I was flipping through here—and I can't show you because that would make it a prop—but this is where this amendment will fit in here. What we're debating fits neatly in here. But when you flip through the act, you find grey areas—like, actually coloured grey. I'm being literal here. These are sections of the bill that we have already debated in this House, that have passed but haven't actually been proclaimed yet. There's a whack of them.

The government might want to take a look at this: When it comes to stopping the distribution of gas, recovery of amounts, exceptions and there are some protections in here for natural gas consumers in the event of—well, reading into it—winter disconnections, for example; so protections for consumers that are in law but haven't been proclaimed yet. So while you're at it, while you're digging in here—putting in these amendments and we're talking about a committee—seeing as how you're the new

government, maybe go back and proclaim some of these protections just for fun and while we're here.

The takeaway, in my last minute and a half: The government is cutting a \$100-million investment, a \$100-million grant. They have no skin in the game, and they're putting all of this on private industry. Saying that, "No longer the taxpayer is on the hook for this, but the ratepayer is," and pretending that those are different people—come on. An Ontarian is an Ontarian, and the costs will be borne by them.

So let's do this responsibly and reassure folks that this will be something that does, ultimately, lead to the goal that you're talking about—and it's not in writing—that is, to have affordable energy access to our rural, remote, northern and Indigenous communities. That needs to be the priority. Please put it in writing. The potentially unfettered access to ratepayer pockets—we want to know and we want to hear from this government that the OEB will be involved and what that will look like. Can they scrutinize it? What is their place in this? Because it can't just all be up to cabinet. Like I said, "I like you—but." Okay? We need independent oversight on this.

0920

We really want the government to prioritize the needs of our ag sector, of our rural communities and our northern neighbours. Prove it. Use the words. Type them; they're not too long. Put them in the bill. We've seen an unpredictable and unstable way of doing business with the cancelling of contracts. We want to know that this is the right way forward, so we're asking this government to prove that to us.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Parm Gill: I want to thank the member from Oshawa for her speech. I just want to share what I am hearing and what I have been hearing in my riding. I represent the great riding of Milton, and it's, obviously, an honour and a privilege each and every single day. It allows me to be in this House and represent the members of my community.

We have a significant portion of my riding that is rural, communities, like Campbellville, Moffatt—you name it—Brookville, Lowville, Kilbride, Nassagaweya. I run into my constituents all the time, especially lots and lots of them during the election, because this is an issue that concerns most rural residents, who are basically paying through their nose when it comes to having to heat their home and, in some cases, having to choose whether they are going to put food on their table or whether they're going to heat their home and whatnot. These are people that are dependent on natural gas to heat their homes, or on electricity, oil and other means where they don't have access to natural gas.

This would really help families. I can tell you, in my riding of Milton, this is an initiative that is received really, really well. I am hearing lots of positive feedback on what kind of relief it will help bring for families that are suffering, making ends meet, especially seniors in my riding.

Under the previous Liberal government, the private sector was restricted in terms of how they could play a role in eliminating this need—to bring natural gas to rural communities. This will help my communities in a big way.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jeff Burch: I just want to thank my friend from Oshawa for a very thoughtful one-hour presentation. I admire anyone that can get up and speak for an hour on any subject—

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Oh, I can speak for an hour—

Mr. Jeff Burch: She can speak for an hour.

As she pointed out, this is another example of this government bumbling along with policy, not really tying up loose ends and not really sure where they are going. Whether this side of the House decides to support this bill or not, there are obvious problems with it because of the bumbling nature of the way the government approaches legislation.

For example, as of last week, Bill 32 was not posted to the Environmental Registry as is required by law. We all know that Greenpeace sued the government for failing to abide by this law when Bill 4 was not posted. Time and time again, it's evident that this government doesn't have an environmental plan—I've raised this issue many times—and they don't tie up loose ends when they present legislation. It's very unfortunate.

Life is becoming increasingly unaffordable, and we want to rectify that. However, this bill, combined with the \$100-million cut to the natural gas expansion grant, could be sending the natural gas sector down a similar road as the hydro scandal, and the indirect costs of this bill could be very large. Capital decisions have to be authentically in the interests of consumers, not politics or big business.

On this side of the House, we know what happens when Conservatives take government. We have the federal debt—72% of it was accumulated by Conservative governments. What they do is they get in, the deficit balloons out of control, their friends make a bundle and workers suffer. That's our concern, Madam Speaker, with the way the government is approaching this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Billy Pang: I appreciate the member from the opposition—that we agree that living in Ontario is more challenging and more unaffordable. However, we have different approaches.

We are going to implement a proposed program that the legislation, if passed, allows more consumers access to affordable natural gas. I just got some bills from my wife that she sent to me. I can see that the bill of the natural gas is rocketing up.

We understand that for average residents, consumers, in Ontario, if they use electric for the heating, it will be way more expensive. So we are supporting them by proposing more natural gas support that results in savings between \$800 and \$2,500 per year. By removing the cost of the cap-and-trade carbon tax from the natural gas, we believe that residents in Ontario can live a way more

affordable life. Therefore, we proposed this bill. We want to put money back into Ontarians' pockets.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jamie West: I also want to congratulate the member for Oshawa for her presentation and the points she brought forward and how eloquently she did it.

One of the ones she hammered again and again and talked about was “no cost to taxpayers.” That's fun to say, that taxpayers won't pay, but at the end of the day someone has to pay. It doesn't matter if you call them a taxpayer or a ratepayer; someone is paying at the end of the day. Ratepayers are taxpayers. You can play with vocabulary, but there isn't a very big difference.

The other part of it is, as somebody who currently has natural gas in my house as well as other utilities, I don't want to subsidize the expansion of a private company. I don't think that's fair to me to have my bills go up so I can pay for the expansion. I think the cost should be borne by the company and incentives through the government, but not specifically just because I'm already a customer. It would be like if I rented a unit and my landlord decided he would like to build a unit next door to me and my rate doubled so that I could pay for his infrastructure. That doesn't make sense to me.

The member from Milton talked about the heightened cost of electricity. It's going to skyrocket again once the artificial lowering of rates goes down. I agree with that.

If you go back in time, in Sudbury we had a lot of people heating by oil. It was costly, dirty and expensive. Then, electricity was the saviour. In the 1970s, all of these houses were built with electric baseboard heaters. In fact, my first house had electric baseboard heaters and one natural gas fireplace in the corner. We almost never turned on the baseboard heaters because it was so expensive. This was before it ballooned up. That's something that we have to look at as well when we're looking at rural communities or remote communities.

It's important that the bill, even though it includes it in the title, should specify that this isn't, as the core city of Sudbury expands, to bring natural gas to neighbourhoods that are nearby, but to bring it to the neighbourhoods that are outside, in Greater Sudbury and beyond, that don't have any immediate access at all. As it expands, we have to keep in mind: Do we have these rural communities on gas as their only choice, and then that rate climbs as well, and what alternatives do they have?

It's about giving people choice—and not just a choice, but many choices. And I agree: They need choice and they need access, because the price of electricity is very high. But we have to make sure that it's a fair choice and one that's going to be economical.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Back to the member for Oshawa.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Thank you very much. I appreciate the comments from the members from Milton, Niagara Centre, Markham–Unionville and Sudbury.

As the member from Milton reminds us, we hear constituent concerns on a regular basis. We do want to

help families. So I want to ensure, as I said, that that is the goal of this because, as the member from Sudbury just mentioned, how does he as a ratepayer or how do ratepayers feel about the expansion of the company? If it's expansion just for the sake of expansion versus expansion for access for our rural and northern—I'm willing to pay a bit more on my bill to make sure that our northern and our agricultural communities have access to lower-cost energy, but I also want to know that my government will invest. I want to know that the government cares enough to put money into this, that they're not just going to throw up their hands and say: "Do it on your own. Go ahead. Have at them."

0930

So the comments from the member from Niagara Centre about how this is presented, with lots of questions and loose ends, getting to be par for the course—which is annoying, because when the bill comes into force, then we do have to do the cleanup afterwards. It's always a good idea to put the work in on this side of it. But as he said, we want assurances—we Ontarians want assurances—that this will be done authentically in the interest of consumers. So reassure us, folks. That would be great.

The member from Markham—Unionville talked about his bill going up. I've been seeing bills as well, but when his natural gas bill is already going up—and we're going to spread natural gas far and wide and we're going to use up all of these supplies that we've got from fracking in the US—well, then, are we going to find ourselves back in the 1970s with the electricity conversation, but now natural gas? So great point. And money back into Ontarians' pockets—yes. But don't just take from one to put in the other. It's one set of pockets, ratepayer or taxpayer.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I rise this morning to do my inaugural address. Madam Speaker, it is an honour and a privilege to be here today and to congratulate you, on behalf of the residents of St. Catharines, on your appointment as Speaker of this House. I offer my personal congratulations as well, and I look forward to working with you in the next four years.

Any speech that I have ever done, whether it be professional or personal, cannot begin without mentioning any and all of my family. I would like to thank my very supportive husband, Jim—Jim has been my silent partner throughout my whole political experience; my son, Jonathan; my daughter, Charlotte; and their partners, Sarah and Mark. I would be remiss not to mention my two beautiful granddaughters, Josephine and Hazel Mae; my sister, Jackie; Bryan; and of course, my mother, Pat; and my late father, Fred. Whether it has been my municipal or provincial campaigns, my family and friends—and by the way, some of the best friends a girl could ever ask for: Shelley, Peggy, Dana, Lisa and Sharon—have always been by my side, ready to knock on doors, put up signs and do whatever they could do. I would like to thank them all from the bottom of my heart.

My family is a proud military family. Both my grandfathers served in the air force. In fact, my mother and father met on an air force base in 1960, in Edmonton, Alberta. They're known as what you call "army brats." It was shortly after then that my father served in the Canadian navy. My cousin Joanne serves in the air force. Her husband, Denis Doucette, is a warrant officer for the Canadian military. But most of all, my proud part in my life is my son, Jonathan. Jonathan serves in the Canadian navy.

You could say we have it all covered in Ontario and across Canada. We have the land, the air and the sea. Because of my family ties to the military, I was honoured to be named the opposition critic for veterans, legions and military affairs. Being raised by a veteran and raising one myself has instilled in me deep appreciation for the risks our men and women in the Canadian services put themselves in every day.

It was always with mixed emotions that I would say, "Fair winds and calm seas" to my son, Jonathan, when he would leave for a tour of duty. Jonathan has served our country, Canada, in three tours of duty. ALTAIR was a counter-terrorism mission, SAIPH was a counter-piracy mission in the Gulf of Aden, and Active Endeavour was about showing forces in the Black Sea and the Mediterranean during the war on terror. The pride I felt knowing that my son was following in his grandfather's footsteps, ready to risk everything to service this—yours—great country of ours; but also the worry, the wondering whether or not my son, Jonathan, would come home to the arms of his family. We were fortunate: Our son, Jonathan, came home, but many of his friends and comrades were not so lucky.

I would like to let you know about a young man named Dennis Brown. Dennis grew up in the riding of St. Catharines. He was a very, very good friend of mine. He perished in the line of duty on March 3, 2009. Dennis enlisted in 1988 with the Lincoln and Welland Regiment in St. Catharines and served as a warrant officer in the Canadian Armed Forces.

When I think of the sacrifices of men like Dennis, my heart aches for the loved ones, for his three young boys who been left behind: Mac, Owen and Ben. There is no question we must put our veterans and their families first in our minds and in our hearts every day. Those who have sacrificed everything for this country deserve the same from it. The least we can do as elected representatives is to do everything in our power to give our veterans and their families everything they need.

My first political endeavor was when I ran for St. Catharines city council back in 1997. It was my mother and my late father who played a role in inspiring me to run municipally. My mother herself had served as a school board trustee. She was the chairman of the Lincoln County School Board. And 43 years before I was elected to this position, my father, Fred, ran provincially for the NDP in 1975 in the riding of St. Catharines—Brock. He went on to serve on St. Catharines city council from 1981 to 1985. I know that he cannot be here today to listen to my inaugural

speech, but I know he is here looking down from above, guiding me through every step of this endeavor. And boy, oh boy, I know my father has a huge smile, and it's a smile of pride.

Even though I ran unsuccessfully my first two tries municipally, my mother never gave up, and her support never wavered. In fact, in every election, being municipal or provincial, since then, I can say with confidence that she has knocked on more doors than anyone else in St. Catharines, and I know that for a fact. No one has supported me more in my political life than my mother. For every pair of shoes I went through, I know my mother burned out two. At every campaign event I went to, my mother stood right beside me. I would like to take this opportunity this morning to thank her; to thank her from the bottom of my heart.

So, a little about me: I was born and raised in St. Catharines in a small community called Merritton within the city of St. Catharines, and it is a place I have called home all of my life. I cannot express how humble I am that St. Catharines residents have put their trust in myself to be their representative, their voice here at Queen's Park.

My predecessor, Mr. Jim Bradley: Jim represented the residents of my riding, St. Catharines, for the past 41 years—41 years, Madam Speaker. He did so with honesty, and he did so with integrity and a strong sense of commitment to provide the residents of St. Catharines the programs and the services they needed. But mostly, Mr. Bradley served the residents with a lot of hard work. I have been left with some pretty large shoes to fill.

If there is one thing of Jim's legacy that I would like to carry on, it is his insistence that no matter what, the working class of this province, they deserve to be heard, whether it be housing, in employment law or in child care.

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St. Catharines, Madam Speaker, is the largest municipality in the Niagara Peninsula. It's a city of approximately 132,000 people, the largest municipality in Niagara. It is divided by one of the busiest highways in Ontario, the Queen Elizabeth Way. As the largest municipality in Niagara, St. Catharines has a north end and it has a south end. Seeing that it is on a direct route between Toronto and the border with the United States of America, transportation is an important issue and a concern. Rapid and reliable transportation between St. Catharines and Toronto is needed. GO Transit has been promised to the residents of St. Catharines. It needs to be delivered, and it needs to be delivered as soon as possible.

St. Catharines, like other cities, is in the midst of an opioid crisis. Last fall, Niagara Health reported a 65% increase over 2016 in the number of opioid overdoses in its emergency department. At the same time, data released by the Canadian Institute of Health Information showed that Niagara had one of the highest rates of opioid overdoses in Canada. Safe injection sites, safe consumption sites—many of them are needed, and they are needed now. Every day, at the doorstep, I heard stories—whether it was people finding needles on their streets or in their parks or within their children's playgrounds—their experiences,

their real-life stories, of their loved ones and how they struggled with addiction.

Madam Speaker, I was elected to represent everyone in St. Catharines, and that includes our most vulnerable people. We owe it to them to let them know that we believe their lives are worth fighting for, whether it be an overdose prevention site, or whether it be providing housing or even a good paying job.

St. Catharines has one of the lowest vacancy rates for Ontario cities. The vacancy rate is well below 3%. This puts a financial strain on our regional housing services that were downloaded by the province many, many years ago. Public housing is something I will fight tooth and nail for, every step of the way, just as my constituents have asked me to do.

St. Catharines has officially declared itself a "compassionate city." It is struggling to offer compassion to the homeless and to those seeking affordable rental accommodation when the vacancy rate is so low. Provincial policies and programs need to do more to address the urgent need in St. Catharines.

Residents of St. Catharines need better transportation in the form of GO Transit. It is needed now. Residents of St. Catharines need more affordable housing. It is needed now. Residents need safe injection sites and an end to hallway medicine that I experienced first-hand as an employee at the Hotel Dieu Shaver rehabilitation centre. Hydro One must be put back into public hands so residents can see some relief to their electricity charges. High tuition costs for our Brock University students and our Niagara College students must be addressed so our students don't have to choose between paying for books and paying for food.

These are only a few additional issues and concerns expressed by my residents of the riding of St. Catharines during the last provincial election campaign. There are many, many, many more, and I look forward to working with my fellow members from across the House to see these issues addressed and come to a conclusion that will benefit all of the residents in my riding as well as the ridings around St. Catharines.

As a former city councillor for the past 15 years, I, along with my fellow city councillors, have strived to make St. Catharines the vibrant, attractive and productive city it is today. But St. Catharines needs more than can be given from its municipal or regional government—a government that is willing to tackle the issues that my community faces, communities within St. Catharines, as I have already listed. There is no question that St. Catharines residents need more.

With the help of my fellow members in this House and with your assistance, Madam Speaker, it is my hope that programs and services are supported in my constituency. That is what I was elected to fight for. Residents know that I will work with anyone to get things done and that I have no problem working alongside people of every political stripe to make sure my constituents get what they asked me for during the election: better transit infrastructure, affordable housing, good-paying jobs, an end to hallway medicine, and the mental health and addiction supports

that my constituents and the residents of St. Catharines desperately, desperately need.

St. Catharines cannot afford to be put on pause any longer. We need our parks needle-free. We need our playgrounds safe. The people of St. Catharines need to be heard.

If there is anything I was known for back home before my election, it was how vigorously I fought for my constituents in the ward of Merritton. Well, Madam Speaker, on election night I promised the residents of St. Catharines that they would be my new Merritton ward. My constituents can be certain that, if anything, they have elected a fighter who will never waiver in her commitment to fight for the needs of the constituents and the residents of St. Catharines.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to take this time.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Thank you to the member from St. Catharines. You spoke quite a bit about family and the important role that they play to allow us here to serve the communities as we do. I'm seeing the adjustments that my family have had to make in allowing me to do the job that I do. But I really wanted to touch on the fact that members of your family have served in the military and how proud you must be. I certainly can imagine what it's like waiting for your loved ones to come home when they've served—just to make sure that they come home safe.

I'm a member of our local Legion, and I've met with a lot of vets and talked to them and learned so much from them. As we come towards Remembrance Day on November 11, I think we all should reflect and make sure that we do understand and make sure that our next generations understand the sacrifices they have made for us to be as free as we are today. Here in the House I did a member's statement on the passing of someone, Marc Diab, who served in our military and was killed in the line of duty. I met with his family and many, many friends, who do an annual bike ride for him. Listening to all of that, I have to say, coming from a military family, that I have a lot of pride. Thank you for allowing your family to do that.

I'm really proud also of the achievements that our government is making, the things we are doing to try to make life better for people here in Ontario: scrapping the cap-and-trade carbon tax and reforming OHIP+ so everybody can have access to what they need. One thing I felt was very important was the Independent Financial Commission of Inquiry and the line-by-line audit to make sure the hard-earned dollars that we put into the system are used effectively and wisely. One thing that was very close to me was ending the York University strike. I think that was very important, to get those students back into York University.

Talking about promises made, promises kept: It's extremely important that we do that.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

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Mr. Jeff Burch: It's a treat to stand and give a few comments about my friend from St. Catharines. I say that more than just in the House; we've actually been friends for many years. In 2006 I was elected as a Merritton councillor and we became ward mates and worked for two terms together on St. Catharines city council. I can assure this House that, from what I've seen from the member from St. Catharines, she is a fighter.

It always amazed me how, while some politicians will concentrate on the big issues, she would often spend a couple of hours on a Saturday morning having tea with a senior while the tree out front was replaced, and she wouldn't leave the house until the city came and removed the tree. That's the kind of representation that the people of St. Catharines can expect—very different from Mr. Bradley, whom I also know quite well, but one thing they have in common is great respect for working people.

It's going to take a lot of work to represent the people of St. Catharines because, as the member mentioned, there are some very serious problems in the city of St. Catharines and across Niagara. One of those is the opioid crisis, which has hit particularly hard in St. Catharines. We have all kinds of transportation issues and other issues as well.

I can recall the place I used to work, which was a multicultural centre. I came to work one day and found 26 needles in the playground where the newcomer children play every day. They have to work on that every morning—some real challenges, but the right person was elected in St. Catharines to meet them.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: We all heard the inaugural speech by the member from St. Catharines. One of the beautiful ways to learn about each other's story is through the inaugural speech.

Today I learned a lot about the member's family background and the service they have served in the military. That is a story that I would relate to myself. I only came to this great country when I was 14. I landed in Toronto Pearson International Airport and one thing I will never forget is the way people welcomed us, and the way that I feel I am protected and I am growing up in a very peaceful environment. I want to thank all the brave women and men who are serving this country.

As well, Madam Speaker, I'm very pleased to share with you that our government for the people is committed to building Ontario's first provincial memorial to honour Canadian heroes of the war in Afghanistan. The memorial to the Canadian heroes of the war in Afghanistan will be located here at Queen's Park. This memorial will stand as a testament of the bravery of our veterans and the sacrifices made by our troops.

We have the utmost respect for our veterans, our soldiers and their families. We will ensure that their courage is honoured and we will express appreciation on behalf of all Ontarians for their services. Thank you for the opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jamie West: I want to begin by also congratulating the member for St. Catharines for her inaugural speech. It's one of those things I believe should be mandatory for us because we get to know each other better. As the member from Scarborough–Rouge Park had mentioned, it puts meat on the bones. We get to see more than just the political stripe; we get the background and the family history.

There was a conversation I was having with the member from Willowdale last night after hearing his inaugural speech, how you see people differently and you think differently.

One of the things I have in common with the member from St. Catharines that I wasn't aware of before, even though we are in the same caucus and have the time to talk together, is the history with the grandparents and parents. My parents and my grandparents also were in the air force and my parents also met as air force brats. When they were dating, my dad, for some reason, jumped out of perfectly good airplanes. My mom was at secretary school. They came to the riding of Sudbury for work, but they really started in the military.

I want to emphasize that because several times members from across the aisle have said that we don't appreciate the military in my caucus, that we're angry at them, we don't like them and we don't respect them in the military and the police. That does a disservice not just to my family and families of the members of the caucus. When you talk about the member for St. Catharines's grandparents, parents and children all serving, when you hear an insult like that come across, it cuts to the core. That's why I talk about this core ability of recognizing people as people in here, in these inaugural speeches, and how important that is.

Personally, I feel like that damages my relationship with police chief Pedersen from the Sudbury regional police; my neighbour, an OPP officer, Sergeant Filipov; John Valtonen, from the Sudbury regional police—we volunteered for many years in Scouts together; and many members of my local, Steelworkers Local 6500, including Shane Cusack, who is the president of regional Canadian Legion Branch 179.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Back to the member from St. Catharines.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I'd like to thank the member across the way from Mississauga–Streetsville for her kind remarks about my family.

As well, I would like to mention at this time that I'm a proud member of Legion Branch 138 in Merritton, and my family are members of that legion as well. In St. Catharines, we are fortunate: We have four legions within the riding, so I'll be a very busy girl on Remembrance Day.

Also, the member for Scarborough–Rouge Park: I'd like to thank you for your kind word and the mentioning of the Afghanistan memorial here at Queen's Park.

My fellow member from Niagara Centre: Thank you very much for the kind words. Yes, we are very good

friends, starting out our political careers as ward mates, and we have continued to be friends throughout the years. But most of all, I couldn't have been more proud than when we were both elected to represent our residents here in Queen's Park.

To the member for Sudbury: Thank you very much for the kind words as well.

Most of all, though, with 42 seconds to go, I would like to repeat my many thanks to my mother; my late father; my husband, who has been behind me—the residents of St. Catharines call him the “first lady of Merritton”; my son, Jonathan, and my daughter, Charlotte, and their partners, Sarah and Mark. If it wasn't for them, I don't think I would be here today, standing and representing the residents of St. Catharines.

Most of all, Madam Speaker, the residents of St. Catharines have put me here to represent them, to be their voice. And believe me, I will be their voice and I will represent them with everything I have.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Mike Harris: I'm very happy to be here today to be part of the debate on Bill 32. This piece of legislation is one that bodes very well for both suppliers and consumers of natural gas, protecting the interests of both these parties in my riding and across Ontario. Importantly, it does this without pulling from the government purse. It is a private sector solution that (1) puts more money back in people's pockets and (2) makes Ontario open for business again.

