

Legislative  
Assembly  
of Ontario



Assemblée  
législative  
de l'Ontario

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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

G-37

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

G-37

**Standing Committee on  
General Government**

Better for People, Smarter for  
Business Act, 2020

1<sup>st</sup> Session  
42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament

Monday 30 November 2020

**Comité permanent des  
affaires gouvernementales**

Loi de 2020 pour mieux servir  
la population et faciliter  
les affaires

1<sup>re</sup> session  
42<sup>e</sup> législature

Lundi 30 novembre 2020

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Chair: Goldie Ghamari  
Clerk: Isaiah Thorning

Présidente : Goldie Ghamari  
Greffier : Isaiah Thorning

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House Publications and Language Services  
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Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement  
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park  
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## CONTENTS

Monday 30 November 2020

Better for People, Smarter for Business Act, 2020, Bill 213, Mr. Sarkaria / Loi de 2020 pour mieux servir la population et faciliter les affaires, projet de loi 213, M. Sarkaria.....	G-995
Trinity-St. Paul's United Church and Centre for Faith, Justice and the Arts; Greyhound Canada Transportation; Parkbridge Lifestyle Communities Inc.....	G-995
Rev. Dr. Cheri DiNovo Mr. Stuart Kendrick Mr. Robert Voigt Mr. Sandy Higgins	
Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters; Mr. Frank Dimant; Badder Bus Operations Ltd./Cherrey Bus Lines Inc./Airways Transit.....	G-1004
Mr. Alex Greco Mr. Doug Badder	
Mr. Raymond DeNure; Carleton University Academic Staff Association; Wellington Water Watchers.....	G-1013
Dr. Brenda Vellino Mr. Robert Case Ms. Christal Côté	
Ms. Akanksha Sharma; GBL Inc.; Mr. Benjamin Dichter.....	G-1021
Mr. Navaz Cassam Ms. Laura LaRiviere	
Canadian Union of Public Employees; Canadian Natural Gas Vehicle Alliance; Mr. Justin Stone.....	G-1029
Ms. Susan Gapka Mr. Bruce Winchester	
Continuing Education Students' Association of Ryerson; Coach Canada.....	G-1036
Ms. Maddy Fast Mr. John Emberson	



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DES  
AFFAIRES GOUVERNEMENTALES**

Monday 30 November 2020

Lundi 30 novembre 2020

*The committee met at 0900 in room 151 and by video conference.*

**BETTER FOR PEOPLE,  
SMARTER FOR BUSINESS ACT, 2020  
LOI DE 2020  
POUR MIEUX SERVIR LA POPULATION  
ET FACILITER LES AFFAIRES**

Consideration of the following bill:

Bill 213, An Act to reduce burdens on people and businesses by enacting, amending and repealing various Acts and revoking a regulation / *Projet de loi 213, Loi visant à alléger le fardeau administratif qui pèse sur la population et les entreprises en édictant, modifiant ou abrogeant diverses lois et en abrogeant un règlement.*

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Good morning, everyone. I hope that you are all well and that everyone is staying safe and healthy. The Standing Committee on General Government will now come to order. We are here to resume public hearings on Bill 213, An Act to reduce burdens on people and businesses by enacting, amending and repealing various Acts and revoking a regulation.

We have the following member present in the room: MPP Catherine Fife. The following members are participating remotely: MPP Glover, MPP Schreiner, MPP Skelly, MPP McDonnell and MPP Sattler. Have any other MPPs joined us?

We are also joined by staff from legislative research, Hansard, and broadcast and recording.

To make sure that everyone can understand what is going on, it is important that all participants speak slowly and clearly. Please wait until I recognize you before starting to speak. Yes, MPP Fife?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Thank you for recognizing me. I just wanted to ask you, as the Chair: On Friday, when we had delegations, a member was making very disrespectful gestures on the Zoom call. I'm asking you to consider writing a letter to the delegations who witnessed that and apologizing on behalf of the entire committee.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** MPP Fife, that was already raised as a point of order. I already reminded all members not to make any gestures on the screen. If it continues, then I will consider your request. Thank you.

Since it could take some time for your audio and video to come up after I recognize you, please take a brief pause before beginning. As always, all comments should go

through the Chair. Once again, in order to ensure optimal sound quality, members participating via Zoom are encouraged to use headphones and/or microphones if possible. Are there any questions before we begin?

Our presenters today have been grouped in threes for each one-hour time slot. Each presenter will have seven minutes for their presentation, and after we have heard from all three presenters, the remaining 39 minutes of the time slot will be for questions from members of the committee. This time for questions will be broken down into two rounds of 7.5 minutes for the government members, two rounds of 7.5 minutes for the official opposition, and two rounds of 4.5 minutes for the independent members as a group.

**TRINITY-ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH  
AND CENTRE FOR FAITH, JUSTICE  
AND THE ARTS  
GREYHOUND CANADA  
TRANSPORTATION  
PARKBRIDGE LIFESTYLE  
COMMUNITIES INC.**

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** I will now call upon the United Church of Canada: Trinity St. Paul's Centre for Faith, Justice and the Arts. Please state your name for the record, and you may begin. You will have seven minutes. Thank you,

**Rev. Dr. Cheri DiNovo:** I'm Reverend Doctor Cheri DiNovo, CM. Thank you for allowing me to present before you. I appear before you as a woman who has worked for 50 years to address homo-, bi- and transphobia in Canada, and last year I was honoured to be awarded the Order of Canada for that work.

In 1971, I was the only woman to sign We Demand, the first public demand for equal rights for LGB people. In 2001, I performed the first legalized same-sex marriage.

After my election to this Legislature in 2006, I passed the most LGBTQ pieces of legislation in Canada. They included Toby's Law, named after my trans church music director, adding trans rights to the Ontario Human Rights Code—a bill, like all of my bills, made law with all-party support. One of the co-signatories of that bill was Deputy Premier Christine Elliott. She, I and Yasir Naqvi, the other signatory, were given awards by Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, delivered by the comedienne and actress Rosie O'Donnell.

I was saddened to hear that Ms. Elliott did not vote against schedule 2 of this bill before us. It gives university and degree-granting status to Charles McVety's Canada Christian College, a man who has always opposed trans rights and the very existence of trans people.

Why do I and many others consider granting accreditation to a college that espouses racist and homophobic views to be wrong? It is because such views result in death. Some 33% of LGB children attempt suicide, and almost 50% of trans and non-binary children, as compared to 7% of straight children, attempt suicide. LGBTQ rights are, at their heart, about saving lives, particularly the lives of our most vulnerable children. Adding trans rights to the OHRC helped to save lives.

McVety opposed that bill. He also opposed every other LGBTQ rights bill I was part of, or originated, and passed into law, like banning conversion therapy in Ontario in 2015, like parent equality for LGBTQ families, like the Trans Day of Remembrance in 2017 that Minister Lisa MacLeod was a co-signatory on. Anything and everything that could prevent such deaths, Charles McVety has opposed. In short, he has consistently opposed the will of this Legislature.

Let me be very clear: His views are not supported by mainstream Christianity. There is an entire network of recognized Christian seminaries in Ontario. Here in Toronto, the Toronto School of Theology, under the University of Toronto, includes Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Anglican and United Church of Canada colleges. The United Church of Canada, of which I am a part, having been ordained in 1996, is the largest Protestant denomination in Canada, with over 2,000 churches, and has been ordaining openly gay and lesbian clergy since 1988. All of the Toronto schools of theology are bound by and adhere to the inclusive policies of the University of Toronto.

McVety often pretends to speak for the Roman Catholic community, but Pope Francis himself has supported same-sex civil marriage and advocates for the love of all people. Our Catholic school system has supported gay-straight alliances and the health and physical education curriculum—again, both initiatives that Mr. McVety opposed.

It is certainly not Christian to hate one's neighbour, as McVety does with our Muslim neighbours, having called Islam "hateful" and "a war machine;" or our Jewish neighbours, who, through the Canadian Jewish Congress, opposed one of McVety's other attempts in 1998 to achieve accreditation, based on his anti-Semitism; nor is it Christian to call Haitians "practising Satanists," another of McVety's quotes.

Biblically, Jesus says nothing about homosexuality, but does say in Matthew 19:12—2,000 years before Lady Gaga—that some are born not finding heterosexual marriage their calling, or some are "born that way." Taking instances of homophobia out of context, as McVety does, is poor Biblical exegesis and poor scholarship. By that measure, we would be condoning slavery and a myriad of other now justifiably illegal acts.

The Christian television station here in Canada, representing conservative Christianity, removed McVety's

show from the air because of his views—and CTS is known as the voice of the evangelical Christian community. The Canada Broadcast Standards Council condemned him as well for such lies as suggesting that homosexuals prey on children. The conservative Sun News Network has also disavowed him.

As far as degree-granting, Premier Bill Davis, a Conservative, opposed giving Canada Christian College degree-granting status in 1983, seeing it as part of what were called "degree mills" back then.

Questionable financial practices like loans totalling almost \$900,000 from his own college to Mr. McVety and his son would not be tolerated at a legitimate university.

The Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board has not vetted the Canada Christian College either. The Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations has also condemned the potential degree-granting status of Canada Christian College.

I appeal to the Conservative members on this panel, whose party has acted in the best interests of our vulnerable and our precious children in the past by voting for equal rights for the LGBTQ community—all bills now law, as mentioned—

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute.

**Rev. Dr. Cheri DiNovo:**—don't recast your party as the voice of homo-, bi-, transphobia and racism. Keep your own faith and your own tradition alive.

May I remind those assembled here of a quote by the great hero and theologian of the German Christian resistance to Hitler: "Silence in the face of evil is ... evil: God will not hold us guiltless.

"Not to speak is to speak.

"Not to act is to act."

To conclude, let me say to all those of you on this committee, it is evil to promote hatred. To you who love and desire to protect our most vulnerable, do not allow hatred to pass as love; do not allow hatred to pass as faith. Our children and all of us are counting on you. Thank you.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you very much.

Before we turn to our next presenter, I just wanted to confirm: MPP Harris, can you please confirm that you are MPP Harris and that you are in Ontario?

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I am MPP Mike Harris and I am here in Toronto.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** MPP Sabawy, can you please confirm that you are MPP Sabawy and that you are in Ontario?

**Mr. Sheref Sabawy:** Good morning, Chair. This is MPP Sabawy, calling from Mississauga, Ontario.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you. We'll now turn to our next presenter, Greyhound Canada Transportation. Please state your name for the record, and then you may begin. You will have seven minutes.

**0910**

**Mr. Stuart Kendrick:** I'm Stuart Kendrick, senior vice-president of Greyhound Canada. I appreciate the opportunity today to speak to the committee on Bill 213.

Days after the pandemic lockdown, Greyhound ridership declined by 95%. The company maintained operations; however, we had to scale down scheduled service as we saw the impacts of the pandemic and, unfortunately, had to suspend service around May 12. The ridership on each schedule that we operate during the pandemic was at a level that was not sustainable. This impacted about 400 employees who have been laid off and since continue to be laid off. Greyhound's ridership in Ontario predominantly carries women, students of an average age of under 24, seniors and First Nations people. All have been left without intercity bus service.