Unlike the previous government's track record on this issue, it is not a costly and bureaucratic plan that promises the world to energy consumers but fails to deliver any real, practical solutions for their pocketbooks.

I will put this into perspective for you: Over the course of two economic development projects under the previous government, natural gas expansion only reached nine—that's nine—new communities. Keep in mind also that this limited expansion involved the use of tax dollars and government grants, hurting the pocketbooks of all Ontarians. This policy of the previous government was no plan for the people, and it was bad and poorly executed.

The people of Ontario were clear in the last election: They want a government that is committed to expanding natural gas access while reining in government spending. This is what we promised and what we will deliver to Ontario consumers and businesses. And with the introduction of Bill 32, the Access to Natural Gas Act, and a common-sense private sector solution, it delivers it in a fair way. And it's fair to say, promise made, promise kept.

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Unlike the previous government's policy, ours actually takes significant measures to tackle the demands for natural gas expansion in rural and northern areas. Under our policy, natural gas expansion will hit as many as 78 new communities across Ontario. If you look back at what the Liberals did—nine communities. We're hoping to hit 78 new communities across Ontario.

Interjections.

Mr. Mike Harris: Yes.

This expansion is likely to translate into 63 new projects while providing natural gas services to more than 33,000 Ontario households.

Some good questions to ask are: What is the real impact on the pocketbooks of consumers? And how is this expansion saving them money? Well, Madam Speaker, the math is pretty simple on this one. Those households who choose to fulfill their energy needs with natural gas will save up to as much as \$2,500 a year.

This simultaneous reduction in cost to the consumer and expansion of services across the province is no small feat. It is nothing short of innovative.

Quite frankly, the people of Ontario deserve a government that can deliver these kinds of innovative solutions to some of the most complex and significant issues faced by this province. That is what is fair: a government that is working for the people, not taking the people and their pocketbooks for granted; a government that respects the people; and a government that is committed to making Ontario open for business again.

My own riding of Kitchener–Conestoga provides some great examples of the kind of positive economic impact that this bill's provisions will have across the province. Like many of my colleagues in government from southwestern Ontario, my riding of nearly 100,000 square kilometres is dominated by prime agricultural land and beautiful rural landscapes.

Complementing the urban portion of southwest Kitchener, the rural townships of Wilmot, Wellesley and Woolwich are home to more than 1,191 farms which provide the backbone for the region of Waterloo economy. Waterloo region, more broadly, is home to nearly 1,300 farms, with an average size of 156 acres. The majority of agricultural land is used to grow crops, including field crops, hay, fruits, field vegetables and sod or nursery crops. In regard to the farmers themselves, the vast majority are livestock farmers, primarily on cattle and dairy farms.

All the farms in my riding generate significant revenues for our local economy. In 2015, gross farm receipts totalled \$563.6 million, an increase of \$90.7 million from 2010. During those five years, total expenses of farms grew by \$93 million, totalling \$483 million.

As a highly agricultural riding, Madam Speaker, Kitchener–Conestoga is especially well tuned—

Mr. Bill Walker: A point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): I recognize the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound on a point of order.

Mr. Bill Walker: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice respecting the members' code—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Returning to the member from Kitchener–Conestoga.

Mr. Mike Harris: As a highly agricultural riding, Kitchener–Conestoga is especially well tuned to realize the benefits of natural gas expansion. The wider consumer accessibility to affordable natural gas will help farm

revenues increase and will decrease expenditure, which will ultimately allow farmers to expand their operations.

Clearly, low-cost natural gas has been a long-standing demand for Kitchener–Conestoga farmers. For example, my riding has a large Mennonite population, who currently run many of their farms off generators and would really like to have access to natural gas.

To be honest, there was increasing frustration from not just farmers but also business owners and municipalities with the previous government's restrictions which limited private sector companies from participating in natural gas expansion.

Quoting Rik Louwagie, the chief administrative officer in Wellesley township: "The lack of natural gas is one of the stumbling blocks that keeps businesses from opening in the township. Better access could help level the playing field if they had the same resources available as other centres do."

The constituents that I spoke to throughout my campaign and beyond agree with Louwagie. Because, although those opposing Bill 32 may say that natural gas is not the best source of energy, and that its price can fluctuate in the winter months, the actual farmers on the front lines of the agricultural industry will tell you that natural gas is always the cheapest and most attractive option for their businesses.

I was just talking to some farmers at the Ontario Federation of Agriculture reception Tuesday night, here at Queen's Park, about this very issue. They were here because it is Ontario Agriculture Week.

I'd like to have a round of applause for that. We all love our farmers here in Ontario.

Applause.

Interjection: We like to eat.

Mr. Mike Harris: Absolutely. Farmers feed cities.

Speaking to the president of the OFA, and speaking to their membership, their message was clear: Natural gas is the future for farming in Ontario. They want a government that is committed to expanding natural gas across the province, and for good reason. While Wellesley's major settlements have access to natural gas, there are currently 800 to 900 properties, out of the 3,400, that do not have access. That is over 20%—20% of the population of Wellesley township does not have access to natural gas.

The farmers, business owners and municipal officials that I talk to all say the same thing: The accessibility of natural gas could be one more reason for a company to come and to stay in these rural townships or to relocate elsewhere.

To this, I say that natural gas policy has significant ramifications relating to individual employment and the overall sustainability of the rural economy.

For the average residential customer, the switch from electric heat, propane, oil or natural gas would result in savings between \$800 and \$2,500 a year. Savings to the wider agricultural food, manufacturing and trades/transport/equipment operators in Wilmot, Wellesley and Woolwich townships would be just as significant, and they employ 8,820 individuals. The success of the agricultural

industry is vital to the economic prosperity of my riding and this province.

As such, I was happy to hear confirmation that urban Kitchener residents of my riding will soon be getting to see their natural gas bills reduced as well, to the tune of \$81 a year, because of our government's elimination of the cap-and-trade carbon tax.

Adding to this, the introduction of Bill 32 demonstrates that we will continue to provide additional relief to families, and send a clear message that Ontario's rural and northern heartlands are now, once again, open for business.

It is important that we are doing everything that we can, as Ontario's governing party, to assist the agricultural industry in achieving its production objectives and bringing economic prosperity to our province, because the agricultural industry's success is not only vital to the economic success of my riding but also to the success of Ontario's economy.

What is so innovative about Bill 32 that will make business more attractive in Ontario—

Mr. Bill Walker: Point of order, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Stop the clock.

MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT ON HARASSMENT

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): I recognize the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound on a point of order.

Mr. Bill Walker: Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice respecting the members' code of conduct on harassment.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Mr. Walker is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Agreed? Agreed.

Back to Mr. Walker, the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

Mr. Bill Walker: I move that the members' code of conduct on harassment be amended as follows:

(1) By adding the following new subsection:

“2.2 The code shall not derogate from,

“(a) the parliamentary privileges of the assembly and its members, and

“(b) the authority of the presiding officers of the assembly, including its committees, under the standing orders.”

(2) By deleting subsection 18.2.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Mr. Walker has moved that the members' code of conduct on harassment be amended as follows:

(1) By adding the following new subsection:

“2.2 The code shall not derogate from,

“(a) the parliamentary privileges of the assembly and its members”—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Dispense? Agreed.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

ACCESS TO NATURAL GAS ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR L'ACCÈS AU GAZ NATUREL

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Back to the member for Kitchener–Conestoga.

Mr. Mike Harris: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Let's take a closer look at what this bill actually mandates. What our government is actually doing here is not overly complicated, but it's forward-thinking. We are putting clear guidelines in place for Ontario's major natural gas suppliers to be able to take the measures necessary in order to achieve ratepayer protection and natural gas expansion simultaneously.

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The essence of the rules and regulations to be enacted by Bill 32 in achieving these objectives is well captured in its explanatory note:

“The Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 is amended to provide rate protection for consumers or classes of consumers with respect to costs incurred by a gas distributor in making a qualifying investment for the purpose of providing access to a natural gas distribution system to those consumers. Gas distributors are entitled to be compensated for any resulting lost revenue and all consumers, or such classes of consumers as are prescribed, are required to contribute toward the compensation.”

Under the restrictive practices of the previous government, private sector companies were limited from participating in some natural gas expansion, portions of which were instead managed by a taxpayer-funded grant program. As was expressed in the bill's explanatory note, no such policy applies here. Rather, we empower private companies to provide the increased access that they are the experts in, not the government. Taking this into account, it should be noted here that continued oversight from the OEB will ensure that the interests of ratepayers, ratepayer protection and transparency, remain paramount amidst the expansion.

One of the main things that I like about this bill is that with the OEB's oversight, it puts faith in the market's ability to expand natural gas services in an affordable and sustainable manner. How does it do this? It mandates the subsidization of gas line expansion not through the means of government grants, but in partnership with ratepayers themselves. To reiterate, subsection 4 of the bill stipulates, “All consumers, or such classes of consumers as are prescribed, are required, in accordance with the regulations, to contribute towards the amount of any compensation required under subsection (3).”

“Why is this so innovative?”, the opposition might say. “It's making the ratepayer a negative for taxpayers.” To this I say no, a thousand times no. First of all, there is no tax being levied here. Second of all, the associated cost per

ratepayer to achieve this is so low that it's almost negligible. The cost incurred upon ratepayers in allowing for natural gas expansion across the province will amount to around a not-so-staggering \$12 a year. That's one can of pop per month, Madam Speaker, or a chocolate bar. The savings resulting from the cancellation of the previous government's cap-and-trade scheme more than covers the \$1 fee for ratepayers—as we mentioned, saving roughly \$81 a year.

I have talked to the natural gas suppliers of this province, and they have told me that \$1 per month is the highest amount that a ratepayer will have to pay per month during this expansion when the program is at its peak, and much of the time it will be less. Again, for the sacrifice of one can of pop per month, new natural gas consumers receive as much as \$2,500 in savings. Let that sink in for a second, Madam Speaker. What could one of my constituents do with an extra \$2,500 a year in their pocket?

Ontario families across this province, many of them, under the previous government, were struggling to make ends meet; \$2,500, or even \$800 on the low end, goes a long way, perhaps more than some of my colleagues in the opposition can fathom, in making life more affordable for the average Ontarian. With \$2,500, Madam Speaker, do you know how many more trips on the GO train per year that is for a resident of Waterloo region? Let me tell you: If a trip on the GO train to Toronto is costing Waterloo region residents \$17.70 per ride, they will be able to make more than an additional 140 trips on the GO train per year. Even if their savings are \$800 a year, they would be riding the train almost an additional 50 times per year. For commuters, young professionals, single parents or anyone just worried about their day-to-day expenses, what could be more beneficial than the cost-saving measures we are putting forward here?

In last night's debate, the member from Algoma-Manitoulin said something along the lines of, "Let me remind you that 60% of voters did not vote for your party in the last election," suggesting that our policies do not speak for the majority of Ontarians. Madam Speaker, my response to a comment like this is twofold: First off, and always, the people of Ontario spoke loud and clear in the last election. Our government entered the 42nd Parliament with a definitive majority. Second of all—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you. *Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): The time on the clock being 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I am so happy to introduce people from the MS Society who are here today, inviting everybody to join them in room 228 at noon. They are Jennifer Dutra, Fasika Jembere, Gregory Bourne, Jason Guerin, Barbara Dickson, Amy Kelly, Gaby Mammone,

Nivarsha Nair, Amanda Murray, Carolyn Allman, Joanne Ticknor, Kelly McDermott, Rachel Buttigieg, Florence Roudbarani, Lynda DaSilva, Karen Scott, Juan Garrido, Kimberly McGinnis, Lisa Harris, Lisa McCoy, Abidah Shamji, Treena Gracey and Phil Dewan. Welcome to Queen's Park. Please come to their luncheon.

Mr. Michael Coteau: I want to take this opportunity to introduce Nadin Ramadan, who is a constituent from Don Valley East. Welcome to the Legislature.

Mr. Bill Walker: I'd like to introduce Tyler Stone and John Hammill from Meaford in the great riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I wish to introduce a former member who served in this Legislature in the 39th and 40th Parliaments as the member for Thornhill: Peter Shurman is here with us today. Welcome to the Legislature.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: Today I would like to introduce page Meagan Sequeira's parents, Arum Sequeira and Dimple Sequeira.

Ms. Jill Andrew: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank all the students who are in the building today for coming out to question period. I'd like to give a particular shout-out to McMurrich Junior Public School and teachers Devon Marshall and Samantha Barkin, who I'm not sure I see, but I think I see St. Michael's as well, but nonetheless—ah, here we are. I'd just like to say welcome to all the teachers and students in question period.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: I'd like to welcome, first off, Justine Babin, who is our page. She was just standing there a few seconds ago, but she's hard at work. She's also today's page captain and a constituent member from Pickering-Uxbridge. She's also the one with the pink glasses.

As well, I want to welcome to the House, in the members' gallery, Michelle Boudreau, mother of Justine. I would like to introduce her mother's mother, Patricia Boudreau, grandmother of Justine, and finally Jake Babin, Justine's brother. Welcome to the House.

Mr. Stephen Crawford: Speaker, I'm honoured to have a very good long-time friend and supporter who happens to be from your riding of Wellington-Halton Hills, Mr. Paul Herriot.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: I have the honour of introducing somebody who is known to this House, but hasn't yet been introduced by her MPP: Our wonderful page, Victoria MacLeod, and of course her mother, the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services, along with many other things. Dare I say that Victoria has the best MPP?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Well, how do you top that, Speaker? I do have the best MPP, Jeremy Roberts. It's an improvement from who I used to have, which was Bob Chiarelli.

Interjections.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: We had a joke. I live in his riding; he lives in mine.

Speaker, as you know, a few weeks ago, my community was ravaged, as was the Minister of Colleges, Training and

Universities' community, from a tornado. The people who acted quickly were the Salvation Army and, today, we're joined by those heroes who showed up and fed tens of thousands of people and provided comfort and support.

I'd like to introduce Mr. Glenn van Gulik, who's divisional secretary for public relations for Ontario central east; Mr. Dan Millar, area director for public relations and development for Hamilton and Kitchener; Mr. Jeffrey Robertson, area director, public relations and development for the north region; and Ms. Sylvia Scott, assistant to Mr. Glenn van Gulik.

We really appreciate in the city of Ottawa you guys stepping up. Thank you.

Mr. Dave Smith: I'd like to introduce a couple of people today. My executive assistant, Emily McCullough, is in the members' gallery, as well as my good friend and the person I'm sponsoring to join the Kinsmen Club, Mr. Les Kariunas.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: Good morning, Speaker. I would like to introduce a good friend of mine, Maciej Fibrych, and his dad, Janusz Fibrych, who are visiting us from the land of kangaroos, Australia. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: I'd like to welcome Rob Bellerose from Sioux Lookout from my riding. His son, Patrick, is a page. This is his last day here. Patrick is right there. Good morning.

Mr. Michael Coteau: I know the high school students from George S. Henry Academy are in the building today. I just want to welcome them to the Legislature. They're one of the best high schools in this entire province.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. It is now time for oral questions.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My first question is for the Deputy Premier. No one should be stuck waiting for days in a hospital hallway when they're dealing with serious illness. Yesterday, the Premier held a press conference where he announced a plan for temporary relief. That sounds exactly like the band-aid solutions the previous government had been announcing. Can the Deputy Premier explain if this is even a new plan or just a continuation of the old Liberal one?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Well, thank you very much for the question. I can tell you that this is good news for the people of Ontario, the announcement that we made yesterday. We are following up on the promises we made during the election campaign, both in terms of building more long-term-care beds and ending hallway medicine. I can say to the Leader of the Opposition that this is 90 million new dollars on top of the \$187 million that has previously been spent on this.

This is a lot of money. Is it an answer? No, because we were left with 15 years of chaos, with a lack of planning, with hospitals at over 100% in many parts of this province.

But what it is going to do is help those hospitals with the highest need deal with and get through the flu season where we expect many more hospital admissions. This is going to be a huge help across the province.

Interjections.

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

Start the clock. Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Deputy Premier should know that hallways aren't only filled during flu season, but the reality is constant overcrowding and a scramble for spaces. When is the government going to commit to permanent beds, Speaker?

Hon. Christine Elliott: We are certainly very well aware that many hospitals across the province are at over 100% capacity. We are working on a long-term capacity plan. Unfortunately, it wasn't ready for this flu season because we've only been here for several months. But we are working on a long-term plan that will allow for all hospitals in Ontario to operate at safe levels throughout the year and not just at flu season.

1040

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Across Ontario, we see hospitals operating at maximum capacity and beyond. In Thunder Bay, the hospital has been operating at surge capacity for years. In Windsor, the hospital campuses are operating at 99% to 106% capacity. And everywhere patients languish in hallways waiting for treatment.

Does the government have a plan? Can they tell us when they might be able to produce a plan to move beyond band-aid funding?

Hon. Christine Elliott: The issue of ending hallway health care is not one simple solution. It is a multi-faceted problem, and we are working at all facets of that problem right now.

As the member will know, part of the problem is with respect to alternate-level-of-care patients, people who don't need to be in hospital but don't have a place to go. We have over 30,000 seniors who are waiting for a long-term-care space. So we're working on both easing the hospital congestion and having a place where the ALC patients can go, but we're also building up capacity in long-term care.

Yesterday, we also announced 6,075 new beds out of the 15,000 that we promised the people of Ontario during the election. We are working on this problem from every level.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Deputy Premier. For a patient waiting with cancer in a hallway for days while receiving treatment, the new government seems to be moving from bad to worse. In a recent speech to the Ontario Hospital Association, the Minister of Health told hospitals that they would have to prepare for lean financial times. Can the Deputy Premier explain how cuts to health funding will clear crowded hospital hallways?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Mr. Speaker, through you, I would say to the leader of the official opposition that that is not the case. We are not cutting health care funding for people on the front line. We are not cutting hospital beds. We want to increase the beds that are available for people. We want to increase the services that people can receive.

There is no question that one patient being treated in a hallway is one patient too many. We can all agree on that. What we want to do is make sure that people are treated in hospital rooms, not in hallways and in storage rooms. That is what we are working hard on and we're concentrating on: to make sure that people can get into those rooms and that those patients who are alternate level of care can either go home with proper levels of home support or they can go to a long-term-care facility. Every patient deserves to be in a place that is safe and comfortable for them.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: For patients worried about whether a hospital bed will be there when they need it, this government's approach to health care is concerning. Warning hospitals that lean financial times are coming is, I think, a warning that says, "Get ready for even more cuts to hospitals." Speaker, what cost-saving measures is the government contemplating in the health care budget?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I think the leader of the official opposition will know what the financial state of affairs is for Ontario right now. It has been clearly demonstrated by the Minister of Finance. There is no question that all areas of government are going to have to look at their operations and understand how they can find efficiencies. What that does not mean is making cuts on the front line; absolutely not.

What we need to do is look internally and look at our processes. How do we do things? Things have been done the same old way in health care for many years. We've got to look under every stone and find out where we can find those savings.

We know that hospitals are under a lot of pressure. We know that they're in surge capacity. We want to make things easier for them, not more difficult.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, "modernization," "transformation" and "efficiencies" are the same words that the Liberal government used to cut our hospitals and our health care system.

You know what? Unfortunately for the Premier and the Deputy Premier, people remember what happened the last time Conservatives controlled hospitals in Ontario. Some 6,000 nurses were fired and were compared to outdated hula hoops. Do you remember that, Speaker? Twenty-eight hospitals were shuttered all over the province, closing 7,000 hospital beds. Many of the same players from that era have returned, and one of them is heading up the Premier's health care task force. Does the Deputy Premier really think that that is the path forward?

Hon. Christine Elliott: We are looking at the path forward from 2018 on. We are not looking at what happened in the past; we are looking at how we deliver health care in the 21st century. What changes do we need to make?

The leader of the official opposition may not realize it, but much health care communication is still transported via faxes. That is ridiculous in this day and age. We need to modernize our technology. We need to move forward and look at the ways that we can deliver health care more efficiently.

Telehealth care, making sure that people in remote areas can have specialist consultations without having to travel hundreds of miles in difficult weather: These are the things that we're talking about doing that are better patient care and can be delivered at a lower cost. That's what we're concentrating on and that's what we'll continue to work on in the coming years.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Percy Hatfield: My question is for the Minister of Health. Good morning, Minister.

Windsor Regional Hospital has struggled with overcrowding for years, and now things are getting even worse. Today, the Met campus is at 99% capacity and the Ouellette campus is at 106%. Wait times in the ER are unbearable. There's no room, so patients are left on gurneys in the hallways. It will only get worse when the flu season gets here.

When will this government do the right thing once and for all and give Windsor hospitals the funding they need to get patients out of the hallways and into the hospital beds they deserve?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I thank the member very much for the question. I do know that there are many hospitals in Ontario that are over 100% capacity right now, which is making it very difficult for health care professionals to deliver the quality of care that they want to deliver; and for patients who are left in hallways, storage closets, board-rooms—every available space in a hospital.

We want to ease that situation. It has been building up over a number of years, the previous 15 years. We are trying to figure the situation out and develop a comprehensive health capacity plan, which we are working on actively right now.

But we also had to be prepared for this year's flu season, and we had to put in this short-term funding, this \$90 million, that's going to aid those areas that were determined by the ministry to be in the greatest need. I know there's need across Ontario, but those areas had the most urgent care needs.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Windsor families deserve so much better. For years, the Liberals cut and froze hospital funding. To be fair, they gave a little bit more to prepare for the flu season last year, but that was too little and too late. Now the Conservatives are giving hospitals \$10 million less than what the Liberals did. Why is this government forcing more people to wait even longer and making the overcrowding crisis even worse?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Well, in actual fact, what has happened is the \$187 million that the Liberals were talking about was spent last year by them, but also spent by us this

year. That money has flowed. The additional \$90 million is new money on top of that \$187 million. It absolutely is true.

That is why, because we know there are those urgent needs across the province, we are adding to that capacity. We know that the hospital emergency department admissions have increased this year. There's more pressure on the system, and that's why we want to make sure that those hospitals have the assistance they need.

But as for Windsor itself and for other hospitals across the province, we are looking at a long-term capacity plan that will be in place by this time next year so we won't have to deal with emergency funding for flu season.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Stan Cho: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to first off wish you, and everybody in the House today, a very happy Thanksgiving. I hope everybody has just a little too much to eat this weekend.

My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade: Earlier this week, the federal government reached a last-minute trade agreement with the United States. The deal comes after months of uncertainty—uncertainty that has hurt families and businesses across Ontario and across our country.

1050

Could the minister please outline for the House how the new Canada-US trade agreement fails Ontario workers and leaves many Ontario businesses in a state of un-certainty?

Hon. Jim Wilson: Thank you to my colleague the member from Willowdale. Now that we've seen the details of the new NAFTA, this is what we're facing:

Tariffs remain on steel and aluminum, with no timeline or plan for lifting them.

We now have a limit on how many cars Canada can export to the US, as well as a quota for future investment in Ontario.

Canada gave more market share to American dairy exporters, leaving less business for Ontario, with no plan to help our farmers.

The United States now has veto power over future trade deals involving Canada, which is highly unusual and a real hit on our sovereignty as a nation.

The federal government gave up a lot, with no plan to deal with the impact. Our government will continue to demand that the federal government live up to its obligations and treat the people of Ontario and our farmers and workers with respect.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Stan Cho: Thank you to the minister for his response. It is frankly astounding that our federal government is willing to leave Ontario workers and Ontario businesses out to dry. While they trumpet their deal, farmers in our supply-managed sectors await answers on the compensation they will receive, and tens of millions of dollars of investment is on hold. Steel and aluminum tariffs are still in place, and businesses have yet to receive the money the feds promised.

Would the minister please outline for the House what he is doing to ensure that Ontario businesses get the support they deserve from our federal government?

Hon. Jim Wilson: A very good question indeed. We continue to stand for Ontario workers and will hold the federal government accountable for the treaty that they've signed.

Yesterday I sent a letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister Freeland, demanding answers about the USMCA. Our government wants to know, and Ontario businesses and workers want to know, the plan to mitigate the impact of this deal. We've made it clear that the new uncertainty that has been created by the federal government is hurting Ontario families, businesses and workers.

I received a response yesterday afternoon from the minister, and I was shocked. Speaker, we got a boilerplate response with no answers to our questions for the people and workers of Ontario.

The people of Ontario and the workers of Ontario deserve to be treated better by their federal government.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Deputy Premier. Every day we hear from women and men who are struggling to make ends meet on the current minimum wage. They value being able to take a sick day and emergency days, but they feel like they're not being heard. The minister has said that she's studying the issue, but the Premier said his mind is made up. He's freezing their wages and taking away their sick days.

Who did the Premier consult with to make that decision?

Hon. Christine Elliott: The Minister of Economic Development.

Hon. Jim Wilson: Thank you for the question. We have been doing round tables—my parliamentary assistant Mike Parsa, is doing small business round tables on red tape, and my parliamentary assistant Donna Skelly, on NAFTA—believe it or not, NAFTA.

We hear that, after electricity, the number one issue for our job creators, our businesses—small, large and medium—in this province is Bill 148, and the worst of Bill 148 is scheduled to come in on January 1.

So yes, we are studying, because we owe it to the people who attend these meetings, the people who write us, the people of Ontario, and we owe it to the workers of Ontario to make sure they have the dignity of a job. We're studying every aspect of Bill 148, and we'll have more to say in the future.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: People we've heard from—some would call them the little guy—are telling us that they're falling further and further behind on the current minimum wage. They say they're working multiple jobs. They don't see their children because they have to go from job to job. They say tax cuts won't make a difference, because they don't earn enough to pay any taxes in the first place. They deserve to be heard, Speaker.

Is the government going to hear from people who have to live on their minimum wage, as they make decisions that will have a huge negative impact on people's lives?

Hon. Jim Wilson: Well, Speaker, through you I say to the honourable member, workers did get a 20% increase this year, which is the largest in the 28 years I've been in this place.

We just think it's time. We said this in the campaign and we said this when we voted against Bill 148. I know you guys supported it, propping up the Liberals as you did 97% of the time over there. But you managed to kill an awful pile of jobs and I don't see any apologies over there for the mess you've made.

Bill 148 should never have seen the light of day. If I quote the Ontario Chamber of Commerce in a news release this week, it says: "Bill 148 was too much, too fast," and has "forced our members to decrease product offerings and increase the price of products ... hire fewer employees, reduce services and hours of operation, cut back on employee benefits...."

Congratulations, NDP, for helping the Liberals put us in this mess.

Interjections.

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

I would all remind all members and ask them to make their comments through the Chair.

Start the clock. Next question.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Jill Dunlop: My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. The USMCA announcement this week has been concerning for our supply-managed farmers. The federal government had stated that no deal would be better than a bad deal for Canada, yet the news for our dairy farmers has summed up to be exactly that: a bad deal. The federal government had been negotiating our new trade deal for months and assured us that they would make no concessions, yet concerning concessions were made.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Can the minister assure us that this government will work with our farmers in reviewing the impacts of the new deal?

Hon. Ernie Hardeman: I thank the member from Simcoe North for being a champion for the farmers in her riding during these difficult times.

Our government is committed to standing up for our farmers, especially those affected by the results of the USMCA. During the negotiations, the Premier met with officials in Washington to ensure the concerns of our farmers stayed top of mind. I have been in constant communication with the farmers on these issues.

Unlike the federal government, we will work hard to make sure that our farmers receive the clarity they deserve on how they will be compensated. Our government is committed to doing better, standing up for our farmers. They deserve better.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Jill Dunlop: Thank you to the minister for his answer and for working hard to make sure that our dairy farmers are compensated accordingly.

Our supply-managed industry in Ontario ensures that we supply the amount of food needed for Ontario consumers, and our farmers depend on that market for stability. By opening up market access to the United States, our farmers no longer have the stability they depend upon in prices and in supply.

I know the minister and our Premier have both met with our supply-managed sectors to discuss these issues. Can the minister tell us what they are hearing from our supply managed sectors on the new USMCA?

Hon. Ernie Hardeman: I thank the member for the supplementary question. As she said, we have met with representatives from all of the supply-managed sectors to discuss the impact of the USMCA. With market access being given through the CPTPP and now more access given through the USMCA, our farmers are concerned with the profitability and sustainability of their livelihoods. We will continue to urge the federal government to provide full and fair compensation for our farmers.

I want to assure the member that our government is committed to making Ontario open for business, and this includes ensuring Ontario dairy farms remain open for business as well. Thank you very much for the question.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is to the Minister of Health. The flu season comes every year, and yet each year Liberals and now Conservatives leave health care professionals and Windsor families guessing just how bad things will be. After years of Liberal cuts and funding freezes, our hospitals are in crisis. Rather than doing the right thing and finally giving the hospitals the funding they need to end this overcrowding crisis, the Conservatives are taking the same piecemeal approach as the last government, but this time with even less funding.

How many people in Windsor will be left languishing in emergency rooms and hospital hallways because this government continues to deny hospitals the funding they need to make things better?

1100

Hon. Christine Elliott: I wish it were just as simple as the member suggests: Just throw money at the hospitals and the problem disappears. That is not the way it works.

Ending hallway health care is a multifaceted problem. There has to be changes made at many steps along the way. We have to make sure we don't have as many emergency admissions. We need to work on mental health and addiction issues because we have patients cycling in and out constantly. We need to look at getting the patients who are alternate-level-of-care out of the hospital and either back home where they want to be or, if they can't be there, into a long-term-care home.

So we are investing in long-term-care homes. We made the announcement yesterday: about 6,075 new spaces out

of the 15,000 we promised the people of Ontario during the election.

The problem with overcrowding in hospitals is something that has been going on for 15 years, where nothing was done. I wish I could say we can snap our fingers and make that problem disappear overnight—

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

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It's actually called investing in every Ontarian in this province, not just Conservative insiders and friends.

Leave it to the Conservatives to re-announce temporary funding with \$10 million less than last year and then tout it as progress. By cutting temporary funding that was already too low, this government is going to make things even worse and life even harder for Windsor families struggling to get appropriate space in a hospital. The bottom line is that Liberal and Conservative temporary funding photo ops won't fix hospital overcrowding.

Speaker, will this government do the right thing and give hospitals the \$300 million they need to stop the hallway crisis from getting worse? Yes or no?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I think it's important for the people who may be watching today's proceedings to correct the statement that was made by the member with respect to funding. In fact, there was \$187 million spent last year by the Liberals. There was \$187 million spent this year by our government. The amount that we announced is a new announcement of \$90 million more. It's extra. It's extra on top of that \$187 million.

So this is a new announcement. This is good news for people across the province. Is it the entire answer? No, but it's a very good step forward, and it's going to help hospitals during flu season.

I would just like, if I may, Mr. Speaker, to read a statement from Dr. Gary Newton, who is the president and CEO of the Sinai Health System: "On behalf of our patients, their families and our staff, I would like to thank Mrs. Elliott for this investment in beds at Bridgepoint Active Healthcare. Any?"—

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

FIREARMS CONTROL

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Deputy Premier, the quality of life that we have in Ontario is something that we should work hard as legislators to protect. Last night, I was with the member from Scarborough–Agincourt, and it was the 83rd homicide in Toronto. We witnessed families walking home from school, gripping the hands of their children, trying to keep them safe. In light of the horrific incidences of gun violence that are plaguing our streets and our communities in Ontario, does this government support the ban of handguns?

Hon. Christine Elliott: To the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Thank you for that question. As we have demonstrated, our government has and continues to take action to combat gun and gang violence, restore public confidence and ensure our streets and communities are safe. Unlike the last government that looked to cancel the \$12 million in funding, we committed \$25 million over four years.

Mr. Speaker, it's not guns that kill people; it's the people who have guns illegally that kill people. The investment that we're making is a vital first step in combatting gun violence, disrupting gang activity and cracking down on the trafficking of illegal guns in the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Back to the Deputy Premier: I don't disagree with the investments that you're making, but even community members—yesterday, I spoke to a grandmother who said to me that these incidences that are occurring are putting everyone in the community at risk and, in fact, those who are involved in those criminal activities are not afraid of the police. These incidences are becoming more brazen and more prevalent in our communities.

Your investments in police services and in crown attorneys is welcome, but it's not enough. It's not enough, and it's not solving the issue at hand. As a matter of fact, it's also after the fact.

Will you stand in this House and support my Bill 30, which bans the sale of ammunition right now in municipalities that need that extra support?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: As I've mentioned, we have made an investment with respect to the guns and gangs in the province of Ontario, starting in Toronto. The new equipment and innovative investigative technologies will have an impact with respect to the gun violence that we're experiencing.

Our government has been clear in our message that gun violence is a menace to Ontario communities and will not be tolerated in any form. The status quo has failed, and our party is the only party in the Legislature that's committed to doing something about it. We have made a commitment to ensuring that our streets are safe. We will continue supporting our police services, which are doing an amazing job with the tools that they have. We will continue supporting them in all their work to ensure that our communities are safe.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: My question is to the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. DesRosiers Automotive Consultants have reported that new light vehicles were down by 7.4% in September compared to last year, the largest single drop since 2009. The auto industry is an integral part of Ontario's economy and employs thousands of people. DesRosiers said Tuesday that uncertainty surrounding "North American trade deal negotiations may have contributed to the drop in sales."

Many questions still remain regarding what supports Ontario workers and families will get from the federal government. Can the minister please inform the members about how the uncertainty surrounding NAFTA and tariffs affected Ontario workers and industries?

Hon. Jim Wilson: Thank you to my colleague for the question. The federal government should have gotten a better deal under the USMCA. Ontario jobs, Ontario families and Ontario industries are paying the price, including our auto sector.

We stood shoulder to shoulder with the federal government throughout the negotiations because we knew that a deal needed to get done. However, Mr. Speaker, we were very clear that a deal needed to get done that protected the agriculture, steel and aluminum sectors of our economy. That is not the deal that we got.

The federal government must come forward and be honest with the people about how they're going to support and fairly compensate those affected by their deal. It has to be federal money; it's an international treaty. They need to stand by the Constitution and stand up for workers and jobs in Ontario and across the provinces and territories and fairly compensate the people they've hurt.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Thank you to the minister for his response. Our government must stand up and protect Ontario industries, whether it's autos or agriculture.

The Bank of Canada has stated that because of the uncertainty in tariffs, the Canadian GDP will shrink by two thirds of a per cent by 2020. The Deputy Governor of the Bank of Canada has also said, "After just a couple of months, the tangible effects of the cross-border tariffs on steel, aluminum and consumer goods have already started showing up in the economic data."

1110

I am very concerned about the current tariffs and what our federal government is doing to mitigate the threat of future tariffs. Can the minister please inform the members what effects the continued steel and aluminum tariffs have on Ontario's industries?

Hon. Jim Wilson: Thank you again to the honourable member for the question. Speaker, the federal government certainly missed an opportunity to keep section 232 tariffs on the negotiating table throughout the talks. They told us it had nothing to do with the talks, but in a technical briefing on Monday, on page 4, it says they tried to talk to the Americans; the Americans rejected them. But they didn't bring them back. They just took the Americans' word for it: "Fine. We'll kill our steel and aluminum industry."

The member for Sault Ste. Marie, Mr. Romano, was just telling me—in a story this morning out of Sault Ste. Marie—that it has cost Algoma \$55 million in just three months of steel and aluminum tariffs; steel tariffs, in their case. Fifty-five million dollars. That will eventually hurt every Ontarian because it will be into the price of your appliances, it will be into the price of your cars, it will be into the price of your building materials, it will be into the

price of the steel that we use for industry of all types. That's going to hurt every person in the province of Ontario, so the federal government needs to get the job done.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Jamie West: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. In my riding of Sudbury, Health Sciences North has been underfunded for years. Under the previous Liberal government, funding was cut again and again, requiring front-line health care workers to do more and more with less and less. Despite re-election promises from the Premier that no one would be laid off, the hospital is laying off 60 nurses and cutting services. Short-term band-aid funding will not help those front-line workers and will not help solve years of neglect.

After years of waiting, Sudbury needs to know: When will this government be putting forward a long-term plan to end hallway medicine?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Thank you for the question. We are actively working on a long-term capacity plan as we speak. That is something that we will have in place in advance of the flu season for next year.

But as far as your hospital is concerned, I would say that there have been some unfortunate problems for the last year or so. There is a significant debt there that they are working with the LHIN to try and deal with. With respect to the nurses, they are either going to be retiring or they are moving on elsewhere. No one is actually losing their job.

It's important, though, that they continue to operate the hospital, and that is why the ministry, the LHIN and the senior executives at the hospital are working on a long-term solution.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Jamie West: Back to the minister: I agree the hospital is making difficult decisions when it comes down to funding and years and years of underfunding. Hospital overcrowding is the number one issue for the people in the riding of Sudbury. It's the number one thing I hear about. We are dealing with a hallway medicine epidemic that impacts patient care all year long, not just during flu season. It's been going on for years and years. Our hospitals are stuck making difficult decisions. Our front-line health care workers are doing their best with limited resources, but morale is low and many are left wondering if their jobs will be next on the chopping block. Attrition, layoffs, otherwise—we're short-staffed.

I join you in blaming the previous government for years of underfunding, but will the minister listen to the people of Sudbury and fund our hospitals properly? That's what we need to know.

Hon. Christine Elliott: Well, there certainly is something that we can agree on, that this is a problem that's been growing for many, many years—15 years, I would say, of the Liberals—and now we are left with that situation we are trying to fix. We know it's not going to be

an overnight solution. We look forward to working with you and your constituents in your riding to find solutions.

It has been suggested by a number of hospitals—I would say particularly, at this point, medium-sized hospitals—that the funding formula does not work for them. I would suggest it probably doesn't work for many hospitals. So we are taking a look at funding formulas right now, as well, to determine the best way of compensating and providing hospitals with the funds that they need in order to operate at the capacity where they want to operate. Not at 120% capacity; at a comfortable level so the health care professionals will be able to do the great work that they're doing in all of our communities in the way that they want to be able to do it, and that patients will receive the best—

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

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Dave Smith: My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Many people in the agriculture industry in my riding are concerned about the impacts of the USMCA—farmers like Tara and Randy, processors like Mike, suppliers like Paul. Much of the discussion surrounding the USMCA has been focused on its impact on dairy farmers within the supply-managed industry.

I'm aware that the minister and the Premier met with supply-managed farming organizations to discuss the impacts of the new deal. Can the minister also let us know what the agri-food business is saying about the new trade deal?

Hon. Ernie Hardeman: I'd like to thank the member from Peterborough–Kawartha for the question and for bringing attention to our agricultural industries impacted by the USMCA.

We all know that the USMCA negatively impacts supply-managed farmers. However, we also heard from many of our processors following the new deal. They're concerned with the millions of dollars in investments in their businesses that are now risky due to greater market access given to the United States. In fact, Gay Lea Foods Co-operative said this week that the deal would have “destabilizing and detrimental impacts on the Canadian dairy industry....”

Our government is committed to keeping jobs in Ontario and, furthermore, to creating new jobs in Ontario to reflect that Ontario is open for business.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Dave Smith: Thank you to the minister for bringing attention to the agricultural industries impacted by the USMCA.

I've heard from many of our processors following the new deal. They're concerned with the millions of dollars in investments that their businesses are now risking due to greater market access given to the United States. In fact, Gay Lea said this week that the deal will have “destabilizing and detrimental impacts on the Canadian dairy industry....”

Can the minister outline how Ontario will continue to be open for business in agri-food?

Hon. Ernie Hardeman: I want to thank the member again for being a champion for his farmers.

As mentioned previously, our supply management system in Ontario is designed so that our farmers produce only the amount of goods that are consumed by Ontarians. This system provides pricing and supply dependability for our farmers.

As we continue to review the impacts of the deal on our supply-managed sectors, I assure you that the impacts on chicken, turkey and egg farmers will be treated with significant importance.

I myself will be cooking two turkeys this Thanksgiving weekend in support of our turkey farmers, and I may need some relatives to help come and eat them. If he's interested, my invitation is still open to my critic across the aisle to join us for Thanksgiving dinner.

ANTI-SMOKING INITIATIVES FOR YOUTH

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée.

One of the first acts of this government was to cancel regulations that would have stopped vaping companies from promoting their products to children. Then last week, the government introduced Bill 36, which comes with new regulations that allow e-cigarettes and vaping products to be promoted and marketed to children in convenience stores.

Tuesday, a coalition of health organizations including the Canadian Cancer Society and the Ontario Heart and Stroke Foundation called on this government to put the health of children first and to withdraw this regulation.

Will the minister listen to these health care professionals and make sure that vaping companies and e-cigarette companies cannot promote and market their harmful products to our kids?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I think we can certainly agree that the health and safety of children and young people is of the utmost priority for everyone in this House. The regulations with respect to vaping were conducted, and there is some suggestion, with respect to vaping for adults, that it may lead to smoking cessation.

But as far as children are concerned, there are regulations that are already in place in stores and so on that sell vaping products to make sure that they're not available to children, to be sold to children. Those will remain in place and those protections will stay there. That won't be disturbed by this change.

1120

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I want to make it clear, Speaker: Most of the vaping companies are owned by big tobacco companies, which are desperate to hook the next generation to their addictive products. They want to pretend that vaping nicotine is harmless, even though studies show clearly that nicotine is just as addictive if you smoke it than

if you vape it. They want to normalize vaping for kids and they want to make it look really cool. Above all, what they really want is to get kids addicted to nicotine to make them customers for life.

When will the minister withdraw this harmful regulation and make sure that kids are not exposed to vaping marketing, promotion or displays?

Hon. Christine Elliott: The regulation is as it is. People can comment. Of course, I'm willing to listen to what people have to say. I want to protect children as well. That is very important. No one wants to see a young person get started with nicotine. Who knows where it may go from there?

But it is important to note that stores have responsibility with respect to the placement of these products: not to sell them to children. We expect them to live up to what their requirements are and make sure that children are safe. We will take other steps to make sure children are safe. We want to make sure that we have a public health campaign to let people know about vaping, to let people know about cannabis, to let people know about alcohol. They may be legal but they're not benign—

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

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Stephen Lecce: My question is to the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. While we remain hopeful that the USMCA will benefit our economy, I'm pleased that the minister sent a letter to the federal government demanding answers on this deal.

Let us evaluate what the Prime Minister gave up versus what we got in return. Under this deal, the Prime Minister backed down on protecting our dairy farmers. He backed down on gaining control of our auto industry. Speaker, he backed down on affordable prescription drug prices. He backed down on ending Buy American provisions. The Liberals backed down on tariff-free access for steel, aluminum and softwood lumber. And the Liberals gave a foreign government the power to override future trade deals. Speaker, through you to the honourable member: Did the federal government sign away our sovereignty in this new trade deal?

Hon. Jim Wilson: Thank you to my colleague. What an important question that is, and the answer, of course, is yes, they did. Canadians should be shocked at this very fact. We're extremely concerned that the deal forces Canada to inform the US of any intention to pursue negotiations with a non-market economy like China. This is about our sovereignty indeed, Mr. Speaker. Clause 32 gives the US sweeping powers for the first time to override Canada's future trade deals. If we sign a deal with a country like China, the clause says we could be kicked out of NAFTA.

Speaker, because of this new NAFTA, it's more important than ever that we have new trade deals with Japan, China, Asia, more with Europe, South America, the African continent, the rest of the world, because we need

those good paying jobs. We benefitted greatly from the old NAFTA, not so much the new NAFTA, so we need—

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

Mr. Stephen Lecce: Back to the minister: I am very concerned that the federal government would brazenly sign away our sovereignty. This Legislature should speak with one voice in the defence of our industry, in the defence of our sovereignty and in the defence of our economy. We should be united in holding the Prime Minister to account and count on this minister and this Premier to deliver the message to our Prime Minister to do your job and to fight for our workers, because never has so much been given up with so little in return.

Speaker, as our government works to diversify our export markets to create good jobs in this province, can the minister inform this Legislature if the federal government has provided answers on why President Trump has a veto over future trade deals in this country?

Hon. Jim Wilson: Thank you again to my colleague for the question. I think we've also been alarmed at the lack of a meaningful response from the federal government. Even a recent policy adviser to the Prime Minister said he was concerned. He said it's "troubling to provide another country with a formal role in vetting Canadian trade negotiations."

Mr. Speaker, the people of Canada and the people of Ontario who did vote for the federal Liberal Party did not vote for that party and Prime Minister Trudeau to give away our rights to be a sovereign nation, to make trade deals, to be proud Canadians and not subject to the Americans. That is not what this country was built on. That's not what our ancestors fought for. That's not what our troops fought for in Afghanistan or in world wars or Vietnam. We fought to be a sovereign nation, not to give our rights to the Americans. Shame on Trudeau. Shame on the federal government—

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

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, there's the old Jim Wilson I used to know.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Deputy Premier. Deputy Premier, you will know that we go to the pumps to fill our cars and trucks and we get gouged every time we go. If you live in southern Ontario, you pay 40 cents less for gas than you would in places like Thunder Bay. If you live in Kiiwetinoong, you're going to probably pay an additional \$1 per litre.

Your government took the first step. You supported the NDP bill on gas price regulation at second reading, but now you've got to take the next step. Will you allow that bill to be called in committee so that we can bring relief to people at the pumps?

Hon. Christine Elliott: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you very much, and good morning. Look, our government is committed to reducing

gas prices by 10 cents a litre. We've already taken a step. Through the cap-and-trade system, Speaker, you will have noticed the price of gas has gone down. It's gone down by 4.3 cents a litre. Congratulations to our Minister of the Environment. They've taken away the cap-and-trade tax, which not only has reduced the price of gas by 4.3 cents, but it has also put \$285 back in the pockets of families.

If you're on natural gas, Speaker, that put \$80 more back into the pockets of families, with more coming yet. I congratulate this government on bringing real relief to families.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, that's laughable. Through you: We know what happened to the price of gas. It was the winter blend that came online. All across Canada the price of gas went down. It's part of what happens every season. To stand in this House and say, "It is the Conservative government that did it"—I didn't know you had such far-reaching power to affect Alberta, British Columbia, Newfoundland, Quebec and the rest of the country.

So I say to you again, if you really want to stand up for people at the pumps, will you allow our bill that we have in committee now to be called so we can bring relief to people at the pumps?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: I'll tell you how far-reaching our power is: We lowered the price of gas by 4.3 cents. Speaker, we remain committed to our promise that we made during the campaign to make life more affordable for Ontario families and for businesses, and we intend to bring that savings, not just at 4.3 cents, but a full 10 cents a litre. We will be looking at taking off another 5.7 cents a litre.

That's what this government is all about. It's a government that is for the people, that is returning prosperity to Ontario, that is bringing real relief for families—not just rhetoric—but real relief for families. That's what we're doing and that's what we'll continue to do, Speaker.

Interjections.

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

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Will Bouma: My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. As we approach the end of Ontario Agriculture Week, I think it's important that we talk a little turkey before we gobble up our food this Thanksgiving weekend.