When the red tape bill containing the intercity bus deregulation provision was tabled in the Legislature, we were caught off guard with the timing. I think the timing of the bill has somewhat left the industry a bit perplexed. With ongoing issues with ridership and revenue even before the pandemic, the timing of this bill is one that is up for discussion, both within the private bus industry and hopefully here today.

At the best of times, deregulation would mean the end of service to smaller communities. Really, in a normal environment, these communities have been obviously at risk for years due to low ridership. Operating authorities that some of the private sectors have today and asset values of businesses will be worthless.

In a post-pandemic world, there seems to be this discussion that the rural communities will have more competition. The competition within the rural communities will end. We've seen that in communities across Canada: when deregulation took place, many of their communities lost. The increase in competition you'll see will be on Highway 401, London to Toronto, Toronto to Ottawa. I think it raises the issue of Quebec. Quebec, to my understanding, will not deregulate, and this will cause an unfair playing field for the private businesses.

The private intercity bus companies rely on the fare box. They don't receive subsidized money from municipal, federal or provincial governments. The private bus carriers have been in discussions with Metrolinx on looking at ways to harmonize operations and facilities and integrate customer service and ticketing, which has really been a big step in the last 10 to 15 years with these discussions recently. The proposal to deregulate puts these discussions on hold and could, in fact, really end the discussions.

I think the important thing today is to understand that the timing of this bill—during a pandemic, when most of the private carriers, if not all, are on their knees financially and looking to governments at different levels for support on how we can come out of this post-pandemic—really continues to be the big impact.

The opening up of deregulating the bus industry raises some safety concerns. You have new entrants that will look at coming in and operating predominantly, we think, on Highway 401. I think it's very important that the regulators look at the safety, insurance and really, the feasibility of these companies to make sure that they will be viable. Our experience in deregulation and companies

that come into the business is that when they're not able to remain viable based on the fare box revenue, you have to be careful that they don't cut on safety, insurance and driver training.

If the government is not looking to withdraw the deregulation during the pandemic, it's the private sector's and Greyhound's recommendation that they look at a delay in the implementation date, which will allow the private bus carriers to come out of the pandemic and try to rebuild the business, while customers get the ability to look at the trends they're seeing with the travelling sector and the confidence back in riding public transit.

I'd like to take this time to recognize the fact that the intercity community funding program, which has addressed some of the gaps in the rural funding, is one that we think is a great opportunity for Ontario to allow connectivity into the main corridors and something that should be looked upon as a permanent solution to some of the gaps that you see in the rural sector. Right now, the Ontario government has the ability to allow GO Transit, Metrolinx and Ontario Northland to fill a lot of those gaps, and you've seen that over the last several years.

Again, I'd like to take the opportunity to thank the committee for allowing me to speak today, and I look forward to some of the questions at the end. Thank you.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you very much. At this point, we'll turn to our third presenter, Parkbridge Lifestyle Communities Inc. Please state your name for the record, and then you may begin. You will have seven minutes.

**Mr. Robert Voigt:** Hello, my name is Robert Voigt. I am joined here virtually today by Sandy Higgins. I am the director of planning for Parkbridge Lifestyle Communities, and Sandy is Parkbridge's vice-president of development. I'd also note that I'm a registered professional planner with over 25 years' experience, including 17 as a civil servant.

Good morning, and thank you to the Standing Committee on General Government for the opportunity to speak today about Bill 213. We appreciate the opportunity to address the committee today about schedule 21 of the bill, which specifically proposes changes to section 50 of the Planning Act.

Parkbridge applauds the Ontario government's bold commitment to cut red tape and streamline Ontario's burdensome planning process. We believe that this is an important and overdue step towards delivering more supply and choice to Ontario's overstretched housing market.

Parkbridge is Canada's largest owner, operator and developer of land-lease communities, and we have 30 vibrant residential communities in Ontario and more in development. These communities are home to over 10,000 homeowners. I'm sure you appreciate that the Planning Act, and section 50 specifically, have a significant impact on our day-to-day business of providing affordable homes to Ontarians.

Parkbridge has no concerns with the proposed changes to section 50 of the Planning Act, and I believe that they

can move forward on their own merits. However, we believe now is the right time to do more. We are additionally proposing highly targeted changes to sections 46 and 50 of the Planning Act. If passed, these overdue changes would unlock affordably priced home ownership options that reflect the value and choice offered by land-lease home ownership, because fundamentally, land lease is a form of home ownership. Land lease gives Ontarians a housing choice in which they own their homes without having to buy the land. This creates a more attainable home ownership option with all the benefits of a vibrant community for approximately 30% less than a comparable freehold home in the same municipality. That's why land lease is a popular and growing home ownership option for middle-income homebuyers, especially downsizing retirees.

Contemporary land-lease communities can also be a highly affordable home ownership option that is ideal for first-time homebuyers and young families. However, they're traditionally facing unnecessary barriers in securing the financing that they need. They typically have less than 20% down payment and require higher-ratio mortgages. This is very different from most of our senior buyers, who purchase a home from earned equity after downsizing.

Recent changes by CMHC have opened the door for new homebuyers to access CMHC-insured mortgages similar to those readily available for freehold homes, condominiums and even mobile homes. However, outdated red tape in the Planning Act means that these first-time homebuyers cannot meet the requirements of financial institutions for a term of tenure or lease length that matches the most common mortgage amortization periods.

Currently, the Planning Act prohibits leases longer than 21 years, which creates this misalignment. As a result, these prospective homebuyers cannot get the mortgage they need to buy a land-lease home. That is why we are proposing targeted changes for consideration that would close the gap and enable thousands more Ontario families to become homeowners.

**0920**

These proposed changes are highly focused, fall within the scope of the bill and would have no impact upon the other changes to the Planning Act. In fact, they can be accomplished through two minor changes within the existing structure of Ontario's Planning Act as it applies specifically to land-lease communities.

First, this minor change is necessary so that financial institutions like banks or credit unions are able to legally identify an individual home site in a land-lease community for the purposes of approving a mortgage. For this, under section 46 of the Planning Act, which is the section of the act specific only to land-lease communities, the definition of "parcel of land" is updated to include both registered plans of subdivision and approved site plan agreements, thereby reflecting the full range of planning tools used by municipalities to comprehensively review and approve the development of land-lease communities.

Secondly, under section 50 of the Planning Act, a new subsection (9.1) is added to make it clear that nothing in subsections 50(3) and 50(5) of that section prohibit entering into a lease for a land-lease home for between 21 and 99 years, thereby extending those lease terms. Not only does this allow all community operators to offer land leases that conform with or exceed typical mortgage amortization periods, it provides homeowners with even greater security in their tenure.

We at Parkbridge are ready and eager to build homes and communities to meet the needs of Ontarians in municipalities province-wide.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute.

**Mr. Robert Voigt:** It is not an exaggeration to say that addressing this outdated regulatory red tape is the last hurdle that we and our fellow community builders face to be able to offer these affordable home ownership options to thousands of first-time homebuyers and families. Working together with the Ontario government and these targeted changes, we can help address the growing housing affordability crisis and make the dream of home ownership a reality for thousands more families in the province.

We will provide a copy of our proposed updates to sections 46 and 50 to the committee for review. Both Sandy and I thank you for your time and consideration and are happy to address questions during the question period. Thank you.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you very much. At this point, we'll turn to the independent member for four and a half minutes. MPP Schreiner, you may begin.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I really want to thank all three presenters for being at committee today. I'm hoping in my two rounds to be able to ask each of you questions.

I'm going to begin by directing my first question to Cheri DiNovo. Welcome back to Queen's Park, virtually. Given the work you've done around updates to the Ontario Human Rights Code, do you believe that practices at Canada Christian College are in compliance with the Ontario Human Rights Code?

**Rev. Dr. Cheri DiNovo:** No, absolutely not. They are not in compliance with the Ontario Human Rights Code, which makes them very different from all the other theological colleges that do give degrees. I gave the example of all of the colleges under the Toronto School of Theology, where they have signed on to the University of Toronto's inclusive practices, which is, in part, upholding the Ontario Human Rights Code. So there is no problem with Christian colleges upholding the Ontario Human Rights Code and being inclusive, but the very fact that Canada Christian College espouses, through Charles McVety, their spokesperson, particularly homo-, bi- and transphobic policies is absolutely outside the realm, I argue, of Christianity and universities.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Do you think it's possible to separate Canada Christian College as an institution from Charles McVety as president and his own personal views?

**Rev. Dr. Cheri DiNovo:** Absolutely not. As I pointed out, the fact that they use it as a personal piggy bank, with



\$900,000 worth of loans to McVety and his son—that kind of practice would be absolutely condemned and illegal for legitimate universities.

Again, there are lots of red flags here, in particular the rejection from his own conservative Christian community through CTS and through Sun News Network. As I said before, Bill Davis rejected this application back in the day in 1983. Even speaking from within the Progressive Conservative framework, his college has been rejected time and time again.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Do you believe that requiring a pastor's note for admittance to Canada Christian College is a discriminatory admissions process?

**Rev. Dr. Cheri DiNovo:** Absolutely. Absolutely, it is. Again, when you look at the other Christian colleges, no such note is required. This isn't part of the process of going through seminary, of getting a master of divinity or a bachelor of theology or religion. This is not part of any of that.

I was kind of given a high-five before I came to testify before you today from my own alma mater, Emmanuel College, part of Victoria University, but also from Presbyterians, from Catholics and Anglicans I know. Again, the vast majority of the Christian community in Canada does not uphold the views of Charles McVety.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Do you believe that Canada Christian College engages in discriminatory hiring practices when it comes to its process for hiring faculty?

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute.

**Rev. Dr. Cheri DiNovo:** Of course it does. People who are out and LGBTQ2+ are rejected from being faculty, of course; they are. This is very clear in their hiring practices, which is discriminatory under the OHRC. Of course, it's also their policies that make it impossible to be a student there if you are openly and proudly LGBTQ2+.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I think you've stated this, but I just want to be clear for the record: You're not aware of any other Christian college or university in Canada, or at least in Ontario, let's say, that engages in such discriminatory practices?

**Rev. Dr. Cheri DiNovo:** Again, at the Toronto School of Theology, St. Mike's college and others; Regis College—two Catholic colleges there; Knox College, Presbyterian; Wycliffe and Trinity, Anglican colleges—all uphold the University of Toronto inclusive standards.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you. That's all the time we have.

We'll now turn to the official opposition for seven and a half minutes. MPP Fife, you may begin.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Thank you to all presenters. I'm going to continue in the same vein, with former MPP DiNovo. It's good to see you, Cheri.

We heard also from The 519 on Friday. We had a full day of delegations as well. They provided a very strong legal perspective on fights that have already happened. This would be having to do with Western University, which actually had gone to the Supreme Court of Canada around hiring practices. How does this square with more legal action that this government is brazenly moving into,

given the conflict that they've already had with the courts? Can you speak to that?

**Rev. Dr. Cheri DiNovo:** I suspect that this will provoke a number of challenges both at the Ontario Human Rights Commission and, of course, through the Supreme Court, and through the court system as well. Absolutely, it is discriminatory.