1130

When I say "talk a little turkey," Mr. Speaker, I'm talking about our supply-managed sectors, like dairy, eggs and poultry, that were the focus of the USMCA agreement this week. It's important to reflect on the farmers who bring us the great food and products we consume every day through their hard work and dedication.

I know the minister met with the governor of Idaho this week. Before he passes the potatoes, can the minister let

us know what he is doing to show our farming families he supports them?

Hon. Ernie Hardeman: I want to thank the member from Brantford—Brant for that great question. Following the USMCA announcement, the Premier and I met with our supply-managed sectors to reassure them that we will continue to press the federal government on providing full and fair compensation to those farmers experiencing losses through the new deal. I have been in constant contact with stakeholders on the best way to move forward together and to listen to their concerns during this difficult week. We will continue to review the details of the new trade agreement to fully understand how it will impact our farmers and what can be done to assist them.

Farming families are never to be used as the bargaining chip, and our government is committed to supporting our farmers this week and every week.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. Will Bouma: I thank the minister for his answer. I know the minister has a long history of supporting Ontario farmers.

Mr. Speaker, back to the minister: As we approach Thanksgiving weekend, we look forward to spending time with our families and reflecting on all that we are grateful for. Reflecting on the new USMCA, the federal government has let our farmers down, more like a relative who gets stuffed before Thanksgiving dinner and then forgets to bring the pumpkin pie. Can the minister let us know what our government has cooking to ensure that the contributions of our farmers are recognized and respected?

Hon. Ernie Hardeman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and again thank the member for the supplementary question.

In celebration of Ontario Agriculture Week, I had the opportunity to join the Farm and Food Care group at Union Station to hand out breakfast sandwiches to commuters and make their morning a little bit brighter, compliments of Ontario's farmers.

I also talked a little turkey of my own with the Turkey Farmers of Ontario earlier this month. I will be cooking two turkeys for my family this weekend to support our farmers, and I hope the opposition critic will be able to pass the cranberry sauce without starting a food fight.

I encourage everyone to buy local Ontario produce this week and every week, and I'd like to wish everyone a very happy Thanksgiving.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. Joel Harden: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. In Ottawa, 150 families are being evicted from the Heron Gate neighbourhood by the major developer Timbercreek, a \$7.5-billion company based here in Toronto. The developer is demolishing their low-income townhomes to make way for more upscale apartments, leaving residents, mostly new immigrants, scrambling to find affordable housing. Sadly, many have been unable to find affordable options in Ottawa's real estate market.

Speaker, when will the minister take real action to address the housing crisis in this province?

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, through you to the member for Ottawa Centre: I want to thank you for that question. I'm certainly aware of the situation in Ottawa. As most of you know, I spent a significant amount of time in that city, given the tornado that went through several areas of the city.

While I was there, I had a number of people talk to me about supply of housing and housing affordability. I've had several conversations with Mayor Watson about some of the ideas and some of the innovation that the city is working on. I want to say to the member that the issue of housing supply is one that I think we all need to co-operate on, whether it's in the government benches or in the opposition benches. We need to mobilize all of our stakeholders. We need to work together. I think housing supply is one of the things that our government is going to continue to place as a top priority.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Joel Harden: I thank the minister for his response and his presence in Ottawa during the recent tornado crisis, but there's another tornado unseen that has hit our city, and its name is Timbercreek. This is one of the worst mass evictions in Ottawa's history, and we have yet to see any action from this government to take any serious steps to ensure these families have affordable homes to move into.

The UN special rapporteur on the right to housing has called this crisis happening in my city a human rights violation. The residents of Heron Gate deserve justice, but the developer has failed them. To date, the mayor of Ottawa has also failed them. They're counting on this minister and this government to stand up for them. Will the minister end the practice of renovations in Heron Gate and everywhere else in this province, so something like this never happens again?

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, through you to the honourable member: Again, I want to thank you for the question. I agree that supply of housing is a priority for our government.

I tend to take a different approach than the member with this question. I want to continue to work with municipalities, to work with our 47 service managers and our two Indigenous program administrators, as well as developers, as well as the real estate sector. We need to work across lines to ensure that we have an adequate supply.

Our government is committed. We've committed at every opportunity to talk about more housing, more affordable housing online faster. We need to streamline the development process. That's going to involve co-operation, not demonizing the mayor or—

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

The member for Parry Sound–Muskoka.

TAXATION

Mr. Norman Miller: My question is for the Minister of the Environment. A few months ago, the voters of

Ontario spoke clearly. They elected us on a mandate to bring an end to the ineffective cap-and-trade program. They also voted for us to stop the expensive, ineffective federal Liberal carbon tax, which would increase the price on everything.

Since then, the people of Ontario are not the only people across the country who have seen the light. More and more provinces are now seeing the carbon tax and the federal carbon plan for what it is: a cash grab that does little to address the problem of climate change. This damaging policy will increase the price of gas, basic goods like groceries, and make life more unaffordable for everybody.

Ontario has shown leadership in standing up to the federal government against a carbon tax. Can the Minister of the Environment update this House as to the status of our fight?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member: As this House knows, this government was elected on a promise to do everything we could to fight the regressive, job-killing carbon tax of the federal Liberals.

Since that announcement—the list is so long, I need a piece of paper to keep track. Yesterday, Manitoba became the last province to reject the federal carbon plan. Add to them Ontario, of course, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, Alberta and PEI in opposition to the federal carbon plan. The list just keeps growing.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Norman Miller: I thank the minister for his commitment to this very important promise.

Back to the minister—I heard it time and time again at the doors: Families can't afford a carbon tax. It's great to see we are getting support from other provinces in this fight as well.

I know that the Premier is going out west and will be meeting with other Premiers. Canada needs this leadership, someone to talk to the provinces to bring them together to work collaboratively. We need a pragmatic approach, and if the federal government is unwilling to provide that leadership, I'm proud that our Premier, Premier Ford, is doing just that.

We all know that hard-working Ontario families just can't afford more taxes. Can the minister assure the families in my riding that we will do everything possible to ensure the carbon tax is not imposed on the hard-working people of our province?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the member for Muskoka: I too am proud of the leadership our Premier is showing on this issue. He's working hard and reaching out across the country. He's going to Saskatchewan, to Alberta and, who knows, he may even make a stop in Winnipeg on the way back.

While we are showing this leadership, while the Premier is showing this leadership, the federal Liberals are stuck in the mud. They won't change their tune. The NDP opposition is devoted to a carbon tax, the highest carbon tax in the world.

Mr. Speaker, we take our direction from the people. We will put, as the Minister of Finance said, \$260 back in their

pockets every year. We will do everything we can to stop a regressive, job-killing federal carbon tax.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time we have for question period today.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I wish to acknowledge another former member who is in the House today, who served the riding of Niagara Falls in the 36th and 37th Parliament: Bart Maves has joined us today. Welcome.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Ms. French assumes ballot item number 29 and Ms. Andrew assumes ballot item number 41.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): It is now time to say a word about our legislative pages. These fine young people are indispensable to the effective functioning of this chamber. They cheerfully and efficiently deliver notes, run errands, transport important documents throughout the precinct and make sure our water glasses are always full. We are indeed fortunate to have them here.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I've got more to say; I'm actually just getting started. Our pages are smart, trustworthy and hard-working. They depart having made many new friends, with a greater understanding of parliamentary democracy and memories that will last a lifetime. Each of them will go home and carry on, continue their studies and will no doubt contribute greatly to their communities, their province and their country. We expect great things from all of them. Maybe some of them will some day take their seats in this House as members or work here as staff.

We wish them all well.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you for showing your appreciation to our pages.

DEFERRED VOTES

CANNABIS STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LE CANNABIS

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

Bill 36, An Act to enact a new Act and make amendments to various other Acts respecting the use and sale of cannabis and vapour products in Ontario / Projet de loi 36,

Loi édictant une nouvelle loi et modifiant diverses autres lois en ce qui concerne l'utilisation et la vente de cannabis et de produits de vapotage en Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We now have a deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 36, An Act to enact a new Act and make amendments to various other Acts respecting the use and sale of cannabis and vapour products in Ontario.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1143 to 1148.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I would ask the members to please take their seats.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Will the members please take their seats.

On October 1, 2018, Ms. Mulroney moved second reading of Bill 36. All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Hillier, Randy	Phillips, Rod
Baber, Roman	Hogarth, Christine	Piccini, David
Babikian, Aris	Jones, Sylvia	Rasheed, Kaleed
Bailey, Robert	Kanapathi, Logan	Roberts, Jeremy
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Karahalios, Belinda	Romano, Ross
Bouma, Will	Ke, Vincent	Sabawy, Sheref
Calandra, Paul	Khanjin, Andrea	Sandhu, Amarjot
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Kramp, Daryl	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Cho, Stan	Kusendova, Natalia	Schreiner, Mike
Clark, Steve	Lecce, Stephen	Scott, Laurie
Coe, Lorne	MacLeod, Lisa	Simard, Amanda
Coteau, Michael	Martin, Robin	Skelly, Donna
Crawford, Stephen	Martow, Gila	Smith, Dave
Cuzzetto, Rudy	McDonell, Jim	Smith, Todd
Downey, Doug	McKenna, Jane	Surma, Kinga
Dunlop, Jill	McNaughton, Monte	Tangri, Nina
Elliott, Christine	Miller, Norman	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Fedeli, Victor	Mitas, Christina Maria	Thompson, Lisa M.
Fee, Amy	Mulroney, Caroline	Tibollo, Michael A.
Fullerton, Merrilee	Nicholls, Rick	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Ghamari, Goldie	Oosterhoff, Sam	Wai, Daisy
Gill, Parm	Pang, Billy	Walker, Bill
Hardeman, Ernie	Park, Lindsey	Wilson, Jim
Harris, Mike	Pettapiece, Randy	Yakubski, John

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

Nays

Andrew, Jill	Gretzky, Lisa	Morrison, Suze
Begum, Doly	Harden, Joel	Natyshak, Taras
Bell, Jessica	Hassan, Faisal	Rakocevic, Tom
Bisson, Gilles	Hatfield, Percy	Shaw, Sandy
Bourgouin, Guy	Horwath, Andrea	Singh, Sara
Burch, Jeff	Hunter, Mitzie	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Fife, Catherine	Karpoche, Bhutila	Stiles, Marit
Fraser, John	Kernaghan, Terence	Tabuns, Peter
French, Jennifer K.	Lindo, Laura Mae	Taylor, Monique
Gates, Wayne	Mamakwa, Sol	Vanthof, John
Gélinas, France	Mantha, Michael	West, Jamie
Glover, Chris	Monteith-Farrell, Judith	Yarde, Kevin

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 72; the nays are 36.

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

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to the order of the House dated October 3, 2018, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

Before I recess the House, I want to thank and acknowledge the members for the higher standard of decorum that we've set this week, in my opinion. It has been a distinct pleasure to serve as your Speaker this week.

This House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1153 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce today in the members' gallery Mr. Satoshi Ominato, the Deputy Consul General of Japan, right here in Toronto. We are honoured to have you with us. Thank you.

Mr. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, I hope you'll forgive me. My visitor isn't here, but I didn't want to miss the opportunity to wish my youngest daughter—she's turning 10 years old today. I'm surprised that she's not in the gallery yet, but I wanted to make sure that I wished her a very, very happy birthday.

Mr. Bill Walker: I'm honoured to introduce Tyler Stone and John Hammill from Meaford. I introduced them this morning as well. Tyler is an avid fan, every day watching Queen's Park. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Michael Coteau: Joining us here in the Legislature is Victor Beausoleil. He is someone who has worked with me as a youth worker out in Scarborough. I'd like to welcome him to the Ontario Legislature.

Mr. Deepak Anand: It's a great pleasure to introduce my constituent Parveen Dalal, his wife, Rakhee Dalal, and my sister, Raj Mohini Redhu. Welcome to Queen's Park.

M^{lle} Amanda Simard: J'aimerais introduire Carol Jolin, Stewart Kiff, Estelle Duchon et Gilles Marchildon, qui vont être ici un peu plus tard pour ma motion. Bienvenue à Queen's Park.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CHRISTINE HAYES

Mr. Taras Natyshak: As always, it is a pleasure to rise in this House to recognize the achievements of the great people in my riding of Essex. Today I have the distinct honour and pleasure of recognizing a dear friend of mine, Christine Hayes, who has been named the Essex 2018 Citizen of the Year Award recipient.

Christine is an enthusiastic, dedicated and compassionate volunteer for so many organizations in various capacities in our community. She is the treasurer of the Essex Region Goodfellows, the secretary of the Essex Legion 201 Ladies' Auxiliary, a canvasser for the Windsor/Essex

County Humane Society, and a volunteer for the Big Bike ride for Heart and Stroke. She sings in the resurrection choir at Holy Name of Jesus Church. She also supports numerous local charities. She does this all in our community while working full time in Essex and raising her brilliant teenage son, Connor.

Speaker, the Citizen of the Year Award recognizes an individual who has given their time to volunteer, has made a positive impact on citizens and has been dedicated to improving and serving the community. The award is sponsored by the Knights of Columbus Council 3305, the Essex Rotary, the town of Essex, Heritage Essex and the Essex Legion.

Christine is also the daughter of the former MPP for Essex, the late Pat Hayes, who was my political mentor, Speaker. Christine carries on the tradition of activism, involvement and a genuine compassion for her community that her father instilled.

I know Pat will be looking down on her, beaming with pride for all the accomplishments of his daughter, and I'm truly honoured to be able to offer this recognition in the same chamber where Pat served the people of Essex county.

Speaker, on behalf of the Ontario NDP, the members of this Legislature and the members of our community of Essex county, I want to congratulate Christine Hayes. We love you. Thank you and congratulations.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mr. Aris Babikian: I rise in the House this afternoon with a heavy heart. Yesterday, around 1:30 p.m., gunshots were heard in my riding in the vicinity of two high schools. The shooting, which had taken place in a very busy plaza on Bonis Avenue and Birchmount Road, has taken the life of a young man, aged 18, and destroyed the lives of many others. The police are so bravely looking to capture.

Yesterday, I was thinking of the parents and the students who were locked down in their places of learning and enlightenment following the incident. I have personally spoken to some of these families and students, and I want to reassure them yet again that we will do our best to protect and secure our community.

Mr. Speaker, as the MPP and a resident of Scarborough—Agincourt for the past 28 years, I'm looking to reassert that we still do live in a safe, diverse and vibrant community. I am sure that this incident will make us stronger and allow us to look for solutions to the gun crimes that have riddled our community and city of Toronto this year. I look forward to being part of this process over the coming days and months.

Finally, I want to thank the first responders and the police services for their diligent and swift actions and commitment to our safety today and always. I know that members of the Toronto police department and paramedic services have been very much involved in ensuring that our communities, neighbourhoods and city are well-protected and served.

MOHAWK COLLEGE

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I rise today to share with the members some positive environmental initiatives that are happening right in my own riding of Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas.

I recently had the pleasure of touring Mohawk College's net-zero industrial building. I was sharing that tour with the Mohawk College president, Ron McKerlie, and with my colleague the member from Hamilton Mountain. This new Joyce Centre for Partnership and Innovation will be the largest net-zero building in all of Canada.

The centre will provide students and our community with state-of-the-art labs, workshops, lecture theatres and industrial training centres. In addition, they will have Ontario's largest solar carport, at 50,000 square feet. This has been engineered by a local firm, QPA, with Mohawk College. The Joyce Centre is very beautiful and it has been engineered by a local firm, McCallumSather, and B+H. It really is, truly, a sight to behold.

Unfortunately, with the recent cancelling of the climate change action plan, they have lost \$1.2 million in planned building and they're going to have to seek other funding. But as the students made clear to me during our tour there, they're very excited about this building and they want us to understand that it's very important to ensure that we understand that projects such as this make business sense. They save money in the long run and, more importantly, they help to reduce our carbon footprint, which is vitally important for those students, for our children and for future generations.

I congratulate Mohawk College on their success.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: This week is mental health awareness week, and Tuesday was mental health action day. I think it is important to distinguish these two great causes, because we have arrived at a point at which we understand that awareness only goes so far without action.

On mental health action day, I had the privilege of speaking on behalf of our government at the Medical Psychiatry Alliance conference at the Living Arts Centre in my home riding of Mississauga Centre. There, I introduced the inaugural Hazel McCallion Endowed Lecture in Shaping Healthier Communities, with its focus on bridging the gap between mental health and physical health. I was invited by Trillium Health Partners and the Institute for Better Health to celebrate the first lecture in the annual series named after our great former mayor, Hazel McCallion, a champion of action and change.

I am so proud of THP for their leadership in clinical excellence and for providing the largest health constituency in Ontario with renowned state-of-the-art care, including their outstanding work on mental health, which demonstrates that with action, we can have a great impact. I look forward to working with their leadership team on addressing local health care needs, because we are all better together.

INJURED WORKERS

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I rise to speak about an issue that injured workers in St. Catharines have faced for a number of years.

No one chooses to obtain a workplace injury, Mr. Speaker. However, we in this Legislature choose how we are going to support those who have been injured at work.

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Today, I want to speak about the issue of deeming. Deeming is a practice that allows the WSIB to assume that injured workers have a job, even if that worker is unemployed, for the purpose of their claim. This means that injured workers are assumed to have an income that they in fact do not.

This practice allows the WSIB to falsely assume that the claimant is receiving income for a job they do not have and which their injury prevents them from doing. Deeming is then used to slash benefits for injured workers right across this province. This plunges workers deeper into poverty and further towards addiction, and affects their mental health by no fault of their own.

If this government really cares about working people, it would end deeming immediately and give injured workers the benefits they rightfully deserve.

If we're going to change employment legislation right here, then why not change it for the better rather than trample over the rights of working people across this great province? I sincerely hope that those on the government benches will stand up for injured workers and end the harmful practice of deeming.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. Michael Coteau: Today, I rise to talk about gun violence in the city of Toronto and the GTA. For the first time in this Legislature I want to talk about the victims, specifically Black males who have been murdered in this city over the last 25 years.

When I speak to this issue, I remind people that if there's an estimate that I would take, it is that almost 1,000 Black males have been murdered in the GTA in the last 25 years. The numbers are astonishing. I want to recognize the hardship that the families go through—the mothers, the fathers, the families, the neighbourhoods.

I grew up in Flemingdon Park. In the community that I grew up in, at least a dozen young men were murdered during my time period. I want to remind the House that we're talking about several hundred young Black men—mostly youth, teenagers—in the city, who have been murdered. We all have a collective responsibility to work towards building a strategy to stop gun violence.

The police and the approach we take is not necessarily the only one. The police would acknowledge that. It's getting to the roots of the issue. The Ontario Black Youth Action Plan was one of the pieces put in place—the collection of data to really better understand the issues.

I just want to again recognize the loss of life here in this city and pay tribute to the mothers and fathers and families who have struggled in this city.

RON MOESER

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: This year, Toronto city council approved the naming of a section of the waterfront trail in the Port Union area that runs through my riding of Scarborough–Rouge Park as the Ron Moeser Trail in honour of the late councillor Ron Moeser. On Saturday, residents of my riding and representatives of all levels of government will gather to dedicate this section of the waterfront trail to him.

Ron Moeser was known as a quiet but effective councillor. He was a veteran city councillor who served the residents of this pocket of Scarborough for nearly three decades after his first election to council in the old city of Scarborough in 1988. During his time as a councillor, Ron fought for the creation and protection of public space, and he was instrumental in the creation of Rouge National Urban Park, Canada's largest urban park.

Mr. Speaker, I stand here today to honour the late councillor Ron Moeser, a man who was dedicated to helping and improving the lives of his constituents and the neighbourhoods of Scarborough–Rouge Park. I thank him for the work he has done in this city creating beautiful spaces for parks, forestry and a waterfront trail.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Ms. Doly Begum: Last night, a young boy, only 18 years old, lost his life. He was hanging with some friends at the plaza when a lone gunman walked up and shot multiple times. This marked the 83rd homicide in our city. A few weeks ago, in my riding of Scarborough Southwest near Warden and Danforth, we faced a similar tragedy.

Following the tragedy last night, the Toronto District School Board had four schools in Scarborough locked down. A lot of parents were panicked. They called 911 so many times that the police had to tweet out to keep the line free for emergencies.

I had a chance to talk to some residents in my riding—to some teachers. They feel numb. The message is that now it's happening so much that we don't know what to do about it. The message we are sending to our kids is that it's okay not to act.

I think we need to do a lot more than just talk about the issue. I share the sentiments of my colleague in Scarborough–Agincourt. My heart is with you and with your residents in your riding. As well, I agree with the member from Don Valley East.

What we need to do is address the root causes. We have been talking about the root causes here in the House for months now: better affordable housing, public transit and child care. In my riding, we have children living in poverty. I have the highest child poverty in Scarborough Southwest. Speaker, I cannot tell you of the programs we have that are incredible but that need better funding and need better support from the government, because we really need to look at the root causes in order to solve this problem.

JAPANESE-CANADIAN RELATIONS

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I rise today to bring to the attention of the House recent milestones in the Canada-Japan relationship that myself and the people of my riding recently celebrated. I was glad to attend the sakura tree planting and a heritage sign unveiling ceremony on September 7 honouring two milestones I will speak of.

The first is the 30th anniversary of the Canadian and American redress to Japanese Canadians for their internment in World War II, an act of reconciliation undertaken by two great conservatives, Brian Mulroney and Ronald Reagan. This year also marks the 90th anniversary of official diplomatic relations between our two countries.

This points to an important bond that Japan and Canada share, and that is to own up to the mistakes of the past. We both seek to learn from history in order to grow. Japan is one of our strongest allies, and they are a world leader in promoting peace, trade and human rights. Our nation will continue to work with the people of Japan.

One of the many fruits of the growing relationship with Japan is the more than 85,000 jobs they have created in Canada's auto sector, of which over half are in Ontario. I hope to see this mutually beneficial job creation continue in the years to come, especially in my riding of Chatham-Kent–Leamington.

As we celebrate milestones of the past, it's an honour to affirm the commitment of Ontarians to the harmony in and between communities of diverse ancestries. I look forward to a positive future in Japanese-Canadian relations, one where Ontario is not just open for business but open for a mutually deep relationship as well.

AUTISM

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: October is Canadian Autism Awareness Month. As many in this chamber know, my younger brother, Dillon, has autism. Growing up with my brother presented many challenges. Dillon doesn't speak, he finds bright lights and loud noises disruptive, and he struggles to communicate what he wants.

As anyone who has had an individual with special needs in their life will know, having them in your life brings a special joy that is so innocent and so pure. It might be an unexpected laugh or a smile, or a hand reaching out to grab yours as you walk down the street. While we may never know what prompted that burst of laughter, there is something so calming about these primal human emotions manifesting themselves in their purest forms: laughter, happiness and love.

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Currently, one in 66 children in Ontario are diagnosed with autism. It is the fastest-growing neurological disorder in the world.

Over the next four years, we will have the chance in this chamber to debate ways that we can help individuals with autism and their families. But for today and for the month of October, let us take a moment to celebrate the wonderful things that individuals with autism bring to our lives and to our communities. Take a moment this month to

meet somebody with autism. Learn what makes them special. Experience their challenges. Let them enrich your lives. And maybe—just maybe—you will learn a little something about yourself along the way.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Todd Smith: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding standing order 98(e).

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to put forward a motion without notice regarding standing order 98(e). Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Todd Smith: I move that standing order 98(e) be suspended for today's consideration of private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Smith, Bay of Quinte, has moved that standing order 98(e) be suspended for today's consideration of private members' public business.

Are there any members who wish to speak to this?

Agreed? Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

WORLD TEACHERS' DAY

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: I would like to share with everyone in the House today and those watching that tomorrow, October 5, is World Teachers' Day. You may well know that I have teachers that are teaching internationally, so this is my opportunity to give them a shout-out a day early. I'm also proud to stand here today and recognize that this is really important—to take a moment and say thank you to our teachers in Ontario as well.

Ontario has some of the best teachers in the world, and they are supported by some of the best education workers as well. I want to thank all of Ontario's hard-working educators for the important work that they do each and every day to support our students. Over the coming months, I am looking very much forward to visiting schools across the province and seeing first-hand how our teachers and our educators are innovating and helping our students be the best they can. Speaker, I would like to reinforce that our government is completely committed to working with our educators.

One of those special teachers that I was speaking about moments ago—she challenged me. For those of you who don't know me, I wear my heart on my sleeve. She goes, "What legacy do you want to leave?" I said, "I want to make sure that our government during our time has every opportunity to make sure that the learning environment in

the classroom is the best." With that said, we need to hear what teachers have to say and hear what is top of mind for them as well.

I know a teacher who had to take a knife off a student in her classroom. Was she trained to do that? No. I know a teacher who loves to spend extra time with students and tutor, just to make sure those students can keep up and keep pace. I know teachers that just love giving of their time to extracurricular activities. These are the people that spend quality time with our children. They need to be celebrated, not only tomorrow but every day of the year.

I want to say that that's why this education consultation is so, so important. It shouldn't be painted by a political stripe; it shouldn't be painted by a political colour. We want to ensure that every person across this province has a chance to exercise their voice because the people in the classroom, the parents who see their kids off every day in the morning and see them come home every night after school, are first-hand seeing what's working and what's not. Because of that, we have to hear from them.

We've heard and seen results through standardized testing and from parents who are frustrated in the manner in which math, in particular, is being taught. Honest to Pete, our students deserve better. No one can deny this. No one in this House can deny that our students deserve to have the best platform available to them so they can easily learn the basics and the fundamentals, so that they can have every confidence that they're prepared to compete in a global economy.

That's why we're embarking on what we feel and what we're hearing is probably going to be the most comprehensive consultation in the world—how about we start with the province first, and then take it from there? We're also committed to making sure that people understand that for our students to get ahead today, in 2018 and beyond, we do need to take a step back and make sure our fundamentals are covered off. Because of those special teachers I know who are working elsewhere in this world, I know that other jurisdictions are moving beyond Ontario students when it comes to math, when it comes to science, when it comes to technology. We in this House have to stand up and say that we will work together to make sure that our Ontario students—our pages here today and all the pages that are going to follow in your footsteps—have the opportunity to understand how important STEM is for every sector in this province.

You know, another thing that we have to really touch base on is not just ensuring that schools prepare our students for the realities of today so that they have the job skills for tomorrow; we do also have to stand together to ensure that we build an age-appropriate updated health and physical education curriculum.

We also have to stand together and figure out how we move forward to improve standardized testing. I visit tons of schools, and last spring teachers were telling me they're frustrated. Standardized testing, as it has evolved to date, just isn't working. So let's talk about it. Let's use this consultation that we've embarked on to talk about it.

We aren't just talking about health and physical education and standardized testing or STEM in these consultations. We're going to be covering off a vast range of issues that educators have direct experience with, so their feedback is critical as we move forward together to keep our promise to make Ontario's education system, as I said before, the best it can be throughout this world.

You know what, Speaker? Our teachers and our education workers work hard every day. I want to give a shout-out, not just to our teachers, but to the EAs, to our administrators, and those people in the front office as well, because they are doing a job that we have to respect. They're trying their best with what they have to create the best learning environment possible, but I think we can do better.

Again, referencing those special teachers who are teaching across this world who are in my family, they say, and we agree, that Ontario has a really, really good education system. Have we fallen back a little bit in particular areas, like STEM? Absolutely, we have. But we have to recognize that we can be better, and why can't we stand together in this province and in this House and say, "You know what? While Ontario has a well-respected education system, let's stand together and raise the bar so our Ontario students can continue leading the way." And we're so committed, the PC government is so committed to doing this important work.

Speaking specifically about math, we want to ensure that parents understand what's going on as well. That's why it was really important that not only did we release an updated reference guide for teachers when it comes to math, but teachers have a chance to actually interact with parents. Parents have responsibility as well, and that's why we created a fact sheet for parents, because we want them to be engaged. We want parents to stand beside their students, ensuring that there is two-way communication not only within the family, but two-way communication happening between the parent and the teacher as well.

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The guide that I just referenced is also a valuable resource for grade 9 and 10 teachers when they help students evolve and grow from elementary education into high school.

Tomorrow, as we celebrate World Teachers' Day—and every other day of the year—I want to encourage my fellow members in this House to acknowledge the excellence in teaching that we have right in this province. But, as I said before, stand with us. Stand with the PC government of Ontario as we strive to ensure our students are the best they can be, and participate in the consultation. Let us know how we can help raise the bar for our students.

On behalf of our government I want to thank all the teachers and all the education workers across Ontario for their exceptional work. Have a great day tomorrow.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Responses? The member for Davenport.

Ms. Marit Stiles: It really is a great privilege to rise today in recognition of World Teachers' Day. As education critic for the official opposition and on behalf of our leader, Andrea Horwath, and New Democrats across the

province, I want to extend our sincere thanks and best wishes to all the teachers working so hard in Ontario today. I also want to thank the minister for her heartfelt words. I do believe that we share the same interests, ultimately, at the end of the day. We may have a different path to get there. I think that's important to understand.

Speaker, there are not many professions that have as profound an impact on our lives and on our communities as teaching. Each of us in this House, I'm sure, has a story of a teacher who had an influence on our lives—our pages, I'm sure, have stories—and know who they would want to thank tomorrow on World Teachers' Day.

Being a teacher is more than a job; it's a calling. To the teachers of Ontario I want to say thank you for answering the call. Thank you for the tremendous work you do every day, including the many extra hours throughout the year. It does not go unnoticed. As educators, you do so much more than teach a curriculum. Teachers are community leaders. They are volunteers, mentors, counsellors, coaches, friends and some, eventually, MPPs.

Many families across this province are actually gearing up for a grade 12 graduation at this time of year. Some of the folks may be as well. I have the great privilege of participating in the Oakwood Collegiate Institute commencement tonight, and then the commencement of the Bloor Collegiate Institute students tomorrow—so many bright, young people, heading off to new adventures. It really is one of the great privileges of this role, that we as elected representatives can participate in such milestones as this.

It is so wonderful to hear their teachers speak with such pride and emotion about those students. It reminds me that these graduations are important times for our teachers as well, as they think back on all our graduates' accomplishments—sometimes struggles—and share their hopes and best wishes.

I want to make a special mention today as well of the amazing staff at Oakwood Collegiate Institute. The teaching staff at Oakwood Collegiate Institute a few years ago identified that many of the grade 9s coming into the school were being streamed into applied math immediately. The school and the teachers, along with their principal, Steve Yee, felt that those students were not being given a real opportunity to push themselves and discover their potential. So they worked together and were one of the first high schools in the province to decide to destream grade 9, and they've had remarkable improvements. I just wanted to share that with everyone because that really was an initiative taken by the teaching staff at Oakwood Collegiate.

We task our teachers with extraordinary responsibility and they strive to exceed expectations every single day. But unfortunately, in Ontario today teachers are being asked to do more and more with less and less: reduced resources, higher class sizes, outdated curriculum, sweltering classrooms, leaky roofs. This affects the health, safety and wellness of our students and our educators. We have to do better.

Teachers deserve a government that is their partner in education. They deserve a government that listens to them

and follows through on promises to them. We have a long way to go to get there.

My experience as a school board trustee and as a parent of two girls in our public education system is filled with so many stories of teachers who have inspired us, teachers who have stepped in and stepped up, whether it's helping a kindergartner make that big step away from their parents or guardians—sometimes it's actually helping the parents step away from the kindergartner—or working to help our students with special needs excel, or opening new doors to exciting new ideas and strategies for high school students; teachers who are always seeking to learn and improve themselves; teachers who are committed to lifelong learning and growing and passing along that knowledge to their students every single day; teachers who have worked in partnership with parents in an extraordinarily important relationship of trust. When a parent or guardian comes to me to speak about an issue they're having in their child's education, I always, always suggest, first and foremost, speak with your teacher, because that relationship is paramount. It's essential that parents and guardians are working in partnership with teachers to ensure our students are supported and given the best opportunities to succeed.

It's unfortunate that this government has cast doubt over the ability and the commitment of our teachers with things like snitch lines and attacks, instead of giving them the classroom resources and supports that they need.

I want teachers, students, parents and everyone working in our education system to know that New Democrats have your back. We see you, we appreciate you and we will always stand shoulder to shoulder with you at Queen's Park and in classrooms and communities across the province. The future of our province and our children depend on it.

Happy World Teachers' Day, and thank you to all the teachers in our province.

PETITIONS

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I have a petition and it's entitled, "Don't Take Away Our \$15 Minimum Wage and Fairer Labour Laws."

"Whereas the vast majority of Ontarians support a \$15 minimum wage and better laws to protect workers; and

"Whereas last year, in response to overwhelming popular demand by the people of Ontario, the provincial government brought in legislation and regulations that:

"Deliver 10 personal emergency leave days for all workers, the first two of which are paid;

"Make it illegal to pay part-time, temporary, casual or contract workers less than their full-time or directly hired co-workers, including equal public holiday pay and vacation pay;

"Raised the adult general minimum wage to \$14 per hour and further raises it to a \$15 minimum wage on January 1, 2019, with annual adjustments by Ontario's consumer price index;

"Make it easier to join unions, especially for workers in the temporary help, home care, community services and building services sectors;

"Make client companies responsible for workplace health and safety for temporary agency employees;

"Provide strong enforcement through the hiring of an additional 175 employment standards officers;

"Will ensure workers have modest improvements in the scheduling of their hours, including:

"—three hours' pay when workers are expected to be on call all day, but are not called into work;

"—three hours' pay for any employee whose shift is cancelled with less than two days' notice; and

"—the right to refuse shifts without penalty if the shift is scheduled with fewer than four days' notice;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to honour these commitments, including the \$15 minimum wage and fairer scheduling rules set to take effect on January 1, 2019. We further call on the assembly to take all necessary steps to enforce these laws and extend them to ensure no worker is left without protection."

I support this petition and add my name and give it to page Patrick.

FIREARMS CONTROL

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I have a petition today: "Gun Violence Must End Immediately.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Doug Ford and the Conservative government are not proposing the right solutions to end gun violence happening in our communities;

"Whereas guns and ammunition are lethal hardware that are often used illegally to cause injury and death in our communities;

"Whereas the number of gun-related incidents have increased drastically this year and we cannot afford to lose anymore lives;

"Whereas Ontarians have a right to know about—and have a say in—government decisions that affect the safety of our communities;

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"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services to ban the sales of ammunition for handguns and give municipalities across the province the power to ban them within their boundaries. The protection and safety of the people of Ontario is needed now more than ever before."

I will sign this petition and give it to page Justine.

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Ms. Christine Hogarth: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas certain commercial operations known as 'puppy/kitten mills' have been reported to keep animals in precarious conditions in breach of provincial animal welfare laws; and

"Whereas dog/cat breeding in accordance with the law is a legitimate economic activity; and

"Whereas it is the duty of any government to ensure the laws of Canada and Ontario are respected and that the health and well-being of innocent animals is protected;

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

"That the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services work proactively with all amateur and professional dog/cat breeders, as well as consumers, with the intent to tackle confirmed animal cruelty cases in puppy/kitten mills and to educate all stakeholders about animal welfare standards."

I'm happy to affix my name to it and give it to Molly.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Jill Andrew: I stand proudly for the residents of Toronto–St. Paul's.

"Petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly:

"Don't Take Away Our \$15 Minimum Wage and Fairer Labour Laws.

"Whereas the vast majority of Ontarians support a \$15 minimum wage and better laws to protect workers; and

"Whereas last year, in response to overwhelming popular demand by the people of Ontario, the provincial government brought in legislation and regulations that:

"Deliver 10 personal emergency leave days for all workers, the first two of which are paid;

"Make it illegal to pay part-time, temporary, casual or contract workers less than their full-time or directly hired co-workers, including equal public holiday pay and vacation pay;

"Raised the adult general minimum wage to \$14 per hour and further raises it to a \$15 minimum wage on January 1, 2019, with annual adjustments by Ontario's consumer price index;

"Make it easier to join unions, especially for workers in the temporary help, home care, community services and building services sectors;

"Make client companies responsible for workplace health and safety for temporary agency employees;

"Provide strong enforcement through the hiring of an additional 175 employment standards officers;

"Will ensure workers have modest improvements in the scheduling of their hours, including:

"—three hours' pay when workers are expected to be on call all day, but are not called into work;

"—three hours' pay for any employee whose shift is cancelled with less than two days' notice; and

"—the right to refuse shifts without penalty if the shift is scheduled with fewer than four days' notice;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to honour these commitments, including the \$15 minimum wage and fairer scheduling rules set to take effect on January 1, 2019. We further call on the assembly to take all necessary steps to enforce these laws and extend them to ensure no worker is left without protection."

I affix my signature to this proudly and hand it over to Eric.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Marit Stiles: It's a pleasure to present this petition.

"Petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly:

"Don't Take Away Our \$15 Minimum Wage and Fairer Labour Laws.

"Whereas the vast majority of Ontarians support a \$15 minimum wage and better laws to protect workers; and

"Whereas last year, in response to overwhelming popular demand by the people of Ontario, the provincial government brought in legislation and regulations that:

"Deliver 10 personal emergency leave days for all workers, the first two of which are paid;

"Make it illegal to pay part-time, temporary, casual or contract workers less than their full-time or directly hired co-workers, including equal public holiday pay and vacation pay;

"Raised the adult general minimum wage to \$14 per hour and further raises it to a \$15 minimum wage on January 1, 2019, with annual adjustments by Ontario's consumer price index;

"Make it easier to join unions, especially for workers in the temporary help, home care, community services and building services sectors;

"Make client companies responsible for workplace health and safety for temporary agency employees;

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"Will ensure workers have modest improvements in the scheduling of their hours, including:

"—three hours' pay when workers are expected to be on call all day, but are not called into work;

"—three hours' pay for any employee whose shift is cancelled with less than two days' notice; and

"—the right to refuse shifts without penalty if the shift is scheduled with fewer than four days' notice;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to honour these commitments, including the \$15 minimum wage and fairer scheduling rules set to take effect on January 1, 2019. We further call on the assembly to take all necessary steps to enforce these laws and extend them to ensure no worker is left without protection."

I was handed this by Lily Chang. I'm proud to affix my signature and hand it to page Josh to table with the Clerks.

NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Joyce Lammi from Wahnapiatae in my riding for this petition. It reads as follows:

"Save the Breast Screening and Assessment Service....

"Whereas Premier Doug Ford promised that there would not be cuts to nurses' positions; and

"Whereas in Sudbury we have already lost 70 nurses, and Health Sciences North is closing part of the Breast Screening and Assessment Service; and

“Whereas cuts to the Sudbury Breast Screening and Assessment Service will result in longer wait times, which is very stressful for women diagnosed with breast cancer; and

“Whereas cuts to the Sudbury Breast Screening and Assessment Service will only take us backwards”;

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“Provide adequate funding to Health Sciences North to ensure northerners have equitable access to life-saving programs such as the Breast Screening and Assessment Service.”

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

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: I would like to thank constituents of Parkdale–High Park for this petition. It’s called “Don’t Take Away Our \$15 Minimum Wage and Fairer Labour Laws.”

“Whereas the vast majority of Ontarians support a \$15 minimum wage and better laws to protect workers; and

“Whereas last year, in response to overwhelming popular demand by the people of Ontario, the provincial government brought in legislation and regulations that:

“Deliver 10 personal emergency leave days for all workers, the first two of which are paid;

“Make it illegal to pay part-time, temporary, casual or contract workers less than their full-time or directly hired co-workers, including equal public holiday pay and vacation pay;

“Raised the adult general minimum wage to \$14 per hour and further raises it to a \$15 minimum wage on January 1, 2019, with annual adjustments by Ontario’s consumer price index;

“Make it easier to join unions, especially for workers in the temporary help, home care, community services and building services sectors;

“Protect workers’ employment status, pay and benefits when contracts are flipped or businesses are sold in the building services sector;

“Make client companies responsible for workplace health and safety for temporary agency employees;

“Provide strong enforcement through the hiring of an additional 175 employment standards officers; and

“Will ensure workers have modest improvements in the scheduling of their hours, including:

“—three hours’ pay when workers are expected to be on call all day, but are not called into work;

“—three hours’ pay for any employee whose shift is cancelled with less than two days’ notice; and

“—the right to refuse shifts without penalty if the shift is scheduled with fewer than four days’ notice;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to honour these commitments, including the \$15 minimum wage and fairer scheduling rules set to take effect on January 1, 2019. We further call on the assembly to take all necessary steps to enforce these laws and extend them to ensure no worker is left without protection.”

I fully agree with it and will be affixing my signature.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Doly Begum: This petition is called “Don’t Take Away Our \$15 Minimum Wage and Fairer Labour Laws.”

“Whereas the vast majority of Ontarians support a \$15 minimum wage and better laws to protect workers; and

“Whereas last year, in response to overwhelming popular demand by the people of Ontario, the provincial government brought in legislation and regulations that:

“Deliver 10 personal emergency leave days for all workers, the first two of which are paid;

“Make it illegal to pay part-time, temporary, casual or contract workers less than their full-time or directly hired co-workers, including equal public holiday pay and vacation pay;

“Raised the adult general minimum wage to \$14 per hour and further raises it to a \$15 minimum wage on January 1, 2019, with annual adjustments by Ontario’s consumer price index;

“Make it easier to join unions, especially for workers in the temporary help, home care, community services and building services sectors;

“Make client companies responsible for workplace health and safety for temporary agency employees;

“Provide strong enforcement through the hiring of an additional 175 employment standards officers;

“Will ensure workers have modest improvements in the scheduling of their hours...;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to honour these commitments, including the \$15 minimum wage and fairer scheduling rules set to take effect on January 1, 2019. We further call on the assembly to take all necessary steps to enforce these laws and extend them to ensure no worker is left without protection.”

1350

I fully support this and will give it to page Will after I sign it.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Sara Singh: I have a petition here to the Ontario Legislative Assembly entitled, “Don’t Take Away Our \$15 Minimum Wage and Fairer Labour Laws.

“Whereas the vast majority of Ontarians support a \$15 minimum wage and better laws to protect workers; and

“Whereas last year, in response to overwhelming popular demand by the people of Ontario, the provincial government brought in legislation and regulations that:

“Deliver 10 personal emergency leave days for all workers, the first two of which are paid;

“Make it illegal to pay part-time, temporary, casual or contract workers less than their full-time or directly hired co-workers, including equal public holiday pay and vacation pay;

“Raised the adult general minimum wage to \$14 per hour and further raises it to a \$15 minimum wage on January 1, 2019, with annual adjustments by Ontario’s consumer price index;

“Make it easier to join unions, especially for workers in the temporary help, home care, community services and building services sectors;

“Protect workers’ employment status, pay and benefits when contracts are flipped or businesses are sold in the building services sector;

“Make client companies responsible for workplace health and safety for temporary agency employees;

“Provide strong enforcement through the hiring of an additional 175 employment standards officers; and

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“—three hours’ pay when workers are expected to be on call all day, but are not called into work;

“—three hours’ pay for any employee whose shift is cancelled with less than two days’ notice; and

“—the right to refuse shifts without penalty if the shift is scheduled with fewer than four days’ notice;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to honour these commitments, including the \$15 minimum wage and fairer scheduling rules set to take effect on January 1, 2019. We further call on the assembly to take all necessary steps to enforce these laws and extend them to ensure no worker is left without protection.”

I am very proud to affix my name to this. I will send this off with page Aaliyah.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

HEALTH CARDS CARTES SANTÉ

M^{lle} Amanda Simard: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario integrate linguistic identity data for both official languages of Canada on the Ontario health card, and that the government of Ontario should respect the taxpayer by maximizing the potential of invested human and fiscal resources and the quality of care through the use of that data.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mademoiselle Simard has moved private member’s notice of motion number 23. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

M^{lle} Amanda Simard: Je suis heureuse de prendre la parole aujourd’hui en cette Chambre pour discuter de ma motion, ma première en tant que députée provinciale de mon super comté, Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. Cette motion est importante pour la santé de la communauté francophone en Ontario, y compris les citoyens de ma circonscription de l’est ontarien. Elle est aussi importante pour le gouvernement de l’Ontario et tous les Ontariens.

It is also important for the government of Ontario and all Ontarians. The more data the government has, the better it can plan and the more efficiently we can allocate resources.

Je voudrais tout d’abord remercier mes nombreux collègues du gouvernement et de l’opposition qui appuient cette motion qui vise à capter les données relatives à l’identité linguistique des Ontariens au moyen de la carte Santé. J’ai également reçu beaucoup de commentaires positifs de la part de mes électeurs, et de groupes d’intervenants qui souhaitent s’assurer que le gouvernement de l’Ontario recueille des données exactes et significatives qui aideront les gestionnaires à mieux planifier l’offre de services de santé en français, tout en allouant plus efficacement les ressources à leur disposition. C’est une étape vers un système de santé plus efficace et sécuritaire.

Madame la Présidente, les modifications apportées à la Loi de 2006 sur l’intégration du système de santé local ont renforcé l’attente selon laquelle les réseaux locaux d’intégration des services de santé—les RLISS, comme on les appelle—respectent les exigences de la Loi sur les services en français dans la planification, la conception, la prestation et l’évaluation des services. Ces changements ont également souligné la responsabilité des RLISS de promouvoir la qualité et la sécurité des soins pour les francophones.

À l’heure actuelle, les dossiers des services de santé en français administratifs de l’Ontario n’incluent pas de données linguistiques que les planificateurs, les décideurs et les chercheurs peuvent utiliser pour mieux planifier. Nous devons faire plus pour nous assurer de disposer de ces données afin de pouvoir fournir des services de qualité à tous les résidents de l’Ontario, qu’ils parlent l’anglais ou le français.

Le ministère de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée a défini la base de données sur les personnes enregistrées comme un outil potentiel pour la collecte de données linguistiques. Présentement, pour chaque personne possédant une carte de régime d’assurance médicale de l’Ontario, la carte RAMO, inscrite dans la base de données, une préférence linguistique de l’anglais ou du français est enregistrée pour indiquer la langue dans laquelle la personne souhaite recevoir une communication écrite. Ces données n’identifient pas nécessairement les francophones puisque certains francophones peuvent choisir l’anglais comme préférence de langue écrite alors que leur langue habituelle est le français.

Le ministère a envisagé l’inclusion de questions supplémentaires dans le processus d’enregistrement et de renouvellement de la carte RAMO afin de permettre la collecte de données d’identité linguistique francophone qui seraient insérées dans la base de données du système gérant la carte Santé.

Madam Speaker, I wanted to share a bit of background information and feedback from stakeholders on this. First, there is the French Language Health Services Advisory Council. The council was consulted and expressed support for the proposed process to collect linguistic information via the health card. Then, there are the French-language health planning entities. In July 2016, the entities developed a position paper called Réseau Recommendations: Linguistic Data Collection, in which they identified the following two

questions to collect data related to linguistic identity. First, what is your mother tongue? And second would be: If your mother tongue is neither French nor English, in which of Canada's official languages are you most comfortable?

The entities also provided the following two recommendations to the ministry:

(1) Linguistic identity data must always be collected. The data is essential for proactive planning of the offer of services based on population needs.