But more to the point, I am trying here to appeal to the Conservatives, who have a majority government and can decide to take this section out of this bill, if they so choose, that they themselves have been on record in supporting LGBTQ2+ rights. They have co-signed bills. How can Deputy Premier Christine Elliott or Minister Lisa MacLeod—how can they let this pass knowing, as they do, that they have signed on to bills that support equal rights for LGBTQ2+ people?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Yes. Of course you know that the official opposition also put forward a motion last Wednesday—it did pass—to condemn the direction that schedule 2 is taking us in. A number of Conservative MPPs chose, obviously, not to partake in that vote so that the NDP opposition motion passed. It really does speak to the internal pressure, I think, from the Premier's office to move schedule 2 forward.

You'll hear later on from PC members that this is simply a transparent process. Do you see it as a transparent process?

**Rev. Dr. Cheri DiNovo:** Absolutely not. As I said, their own vetting process for new colleges and accrediting universities has not vetted them. OCUFA has not vetted them.

This has come before this Legislature before, since 1983, and it always has been rejected. Again, that's a huge history to overcome. This is not partisan. This is a Conservative history to overcome.

**0930**

Again, why now? Good question. What hold does Charles McVety have over the Premier? That's the question, I think, that is pertinent to this. That's not my area of expertise. I'll leave that to others. But the very fact that they didn't show up to vote says something; as I said—the quote from Dietrich Bonhoeffer—to not speak is to speak and to not act is to act.

So I would really challenge those members who have spoken about LGBTQ+ rights and have said that there is no contradiction between that and voting Conservative. If they truly believe that, then act it, then speak it and take this schedule out of this bill.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Thank you very much for your testimony today.

I'm going to move on to Stuart Kendrick from Greyhound. Stuart, thank you very much for your presentation as well. I think you made a very salient point to Bill 213 as it relates to creating the potential for an unfair playing field between Ontario and Quebec by the measures that are taken within this bill. I wanted to give you an opportunity to provide some greater clarity around that, so please go ahead.

**Mr. Stuart Kendrick:** Sure. You have a lot of private charter carriers that, right now, with the timing of this

announcement, have basically got zero revenue, and so probably your nearest province, Quebec, in a deregulated environment, would be able to come into Ontario and operate charters post-pandemic or even in a normal environment, and that really creates an unlevel playing field for the Ontario companies.

You also have the US component of carriers that could come into the market as well and really create turmoil for the Ontario companies that rely on charters as well as scheduled service product to really stay viable and alive.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Thank you. Just for those who are at home, Bill 213 repeals the Public Vehicles Act and dissolves the Ontario Highway Transport Board, deregulating Ontario's private intercity bus service, and it amends the Highway Traffic Act to give the LG in C broad regulatory authority over passenger transportation vehicles.

You raised a very good point, Stuart, around the timing of this. I know, also, that there was a lack of consultation. It doesn't strike me that this is actually better for people and smarter for business if you're in the business of delivering passenger transportation services. Why the timing? You made a very salient point around the timing of this particular section. Can you speak to that, please?

**Mr. Stuart Kendrick:** Sure. I think when you look at the business that we're in, the timing, really, is around what's going on globally on the pandemic side. We all know it has had a massive impact on all business, but on the travel and tourism and the private bus carriers in Ontario—we rely on ridership. We have to survive off of fare box revenue. Fare box revenue has dried up, really, to zero. So as you come out of this pandemic, you hope that there's a vaccine and everything turns around overnight, but I don't think that's going to happen overnight with respect to the customers that rely on charter and scheduled bus service. They've got to get confident to travel again.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute.

**Mr. Stuart Kendrick:** So the timing of deregulating and opening this up during the pandemic really is one that needs to be reviewed as the private bus carriers come out of this and hopefully survive.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Thank you very much. That's very helpful, Stuart.

Sandy and Robert, I'll get to you in my next section of questions.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** We'll now turn to the government for seven and half minutes. MPP Skelly, you may begin.

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** Good morning, everyone. I'd like to thank all of the presenters who are with us this morning. My first line of questioning is for Robert Voigt. As we all know, the shortage of housing has been an issue across Ontario for many, many years, but, of course, COVID-19 has exacerbated the situation. I see in my area of Hamilton in the GTHA a number of people fleeing Toronto and a lot of the vertical living, and looking for land where they can put their feet on the ground. That has really had a huge impact on not only a shortage, but, of course on the price of housing. I have never really understood or, to be quite

honest with you, heard about a land lease. Robert, can you take me to the beginning and explain to me what you're talking about when you refer to a land lease and who that would benefit?

**Mr. Robert Voigt:** It's actually relatively easy to understand in the sense that it's the homeowner owns the home but does not purchase the land. It's very similar in that sense to the way you might see a lot of commercial activities done, or you may have heard of community land trusts as well, where it's the same kind of thing. Really, the situation is that the homeowner purchases the home and does not purchase the land, and therefore that is the portion that is leased to them.

Historically, this would have been, and still is, the case that you might see with mobile home communities. That's the same set-up, except with contemporary land lease, what happens now is that these are stick-built homes. They're essentially indistinguishable from any other kind of community of residential units. It's really quite something. Because of that, that's where that 30% cost savings is, because they're not purchasing the land. That 30% is a rule of thumb that is applicable to any municipality that contemporary land-lease products are being delivered on in Ontario.

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** So I'm part of a young couple that's purchasing their first home, and looking at a home that's maybe, we'll say, about \$500,000. They pay \$350,000 for the home. What happens when they go to sell and upgrade?

**Mr. Robert Voigt:** I'm actually going to get Sandy to answer that, because he can go very deep into the details because he has been in the industry for a couple of decades now.

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** Sandy, I think you're going to have to introduce yourself when you first speak, just so we have it in Hansard, please.

**Mr. Sandy Higgins:** Sure. My name is Sandy Higgins. I'm the vice-president of development, Parkbridge Lifestyle Communities. I have been with the company a little over 18 years, as we've grown land lease from a small start-up in the margins through disruption to try to bring it into the mainstream of housing in Ontario.

To address your specific component, what we find is land lease is no different than conventional housing when it comes to resale. In fact, homeowners routinely build equity in their land-lease homes. What we do find is these land-lease communities are more cohesive, with a lot more lifestyle and amenity offerings than a traditional freehold or generally a lot of condominium products. In addition to the home, the communities are trading on the value of the community itself and the activity and energy within the community. So we see, particularly with a lot of our adult lifestyle communities, that these are very energized communities that bring a lot of value to the table.

In terms of resale, absolutely: Young families, seniors, they're all seeing appreciation. It's a way for them to get into the market earlier with a much lower down payment, very favourable carrying costs, and they see themselves building equity over time, whether it's a first-time family

getting into the market or retirees looking to downsize and take money out of the equity they have in a larger home and use that as part of their retirement.

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** Is there ever an opportunity or a situation where the owner of the land has to reclaim the land and somehow evict the tenant? How would that work? Why would you, and could it possibly happen? If so, what is the procedure?

**Mr. Sandy Higgins:** Generally speaking, tenants have security of tenure under the rental housing act. Now, to your point, shorter-term tenure, if tenants in a land-lease community become month-to-month tenants, that can reduce their security of tenure in the event of some issue. If the land is no longer occupiable for some reason, that could put it at risk, which, again, is why what we're advocating for today is moving from a 21-year less a day tenure to a 49- or 99-year tenure, which would give homeowners in land-lease communities much better security of tenure, because there is very, very little way at all to remove somebody who has a lease term on their home from a land-lease community. A longer lease term would be of tremendous benefit to the market, both in terms of what it can do for financing, but also improving the tenure of homeowners in these homes.

0940

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute.

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** This sounds as if it has tremendous potential, and I realize there's a community in my own riding that is very similar. What are the obstacles in place and why are people—or maybe you can give me some examples of where it is working successfully.

**Mr. Sandy Higgins:** We have the largest land-lease community in Canada in Innisfil—Sandy Cove Acres—with 1,233 homes in it. It's a vibrant, energetic community. It's very successful. Homeowners there are able to sell their homes. There are over 100 social and recreational committees there that support seniors living and aging in place. I could give you dozens of examples of vibrant land-lease communities.

Unfortunately, it's the issue with the current Planning Act that limits these leases to—

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you, that's all the time we have for this round.

We'll now turn to the independent Green Party member.

In the interest of fairness, because we do have a hard stop at 10, I'll be shortening everyone's time in equal proportions so that every group can get an equal amount of time for questions.

At this point, the independent Green Party member can begin. You will have three and a half minutes. Thank you.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I'm going to direct my next line of questioning to Greyhound Transportation. Stuart, we've heard loud and clear from many transportation companies that the timing on these schedules is off. I'm assuming that one of the motivations here—I don't know but I'm assuming—is to improve intercity bus transportation, particularly in underserved areas, especially in rural communities. Do you have some thoughts on the ways in

which government policy can help improve intercity bus transit?

**Mr. Stuart Kendrick:** Yes, when you look at Ontario and the rural locations, I think you have to look to the intercommunity funding project that was put out recently, that I understand is temporary. That's an excellent way to do it, and Greyhound was a proponent and sat and discussed with the government on long-term solutions to that.

But when it comes to rural community gaps, when we look at it, we wonder, "Where are the gaps?" because you do have Ontario Northland Transportation subsidized and running the rural routes, and you have GO Transit that's servicing a lot of the rural communities.

If I was to answer that in closing, I would say I think a lot of subsidized transit has already looked after some of the rural routes, but, definitely, the intercommunity funding project should be looked at, expanded and made permanent.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Great, I appreciate it. Do you think that provides enough of an incentive for companies like yours to make it financially viable to provide those kinds of transportation links?

**Mr. Stuart Kendrick:** I think for us, no. But I think for some companies that did bid on the RFPs, I think they would say yes. They have a different model and different-sized buses. For a company like Greyhound and some of the larger ones, there would probably need to be some enhanced funding or gap funding off the fare box to make it long-term viable.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Great, I appreciate that.

I know my time is probably very limited, so really quick to Parkbridge: I'm wondering, do the owners pay an annual lease similar to a condo fee or something like that to the land-lease company?

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute.

**Mr. Sandy Higgins:** Yes. In addition to buying and owning the home, there is a relatively modest monthly land-lease fee. And then, depending on what maintenance the community provides through rec centres and stuff, there is potentially also a maintenance fee. But the entire package tends to still be far more affordable than conventional housing.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Yes, that was my next question. That fee plus the lease on the house is less than most people's mortgages, I would guess, then?

**Mr. Sandy Higgins:** Yes, overall, our housing is generally the most affordable form of tenure for homeowners looking to get into the market, downsize in the market, have an ownership interest in their homes.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I appreciate that. Would you be able to provide—

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you. That's all the time we have for this round.

We'll now turn to the official opposition for six and a half minutes. Who would like to begin? MPP Glover, you may begin.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** I want to thank all of the presenters for being here. I'll start with a couple of questions for Dr. DiNovo. You mentioned that the actions of Charles

McVety lead to death, the words lead to death. Last week, we were hearing in Friday's deputations about the difference between freedom of speech and hate speech. Somebody said that hate speech is when it impedes on the safety of others.