(2) Linguistic preference data should be collected in addition to linguistic identity data in the context of service delivery and client satisfaction.

The position paper identified that the most effective and efficient method for collecting this data would be through the OHIP renewal and registration process. In 2017, the entities reiterated their support for this project and noted that the best proxies for the language of need are the language that defines the person—their mother tongue—and the official language in which individuals are most comfortable.

Then there's the French Language Services Commissioner. In July 2018, the commissioner released his annual report, *Looking Ahead, Getting Ready*, which included a section on standardized accessible language data, outlining his support for the inclusion of the language variable in the health card renewal process. The commissioner noted that the language variable has been recognized as a critical factor in the experience of patients and their families, and the government's interest in determining the linguistic identity of patients from their health cards is the key to solving this problem.

Then there's the Alliance for Healthier Communities, formerly known as the Association of Ontario Health Centres. In 2017, the association recommended to the ministry that francophones' linguistic identity be captured through the OHIP card registration and renewal processes and that any collection of sociodemographic or related data use the inclusive definition of "francophone."

Last, but not least, l'Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario, AFO, in 2014 and then again just recently reiterated in their white paper—the white paper, then and now, recommends to improve the quality of the province's health care system and ensure that it meets the needs of Franco-Ontarians, irrespective of their geographic location, social, cultural or linguistic characteristics. Specifically, AFO recommended that the ministry address the lack of standardized linguistic information related to francophone patients' health care to allow for evidence-based planning at all levels.

1400

I also wanted to note that in 2017, Prince Edward Island updated their health cards to include language of preference. According to Health PEI, this implementation has made it easier for health care providers to ensure that they provide services and information in a manner that is better understood.

Modifier la carte Santé afin de capter l'identité linguistique des patients lors du renouvellement de la carte Santé permet aux patients de fournir leur identité linguistique dans un contexte propice et non lors d'un

moment de vulnérabilité. De plus, comme l'identité linguistique sera associée au numéro de carte Santé, l'information pourra être reliée à un plus grand nombre de bases de données, permettant ainsi de faire des analyses plus complètes.

Je suis fière de la réaction positive suscitée par cette motion et cette initiative. Les députés des deux côtés de la Chambre et les principaux intervenants francophones comprennent l'importance de cet outil.

Je suis reconnaissante à des organismes comme le Conseil consultatif sur les services de santé en français, le commissaire aux services en français, et l'Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario pour leur appui et engagement à défendre cette motion.

Avec l'adoption de cette motion et sa mise en oeuvre par le gouvernement, le gouvernement de l'Ontario peut disposer d'un outil précieux pour appuyer l'analyse fondée sur des preuves, tant au niveau du RLISS qu'au niveau provincial, afin de faciliter la prise de décision et l'établissement des priorités pour :

- réduire les disparités dans la fourniture de soins de santé aux Ontariens et Ontariennes;

- améliorer l'accès aux services de santé en français dans tout le système de santé; et

- améliorer l'expérience globale du patient et les résultats pour la santé de la population francophone.

Un grand merci à tous et toutes pour votre considération de cette importante motion.

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

M. Guy Bourgouin: Ça me fait plaisir de me lever aujourd'hui sur un projet de loi de la députée de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. Comme francophone et aussi comme critique francophone pour mon parti, je pense que c'est un besoin que ça fait trop longtemps qu'on demande et qui aurait dû être fait.

On vient de fêter, le 25 septembre dernier, la journée francophone et aussi la semaine. La députée de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell a mentionné que l'AFO a un livre blanc. L'AFO est l'Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario. Ils ont un livre blanc sur la santé. Une des demandes était justement d'identifier les francophones sur leurs cartes de santé. Ça va permettre d'identifier qui est francophone et aussi d'avoir de meilleures données. On entend trop souvent qu'on n'a pas assez de données sur les francophones, on ne peut pas améliorer, on ne sait pas où améliorer—je crois que ce projet de loi-là va améliorer cette situation-là, qui est un besoin dont les francophones ont besoin.

Pouvoir identifier la langue française, les francophones, je pense que c'est un besoin. Je pense que ce n'est pas juste un besoin qui est là, mais il faut que les services soient améliorés.

Je peux vous parler d'une situation personnelle. Ma mère est d'une petite communauté francophone du nord de l'Ontario. Il y a eu un incident. Elle a appelé le 911 et il n'y avait aucune personne qui pouvait répondre en français. Ça, c'est un exemple. Mais, ça ne s'arrête pas là.

Ma circonscription comprend 60 % de francophones, et je peux vous dire des histoires de même, j'en ai entendues. Je pense que c'est un besoin que ce projet-là va adresser, que le gouvernement ou les personnes qui prennent ces données-là vont pouvoir prendre puis améliorer nos services. Parce que c'est un grand besoin de la francophonie. On est beaucoup de francophones en Ontario, et c'est un manque qu'il y a—un grand manque—dans les soins de santé. C'est pour ça qu'il me fait plaisir aujourd'hui de me lever et de supporter ça, comme francophone, premièrement, et aussi comme critique francophone et aussi de la part de notre parti, parce que je pense que c'est un grand besoin et que ça fait longtemps que ça aurait dû être fait.

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

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: It is absolutely an honour this afternoon to stand here in support of this motion from the member here. She has been an amazing friend, as well. So I'm going to be speaking in support of this motion, for sure.

This motion, if enacted, will support vital health research within Ontario assisting policy decisions as well as supporting important academic research.

Currently, within the Registered Persons Database for each OHIP cardholder, mother tongue or service language is not identified. The language preference section solely refers to which official language a person wishes to receive written communication in, French or English. There are many cases where francophones in Ontario indicate the preferred written language of communication to be English. As you can see, this can be problematic when designing policy or programs for this population. The data are not accurate.

Key francophone stakeholders and organizations such as the French Language Health Services Advisory Council, the French Language Services Commissioner, and l'Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario have voiced their commitment to advocate for this motion.

Former critic for francophone affairs and current critic for health of the official opposition, the member from Nickel Belt, supports the integration of the linguistic variable on the health card. Former critic for francophone affairs and former minister Madame Lalonde supported this idea.

This idea of integration of the language variable item is not new. The integration of the language variable was an item in the last provincial budget passed in March.

The importance of this bill: The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has identified the Registered Persons Database as a potential tool for collecting socio-demographic data, including language. It is one of the key data sources used by university-driven academic health research. Accurate socio-demographic data, including spoken language, can assist the government of Ontario and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, including other agencies such as LHINs, to gather accurate demographic information, including preferred language, as a valuable tool to enhance decision-making and priority-setting through an evidence-based analysis. This would reduce disparities in the provision of health care, enhancing access to French-language health

services, and improving the overall patient experience and treatment outcomes.

Not a lot of people know this, but my grandmother is a francophone. I'm really looking forward to the turkey dinner she's going to be preparing, with mashed potatoes and—oh, my God, I can't wait for the weekend.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Cranberries.

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Cranberries, yes. You're absolutely right. I can't wait for the turkey.

When she first came to Toronto in the 1960s, a health emergency had taken her to the hospital. She could only speak a few words of English. Luckily, there was a French-speaking staff which helped translate the huge volume of information she was receiving from physicians and staff in regard to her condition: what she was expected to do, the type of medication she was expected to take.

1410

Madam Speaker, just imagine not understanding anyone, especially when you are in critical condition. It is very scary. Any wrong exchange of information can be critical to life and death, like misunderstanding the dosage or what type of medication my grandmother was on. The staff translator was a critical component in the delivery of her health care.

There are many Ontarians who are in this situation on a daily basis. Understanding the type of population, including the dominant mother language of that community, can assist medical providers in designing meaningful, efficient programs of delivery.

On behalf of my family, happy Thanksgiving.

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

M. Gilles Bisson: Je ne vais pas prendre beaucoup de temps. Je ne voulais rien que de mettre sur le record une couple d'affaires.

Premièrement, félicitations à notre collègue d'avoir amené cette motion en avance. C'est quelque chose qu'on oeuvre pour, ça fait longtemps, quelque chose qui fait quasiment beaucoup de bon sens et certainement quelque chose qu'on peut tous supporter.

La première affaire c'est de respecter les francophones. Je pense que c'est l'affaire clé. Mais, deuxièmement, c'est aussi d'être capable de dire, « Tiens, on connaît qui est dans le système—combien de francophones on a et où ils demeurent. » Ça va nous allouer, dans le plus long terme, de mieux planifier les services de santé.

Je peux vous dire qu'on a passé à travers à Kapuskasing, on a passé à travers à Timmins, puis on a passé à travers à Hearst. Quand on a créé les deux centres de santé communautaire, le premier à Kap, le deuxième à Timmins, une partie de ce qu'il nous a fallu faire était d'identifier le monde qui était là—qui va s'en servir? Cette carte d'identification—la seule manière d'identifier, sur la carte de santé—aurait beaucoup réduit le travail qu'il a fallu faire pour prouver que, ouais, il y a des francophones qui demeurent dans le coin, et ils veulent se faire servir en français.

C'était la même situation à Hearst quand on a créé ce qu'ils appellent la « family health team », l'équipe

familiale, qui est à Hearst. Il a fallu passer à travers—so, toute une bonne affaire.

Je veux finir sur une petite histoire de M^{me} Rousselle. M^{me} Rousselle, que tu as connu, qui a demeuré à Mattice, est décédée. Je pense qu'elle avait 102 ou 103 ans. C'était une femme qui parlait seulement le français—elle ne parlait pas une goutte d'anglais. De temps à autre, même en demeurant dans une place comme Mattice, qui est majoritairement francophone, et en se faisant desservir à Hearst et des fois à Kapuskasing, elle s'est parfois trouvée dans une situation où il n'y avait personne capable de la desservir. Pour pauvre M^{me} Rousselle—je ne dis pas « pauvre » M^{me} Rousselle; c'était une des meilleures personnes que j'aie jamais rencontrée; positive, toujours un sourire, toujours une histoire, quelqu'un de vraiment extraordinaire que j'ai été bien choyé de connaître—c'était très frustrant pour elle quand elle arrivait à ces services et elle ne se faisait pas desservir dans son propre langage.

So donc, à la mémoire de M^{me} Rousselle de Mattice, on dit que ce projet de loi aurait peut-être pu aider le restant de la famille et le restant des francophones dans la province de l'Ontario un peu mieux.

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

M^{me} Gila Martow: Je suis très fière de parler un petit peu aujourd'hui à ce sujet—de demander à tous les résidents de l'Ontario, pour leur carte de santé, si leur langue maternelle est l'anglais, le français ou une autre langue, peut-être, et dans quelle langue ils aimeraient discuter et avoir des discussions.

We're speaking today about the very important topic of my colleague, and we're talking about whether or not we should be asking people their mother tongue when they apply for or renew their health card, and which language they prefer to discuss in.

I think it's very well known here that I'm quite passionate about French-language services and our francophone communities, who have so much history in the province of Ontario and in Canada and so much to offer us.

We know that the world is global trade now. You're not just doing trade within your province, your country or your continent; it's a global economy, and francophone regions across the world are growing. The economic advantages of having the ability to conduct business in both official languages is a big plus for our province here in Ontario.

I'm very passionate about the francophone community, but I'm equally passionate about the francophiles, people whose mother tongue is not French, but they've made an effort—such as myself and my siblings and my parents—to learn French. We did not speak French at home, and I didn't learn French until I was in my early teens, but I took it very seriously. I made an effort to speak French at work and to have friends who spoke French, and I would speak to them in French. Now that I'm elected here and representing the wonderful riding of Thornhill, I'm able to put that French to good use every now and then.

I know we have some guests here from the French community, French organizations and French-language services. François Boileau, I'm sure, is very interested in

what we have to say here today, because this comes under his jurisdiction.

Data is a very important asset, we know, to government. It helps us plan where we need to provide services. Our government, the Ford government, is about ensuring that we're efficient, that we're not spending money where we don't want to be spending money. We value the taxpayers' money. We want to encourage as much as possible to have more efficient use of taxpayers' funding, so we don't want to provide French-language services where they're not warranted and not needed. On the other hand, we want to ensure that we are able to plan for future communities or community growth.

We're talking about ensuring that everybody is able to have the best health care possible in Ontario. We're announcing more long-term-care beds so that we can free up hospital beds, so that we can end hallway medicine. How is all of this done? All of this is done through efficiencies, and this is just one example. Better health care for francophones means better health care for everybody in Ontario, because we know that if a francophone patient goes to a hospital and misunderstands the instructions, they have to return again, possibly, to that hospital, that medical centre or that doctor, and that is a waste of valuable health care dollars.

The motion tabled is providing a direction for the government to ensure that we have the data that we can collect. What I would suggest is that perhaps there is going to be some discussion about whether or not we could be doing more when people are applying for their health card to collect other data that is beneficial to the government as well. We sometimes hear in Toronto, where Queen's Park is located—we're here in the Legislature today, most of the time speaking in English, although, like the member whose bill we're presenting, we're speaking more French. But we're really living in a fairly English enclave here in Toronto. I think we forget, unless we represent, like the member for Timmins, communities in northern Ontario, northeastern Ontario or eastern Ontario—sometimes it's easy to forget that Ontario has francophone communities, and it's important for us to get out of that Toronto bubble every now and then, visit Ottawa, walk down the street and notice how many people are having conversations in French.

I know that the member who is presenting today is representing a riding that's 70% francophone. It's maybe hard to wrap your head around how many French language services there are and how many people we need to encourage to speak French in the province to provide those services. The previous Liberal government really dropped the ball in terms of French-language instruction for teachers, and we're seeing the repercussions of that now. We're seeing that we have French immersion schools and French-language school boards that are struggling to find teachers who are able to teach in French—not just to teach French, but to be able to teach in French at a French-language school, whether it's a public school or a French-language Catholic school. This is unfortunate, Madam Speaker, because we have to provide those services in many regions

in Ontario, and without having a workforce that is able to speak French, we're losing out on global trade and we're losing out on servicing those communities.

I want to thank the member for presenting today, and I look forward to more discussion.

1420

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: J'aimerais commencer en remerciant la députée de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell d'avoir amené cette motion. J'aimerais également saluer la direction de l'association francophone de l'Ontario, M. Carol Jolin et M. Stewart Kiff, qui sont ici avec nous, et Bryan. Ça nous fait toujours plaisir de vous accueillir à Queen's Park.

La motion de la députée de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell a deux parties. Dans la première partie, c'est clair : c'est quelque chose que la communauté francophone demande depuis des décennies.

Dans un premier temps, on sait que l'Ontario a des régions désignées. Dans les régions désignées, les francophones comme moi, comme Gilles, comme Guy et comme bien de vous autres, ont droit d'accès aux services en français dans les services qui sont donnés par la province. Ça inclut les services de santé.

Ce qui se passe, malheureusement, c'est que l'identification doit être faite lorsque tu demandes le service. Donc, je vous donne un exemple : tu arrives à Horizon Santé-Nord—Horizon Santé-Nord, c'est le nom de l'hôpital à Sudbury. Tu arrives à l'hôpital à Sudbury. Ça ne file pas. Tu te rends aux urgences de l'hôpital. Là, tu regardes autour, et c'est sûr que la salle d'attente est pleine. La dame à côté de toi, tu lui demandes, avant le triage, « Madame, vous êtes ici depuis combien de temps? » « Moi, ça fait 18 heures. » Tu demandes au monsieur à côté de toi, « Et vous? Vous êtes ici depuis combien de temps? » « Moi, ça fait 12 heures. »

Puis, finalement, c'est ton tour d'avoir le triage, et l'infirmière te demande—parce qu'à Horizon Santé-Nord, on fait l'offre active. Ils demandent, « Est-ce que tu veux ton service en français? » Tout de suite, le petit cerveau se met en marche et puis tu te dis, « Elle, ça fait 18 heures qu'elle attend, lui, ça fait 12 heures qu'il attend; si moi, je demande mon service en français, je vais être ici pour deux jours. » Puis, là, tu dis, « Je veux n'importe quel service en autant que ça soit vite, parce que j'ai mal à »—quoi que ce soit—« et je veux être vu par le système de santé. »

Ça, ça nous sert mal. On sait que les francophones, quand on leur demande, en situation de crise—la plupart du temps quand tu vas dans un service de santé, si ce n'est pas celui qui t'offre tes soins primaires, que tu t'en vas dans une clinique ou quoi que ce soit, il va y avoir des temps d'attente—les francophones ont tendance à ne pas s'identifier. Et je vais en parler un petit peu plus tard, mais cela a des répercussions sur tout notre système de santé.

Donc, l'idée est vraiment, pour les francophones, qu'on pourrait s'identifier, comme la députée l'a dit, dans une situation où il n'y a pas d'urgence. Tu es en train de renouveler ta carte Santé à tous les cinq ans—tout le

monde en Ontario doit renouveler la carte Santé. Des fois, au bout de cinq ans, tu sais, on n'a plus la même coupe de cheveux ou quoi que ce soit—ils prennent notre photo, et c'est ça. On met la carte Santé à jour, et il n'y a pas d'urgence. C'est un bon temps pour demander aux gens : « Est-ce que vous voulez »—

Une voix.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Tu as encore ta vieille carte Santé? Lui, il a encore sa carte Santé sans photo. Ce n'est pas bien. Montre-la pas à personne, et puis va chercher ta carte Santé avec photo.

Excepté pour certains comme lui qui ont encore la vieille carte rouge et blanche, la plupart de nous autres ont une belle carte avec notre photo dessus. On la renouvelle à tous les cinq ans, et lorsque tu la renouvelles, bien, c'est ton opportunité de dire, « Oui, je suis francophone. »

Souvent, plusieurs de nous vont remplir le questionnaire en français. Ça devient assez évident qu'on est francophone. Et, puis, là, ça change tout, madame la Présidente, ça change tout. À chaque fois que tu vas présenter ta carte Santé, que ça soit dans une clinique, que ça soit à l'urgence, que ça soit avec celui qui t'offre tes soins primaires ou que ça soit lorsque tu as un renvoi en service à un spécialiste ou quoi que ce soit, à chaque fois, la banque de données du gouvernement va voir que tu es un francophone qui a demandé un service.

Pour la première fois de notre vie, on va être capable de voir où les francophones vont chercher leurs services, où les francophones sont, quels types de services ils ont reçu et quels étaient leurs nombres. Ces connaissances-là ont un potentiel de tout changer parce que pour la première fois, on va pouvoir revendiquer des services basés sur des données probantes que tout le monde va avoir devant eux. On va pouvoir dire, « Nous, on veut que le programme de colonoscopie de M. XYZ soit disponible en français. » Puis, là, on va pouvoir démontrer que 40 % de la clientèle qui se rend là sont francophones. On n'a jamais été capable de faire ça.

Tous ceux qui travaillent dans la planification de la santé, on utilise des bases de données. On essaie de faire des références, des renvois de ci et de ça, mais on n'a jamais été capable d'avoir des données directement de la carte Santé. Ça a le potentiel de tout changer.

Les gens vont dire, « Bien, est-ce qu'il n'y a pas un risque que, si les francophones n'utilisent pas un service, on va le perdre? » Ma réponse à ça c'est : on en a tellement peu de services de santé en français garantis, qu'on a beaucoup plus à gagner qu'on en a à perdre.

Le plus tôt—et la dernière chose, parce que là je vois que mes six minutes sont quasiment terminées. On est, finalement, en 2018, dans une position où on a les connaissances technologiques pour le faire. Si tu regardes dans la bureaucratie du ministère de la Santé, on est capable de le faire. La banque de données est capable de recevoir les données. On serait capable d'extraire ces données-là et d'en faire des arguments solides, basés sur des données probantes, pour être capable de faire avancer nos demandes de services de santé en français partout dans la province, que tu sois dans une région désignée ou pas.

C'est une porte ouverte aux francophones que l'on demande depuis longtemps. J'encourage tous mes collègues à l'Assemblée législative de voter en faveur.

Et la deuxième partie, qui m'agaçait un peu plus, bien, je n'ai pas eu le temps d'en parler.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell has two minutes to reply.

M^{lle} Amanda Simard: I want to thank my honourable colleagues for sharing their remarks on this. I truly appreciate it. I believe that our mandate here—all of us, not just on this side of the House, but for all of us here—is to make life better for Ontarians. To do that, we need data. We need data to plan proactively, moving us forward. I ask all my colleagues to support this important motion today.

J'invite mes collègues à appuyer cette motion et je vous remercie de m'avoir donné l'occasion de prendre la parole aujourd'hui.

REA AND WALTER ACT (TRUSS
AND LIGHTWEIGHT CONSTRUCTION
IDENTIFICATION), 2018

LOI REA ET WALTER DE 2018
SUR L'IDENTIFICATION
DES COMPOSANTS STRUCTURAUX
À OSSATURE LÉGÈRE

Mr. Pettapiece moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 33, An Act governing the identification of truss and lightweight construction in buildings / Projet de loi 33, Loi régissant l'identification des composants structuraux à ossature légère incorporés aux bâtiments.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to standing order number 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: It's a pleasure to stand in this House to reintroduce this bill, a bill that was designed for the protection of our firefighters. In introducing the Rea and Walter Act, I am aware that it recalls a heartbreaking chapter in the history of our area. It's also a painful chapter for firefighters across the province and beyond.

Seven years ago, on March 17, 2011, fire engulfed a dollar store in downtown Listowel. That fire claimed the lives of two North Perth volunteer firefighters, Ken Rea and Ray Walter.

Ken was a great volunteer. He was 56 years old. He was a board member for victim services of Perth county and for 37 years was a volunteer firefighter, becoming deputy district chief at the Atwood station.

There are three stations in North Perth. One is in Monkton; the other one in the middle is in Atwood; and Listowel has a station.

Ray Walter was 30. He was also a great volunteer. He was vice-president of the Kinsmen Club of Listowel and joined the volunteer fire department in 2008.

Ken and Ray were inside the dollar store as the fire spread. They were searching for possible victims; they

were searching for the source of the fire. Suddenly, the roof collapsed, leaving Ken and Ray with no escape. Rescue was impossible.

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I was in town that day, Speaker. I saw the dark, black heavy smoke, and I heard rumours that someone was hurt or killed in the blaze. My first thought was of my son, also a North Perth volunteer firefighter. You can imagine my concern, but he was safe, taking phone calls pouring into the Monkton station.

As you may be aware, the first ones to get to the station when a fire alarm is called get in the trucks and go to the fire. Steven didn't get there in time to go on the trucks, so he stayed at the station and took phone calls from concerned family members of other firefighters who were at the fire. It was a hard day for him because he couldn't answer their questions even though he knew that somebody was hurt.

Memorial services were held a week later. Thousands of firefighters, paramedics and police officers from across Canada and the United States, and government officials from all levels of government, were there. It is a tremendous show of support for our small community's devastating loss. Investigations followed. They revealed what firefighters could not have known on that day. Initially undetected, the fire had started behind some insulation and was degrading the lightweight wooden roof trusses. Collapse was inevitable.

On July 21 of this year, there was another potentially deadly fire in Arthur, Ontario. The employees in the local Tim Hortons discovered a fire in the ceiling cavity of the building. Thirty firefighters soon arrived on the scene, and employees did a wonderful job getting people out of the building. The fire had been burning for some time before staff noticed smoke. The occupants were totally unaware that the fire was burning above their heads. Wellington North Fire Services did an excellent job containing and extinguishing the fire. However, Chief Guilbault believes that they were within minutes of a roof collapse. He said, "We were not aware that the roof trusses were lightweight. There was no way of knowing. There could have been serious injuries or loss of life." Madam Speaker, we got lucky on July 21, but countless other times we will not.