My question is: When the government members are saying that they're defending Charles McVety's right to freedom of speech, how would you respond?

**Rev. Dr. Cheri DiNovo:** I think that's a good working definition of hate speech as contrasted with freedom of speech. I mentioned that I was ordained in 1996. I would say a large part of what I've done in ministry is, sadly, to counsel and welcome those who have come from hate-filled communities that profess to be faithful communities.

Certainly with banning conversion therapy—there's a high rate of suicide among those who have gone through conversion therapy. When I was on the GSA committee travelling around Ontario, we heard from medical professionals, those that were religiously motivated to try to turn gay kids straight. We heard also from the victims of that. It's well-documented now that the victims of conversion therapy, the victims of transphobia and homo, bi and 2S+ communities are at a far higher rate of suicide. As I said, it's almost 50% for attempted suicide for trans kids; about in the 30s, depending on which study you look at, for bisexual, lesbian and gay kids. That's significant.

Also homelessness, which I did not mention: Still, if you look on the streets of any large city, or even a smaller city, and you see youth that are homeless, a much larger proportion of those than in the general population will be from the LGBTQ2+ community.

Again, it has real ramifications on children. I think that's really important to note, that it's children who suffer the most.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** The other thing that some of the government members have been arguing is that McVety is entitled to the process of bringing this bill forward. How would you respond to that defence of this bill?

**Rev. Dr. Cheri DiNovo:** Anybody can bring anything forward, but do you have to acknowledge it? Do you have to give voice to it? Do you have to amplify it out into the community? Because by doing it, as I suggested in my presentation, the Conservative Party is putting themselves on the wrong side of history here. They're certainly saying loudly and clearly, "This is not a party for you if you are LGBTQ2S+. It's not your party. Don't vote for us." Quite frankly, I don't think that's what they want to do.

My challenge to them is, who are you as a party? Who do you speak for? If you don't speak for that community, pass this. If you do pretend to speak for this community, eliminate this.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** Also, would you say the same applies to the Muslim community in Canada?

**Rev. Dr. Cheri DiNovo:** Absolutely. To call Islam a "war machine" and to support—which I didn't have time to say—speakers from other countries who are what we would call Islamophobic is hateful and, again, results in death. We've seen attacks on mosques in this country.

Also, again, it's not just for Muslims. The Canadian Jewish Congress, back in 1998—another attempt by this

college to get accreditation—rejected it, because they were preaching that you can become a Christian and they were supporting Jews that were converting to Christianity against the wishes of the Canadian Jewish Congress. So there you have two pretty large communities who are speaking with one mind about this college and about this section.

**0950**

**Mr. Chris Glover:** Okay. Thank you very much for being here.

My next question is for Stuart. We had a couple of deputants from different bus industries or bus companies, and I've spoken to one of them also as part of a delegation talking about the tourism industry and the impact of the pandemic. My understanding, and I'm just going to reach out for clarification here, is the big challenge with schedules 16 and 24 in the current bill is that they open it up to Quebec companies that can use their access to the Montreal market to give them a competitive advantage over the Ontario companies and that if these schedules are passed, it could be a death knell for Ontario bus companies. Is that a fair assessment? Have I got that right?

**Mr. Stuart Kendrick:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** And I'm open to clarification.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute.

**Mr. Stuart Kendrick:** Yes, absolutely, it's a bang-on statement. On the charter side, again, anyone can come in from Quebec and operate a charter in Ontario. That would be the same on the scheduled service side. I think that that is a major concern for the Ontario coach providers, bus providers.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** Okay. The Ontario bus companies seem pretty unified in their voice asking this government to remove schedules 16 and 24 from the bill. Is that fair?

**Mr. Stuart Kendrick:** In my discussions with many of the companies, I would say that that's fair, yes.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** Okay. Thank you very much.

I'm almost out of time. I'm sorry I didn't get to ask questions of Sandy and Robert, but thank you very much for being here. Thank you to all the delegates for being here and taking the time to speak to us.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** At this point, we'll turn to the government. MPP Harris, you may begin. You have six and a half minutes.

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Thank you to everybody who has taken the time to come and present here today. Obviously, some very poignant thoughts have been brought forward to the committee.

I wanted to start where MPP Glover left off with Stuart from Greyhound. I've had an opportunity to talk to a lot of people who operate bus lines out of Waterloo region and southwestern Ontario. The member from Waterloo as well probably has had a chance to speak with Great Canadian coach lines and Larry Hundt. I know he has been very vocal about this. I think he has been generally supportive of what we're trying to do here and increase competition for consumers, but the one thing that I know he has been very vocal about is the timelines of this, especially with

COVID. This has been something that has been talked about for, from what I understand, a couple of years.

It's certainly not a surprise that we're going down this road, but I do share some of his concerns and some of the concerns that you've raised around timelines here today. I think we can all agree that competition is a good thing for consumers. We're certainly not trying to push anybody out of the market. But at the same time, with what's happening with the downturn in ridership right now, I was hoping maybe you could provide a little bit more insight into what sort of timelines would be a little bit more acceptable to the industry and for maybe your company specifically as being one of the biggest players in the industry.

If we were looking to make any amendments or if we were looking to change some of that, what would you see as more of an appropriate timeline for putting something like this forward?

**Mr. Stuart Kendrick:** You hit the nail on the head. The impact—and I've talked to Larry many times on the same issue. I think the timeline is difficult to say. When are things going to improve? When are the private bus carriers going to be able to be sustainable off the fare box or by charter revenue? A lot of it is going to depend on the recovery from the pandemic. There are a lot of unknowns, as we all know. When are the customers going to be confident in spending money to ride on buses?

Our dealing with intercity busing trends and travel and competition all over Canada when you had this pandemic, I would think that this is a year-and-a-half to a two-year recovery. That's without any help from the government, which is really another topic. But I think you're looking at a significant recovery time for a lot of these businesses to try and stay upright and operate.

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Before the pandemic, what was ridership like year over year? Were you seeing increases? Was it staying pretty stagnant, or was there a bit of a decrease in ridership, say, over the last couple of years?

**Mr. Stuart Kendrick:** There are two pieces to that answer. We're very trendy; a lot of it depends on time of year. There are four or five times a year, when school is in or out, or holidays, where we're actually seeing some positive trends year over year where there's a slight uptick on the previous year—a single-digit uptick on some of the corridors, but, again, we've seen rural ridership decline for years. So I think a lot of the carriers were seeing some positive, and then all of sudden—bam—in March it ended. That has been, really, the whole thing about this. But I think there were some positives in the prior year, pre-pandemic.

**Mr. Mike Harris:** I wouldn't suppose that you'd be able to say this for other companies, but for your company specifically, what have been, I guess you could say, the most popular routes where you've maybe seen an uptick in ridership?

**Mr. Stuart Kendrick:** I think, when you look at our business in Ontario, the Highway 401 corridor, some of the highway 400s, coming out of the Niagara Falls area—again, a lot of them are depending on travel trends. I don't think you're going to have any issue with people

competing on Highway 401 in a deregulated environment. Again, it's just the timing and the ability for those companies to get prepared for the ultimate deregulation, if that's the way the government goes. It seems that that's what they're looking to do.

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Thank you, Stuart.

How much time, Madam Chair?

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute and 45 seconds.

**Mr. Mike Harris:** I'll try and be quick. Sandy and Robert, there's been a lot of talk in Waterloo region about tiny homes over the last little while. I know that's probably not your expertise, but I wanted to ask just because, when we're talking about land lease, is that something that you think could work for that type of situation, where someone could have a designated lot where they could build—or a trailer—say, a tiny home and then go ahead and lease that land? Do you think that that's something that's in the realm of possibility?

**Mr. Sandy Higgins:** Yes, in fact I would agree, and particularly as it relates to land lease, when we take land purchase out of the equation, what people normally find with tiny homes is that the land cost is what makes tiny homes unworkable, but we have a number of communities that incorporate much smaller homes into them very successfully in land lease. I have a community in Elmvale near Barrie with homes that are 532 to about 700 square feet, and it's a vibrant community with very affordable housing that provides a very significant opportunity for seniors in that community. That model would work in any number of locations across the province to bring more affordable housing to people in this province.

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Thank you very much. I assume we're pretty tight on time now, so I will finish up there.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Ten seconds.

**Mr. Sandy Higgins:** Thank you, and thank you to the committee.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you very much, everyone. At this point, I'd like to thank our presenters for taking the time to be here with us today. You may now step down. You're released from committee.

Just a reminder that committee will resume at 1 p.m. today. Thank you, everyone. We are now in recess.

*The committee recessed from 0958 to 1300.*

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Good afternoon. The Standing Committee on General Government will now resume its public hearings on Bill 213.

Before we begin, I would like to confirm we have a few new MPPs on Zoom. MPP Bob Bailey, can you please confirm that you are present and that you are in Ontario?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Yes. I'm on my cellphone, but I can see you guys on the computer. It's a long story, but I'll be participating with my phone and the computer. Anyway, it's awkward. Thank you.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Can you confirm that you are present in Ontario?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Yes, I'm in the legislative precinct, actually.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** MPP Wai, can you please confirm that you are present and that you are in Ontario?

**Mrs. Daisy Wai:** Yes, good afternoon, Chair. This is MPP Daisy Wai and I am in Ontario.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** MPP Randy Pettapiece, can you please confirm that you are present and that you are in Ontario?

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** MPP Pettapiece, and I am in in Ontario.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** MPP Piccini, can you please confirm that you are MPP Piccini and that you are in Ontario?

**Mr. David Piccini:** Bob, I thought you were back in the riding with those Internet issues.

I'm in Toronto—no Internet issues—and I'm in the legislative precinct, in my Toronto office.

CANADIAN MANUFACTURERS  
AND EXPORTERS  
MR. FRANK DIMANT  
BADDER BUS OPERATIONS  
LTD./CHERRY BUS LINES INC./AIRWAYS  
TRANSIT

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** We'll now turn to our set of presenters. Each presenter will have seven minutes for their presentation, and after we have heard from all three presenters, the remaining 39 minutes of the time slot will be for questions from members of the committee. This time for questions will be broken down into two rounds of 7.5 minutes for the government members, two rounds of 7.5 minutes for the official opposition and two rounds of 4.5 minutes for the independent members as a group.

At this time, I'd like to call upon Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters. Please state your name for the record, and then you may begin. You will have seven minutes. Thank you.

**Mr. Alex Greco:** Good afternoon, Chair. I'm Alex Greco, director of manufacturing policy for Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters. Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for inviting me here today on behalf of our association's 2,500 direct members. Today I will outline the importance of reducing the regulatory burden for the manufacturing sector, our support of this bill and other measures that could be taken to reduce red tape and business costs in the future.

CME's membership covers all sizes of companies from all regions of the country and all industrial sectors. We represent the majority of Canada's manufacturing output, as well as Canada's value-added exports. We have also been extremely proud to partner with the government on the rollout of Ontario Made, a program to identify, celebrate and promote locally manufactured goods.

Over the last several years, manufacturers have been concerned about Ontario's regulatory burden and associated compliance costs, but addressing regulatory issues is more challenging than taxation, because while the tax

regime is relatively uniform, companies are affected by a wide range of regulations depending on the industry in which they operate.