This afternoon, I will explain how the Rea and Walter Act will give firefighters better information which they can use to plan their attack in situations like this. I intend to do three things. I'll describe truss and lightweight construction, or TLC, and why it matters; I will explain how the bill uses a practical and proven way to identify TLC; and I'll show broad support for this bill.

Truss and lightweight construction, when exposed to fire, can pose serious risks to responding firefighters. The best way to minimize their risk is to maximize their information. Ultimately, that's what TLC identification is all about and what this bill will do.

First, we need to understand truss and lightweight construction. TLC is increasingly commonplace as a building method. It refers to wood-framed building materials where the roof or floor supporting systems are constructed of

lightweight, prefabricated materials. Wooden I-beams pose the same issue and are also addressed in our bill.

What's the problem? The problem is not TLC. Modern homes use it, and many commercial and other buildings use it. These buildings are safe. The problem is what happens when lightweight construction is exposed to fire. While traditional floor joists burn in about 15 minutes, pre-engineered joists can take only about six minutes to burn—six minutes. They don't even have to be on fire to pose a danger. High heat can make the wood unstable by melting the glue that holds the joists together.

Suppose you're a firefighter arriving at the scene of a blaze. You probably arrive in about five minutes as the average fire department response time is between four and six minutes. As an incident commander, you immediately face a critical decision. Do you advance through the building's roof or floor to fight the fire at its source, or do you fight it from other angles in other ways? In many buildings, you might have the time and opportunity to advance, but if the building uses TLC, time might have run out. These joists are already beginning to burn. The roof or floor may already be on the brink of collapse, and you have no way to know.

Fire crews cannot know the construction type of every building every time they pull up to a fire. But there is a way: by identifying truss- and lightweight-constructed buildings, to get them better information. That's where the Rea and Walter Act comes in.

It brings me to my second point. Placarding, as set out in the bill, is a practical and proven way to identify truss- and lightweight-constructed buildings. It's practical because it starts with something as simple as a sticker. The bill requires a round, reflective emblem with a white background and a red border to be displayed on buildings using TLC. There will be three types:

- “F” decals if only the floor of the building uses TLC;
 - “R” decals if only the roof of the building uses TLC;
- and
- “FR” decals if both the floor and the roof of the building use TLC.

These requirements are set out in the proposed amendments to both the building code, affecting new buildings, and the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, affecting existing buildings. They would apply to commercial and industrial buildings as well as multi-family dwellings of three or more units, other than townhouses.

The proposed installation of these TLC emblems is similar to when the province of Ontario amended the Fire Protection and Prevention Act to include smoke alarms. However, in the case of the Rea and Walter Act, proposed changes are minor.

To building owners and to building inspectors, the impact of such an emblem is negligible, but to firefighters, its impact is invaluable.

What about insurance rates? According to the Insurance Bureau of Canada, they would be unaffected. In a recent letter, the Insurance Bureau of Canada said, “Insurance is an important mechanism for helping people recover from traumatic events, but preventing injury or death through

awareness is even more valuable. IBC believes that [this] bill ... has the potential to achieve that awareness.”

We checked into other jurisdictions that recognize the need to identify truss and lightweight construction. For example, New Jersey, New York, Illinois and Florida have all passed state legislation to require it. It is my understanding that the three emblems, F, R and FR, are standardized and recognized across many jurisdictions. If they can do it, why can't we?

But you don't need to go to Florida to see examples of proven leadership on this issue. You just need to go to Perth-Wellington and to meet some of the people I am privileged to represent. These emblems are already in use in the city of Stratford.

Other communities I represent, including the township of Perth East, the municipality of West Perth and the township of Perth South, have also passed bylaws. North Huron did too, and I want to thank the member from Huron-Bruce for allowing me to help install a decal at her constituency office a couple of years ago.

The movement has been growing, Speaker, and it demonstrates my third and final point: Support for this initiative is clear and overwhelming. Over the past few years, I have received dozens of supportive letters and emails from municipalities and fire departments.

In Stratford, Chief John Paradis describes the bill as another tool in the tool box to identify potential hazards prior to sending firefighters inside a burning structure. Paradis adds that the city's efforts “are having a positive reception from business owners, who are more than happy to support the safety of their local firefighters.”

From the town of Erin, former fire chief Dan Callaghan wrote, “This proposed bill will save lives of firefighters in the future ... Knowledge is protection.”

South Stormont fire chief Gilles Crepeau wrote, “I am the chief of 100 volunteers, who fully support this bill.”

And there are many more.

I have spoken to firefighters across the province over the past few years. I have been to Carleton Place, Northumberland county, Windsor, Essex and Kenora. I have also talked to the Ontario fire marshal's office, the Ontario Building Officials Association, the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers, and the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association. There is overwhelming support for this bill across the province, Madam Speaker.

But I must emphasize, the momentum to identify TLC did not begin yesterday and did not begin with me. It began years ago, thanks to the efforts of North Perth fire chief Ed Smith. In 2012, Chief Smith introduced a resolution to the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs. It petitioned the province that certain lightweight-construction buildings should have a standard plaque. He was successful and continued to speak up, as others did.

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To conclude, I say this: Throughout our province we have dedicated professional firefighters and volunteer firefighters to keep us safe. Often they do that at considerable risk to their own safety. Again, to minimize their risk, we have to maximize their information. This bill does just that.

This issue is important enough to warrant a province-wide solution, not just a patchwork of local bylaws. Thank you.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to stand in this House—today to comment on the bill brought forward by the member from Perth–Wellington. We were elected at the same time. We're from the class of 2011, I believe. He is a no-nonsense country guy and this is a no-nonsense bill.

It has always perplexed me how a bill that makes so much sense, that could actually save people's lives and potentially save people's lives who are first on the scene to save us—firefighters are the people we all look up to. Be they professional or be they volunteer, they are the ones running to while we're running away.

I've read the bill and, actually, I've listened to the member put forward this bill before. It must be incredibly frustrating to have something that makes sense and have it not be acted upon. Before I go much further, I would implore the government to either take this bill or incorporate it into something else. Just let's get this done.

Often in our system, at least the way I have—

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you, Speaker. Usually they're heckling. I like to look at the Speaker, but now they're not heckling, so I can look at them.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: We can heckle you if you want.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Order.

Mr. John Vanthof: I would implore the government to act on it. I know this isn't a wedge issue. This is a common sense issue. This one is for the people, really for the people. The bill doesn't say we have to change the building code, that buildings have to be built differently. It's not like we want to put sprinklers in old buildings; that's a great idea, but that's going to cost a lot of money. This isn't doing that. This is basically—correct me if I'm wrong—putting an emblem on buildings that are built a certain way, so that when first responders, firefighters, are called to that building, they immediately recognize the inherent danger that exists in that structure because of the way it is built. That makes perfect sense.

It's like having a bottle of laundry detergent or a chemical that has a "poison" sign on it. It's a warning. This is simply a warning. It makes sense. The member's research shows that it's already being done in some other jurisdictions. It's being done by some municipalities.

There is another bill that has gone through several times from another Conservative member, who happens to be related to me—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Don't name him.

Mr. John Vanthof: The member from Oxford, regarding carbon monoxide detectors. It was the same thing. At that time it was a member from the opposition bringing the bill forward—and okay, politics is politics. This time we've got a member of the government side bringing it forward. Yes, it would be life-changing for some people, but you're not going to win or lose the next election based on this. It's something that needs to be done. It's

something that could just be slipped into another bill, or it's something that is worth passing by itself.

You're the government. Your member is putting forward something that makes perfect sense and has the full support of the official opposition. It's a bill that could save lives. I struggle with the fact that the last government didn't figure it out.

One of the things about private members' bills, for the new members here: Sometimes if you come up with a really good idea, the government of the day steals it and puts it in their own legislation. You know what? If you really think that through, that's a great thing, because you—regardless of which side you're on—actually make something better in the province. But in this case, it's the member's own government; it's the member's own party. There should be nothing, really, stopping that, based on the debate this afternoon, from becoming law. I would like someone to tell me what's stopping it.

I'm sure you all have people come to your offices and take meetings, and at other times we get issues that make perfect sense. For the new members—and I fell into this trap. I would take meetings and someone would explain something to me, why we should do something differently. You think: "Wow, that makes perfect sense. I could support that." The next day, I had a meeting with somebody else, who brought forward the other side of the argument, and I went: "Oh, I never thought about that." So now I always ask, when somebody comes to have a meeting at my office: "Okay, so that sounds like an okay idea. Who is opposed to it? It's better if I hear it from you than if I hear it from somebody else," because there are always two sides to an issue.

But this one? I don't believe the member is talking about—and I didn't see it in the bill—that these buildings are inherently dangerous. They're not. It's common construction. There is not a problem with the construction. The issue is, if there is a calamity in the building, such as a fire, something that is dangerous to people but compromises the structure—when that happens, they have a characteristic that could be very dangerous for firefighters.

We have ministers here. We have the movers and shakers of the province. Support your member, but more importantly, truly support the firefighters of this province and do something that's actually in the big picture. We hear a lot of, "Oh, these are lean times," and we know you guys are going to cut stuff, but this isn't even going to cost money, in government terms.

What is a person's life worth? What is going to happen—and we pray it doesn't—if such a fire occurs and the next people don't make it out? Now we all know—due to the member from Perth–Wellington, due to the fact that he has not just brought this forward once, right? We all know. We have the power. Certainly, the government has the power to enact it, so that the next time there's a fire in a TLC—that's the lightweight construction building, truss and lightweight construction?

Interjections.

Mr. John Vanthof: Perfect. The Clerks' table told me that, by the way. I had to ask. They knew. I'm going to be up front. I don't take credit for things I don't know.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: They are very smart people.

Mr. John Vanthof: They are smart people.

But the next time that happens—that there's a sticker there. How difficult is that? The fact that I'm actually standing here, really in my heart wondering how quickly it's going to happen—you really have to ask yourself, right?

My favourite day in this Legislature—and lately I've had a lot of days that aren't favourite days—is Thursday afternoon, because members often bring forward issues that are dear to their hearts, as this one is for the member for Perth–Wellington; issues that stem from an individual riding, as this one has for the member from Perth–Wellington; issues that are tragic, as this one is; and issues that—there aren't a lot of these, actually—can be fixed with the stroke of a few pens and a few dollars for some signs. How can that not be done?

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This is one that, if the government does it, I will be happy. We have a pretty good habit of this. When the government does something right, believe it or not, we actually give credit to the people who fought for it. I have no problem commending them. Once this bill, whether it's a portion of another bill or a self-standing bill—I have no problem standing anywhere and thanking the member from Perth–Wellington, just like every time we do a carbon monoxide event, I always thank my uncle Ernie, the member from Oxford. I have no problem doing that, especially on stuff like this. With this one, we have a chance to change people's lives, to save people's lives with common sense. That's what this is.

I started my remarks by saying that I got elected in the same class. I disagree with him on almost everything, but he's a common sense guy, as am I. People with common sense can disagree.

This is a good bill. It comes from the heart, and it can save people's lives. I implore the government to do whatever it takes to get this one done.

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

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: I want to thank the member for Perth–Wellington for inviting me to speak on this very important bill; I also thank the member opposite for his comments—and the passion that both have shown, both in putting it forward and also speaking positively towards it.

Several members of this Legislature may not be aware, but this past Sunday our province commemorated and lowered our flags to remember our brave men and hard-working front-line staff on Police and Peace Officers' National Memorial Day. I had the distinct honour of attending the memorial service on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, while our Premier and my parliamentary assistant, the member for Brampton South, attended the fallen firefighters' memorial service near the grounds here at the Legislature.

In addition, next week marks the beginning of Fire Prevention Week here in the province of Ontario. Our brave first responders deserve to know that our government and the members of this Legislature are listening, so that they can finally be provided with one of the important and necessary tools they need to perform their duties safely and effectively.

I would first like to begin by thanking the province's brave and hard-working front-line officers, including the many dedicated firefighters across the province of Ontario and the families of those fallen firefighters who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to their community, their province and their country. Words cannot express how truly grateful all of us are for their dedication and service. Our thoughts are with those families of these fallen heroes and their loved ones.

Madam Speaker, we must do more to protect the hard-working and dedicated men and women of our province, and provide these firefighters with this additional tool. This bill that we are debating today is a completely common sense piece of legislation, and it's a piece of legislation that I know all parties, as has been said this afternoon, can support. In fact, it has been supported in the past, when this bill was first read in the House.

During the election campaign, we stated that the status quo has failed. We committed to providing the necessary tools and resources for our dedicated front-line officers so they would be able to perform their duties safely and effectively. This bill directly reflects this commitment and reflects the values of all the members of this Legislature.

This bill is an important piece of legislation that addresses a significant public safety concern, and it's a concern that many of this great province's firefighters have brought to the attention of our government and other members in this Legislature. This bill stands to provide our province's hard-working and dedicated firefighters with critical and potentially life-saving information regarding the presence of lightweight construction upon entering a structure.

Speaker, this is a common sense solution to an incredibly dangerous problem. All that's required to potentially save the lives of the people of this province and our brave firefighters is to display a small decal which would indicate to our fire services that a structure contains lightweight construction. This would provide necessary information for the province's firefighters that would enable them to perform their jobs safely and effectively, minimizing the possibility of danger to the public and our front-line personnel. This bill is both a cost-effective and thoughtful way of ensuring that our fire services have access to better workplace safety mechanisms, and also serves to improve and enhance safety across this great province.

The bill that we're debating today was wiped off the legislative agenda when the previous government prorogued the Legislature back in March of this year. When this bill was first read in this Legislature, it is my understanding that it was given all-party support. I urge all of you today to do what's right, not only to ensure the brave men and women of our fire services have the necessary

resources and tools to perform their duties safely, but also to ensure that all Ontarians are provided with the level of public safety that they expect us to provide.

We are here debating this bill today because two of our brave firefighters, Ken Rea and Ray Walter, lost their lives in the line of duty in 2011 after the roof of a store constructed with lightweight construction collapsed while they were fighting a fire. I urge every member in this assembly to do the right thing and support the common sense, cost-effective and thoughtful piece of legislation that could potentially save the lives of our brave firefighters and the people of this great province.

As Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, I directly oversee the Office of the Fire Marshal, which is mandated to provide leadership and expertise in the reduction and elimination of fire and other public safety hazards.

As I mentioned, this is a simple solution to an incredibly dangerous problem. We must address this problem by supporting this bill here today. It will become part of enhancing and improving public safety, ensuring that the brave men and women of our fire services are provided with one of the necessary tools and resources they need to perform their duties safely and effectively. It is the least we can do to make a difference when it comes to fire safety in this great province.

Speaker, I would like to again thank the member for Perth–Wellington for inviting me to the Legislature to speak to this bill.

I want to state once again that it is our duty, it is our responsibility as a Legislature, to make sure that any first responder who goes out in the morning has the opportunity to come back home.

Happy Thanksgiving to everyone, and thank you.

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

Mr. Will Bouma: I had a six-minute speech ready to go, too, but I would like to give the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport the opportunity to also speak briefly, so I will just say a few words.

I remember being called out to a house fire south of the city of Brantford. Imagine the first guy in the door with the axe tapping his way forward to make sure it's safe and disappearing into the seat of what turned out to be a basement fire. Why? Because they had the wood-glued I-beams there and, unbeknownst to the responding firefighters, it was a basement fire. Fortunately, someone thought very, very quickly, ran back to a fire truck and grabbed an attic ladder, which is just a little folded-up skinny ladder a little bit taller than I am, threw it down the hole and the firefighter climbed back out with minor burns to his hands.

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This is extremely straightforward. I'd like to thank the member from Perth–Wellington for bringing this legislation forward. I love listening to the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane when we all agree on something, and that's something that it's really great to be here for today.

The things that go through your mind when you hear that two of our brothers died in a fire are amazing. "What did they do wrong? What were they doing in there?" You know what? They were doing their job.

This simple, common sense solution is not "It can save lives" or "It may save lives"; this legislation will save lives. So let's get it done.

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I am pleased to speak in my colleague's favour on this Bill 33. We try to do a lot of things in government. Some of the things are pretty challenging and some of the things are actually, frankly, pretty easy, if we commit to doing them.

My colleague from Perth–Wellington is a very practical individual. I've seen how he approaches issues. I've seen how he approaches legislation. It's always with a direct view of, "How does it actually help or hinder my constituents?" I respect that, and I like to think that I do the same.

This legislation, if passed, is something that I liken to—it's very similar to the green light for volunteer firefighters. For those of you who do not have the great honour of having volunteer firefighters serve your communities, many, many years ago, our current Speaker of the House—I have no idea what his riding was at that point, because he's had so many reiterations, but his name is Ted Arnott—he introduced legislation that would allow volunteer firefighters who were travelling in their personal vehicles to the fire station or to the fire to use circulating green lights on their vehicles. It was a game-changer. It took a long time to get through; I have no idea why, because it was a very practical, easy solution. But to me, that's what this proposal is now.

We have a responsibility to ensure that the people who make the commitment to become firefighters—their willingness to go to an active fire and engage and protect our persons and our properties—we need to make sure that our legislation protects them as well. I think this is a beautiful example of something that we can do and enact very quickly to protect those individuals.

I love the one comment, when you said that this is not about the construction of the building. This is not about whether you believe in or support light trusses and that application in our building codes. This is about how they're out there, they're happening, they're part of how we build our commercial and residential buildings. We can make it easier and understand, for the people who are going in, what the risks are.

I think it's a practical, doable solution and I am very, very pleased to support my colleague and friend from Perth–Wellington.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I return to the member from Perth–Wellington for his two-minute reply.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I do want to thank the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane, the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, the member from Brantford–Brant and certainly the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Speaker, this was not my idea. This was an idea that firefighters put together over the years. It was brought to my attention when Chief Ed Smith and I had a chat after this happened. He was looking at designs of the stickers that went on the buildings. I asked him what he was doing and that's when he told me. When I suggested that we bring it to the House for a bill and make it province-wide, all of the firefighters' associations in the province got behind me for that. It just makes a lot of sense.

I'm truly proud to stand in this House with all of the MPPs, all my colleagues in this House, because I see that there are times when we can get things done in this House, when we agree on things. I think this is what makes me proud of being an MPP and representing the great riding of Perth–Wellington: when I hear discussions on bills, not on this one but on other ones, which just make a lot of common sense.

I want to thank you for all of your support. I do hope we get this passed and into legislation quickly. This can save lives. That's the main thrust of this thing. This can save lives. It's another tool in the tool box of our firefighters, and certainly we need to get this done as quickly as we can.

FIGHTING BACK AGAINST
HANDGUNS ACT (HANDGUN
AMMUNITION SALES), 2018

LOI DE 2018 RIPOSTANT
AUX ARMES DE POING
(VENTES DE MUNITIONS
POUR ARMES DE POING)

Ms. Hunter moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 30, An Act to amend the Ammunition Regulation Act, 1994 with respect to the sale of handgun ammunition /
Projet de loi 30, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1994 sur la réglementation des munitions en ce qui concerne la vente de munitions pour armes de poing.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Before I begin my portion of this afternoon's debate, I want to take a moment just to thank everyone who has come out here today in support of this very important discussion around Bill 30, An Act to amend the Ammunition Regulation Act, 1994, with respect to the sale of handgun ammunition. I have to take a moment to just say thank you to these people, because they have taken time out of their busy schedules to be present, and I truly appreciate their willingness to have this conversation, because it's not always easy.

I just want to recognize Louis March from Zero Gun Violence; Evelyn Fox, a mother who has lost a loved one due to gun violence; Mahad Yusuf and his team from Midaynta; Jean-Luc Ramphal, who is a young person working with youth in this area; Muna Ali; Fatima Adam; Arlene Wallace; Shamso Elmi; Idil Hussein; and Fosia Duale. I also have to thank Likwa Nkala, whom I work with

very closely in my riding of Scarborough–Guildwood. Please welcome them.

I want to start by stating that every single elected member of provincial Parliament must work together to fight this horrific destruction of our neighbourhoods and our streets. We must do all that we can to solve this complex and difficult challenge. The gun violence plaguing our neighbourhoods must stop. This is not just a Toronto issue; it is a growing problem in many communities across this province: in Hamilton, Peel, Durham, York region, and many others.

Meeting with family members of victims in recent weeks has underscored for me the importance of taking action to stop the escalating occurrence of gun violence. This has been something that has been very, very evident. It is creating havoc on our streets and in our neighbourhoods. This issue was brought to me by one of my constituents, Mr. Majit Bala, after two young people were shot in my riding last May, one of them succumbing to his injuries. Immediately following the 2018 election, he said to me, "What are we going to do about handguns? Why are there so many handguns, and where are they coming from? What can we do to stop this?"

I started to search for ways that we could quell this problem. Sadly, the more that I looked, the more prevalent this issue became. Toronto and many communities in Ontario are seeing a rise in gun violence. I hear stories of how gun violence deeply damages our communities. I hear it from mothers, from fathers, from grandparents, from business owners, and from faith leaders of all creeds and denominations.

Like so many of them, I am tired of hearing about the horrific, tragic shootings on our streets. I do not want our children growing up in a city where schoolyard conversations about their summer vacation stem around trips to the emergency rooms because gunshot wounds have ravaged their bodies, or funerals of slain family members. I do not want this issue to become normalized in our communities. Enough is enough.

1510

Last August, I introduced a bill in the Ontario Legislature that, if passed, would give municipalities the power to ban the sale of ammunition within their borders. This is a simple bill, but it could make a difference. This is exactly what the mayor of Toronto and city council have asked the province for in response to the shootings that are causing havoc on Toronto's streets. City hall would be able to make it illegal to sell gun ammunition in Toronto, and the bill would give all municipalities the tools to do so, should their councils wish to.

Bill 30 is An Act to amend the Ammunition Regulation Act, 1994 with respect to the sale of handgun ammunition. If passed, the act is amended by adding a number of sections: "Optional restriction re sale of handgun ammunition." It addresses the online component of ammunition sales as well. There are strict fines applied to a person who contravenes the act. If found guilty on a first offence, they would be facing fines of up to \$50,000. For a second offence, the fines go to \$75,000.

In order to move forward in an effective way, Premier Ford and the Progressive Conservative government should support this bill today. There's no reason that you shouldn't support it. Gun violence in Toronto has risen in 2018, with shooting deaths up 70% from 2007, with 319 shootings this year alone and 83 homicides as of last night.

I was with the MPP from Scarborough–Agincourt in his community as people walked around stunned at the level of violence that had just erupted in broad daylight, directly across the street from an elementary school with children as young as in kindergarten, a middle school and two high schools. These schools were either placed on lockdown or hold and secure. As these restrictions were lifted, I saw families pour out of the buildings with their children, and they gripped them even tighter. I asked a father about this. He was holding the hands of two little kindergarten girls. He said, "Yes, I'm holding them tighter this evening."

The rate of gun violence and the crime that has arisen in Toronto over the last four years is on the rise. This week, I visited the Cedarbrook lunch program in my riding of Scarborough–Guildwood. This program takes place once a week during the lunch hour and is a chance for local high school students to mingle, to eat lunch and to engage with outreach workers in a safe environment. The topic of the conversation that I was having with these students was gun violence and handguns. We discussed how they felt about gun violence, why young people feel the need to arm themselves, how it affects them and how they believe gun violence can be ended. One young woman actually said that she wishes that handguns were never invented.

There were many more powerful statements and points made by the students. A number of students felt that social media was a factor. A student mentioned that the problem begins on social media, and then it makes its way into reality. Another key point made during the discussion was that they feel the need to arm themselves, because the streets are not safe and they need protection. Gun violence has this domino effect in our communities. Imagine that: a young person who feels that they need protection to walk in the streets. There are simply too many guns on the streets and their lives are at risk.