In 2018, CME published *Industrie 2030 Ontario*, a strategy that laid out the blueprint to drive growth and investment in our sector once again in the province. In the paper, we highlighted that Ontario manufacturers identified an increased regulatory burden as being a significant impediment to making investments here in the province.

Our recent survey results from our 2020 Management Issues Survey report, which will be publicly released on Wednesday, confirm that 35% of survey respondents want their government to prioritize the impact that regulations can have on business growth and competitiveness when regulations are being made, reviewed or revised. Additionally, close to 30% of manufacturers would like the government to focus their attention on the modernization or elimination of outdated regulations, and more than one quarter are looking for the government to make regulatory harmonization across provinces and with the United States a policy priority.

These results underscore the fact that there is widespread agreement within the business community and among analysts that Ontario still needs to undertake additional actions to reduce red tape and improve its global competitiveness, a key foundation of economic prosperity. Simply put, Ontario needs to continue to ramp up their efforts on regulatory modernization.

That said, pieces of legislation like the Better for People, Smarter for Business Act, 2020, are an important step in the right direction. We support this legislation, and I would like to highlight our four reasons as to why this is the case:

(1) The launch of a consultation process to enhance the pre-start review process for machinery, equipment and technology is a welcome step to streamline regulatory processes in Ontario. These processes have long been a hurdle for manufacturers and have prevented manufacturers from enhancing businesses processes. The output coming from this consultation must be that pre-approvals of new machinery and equipment are expedited on a go-forward basis, so that manufacturers can focus more on manufacturing products here in Ontario.

(2) The introduction and implementation of alternative rules for businesses that use pressure vessels to produce goods and services through the Technical Standards and Safety Authority will help manufacturers achieve compliance by utilizing site-specific safety plans and reduce business costs. The changes will balance public safety while reducing the regulatory burden on manufacturers.

(3) The government's introduction of an approved waste digital reporting service will allow more efficient and timely compliance and monitoring of enforcement actions for waste reporting. The introduction of such a system will make sure that hazardous waste is properly stored, transported, processed and managed in Ontario.

(4) Finally, we welcome the government's decision to launch a review of permitting and approval processes for industrial and development projects. Over the last couple

of years, our members have told us that the time frame and complexity of getting approvals for investments from multiple layers of government is directly delaying and, in some cases, stopping investment decisions. Moreover, several companies have told us that it takes them two or more years to get building permits to expand operations; in similar US states, these processes could take two weeks—same requirements, different processes. Significant improvements are required to adequately address the investment approval processes for machinery, equipment, facility construction and major projects.

Now, while many of the measures contained in the bill are welcome, the work to reduce the regulatory burden is not over. We would like to highlight two areas for consideration for this new red tape bill:

(1) There must be more flexibility around employment zones. Too often, when companies are considering investing in Ontario, their options are often limited to just a few locations, some of which are un-serviced or require rezoning. This results in unnecessary investment delays, prevents plan expansions and places additional costs and regulatory burdens on businesses. Industrial lands must be better protected for current and future growth in our sector.

(2) There must be improvements to streamline inspections conducted by the Technical Standards and Safety Authority. Costs associated with inspections are increasing significantly due to onerous reporting requirements and no streamlined dispute resolution processes when manufacturers express concern on how inspections are undertaken. Inspection experiences in other jurisdictions have been more seamless compared to what takes place in Ontario. An outcomes-based and customer-focused approach must be introduced to reduce business costs and ensure a more responsive culture within the Technical Standards and Safety Authority.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute left.

**Mr. Alex Greco:** In closing, I would like to stress three final points on what we must do to modernize the regulatory process and drive new growth and output in our sector.

First, the government must continue to harmonize regulations and view and implement regulations through both an environmental and a competitiveness lens.

Second, the government must rely on evidence, science and seek guidance from industry experts on the impacts of regulations to avoid unintended consequences.

Third and finally, such measures need to be woven into the introduction and implementation of an industry strategy to drive investment, growth, technology adoption and skill. Such a strategy is necessary to introduce in the 2021 budget if we are going to secure Ontario's long-term industrial future and achieve prosperity for all Ontarians.

I thank you for the opportunity to present here today. I look forward to your questions.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you very much for your presentation.

We'll now turn to Frank Dimant. Please state your name for the record, and then you may begin. You will have seven minutes.

**Mr. Frank Dimant:** Hello. My name is Frank Dimant, and I want to thank the committee for affording me the opportunity to address you on Bill 213, specifically schedule 2 relating to the change of status of Canada Christian College to Canada University and School of Graduate Theological Studies.

I was born in Munich, Germany, in 1946. I was one of the first Jewish children born post-Holocaust. My parents are Holocaust survivors. They were in Auschwitz, Dachau and numerous labour camps. I guess that helped me in my passion to fight hate, and I dedicated my life, both professionally and as a volunteer, to engage in combatting hate.

For 36 years, I had the privilege of serving as chief executive officer of B'nai Brith Canada, its League for Human Rights and the Institute for International Affairs. In my capacity as head of the organization, I interacted with numerous NGOs, government, faith groups, multi-cultural organizations and Indigenous peoples of Canada. I even served on the advisory board of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg.

**1310**

I stood alongside the Chinese and Japanese Canadian organizations demanding a government apology for the Chinese head tax and the Japanese internment in Canada. In both cases, I must say that our interventions were successful, and Prime Minister Brian Mulroney was receptive and apologized. I also served as a leader in the battle to free Soviet Jewry from communist regimes.

I've travelled extensively nationally and internationally to combat hatred and have been privileged to receive various awards for my efforts: the Governor General's medal marking the 125th anniversary of Confederation; the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee medal. I was inducted as an honorary chief of the First Nations Keewatinook tribe council in Manitoba, the Cree nation. I received an Officer Cross of the Order of Merit from the President of Poland for building rapprochement, building bridges again between Canadian Jewry and the Republic of Poland post-Holocaust. I also have a coat of arms that was awarded by the Governor General.

My dealings with the Canada Christian College and Dr. Charles McVety go back more than two decades. I met Charles while we were both involved in a march protesting a rash of anti-Semitism in Canada. We began having regular meetings to discuss anti-Semitism in general and Christian anti-Semitism in particular. After all, we had to overcome 2,000 years of bigotry. We also met to deal with the shocking growth of the old anti-Semitism and the new anti-Semitism, the anti-Israel and BDS movements that are now flourishing across this country.

Canada Christian College and B'nai Brith Canada began to sponsor education programs and establish nights to honour Israel. At times, we had thousands of attendees, and subsequently I was invited to teach at the college courses on modern Israel. Sadly, we also had many, many vigils following terrorist attacks on Jewish civilians in Israel. Charles McVety and Canada Christian College

were always standing alongside the Canadian Jewish community in times of joy and in times of sorrow.

Canada Christian College has been at the forefront of the Christian community in battling anti-Semitism and combatting anti-Israel bias. I don't think I would be incorrect in saying that Charles McVety has been the most vocal Canadian Christian in opposing both the old and the new anti-Semitism. He has led 26 study tours to Israel with over 1,135 pastors. I had the good privilege of co-leading some of those missions with him, and I saw the impact on the pastors and on the students of Canada Christian College when they went through the halls of Yad Vashem and saw what the Holocaust was all about.

He has hosted many, many Israeli political leaders at the college. Over 6,500 pastors have graduated from the college. To me, that means 6,500 leaders of men and women in Canada who are now in the trenches fighting anti-Semitism.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute.

**Mr. Frank Dimant:** But we note the dangers of anti-Semitism, because federally Irwin Cotler has just been appointed as a special emissary to deal with anti-Semitism, so we know what a threat it is and how important it is to have people educated properly.

Expanding the capabilities of Canada Christian College through Canada University, I think, will result in enhancing Canada with educated individuals who will stand in opposing the ever-growing new/old anti-Semitism and all forms of bigotry in our country. I believe more students will be attracted to the facility and I believe that they will be enhanced as Canadians.

I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you very much for your presentation. We'll now turn to our third and final presenter. We have Badder Bus Operations Ltd., Cherrey Bus Lines and Airways Transit. Please state your name for the record, and then you may begin. You will have seven minutes. Thank you.

**Mr. Doug Badder:** Good afternoon, Chair, members of the committee. My name is Doug Badder and I'm president and CEO of Badder Bus Operations Ltd., Cherrey Bus Lines Inc. and Airways Transit.

My father and mother started the business 70 years with one school bus. Our company group has grown through expansion, mostly from buying other companies' assets or full businesses. Today, our combined companies before COVID hit had 10 operating locations from Hamilton to Windsor, a combined fleet of 290 vehicles and a workforce of approximately 475 individuals. Our business operates highway coaches, school buses and airport shuttle vans. We have PV, PVF, PVS and PVX operating licences and operate from the GTA all the way to Windsor to points across Ontario and North America. One of our companies also has TICO licence to a travel agency.

We are a family-owned and operated corporation that, until the last few years, I would say, was like many other bus transportation companies in the province. But today, we are one of the biggest motor coach companies in Ontario, with a coach fleet of 65 full-sized highway

coaches from our combined companies. Our school bus fleet has 121 school runs, and we also have 30 shuttle vans in the airport transportation business. Combined, we are a large passenger transportation company that operates one of the most diverse fleets and types of passenger transportation in Ontario.

Other than being a president of our family companies, I am also on the executive committee of the Ontario Motor Coach Association as the vice-chair. All of the operators in the association are talking about the decision to have deregulation in the bus industry and why now, in the middle of a pandemic.

Before the pandemic hit, there were companies that were for deregulation and ones that weren't. But I have to tell you, I haven't talked to any companies that want it right now, including my company. Right now, many of the companies are trying to survive because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The passing of Bill 213, schedules 16 and 24, will hurt the bus industry on top of all the losses we are having because of the pandemic. There isn't time to recover before this hits us.

If we take the school bus section of my business away, we have less than 2% of the revenue that we had before COVID hit in comparison to last year. If we have deregulation next summer, it will make it harder to make it. I only have 50% of my maintenance staff working, 8% of my charter drivers who have worked since March and 20% of my sales and office staff. Fortunately, 100% of our school bus employees are working. This totals only about 190 individuals still with full-time and part-time employment.

Another concern is that other jurisdictions will take Ontario jobs as they can do the job cheaper because of cheaper wages, lower insurance costs and tax rebates in other jurisdictions. Quebec and American carriers can operate for less than Ontario because of this. There are still cabotage rules that would make it so that US carriers couldn't do point-to-point in Ontario and Canada, but it would still be legal for them to go from Ontario to the States. That would cost Ontario jobs. Ontario workers will lose. Quebec carriers will be able to do any and all the types of trips that we do, and with their expenses being less, they will be able to take Ontario jobs.

Next summer, when these changes are proposed to take effect, we will hopefully be moving again, but it will take months and months to get even close to the pre-COVID business that would be in the same jurisdictions and in other jurisdictions. We will have to try and get employees work, but we will be at a disadvantage, then, because other jurisdictions have less expense in doing business. Those other jurisdictions will then be able to build up their revenues even quicker by taking what work would be done in our areas as well as their own. Hopefully the Ontario government has a plan to help level the playing field.

**1320**

Safety is another major concern that I have for this bill. It takes a lot of money to keep equipment safe, and also training to know that your drivers are operating the vehicle



safely. There need to be provisions in place and enforcement in place to keep unsafe operators off the roads.

There is also the possibility that there could be unfair competition from government-funded competitors. Any operation that gets fully or partially funded from the government could do charters in a deregulated environment to compete directly against unfunded carriers. They would have an advantage because of this government funding. Examples could be ONTC, GO, city transit authorities. In the USA, transit authorities aren't allowed to do charter trips unless non-subsidized carriers can't or won't do them. The Ontario government could adopt something like this.

Enforcement will be a priority for the MTO. Through discussions that the staff of MTO had on a call with the OMCA a few weeks ago, we learned that it can take a year to train MTO officers. It will take more enforcement officers if there are a number of new bus companies on the road—

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute left.

**Mr. Doug Badder:** If they haven't already been hired, will they be trained in time to make this?

Until the government can make this a level playing field—our jurisdiction with other neighbouring jurisdictions—I don't think deregulation is in anyone in Ontario's best interest. Jobs will be lost. We need safe Ontario roads and a level playing field, and it won't be here next summer. There are a lot of questions, but not answers, for this to work at this time. I think this time isn't the right time for these schedules in Bill 213. Thank you.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** At this point, we'll now turn to the official opposition for the first round of questions. MPP Fife? Sorry, just before we begin, because you have gone to Zoom, I just need to confirm that you are MPP Fife and that you are present in Ontario.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Yes, I was in Ontario in the morning and I'm still here. I'm in Toronto.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** It's just because you've gone to Zoom, for our procedural rules.

You have seven and a half minutes, MPP Fife. You may begin.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I'm going to start with Douglas. We also heard, this morning, from Greyhound Canada Transportation, and they echoed the concerns that you've articulated. We are going to be trying to pull this section from Bill 213 because we share your concerns around the timing and the lack of supports for your sector in Ontario.

So, Douglas, I just wanted to give you an opportunity to speak to how important it is to not move forward with these changes at this time. Also, if you could just let us know if you were consulted on these changes as they relate to Bill 213. Thank you.

**Mr. Doug Badder:** I wasn't consulted personally. I think there might have been a little bit of dialogue with some—in the Ontario Motor Coach Association. I don't think there was very much. It's been an ongoing thing for years that deregulation was coming, but who knew it was coming, bang, like now?

Also, the problem with doing it now is there are not enough steady fares to make it safe. The cost of a coach now is—my used equipment is probably cut in half since March, so if we had to sell that off to keep going, somebody could get a piece of equipment that maybe hasn't been kept up on keeping them safe for the road. If the people who bought those put them on the road and didn't have them safe enough—would they be able to keep them safe, because it costs a lot of money to keep a coach on the road. They're a \$600,000 piece of equipment. To keep them going takes a lot of money and resources.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** You also made some strong points about trying to level the playing field during this uncertain time. Can you give us some feedback as to what that would look like?

**Mr. Doug Badder:** It's hard to say what you could do. I know some of the others do have tax breaks for things for their jurisdictions. That's one thing. The cost of insurance is very high and it's only getting higher. I wonder if the government could help in those areas.

Like I mentioned, in the States, the transit authorities over there can opt to do charter work unless—any operator that has not got funding from the government are allowed to do it first. Things like that would help.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** That's excellent. Thank you for raising the insurance issue. We've been raising the changes that the insurance sector has brought in during this time since the pandemic started, and across the board there is definitely room for greater leadership on ensuring that insurance rates are fair, and so I take that point from your presentation. We'll see what happens. This bill is going to clause-by-clause on Wednesday, so it's actually moving very quickly. I know that we share some of the concerns that you've articulated.

Next, I'm just going to move to the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters. Alex, we've talked several times through the pandemic. I want to say thank you to the CME for sharing your concerns and also backing them up with research. You did mention that you have a survey that's coming out. Will the survey and the data that you're gathering from your members in Ontario inform this industrial strategy that you were referring to?

**Mr. Alex Greco:** Yes, it will, Catherine. I think there are a couple of things. It's not just the industrial strategy, but it's also focusing on a few key areas: tax and regulatory competitiveness, what are the areas where we could reduce red tape, as well as what we need to do to support innovation, technology adoption and scale-up.

I think right now what we've seen from our members is that 40% of them have said that the Ontario government needs to focus on regulatory and tax competitiveness as we head into the 2020-21 Ontario budget, so that would be significant. And more than ever, if we don't have that growth strategy, while there have been many different pieces, it has to tie into all the elements that I laid out in my presentation. But if we don't have new investment coming into Ontario, then we won't have a strong and vibrant manufacturing sector.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** That's a really good point and that's actually a theme that we've heard around Bill 213. A lot of these changes are relatively minor, but creating a competitive environment for Ontario and for, hopefully, our economic recovery will require understanding what the other jurisdictions are offering—for instance, their bus operators or their manufacturers as well.

Are you aware, though, that this bill, even though it doesn't do a lot, will be held up because of schedule 2, which is the most contentious piece, around awarding Charles McVety's Canada Christian College the ability to grant degrees? We are going to try to pull that section so at least we can get some of these minor changes pushed through.

Can you speak to the urgency that the manufacturers across the province are looking for? That's something that we've been hearing—for me, in Kitchener-Waterloo, especially—that businesses need clarity on guidelines. They need to know where they can actually access resources that have been put into play, and they need them now. I think that this is an important conversation to be having around Bill 213, because businesses are hurting, and they want to see that leadership piece from the government.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute.

**Mr. Alex Greco:** Thank you for the question. I think, more than ever, if manufacturers don't have certainty, they'll be wondering where they need to go next, because they have to make decisions every day in terms of, "Do I keep employees on? Do I have to make cuts? What do I do in terms of expansion decisions?" Some manufacturers are living day by day right now.

We haven't heard of any closures at this point amongst our membership, but there is still a lot of nervousness. In the survey results, Catherine, that you'll see on Wednesday, you'll notice that almost half of our members are worried about where the whole country and the whole province is going in the lead up to 2021. And depending on what happens with those conditions, that could decide what happens: if you stay in Ontario or you reduce your operations or you go elsewhere.

1330

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Okay, thank you. I look forward to reading the report and citing it, and I want to thank all the presenters for appearing before the committee today. Thank you.

**Mr. Alex Greco:** Thank you, Catherine.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** At this point, we'll now turn to the government. I believe MPP Piccini has some questions, followed by MPP Bailey. MPP Piccini, you may begin.

**Mr. David Piccini:** I've got two quick questions today. Thank you to all the presenters—Douglas, Frank, Alex—for your time today and presenting to committee. My first question is for Alex with the CME.

Alex, I know we've talked in the past, obviously, about a number of measures in this bill, specifically digital and a number of others. I just want to expand and step outside—because I know we've talked about and heard

just recently about specific measures perhaps not being enough. Talk to us about the importance of looking at a number of pieces of legislation before the government and before the Legislature in totality.

I know I just got off the phone with a number of your members about the electricity price reduction for consumers, so my question is twofold: the importance of creating a competitive climate and looking at everything government is doing, electricity and others. There were a number fleeing this province who now are looking not only to stay in Ontario, but the importance of what you'd mentioned earlier in your earlier remarks, investing in Ontario: Speak about that, creating a competitive climate, and how you feel that the government has done to date.

My second question is on skilled labour. This was a call about electricity and about measures the government has taken there, but every single one made a point to talk to me about those measures. As I see a number of teachers' federations speaking to the finance committee, perhaps we could relay over from this committee—it's happening concurrently; I know they can't be in two places at the same time—the importance of the next generation of labour, because for all of them, that was the number one thing. I was shocked: every single one. I mean, not surprised, but shocked that every single—

**Mr. Alex Greco:** Thank you for the question, MPP Piccini. Good to see you. Let me tackle the first question, on a competitive business environment. Certainly, the electricity changes that were announced in the Ontario budget will help make us more competitive in terms of other jurisdictions. I think that next to skills, electricity costs and how expensive electricity was in the province have certainly been a concern for some time, and the global adjustment piece of an electricity bill had been the root cause of that. So I think the government did take a bold step; to take a portion of wind, solar and biomass in renewable energy contracts and putting them on the tax-based provincial budget is a needed step.

When we talked about measures like the business education tax and reducing it to 0.88% for the most expensive jurisdictions that have the highest per-month property taxes, I think that is an important piece, to have more transparency and fairness and accountability, and more liquidity in Ontario's property tax system for manufacturers, and then looking at it in terms of some of the other measures, like making the employer health tax permanent for 30,000 businesses.

Having said that, though, I think the next step, MPP Piccini, is that we have to look at investment support measures to make this more competitive. One of the things that we're recommending for the 2021 budget is to look at an investment tax credit, to bring in a tax code that can assist with company training, investment and other investments in machinery, equipment and technology. It has been done in other states like Louisiana, for example, as well as in Ohio. I think it's simple; it's direct investment support instead of applying to a big government fund where you have to jump through a lot of hoops and have to wait months on end to get a decision from the government. That's one piece of it.

I think the other thing, too, is looking at simplifying our tax system and really incentivizing companies to be able to grow, looking at the manufacturer processing tax rate, looking at reducing it from 10% to 6% and then looking at it in terms of the additional steps that we could take in terms of property taxes, so looking at property tax assessments, ensuring that the evaluation date is adjusted appropriately to reflect COVID-19 realities.

In terms of skilled labour: I'm glad you mention that, because a few of our members—we were surprised to hear, but we did an internal briefing and still, 80% of our members raised skill shortages as the number one issue in the province in terms of what's happening with COVID-19. One of the things that we could do to help address that shortage is working with the regional industry councils and taking representatives from government, industry, economic development, colleges and universities to address what that skills shortage is in that particular region, come up with an action plan and implement it over a period of time. It's bringing all the different elements to address a skills shortage in that particular region under one centralized source and ensuring that we're not acting in silos going forward. That would be our main recommendation there.

**Mr. David Piccini:** Thank you very much, Alex. I'll certainly take you up on that in my region in getting some players at the table: the labour market, school boards etc.

My second question is for Frank. Frank, thank you very much for taking the time to come before committee, for outlining your expertise and the advocacy work you've done to combat anti-Semitism and hate in all its forms as a professional. Frank, my question to you is, when it comes to combatting hate, when it comes to combatting hate speech, can you distinguish between how you draw a line between the very real challenges on Criminal Code offences and on other things that offend and anger people? Secondly, in the context of hate and equality based on religion and one's culture etc., the importance of having a fair process for everyone who comes before government and how important you think it is that government pursue a fair process for everybody.

**Mr. Frank Dimant:** Of course, I believe intrinsically that government has a responsibility to be fair to all those who come before it and to adjudicate appropriately.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute.

**Mr. Frank Dimant:** I have stood before many committees in Ottawa and met with many ministers provincially and federally over the years. I know that fairness is sometimes in the eye of the beholder. Nevertheless, I think we have a basic understanding of what fairness is all about.