A student leader with the Cedarbrook lunch program opened up to me about her fears. She said, "I'm scared to even have my own siblings walk outside or go to school, even though it's just right there." She feels that Bill 30 needs to be enforced right now. As legislators, we have the ability to act now.

I want to be frank, and I want to be open in our debate today. I want to be honest about what you feel can solve this problem. This is my solution, and maybe it's a small solution, but even stopping one bullet is worth it in the lives of our families who are affected. We cannot keep waiting. We need to act now. Things are only getting worse, and there is much work that we need to do. Allowing municipalities plagued by gun violence to ban the sale of handgun ammunition is a start.

I've spoken to children who have lost family members, who live in buildings where shootings have occurred, and when I ask them if banning handgun ammo would make a

difference, they look at me as if it's a ridiculous question and they say, "Of course it would." They tell me, "Cut off the supply source. That will make ammunition less available." If the bill were to go and become law, the black market will lose secure access and their source. End off the problem. Cut it down at the source. The bill needs to be enforced right now.

The voice of our young people: You can feel the immediacy in their response. These students are tired of living in fear, of not being able to take the bus to school because of gang activity. Parents and teachers are also feeling this fear.

The effects of gun violence are immediate and prevalent. We need legislation that acts just as quickly, because our kids are getting shot. And in the vast majority of these shootings, it's a handgun that is at the other end of that gunfire.

The government's decision to put more money into policing is not going to solve the problem. We need to limit the access to handguns so that communities are safer, and we need to stop the problem at the source. We need to start taking real measures to reduce gun violence in our cities.

In 2008, the Review of the Roots of Youth Violence report, which was written by Liberal MPP Alvin Curling and Justice Roy McMurtry, painstakingly detailed the links between limited social and economic opportunity and gun violence. Investments in youth training and employment, mental health supports and increasing post-secondary access are all ways that we can address the root issue of gun violence.

There is also the notion that criminals don't buy guns legally, and therefore eliminating the legal purchase of ammunition won't affect a thing. We also place blame on the United States, claiming that the majority of weapons are smuggled in over our borders. We know that illegal firearms sales are part of this issue, just as smuggling firearms over the border is an issue, but guns and ammunition purchased legally are also finding their way into these incidences of horrific crimes.

Reducing the flow of handguns and ammunition will also help to protect our police, who serve and protect all of us. They also want to see this flow stemmed. These guns end up on the streets, where they inflict crime and horror on some of the most vulnerable. We also know that gun violence affects public health as well, in cases of suicide and domestic abuse.

People deserve to feel safe in their communities. Restricting the availability and sale of handgun ammunition will have a productive and meaningful result on individuals and communities who presently don't feel safe.

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

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Thank you to the member from Scarborough–Guildwood for the words this afternoon.

As I've stated before in the Legislature, public safety is of paramount concern to our government. We remain committed to ensuring that the hard-working and dedicated men and women of our police services have the

necessary tools and resources to perform their duties safely and effectively.

Gun violence has no place in Toronto or, for that matter, anywhere in the province of Ontario. The brazen acts that we've seen, these indiscriminate acts of violence, need to stop, but we must be careful about how we address the issue.

1520

It's without a doubt that gun violence destroys lives and is a menace to our communities. As all members of this Legislature know, our government recently announced \$25 million in new funding to address the urgent gun and gang violence situation in the city of Toronto. This investment is a vital first step in combatting gun violence, disrupting gang activity and cracking down on the trafficking of illegal guns in the province of Ontario. With this investment, our government will be able to make informed decisions on how we can implement the best-informed decisions on how to bring forward policies and interventions to tackle gun and gang-related violence in other municipalities across the province.

However, our Premier has been very clear in his message that our government will not seek a handgun ban or an ammunition ban within the province of Ontario. There are many law-abiding firearm owners within this great province. Gun violence is a complex issue that cannot be solved with one policy solution.

With regard to ammunition in the province, the chief firearms office—or CFO, as they are more commonly referred to—is responsible for enforcing the sale and purchase of ammunition in this province. We're confident in the CFO to enforce the law and to take appropriate steps when it comes to the sale of ammunition in the province. Our relationship with the chief firearms office is no different than our relationship with Ontario's police services: We do not interfere with or direct their operations or decisions.

When we announced our \$25 million in new funding to tackle the issue of gun and gang-related violence in the province, we consulted with professionals, such as Toronto police Chief Mark Saunders, as these professionals know best when it comes to the allocation of funding.

Our government does not believe that the banning of ammunition will be the solution to ending gun and gang-related activity in the city of Toronto, or across the province. Over the coming weeks, I can assure all members of the Legislature that we'll continue to meet with our community safety partners to make sure that we are able to identify the best possible strategies to combat gun and gang-related violence within the province. I am taking gun and gang violence in this province seriously and treating this matter with the level of urgency demanded.

Ontarians deserve to feel confident in their own safety and safety for their families. Too many Ontarians and too many communities are living in fear of gun and gang violence. Our government is listening. We're going to continue to take real action to keep our neighbourhoods safe. Gun and gang violence can't be ended by banning guns. It

requires what was referred to before: an integrated solution. It requires the government to look beyond just the banning of guns or, for that matter, ammunition. It requires us to look at solutions that are based on education, that are based on providing communities with opportunities. Those are the things that the government believes we have to invest in and spend time developing, because those are the solutions that will change the system, that will change systemic problems that are existing in the system today.

The root causes of guns and gangs is not the fact that there are guns and that there is ammunition. Guns and ammunition will always exist and will always be around. What we need to do is look at the individuals who think that their lives can be changed by using a gun or by getting into a gang. Those are the things that I would like to spend time and energy doing over the next four years. I invite you to participate in what we're doing, because we are going into communities.

I agree with you. Seeing an eight-year-old girl look at me and say, "Thank you for trying to make our communities safe," is something that affects me the way it affects everybody else in the House. No child of eight years old should have to ask for the community, the police, or an elected official to try to make the community safe. It's something that all of us deserve and every child should feel, anywhere in the province. So I invite you to participate with us in doing the work we need to do to fix what needs to be fixed in the educational system, because we can save a lot of lives there. We can keep drugs out of children's lives. I think we can make a difference.

I think there are community activities that the government can stand behind and support like the ones that you mentioned before—expanding those. I think these are important elements that have to be brought forward. From the standpoint of policing and, unfortunately, the corrections side that I look at, I would love to see the business go down. Police should be proactive. They should be embedded in the community and provide communities with another element of mentorship, showing that there is a vocation, that there are people who care. That's where this government wants to invest. That's what this government wants to do, because systemic changes can be brought about if people of like mind work together and make those changes come forward.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity. I want to thank the member from Scarborough-Guildwood for bringing forward this bill.

There is no question—and everyone in this House, I think, is united in this—that gun violence is damaging people's lives; it is hurting people. People have seen the mass shooting that happened in my riding on the Danforth this summer. People will remember the mass shooting on Danzig Avenue in Scarborough in the last few years, the recent shooting in Regent Park—frankly, Speaker, I could go on and, unfortunately, on and on.

We see these headlines far, far too often, and so there's a profound demand amongst the people in this province

for action on this issue. I know my colleague from York South–Weston knows exactly about this issue. Brampton Centre knows about this issue. Guy from—oh.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Mushkegowuk—James Bay.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: —Mushkegowuk—James Bay is well aware of the issue in Toronto, but is also aware of the issue in a larger sense in Ontario as a whole.

This is a very big problem. This bill is going to be a part of a solution, but as everyone in this room is well aware, it's not enough to be the solution. There have been many studies and inquiries talking about the roots of violence, and it is much bigger than simply putting controls on the sale of ammunition, although I think that can be useful and this bill should be supported.

We know that there's an active black market in guns and ammunition. We also know, even from the incomplete statistics that we can find out there, that a lot of the illegal guns and likely the ammunition that they fire is sold on the black market, and that those guns and that ammunition started out initially as legal, the rest likely smuggled across the border. We are next door to a country where 40% of the world's firearms owned by civilians reside. That's an extraordinary number, so we're always going to have a problem of smuggling and conversion of legal firearms and ammunition into illegal.

Speaker, I support this bill, but I have to say that in terms of what needs to be done, so much more has to be addressed around the roots of violence, and the member alluded to that. Over the last 15 years, we've seen here in this province that funding for social housing, to make sure people had a roof over their heads, was not put in place. The city of Toronto had its social housing funds cut by the Liberal government. When the city of Toronto asked for money to keep units open so people would have homes, they didn't get that support, so that atmosphere of misery, futility and hopelessness has grown.

The money wasn't put in place to deal with mental health issues. In my riding, I've got situations where people have assaulted their neighbours, and only after they've assaulted in very dangerous ways were mental health resources made available. In the last 15 years, that could have been addressed, but it was not. This government has already cut \$300 million from funding that should have gone into mental health.

I think it's useful to talk about guns and ammunition, but if you don't talk about the roots of violence, if you don't deal with the mental health issues, the poverty and misery issues, you're not going to solve this problem. We have to deal with racism. If young people are put in a box and told, "You don't have a future. You're not going to get work," they will act out of desperation, and when you're in that underground economy, you will use firearms to get your way. There are a variety of things that need to be done to deal with this issue that this government is ignoring and that government did ignore.

Speaker, my time is passing, but if we're actually going to get at this one, we have to get at the roots of violence. Do the small stuff, but do the big stuff.

1530

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

Mr. Michael Coteau: I want to start by thanking my colleague for bringing this important bill to the Legislature, and, of course, thanking our guests who are here today, who have worked hard, tirelessly, not for weeks or months, but for years and years and years fighting this important issue here in the city of Toronto and in Ontario.

I've been part of this conversation for a long time, because gun violence has been something that has affected me personally in my community. We've seen a lot of gun violence over the last 25 years in the city of Toronto and it's increased over the years. I said earlier today, in my member's statement, that I would estimate that between 800 to 1,000 Black males, mainly young males, in this city have died through gun violence in the last 25 years. The number is startling. When you actually say that number to someone, it's a bit shocking because we don't think of the numbers over the course of 25 years. A lot of these young men—and there are young women, too, and there are other groups, but mainly young Black men and mainly young Black boys are the victims of gun violence in this city. If you think about the hundreds and hundreds of people who have become victims, not only the victims themselves, but the families, it is just overwhelming.

I remember being at the Toronto District School Board when we were debating the Afrocentric school, and I said that I've personally known a dozen young people in my neighbourhood growing up who died from gun violence. I remember the chair of the school board at the time saying to me, "Michael, I don't even know anyone who died of a heart attack at my age," and she was in her fifties at the time. This is the contrast of what's happening in some neighbourhoods and what's happening in other neighbourhoods.

We have an opportunity to do something here today, as decision-makers, as lawmakers, to support a bill to come forward that will become law, that will allow us to move one step closer to finding a solution to gun violence in our city and our province.

I understand people will say there are gun rights and people want to talk about the right of someone to buy ammunition, but think about the city of Toronto, where the mayor has supported this position. Why does anyone in this city need to go and buy bullets? I can't figure out what the reason is. You can't go hunting behind the Science Centre. You're not going to go hunting. Why do you need guns and why do you need bullets in the city? Of course, if you go hunting, if you leave the city, you can go into those municipalities and buy that ammunition.

The member is not suggesting that there be an outright ban right across the province. What she's suggesting is that municipalities be given the opportunity to make the rules locally to mitigate some of the crime that's taking place. When we've seen such a drastic increase in youth violence over the last 25 years, we all have a responsibility to act and to give municipalities the tools they need to make the decision.

I read this earlier today; it was provided to me by the member from Scarborough–Guildwood. Police have seen more than 40 cases of legal gun owners selling weapons illegally in recent years. Forty cases of legal guns being sold in the black market—this is alarming. So to make the argument that guns do not kill, it's people—you know, we hear that all the time. The minister used that argument earlier today. But when you have little kids in this city saying it's easier to buy a gun than to get a job, there's a problem. Madam Speaker, there's a huge problem with that. The Conservatives will constantly say the way out of poverty is to get a job, but when a kid is telling you they can't find a job and it's easier to find a gun, what does it say about our society?

We have a moral obligation. I'm going to call out some of the members. The member from Scarborough–Agin-court, the member from Don Valley North, who—last week we had a murder in our community. The member who is sitting next to the minister, from Scarborough–Rouge Park, where I worked as a social worker—they have seen endless amounts of youth violence taking place. They've lost dozens of young men and women through violence. I ask them to stand up here in the city of Toronto as members in the city of Toronto and give the municipality the tools they need to stop youth violence and to stop the senseless killing taking place.

This is something that our advocates have been asking for, for a long time. We've tried to make a difference. As the previous government, we put in the Black Youth Action Plan and the Anti-Racism Directorate. It was an ongoing effort, working with many members in this Legislature, to find solutions. This is one of those solutions moving forward.

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

M. Guy Bourguin: Je voudrais remercier aussi la députée de Scarborough–Guildwood d'avoir amené ce projet de loi. La violence avec les armes à feu ou de poing déchire les communautés, ça déchire des familles et ça détruit des vies.

On sait que le projet de loi adresse seulement une petite portion des problèmes dont on traite dans la province. Ceci dit, je voudrais amener une perspective du nord de l'Ontario, surtout de ma région. Quand on traite de projets de loi qui affectent n'importe quoi qui arrive avec les armes à feu—c'est difficile un peu pour mon monde que je représente, quand ça arrive d'acheter des munitions ou bien d'acheter des armes à feu.

Dans le projet de loi dont on traite, on parle de donner aux municipalités et aux villes l'opportunité de dire, « Non, je n'en veux pas », ou « Non, je vais mettre une restriction sur les balles qu'on peut acheter pour les armes de poing. » Je pense que c'est une approche qui peut plaire à tout le monde, parce que—veux, veux pas—dans les communautés du nord de l'Ontario, il y a une culture qui est là.

Les municipalités reconnaissent que le monde a besoin d'aller à la chasse, qu'ils ont besoin de trapper. Même les employeurs, ceux qui font de la plantation, sont obligés

d'engager du monde pour garder le monde qui plante les arbres en sécurité contre les ours le printemps. C'est pour vous dire comment la culture peut changer d'un point à l'autre de la province.

C'est pour dire qu'un projet de loi comme celui qui est proposé ici aujourd'hui, je trouve que ça peut adresser un problème dont les villes peuvent traiter, en laissant les municipalités du nord faire leur décision pour aider à répondre à la question des munitions pour les armes de poing. Je peux vous dire que, quand j'ai eu la chance de parler à certaines personnes de ma circonscription sur les munitions des armes de poing, ils m'ont tout de suite adressé avec le problème. Ils m'ont dit, « Guy, tu sais qu'on est concerné par ça. » Pourquoi? Ce sont des trappeurs; veux, veux pas, ça les concerne.

Ceci dit, je pense que c'est minime ce qu'on demande et qu'on devrait supporter le projet de loi.

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

Mr. Aris Babikian: Madam Speaker, I want to first begin by restating to members of this Legislature that my community and my riding of Scarborough–Agin-court was shaken by gun violence yesterday, when an 18-year-old, Elliott Reid-Doyle, was gunned down in the streets. These fears and horrible acts of gun and gang violence need to stop.

I know that our government for the people is taking the necessary steps to ensure that gun incidents can be reduced within this great province. I want to thank the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services for all he has done to ensure that action is being taken to reduce these crimes and to disrupt gang activities in the GTA and everywhere else in Ontario.

I am proud that our government recently announced \$25 million in new funding to address the urgent gun and gang violence in the city of Toronto. Allow me to reiterate that I agree with the ministers—as I am sure all members of this Legislature agree—that gun violence has no place in Toronto or any of Ontario's communities.

The funding allocated to combat gun activity and crime in the city of Toronto came after our Premier and Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services consulted with professionals, such as Toronto Police Chief Mark Saunders. I know that throughout these consultations both the Premier and the minister did whatever they could to find the best policy solutions to combatting gun and gang violence in this province at large and the city of Toronto specifically.

The gun violence taking place in the city of Toronto is being committed by dangerous criminals, and I fear that banning ammunition will not address the problem that our police are dealing with. What we need to do is get to the bottom of the problem facing our city and province. I know that our government for the people, especially our Premier and the minister, have been meeting with policing and community safety stakeholders to understand the causes of these terrible acts.

1540

I believe understanding the root causes of the violence gripping our city is much more important than attempting to pass legislation that will eventually have no real impact on the lives of the people in Toronto and Ontario. As such, our government does not believe that the banning of ammunition will be the solution to ending gun and gang-related violence in the city of Toronto; rather, it is listening to stakeholders and engaging law enforcement professionals to better understand and finally find a real solution in what we, as a city and province, require at this time.

The brave men and women of our police services know that they finally have a government that is listening to them and giving them the necessary tools and resources to perform their dangerous work safely and effectively. This is thanks to the real effort to engage stakeholders and actually get to the bottom of the issues at hand, from violence to gang activities. Our police services are among the most professional and best in the world. Should we not be listening to them rather than banning ammunition sales, which will have no real impact on our safety and the security of the people of this great city?

I agree with the minister when he says that Ontarians deserve to feel confident in their own safety and the safety of their families. We know that far too many Ontarians and too many of our great communities, such as those within my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt, are living in fear of gun and gang violence. The solution is to listen and understand the root causes for the increase in these violent acts, rather than attempting to bring forward motions that will have no real impact on the violence gripping our city and province.

As such, our Premier has been very clear in his message that our government will not be seeking a handgun ban. However, I know that our government for the people is listening to all Ontarians and will continue to take the necessary actions to keep our neighbourhoods safe and secure, and to make a better future for all of the people in this great province.

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

Ms. Suze Morrison: I'd like to thank my member across the way for bringing this bill forward. Gun violence is certainly an issue that's very, very close to my heart. As many of my colleagues know, my husband and I actually witnessed a shooting from our home in Regent Park just over a year ago, and I know first-hand the trauma that gun violence causes in our communities. It was a very long time before my husband and I could even stand on the sidewalk where the shooting had taken place.

The ripples that gun violence sends through our community don't just affect the victim and the families, but the entire safety of our neighbourhoods, the entire sense of community that we have and our ability to walk down our streets and not feel the ripples of pain and trauma just going about our daily lives in our communities.

I speak from first-hand lived experience, so I very much want to thank you for bringing this bill forward. I know

that this has the potential to change a lot of lives in our communities.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: I want to start by thanking the member from Scarborough–Guildwood as well for bringing forward this bill. As many before me have already stated, especially some of my fellow MPPs from the GTA, this issue affects all of us very close to home.

I want to comment and just focus for a minute on some of the comments that the Solicitor General made earlier today in question period, and then in his comments here today—something along the lines of “Guns don't kill people.” That's something that they use in the United States a lot. They talk about, “Guns don't kill people; people kill people,” right? If you believe that, then the minister, with the greatest of respect, is really missing the point, because people with guns kill much more efficiently. You could really say the same thing about nuclear as well: Nuclear weapons don't kill either; it's the poor soul who has to press the button. But the truth is that it's a tool that people can use to kill more efficiently.

I was thinking, as I was considering what to say today, about some of the indisputable facts out there. Some of them are that we have other, deeper—as the member from Toronto–Danforth spoke so eloquently about earlier, we have the roots of violence. We have to deal with those more complex issues. But there are a few important, I think, and indisputable facts.

One is that people sometimes, occasionally, get angry and want to lash out. They get scared enough to fear for their lives. They sometimes make simple mistakes, and people sometimes wish they were dead. In those circumstances, having a gun nearby, having ammunition available will make any action lethal. It turns a temporary state of mind into what can be a permanent tragedy that has, as the member from Toronto Centre mentioned, ripple effects throughout our communities. So it's a very important piece of the puzzle.

“Guns and ammunition will always be around,” was something else that's often said. But blaming the issue on the individual is just not good enough. Guns and ammunition can be prevented from being around and being easily accessible, and we have the actual tools to be able to prevent some of those tragedies right now, right here.

I think it's incumbent on all of us who have spoken here today about the impact of these many, many deaths and tragedies, particularly this year in Toronto, to think about what we have the power to do right now, right here. I want to really encourage the members opposite to consider this as one of the tools that we could use, that municipalities could use, to take a little bit of a bite out of these tragedies that are occurring across our city.

I've got just a couple more seconds. I wanted to also mention that many of those supports we need to prevent violence and the growth of violence in our communities have to start in schools. We need more social workers, we need more child psychologists and we need early, early

intervention for families and students. Sadly, as a school board trustee, I have seen that missed so many times, and I've seen the tragedies that ensue. So I want to also urge this government to look to those solutions, to bolstering those supports in our community, where they can be accessed the most easily, which is often through our schools.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The member for Scarborough–Guildwood has two minutes to reply.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I'll remind the room to maintain order, please. Thank you.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I want to thank all of the members who spoke to this bill and in support of this bill. I was particularly moved by the member from Mushkegowuk–James Bay for putting some perspective on the regional aspect of this bill. By giving municipalities that choice to enact the tools, should they choose to do so, it really does give them that local decision-making. We're not imposing a solution on a community that does not ask for it or require it.

The fact of the matter is, the city of Toronto has asked for the province of Ontario to give them the ability to ban the sale of ammunition. They've done that because they believe that this can make a difference.

I want to say to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services that stopping one bullet matters. You can talk to the mothers who are here right now who have lost their children and their family members. You can talk to the young people who I spoke to just yesterday whose relatives are paralyzed, or that young woman who says, "You know, I'm actually afraid to live where I live, because of the bullets that fly."

One bullet matters, and we have the power today, as legislators, to do something about that. We have that power. It is in our hands to do something.

The member from Toronto–Danforth, you reminded me of the Danzig shooting, because it was in my riding of Scarborough–Guildwood in 2013. It happened the summer before. I was with that family. I was with that mother who was mourning the death of her daughter, Shyanne Charles. She put her head on my shoulder; I remember that. I thank you for reminding this House of Shyanne Charles.

Janayah and Javayah, the nine-year-old and five-year-old who were shot in a playground, just this summer: We owe it to them, as legislators, to do the right thing.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

HEALTH CARDS

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): We will deal first with ballot item number 19, standing in the name of Mademoiselle Simard.

Mademoiselle Simard has moved private member's notice of motion number 23. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

REA AND WALTER ACT (TRUSS AND LIGHTWEIGHT CONSTRUCTION IDENTIFICATION), 2018

LOI REA ET WALTER DE 2018 SUR L'IDENTIFICATION DES COMPOSANTS STRUCTURAUX À OSSATURE LÉGÈRE

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mr. Pettapiece has moved second reading of Bill 33, An Act governing the identification of truss and lightweight construction in buildings.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill will be referred to—

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Regulations and private bills.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Is the House in favour of this bill being referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills? Okay.

FIGHTING BACK AGAINST HANDGUNS ACT (HANDGUN AMMUNITION SALES), 2018

LOI DE 2018 RIPOSTANT AUX ARMES DE POING (VENTES DE MUNITIONS POUR ARMES DE POING)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Ms. Hunter has moved second reading of Bill 30, An Act to amend the Ammunition Regulation Act, 1994 with respect to the sale of handgun ammunition.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it. I declare the motion lost.

Second reading negated.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Orders of the day?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I call adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Ms. Jones has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

This House stands adjourned until 10:30 on Monday, October 15, 2018. Happy Thanksgiving.

The House adjourned at 1553.

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Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
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Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
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Gill, Parm (PC)	Milton	
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Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	
Kramp, Daryl (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Kusendova, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga- Centre	
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Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
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Miller, Norman (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	
Mitas, Christina Maria (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough- Centre	
Monteith-Farrell, Judith (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Morrison, Suze (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
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Tangri, Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	
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