As to hate speech, there were many, many cases where we tried to appeal to the Attorney General to look at specific hate speech as a criminal offence—not very successful, for the most part. We always seem to err, as a society, in favour of the most liberal approach to speech, and subsequently, I think there's merit to it. Although hate speech that arises the feeling in people of going out to do actions, for example, “Kill the Jews, murder the Jews;” “Muslims have no place in Canada. We've got to get rid

of them. We've got to kill them”—those kinds of things are hate speech that have consequences and that—

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you very much. That's all the time we have for this round.

We'll now turn to the independent Green Party member for four and a half minutes. MPP Schreiner, you may begin.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Thanks to all three presenters for coming in today. Frank, I just wanted to give you a moment to finish your thoughts on the problems associated with hate speech in Ontario—and in the world, I would argue.

**Mr. Frank Dimant:** I concur with you that there is a tremendous amount of hate speech, and it's increasing today. We see it especially on the Internet. We see it at international meetings. We see an outpouring of hate. For example, dealing specifically with anti-Semitism, we see a tremendous increase in Europe not only of speech, but speech that results in actual manifestations of hate, meaning even the killing of people.

It's very, very important that we are very careful in how we define hate speech and look at it so that it doesn't lead to inflaming people to go out and commit crimes of violence. I would be very, very careful in that regard with hate speech.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Yes. Thanks, Frank. I really appreciate that. The rise of hate speech in Ontario and around the world, and particularly anti-Semitism, is a huge concern, and a concern of many of us in the Legislature, so I appreciate you saying that.

**1340**

I'm going to shift to Alex a little bit. Alex, thanks so much. You've been to Queen's Park bringing lots of thoughtful ideas on many occasions over the last few months. I don't want to pre-empt your survey results but I just want to get a sense of, what are you thinking when you think of an industrial strategy, and are there some areas where you see Ontario having a real competitive advantage for us to take advantage of in emerging markets?

**Mr. Alex Greco:** Thank you for the question, and it's good to see you, MPP Schreiner.

I think there are a few. When we look at the strategy, it has to be focused on three key pillars: How do we reduce the cost of doing business in Ontario? How do we address the labour shortage? How do we support investment, technology adoption and scale-up?

One: I think the focus has to be on increasing consumer spending. Some 60% of consumer spending makes up Ontario's economy, as well as Canada's economy, as a whole. If we don't increase incentives to increase consumer spending, then we can manufacture all the products in the world, but they'll stay on shelves if people won't buy them. We have to incentivize consumers to be able to buy on a go-forward basis.

I think, secondly, right now is addressing the labour shortage that I talked about with MPP Piccini. The investment tax credit idea that I mentioned earlier, that could be geared towards the different lanes, whether it is for

company training or whether it's for apprenticeships or whether it's just for looking at micro-credentialing.

British Columbia has also introduced an employer tax credit. That could be another key example where we can model a tax credit that's very simple and easy to use and easy to be able to apply for.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute.

**Mr. Alex Greco:** Where we could be competitive, moving forward: Electricity pricing is something I think we could build on. Certainly, what the government has done has helped, but we need to look at an industrial-grade program for manufacturers. That really is geared towards those small and medium manufacturers to further reduce electricity costs, simplify the electricity system and also encourage more local power, meaning bringing investment from other jurisdictions and having it come to Ontario, and having new manufacturing plants create new jobs and more innovation.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I know I'm almost out of time, but I want to be really clear: The investment tax credit you're talking about is not only necessarily for equipment, but we're actually looking at addressing labour shortages and addressing skill shortages as well.

**Mr. Alex Greco:** That's correct, yes.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Okay. That's an important distinction, because most of the time people think an investment tax credit is primarily equipment, but you're really focusing in on labour as well.

**Mr. Alex Greco:** Absolutely. Yes, that's right.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Thanks for that, Alex.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you. That's all the time that we have.

We'll now turn to the official opposition for seven and a half minutes. MPP Glover, you may begin.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** My first question will be for Douglas Badder. Douglas you are, I think, the fourth bus company operator talking about buses and schedules 16 and 24. I want to make sure that I understand the message that you're giving to us. What we've heard from other Ontario operators is that if schedules 16 and 24 go through, it will open the market to unfair competition from Quebec operators, who have access to the very lucrative metropolitan market in Montreal, and that this would create an unfair competitive disadvantage for Ontario operators and could ultimately lead to many of the operators closing down. Is that fair? Have I got that right?

**Mr. Doug Badder:** Yes, I believe that would happen. They do have a lot of, I believe, line-run stuff—more for workers going in—which helps subsidize them because they can keep their buses busy during the workweek, and then they can charter them on the weekend. That would very possibly be the doom for a few coach operators in Ontario—

**Mr. Chris Glover:** Right. The other thing I've heard about coach operations in Ontario is that, especially when you get a little bit north of the metropolitan—like the Golden Horseshoe and outside of the Golden Horseshoe area—you've got a small population that's very, very spread out. It's the second-largest province in the country,

and it's just not possible to run all those routes without some sort of subsidy. Is that fair? Do we need subsidies in order to make sure that every community in Ontario has access to public transit?

**Mr. Doug Badder:** Yes, I believe that you would need that type of funding to be able to run those types of routes. It might be a little easier with smaller vehicles than full-size large coaches, but it still is operationally very costly to run those types of routes with all the miles and everything.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** Thank you very much.

Let's see. My next question will be for Alex. Madam Chair, how much time do I have left?

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** You have just under five minutes.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** Okay, perfect. I just want to keep track of the time.

You were talking briefly about the electricity rates in Ontario. I noticed in the budget there's a \$5.6-billion tax subsidy to keep electricity rates down. Unfortunately, electricity rates in Ontario have become a competitive disadvantage. Is that a fair statement?

**Mr. Alex Greco:** Yes, it is. We did a report with London Economics International, an independent electricity firm, last year and we found a few things: Ontario manufacturers pay up to 75% more in electricity costs than Michigan, Indiana and Ohio, and that was before these changes. I think the changes that were announced in the budget will certainly help, especially compared with those states, but also with Great Lakes states in general.

I think, however, that doesn't mean that we are out of the woods in terms of being more competitive. Certainly, we still have a lot of small manufacturers that still need electricity relief as a whole, because the industrial conservation initiative program, which is geared toward larger industrials like Dofasco, for example, they have that one rate program, whereas small manufacturers really don't have other relief other than what's in the budget right now. Looking at that industrial rate program for class B ratepayers is going to be fundamental to get us more competitive.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** I used to teach a course at York University on the history and economics of Ontario, and one of the lessons was on the creation of Ontario Hydro by Adam Beck, who was a Conservative MPP. He had a cigar-box manufacturing company. They wanted to give a competitive advantage to Ontario manufacturers, so they created a public utility. Before that, in the first 10 or 15 years of hydroelectricity, the cost was about 10 cents a kilowatt hour. When it became a public utility, it went down to four cents. It stayed at four cents until the privatization process started in 1995. So it's this balance of what gives us a competitive advantage as public sector services and what we should do through the private sector.

The other ones that I would argue are our public colleges, universities and education system and our public health care system. They give us a well-educated, healthy workforce. Those are things that I think the government should be supporting. Is that a fair assessment?

**Mr. Alex Greco:** Yes, I think those areas are certainly relevant. I think what we have to focus on for the education system is building on what we've done so far on science, technology, engineering and math, and really look at making improvements to the curriculum, because more than ever, I think we need to get students that practical hands-on experience to be able to make things with their hands. I even know, chatting with some of my friends with whom, years ago, we had shop class in the past—we've lost that practical bent. I think that's one thing that's important.

You mentioned on health care. I think one of the things we have talked about seeing is to enhance the procurement system in Ontario, and certainly the announcement of Supply Ontario is a positive step, but we have to be able to prepare for the next pandemic and be prepared to have companies be able to put new goods to market, whether it's health care products, other personal protective equipment, food products etc., in order for us to be able not only to be prepared for the next pandemic but also be more competitive in general so there's more certainty for businesses going forward.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** I want to ask one more question of Frank, as well, but I'll look at your deputation, and if you have further information, please send it to my office.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** Only a minute? Frank, I apologize for not leaving enough time, really, to fully investigate this question, but one of the concerns that has been brought to this committee is that Charles McVety at Canada Christian College hosted a meeting by Geert Wilders. They said many things in that meeting, and Charles McVety is also on record as saying many things about Islam being—and I'll just get a couple of the quotes: “the threat of demographic jihad,” about the mission of Islam is “a hostile takeover.”

1350

Our concern is that these kinds of words lead to actions, and to Islamophobic actions. We've seen these Islamophobic actions in our country in the last few years. There's a huge spike in them. How do you respond to that criticism?

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you. That's all the time that we have for this round.

We'll now turn to the government. I believe MPP Piccini has one last question, and then we'll turn it over to MPP Bailey. MPP Piccini.

**Mr. David Piccini:** I'm just going to build on my colleague MPP Glover's question there, Frank. One thing we have seen and we've heard from earlier depositions is that some of the language and some of the inflamed rhetoric and, I would say and I know my colleagues in government would say, a fundamental misunderstanding of the fair process before government here has led to actual hatred towards visible minorities and other groups at Canada Christian College. Frank, can you speak to what you've seen over the last few weeks? Do you condone the death threats that students and faculty have received at that institution?

**Mr. Frank Dimant:** I never condone death threats. But I'd like to say that over the years that I've been with the college, I have never seen any Islamophobic manifestations. I have seen a discussion on Islamic terrorism, which I believe that the entire free world is dealing with. I have seen discussions relating to the threat to Europe, including the Jewish community in Europe, by Islamists. That is true; that's a fact. I don't think there's any dispute about that.

I'd also like to say that I think we're seeing another tremendous kind of hate speech that's in the United States, Canada and Europe, and that's anti-Christian. It's strange that I, as a Jew, have been speaking about this for some time. The mood has changed. We have a great deal of anti-Christianity that now prevails in modern society. I don't think that's healthy either.

But I want to say that the temperament and the student body at Canada Christian College were people who wanted to do good, were people who believed in a Canada for all Canadians. I have never heard Islamophobic comments at all. I think that there's a bad rap that's being given.

**Mr. David Piccini:** Thanks. Frank, I'm going to respectfully just push back on two things here and distinguish between the two. I'm not here to litigate on what you have or have not heard. Certainly, you've made the case there. The bottom line is there are many who are, who do feel hurt by statements made by individuals at that institution. Also, conversely, there are many at that institution who have received death threats since this discussion here.

I'd like to take a step back from all of this and first ask how you think, as someone who has dealt with this over the last number of decades, we can have a very real discussion on hatred and hate speech, but also distinguish that from very legitimate public processes and faith-based institutions that have been afforded the liberty of those processes over the last number of decades before this government.

**Mr. Frank Dimant:** One of the most serious discussions I had on hate speech was with the University of Toronto, as a matter of fact, where they've allowed such things as Apartheid Week, which is a week when every Jewish student who cares about Israel feels threatened and intimidated. I don't believe that's healthy either. I just don't.

We need to have an honest and open discussion. I believe that death threats are—that's for criminal investigation, quite frankly. That's what I would say to that.

Incidentally, as far as I know, throughout the years of operation of Canada Christian College, there has never been a complaint to the Human Rights Commission—never—which tells you a great deal because that's the go-to place that so many of us have used in dealing with the issue of hate speech.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** We'll now turn to MPP Bailey. MPP Bailey, you have three minutes.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Thank you to the presenters today. Alex and Mr. Dimant, I was very interested in your remarks—how much time do I have, Madam Chair?

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** You have just over two minutes and 30 seconds.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I wanted to address my remarks to Mr. Badder. Doug's from my part of the province, south-western Ontario. I know his family very well. I've used their services—probably his mother and dad, back when they started—and I can speak to the quality of transportation. Actually, before I got into this job, I used to run the odd bus trip around the province and down to the States and took advantage of Badder Bus lines and Cherrey Bus Lines, I think before Mr. Badder took it over.

I don't have time for a lot, so I'd just like to talk about the competition from Quebec and what we could do, Doug, to help your business and other coach owners—I understand there are about 400 in Ontario. What can we do to make sure you guys can stay competitive and keep outside competition outside Ontario?

**Mr. Doug Badder:** Well, from what I understand, their wages are a bit lower than ours and also the insurance is a big thing there. I already talked about the Montreal aspect, where their workers have a whole bunch of shuttle work that they do that allows that. So I don't know how you can do anything there. Insurance and such, that might be one of the bigger areas that might help us. That probably would be the—

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute left.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Okay. I don't have a lot of time left, but I do want to applaud all three presenters who have come in today. Doug, I look forward to reading more of your deputation, and if you've got any ideas through the motor coach industry you represent or personally, please send them to my office through the Clerk's office, and I'll make sure that, with my caucus colleagues, we'll advocate for the kinds of support that the motor coach industry, and Badder Bus lines especially, deserves. Thank you.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** There are 30 seconds—

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I'll yield the rest of my time today. I'll just thank everyone for coming in, especially Mr. Dimant. I really appreciated hearing what you had to say, because I'll tell you, it's not the tone that we heard last week, and it's nice to hear someone else that's involved in this college and to hear your point of view. Thank you.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you very much. That's all the time that we have for this round.

We'll now turn to the independent member for four and a half minutes. MPP Schreiner, you may begin.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** This round, I want to begin with Badder Bus lines. Doug, we have heard from a number of coach carriers that raised the concerns you've raised, and I certainly share them and won't be supporting the two schedules, 16 and 24. But I'm wondering if you can elaborate a little, just following up on the question from MPP Bailey. You had talked about some assistance with insurance. I'm thinking of just the competitive landscape. What are your thoughts in relation to insurance and how it's affecting the industry?

**Mr. Doug Badder:** The cost of insurance really rose quite dramatically in the last few years. I think a lot of it has to do with the litigation out there if there happens to be an accident or whatever. The Broncos bus accident out west really affected that also because of the amount of dollars that come from that type of litigation. So I can see where the insurance companies need to make some of that back, but it does make it hard for companies to come up with the kind of resources to take that kind of insurance cost. It is very expensive.

I know in BC they have an insurance board of their own where insurance is dealt with a little differently than it is in Ontario, and I know Quebec—I'm not sure exactly how it works there, but I know their insurance rates are less than ours. So insurance is a big factor that could save us some money.

1400

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Great, I appreciate it. I think one of the things that might be, I guess, driving the impetus here is expanding intercity bus transit, especially in under-serviced and rural communities. Do you have some thoughts around ways in which Ontario could incentivize better intercity bus service?

**Mr. Doug Badder:** I think with what has been happening recently with the government helping to get the different areas with—smaller vehicles are what has happened in a lot of the rural communities where they have lower transit runs that go from different places and link up with larger transit areas. That has been a help, and I think if the government keeps funding that, it will help the areas have at least some type of transit that would help the different areas. Keeping that funding going would help the smaller areas.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Thanks, Doug. I appreciate that.

Alex, I probably have a little bit of time remaining here, so I wanted to ask you a little bit about government procurement. That came up a lot over the summer in the finance committee.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I know I've talked to life sciences companies; I've talked to a lot of companies in emerging markets and employing clean technology saying that if we had a government procurement program to help them, it would help with commercializing and scaling. Would you agree with that, and if so, elaborate a bit on it?

**Mr. Alex Greco:** Yes, I would agree, and the reason is this: When companies are trying to put new goods to market or innovate new technology, right now there's not really a centralized hub that goes beyond just health care products. It would need to be streamlined so that not only could goods go to the market, but also companies can have the resources to be able to operate within their facility moving forward.

The United States has done a fantastic job with their DARPA program, which I'll send more information to this committee about, which is a best-in-class model to establish a procurement system that connects all aspects of the supply chain as well as its distributors and its manufacturers and other partners. If we could focus on

that, I think that we would go a long way to having a modern procurement system.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you very much. That's all the time that we have for this round. I'd like to thank our presenters. At this time, you are released from the committee and you may step down.

MR. RAYMOND DENURE  
CARLETON UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC  
STAFF ASSOCIATION  
WELLINGTON WATER WATCHERS

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** We'll call upon our next group of presenters. We have Raymond DeNure. Please state your name for the record, and then you may begin. You will have seven minutes for your presentation. Thank you.

I'll just pause the time until we can get the audio. Okay, there we go. Please state your name, and then you may begin. Thank you.

**Mr. Raymond DeNure:** Well, good afternoon, and thank you for the opportunity to speak. My name is Raymond DeNure. I'm the owner of a tour operator called DeNure Tours, and we own the buses that are used to operate those tours. We've been in business for more than 60 years. I'm a second-generation owner and I've been with the company for 35 years. My grandfather and his brothers were operating in Ontario in the 1940s.

I wish to speak to the sections which propose to remove the economic regulation on the motor coach industry. I am quite aware that other members of our bus industry have made presentations to the committee, so I suspect that my message is the same and have shortened my presentation just slightly.

Deregulation has been a discussion point for many years in Ontario, with some operators in favour and some opposed. Deregulation in itself is not a bad thing; we all need to ensure that the rules are reasonable and up to date. But the problem with this proposal is the suddenness of it. My main point today is to request a consideration for delay in the implementation and to ask that the transitional regulations are carefully worked out between government and industry.

I have three main reasons to request a delay. One is to provide time for the companies to recover from the economic devastation caused by the pandemic; the second is to appropriately include the complexity of the industry in Ontario; and the third is to coordinate the reduction in regulation with neighbouring jurisdictions—and I'm going to mention Quebec—but particularly Quebec.

The existing legislation, in my understanding, was prepared for a simple industry, and that's the one of intercity transportation by bus. The industry is much more complex these days, where operators aren't just running buses between cities, yet they have needed to find ways to fit into this legislation.

The bus industry itself has transitioned from being an inner-city service to becoming a kind of behind-the-scenes

transportation network that lubricates all of the other ways that consumers can choose to travel. The industry provides slack for the whole system.

By the way, we all assume that when we step on a bus, whether it be a day trip to go to the theatre or the 10-minute ride from the airport to a car park, we're not going to be hurt by that bus.

So many of the members in the Ontario bus industry are owned by second- and third-generation families who have put their entire wealth behind their business. Those owners have adapted their business to suit their local competitive area over a long period of time. The bigger, more visible operators are often foreign-owned, where investors have many other possible investment choices. They don't have to come to Ontario with their money, but they do. Those bigger operators have been good citizens in complying with all manner of regulation and have led the industry in compliance. The smaller operators, particularly the long-running successful family businesses, have also operated safely and have done a good job.

All of these businesses have been reliable participants in the Ontario economy. The interesting point is that each company is different, sometimes very different, each with different businesses, and these differences are further magnified by the unique regional aspects in Ontario.

Ontario's urban-rural divide includes a sparse north and a busy south, meaning that changes to the regulation will have differing regional impacts. That alone speaks to a delay in implementation and perhaps even an approach to a regional modification of that implementation.

Entry into the bus industry is not particularly difficult, despite the high initial cost of acquiring a vehicle. Staying in the bus industry is very difficult, and the result, when revenues fall, is often the cutting of the safety steps, such as vehicle maintenance and driver suitability. A problem even with the existing legislation is that unscrupulous operators can be very difficult to detect until a problem occurs, so the cost structure of the transportation business is one of high fixed costs along with reasonably low operating costs. Investors need to believe that sufficient revenue can be earned to pay those fixed costs, which, like interest on debt or insurance payments, never seem to go away. The urge to cut into soft costs like safety measures can be irresistible when there is suddenly insufficient revenue, as sometimes happens when new entrants appear. While the theory that more competition is better is widely accepted, in a high fixed-cost industry, particularly in sparsely populated areas or in jurisdictional fringes, the theory becomes invalidated.

My business is located in the south. I don't have an inner-city operation, I don't charter our equipment to others, and yet the legislation has been a nuisance. The compliance was a challenge for us in the early years but has not been expensive or difficult recently.

There is a cost, and as such, I would agree that the change could be made. But I live in a world where working with other operators is really important. I depend on the reputation of other operators to help convince consumers to take a holiday with me on one of my buses. I need to ensure that the other members of the bus industry operate

in a safe manner so that consumers have a positive feeling towards my business. I also depend on other bus members to be thoughtful and strong in order to collaborate on best practices in operations, not only here in Ontario but across North America. My individual concerns are less important than my concern for the entire industry.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute left.

**Mr. Raymond DeNure:** I understand that government can change the rules. I ask that implementation be delayed to provide time to adapt. Thank you very much.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** We'll now turn to our next set of presenters from the Carleton University Academic Staff Association. Please state your names for the record and then you may begin. You will have seven minutes.

**Dr. Brenda Vellino:** Hello. My name is Brenda Vellino. I thank the committee for the opportunity to address you this afternoon. I am the vice-president of the Carleton University Academic Staff Association, which represents professors, instructors and librarians. We have approximately 920 members. Our association is also the oldest academic staff association in the province. We are here today because we are respectfully requesting that schedule 2 of Bill 213 be withdrawn for the following reasons.

**1410**

We are gravely concerned about the efforts to extend university degree-granting privileges to the private institution Canada Christian College under the leadership of its president, Charles McVety. In particular, we oppose the government's ongoing attempt to pass legislation that would allow this private college to call itself a university and thereby award degrees without transparency about the institution's accreditation application.

We are not alone in this opposition. The Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations, the National Council of Canadian Muslims, the South Asian Dalit Adivasi Network and LGBTQ organizations, among others, have opposed schedule 2 of Bill 213. Further, 14 Ontario university faculty associations have also expressed their opposition. Even the Ontario Legislature recently condemned this attempt by passing an NDP motion against it.

According to the CBC, it is alleged that the usual mechanisms for the accreditation process for new degree programs have as yet not been engaged by CCC. A private institution which has, up until now, offered curriculum solely focused in theology is not guaranteed to be in a position to offer quality BA and BSc programming that conforms to expected standards, either provincially, nationally or globally.

What guarantees that the Canada Christian College and its proposed new programs will go through the proper accreditation channels if its status and that of new programs are simply swept into law by the Ontario government? We note especially that in schedule 2 of this bill, the government seeks to grant the Canada Christian College the ability to bestow two new types of bachelor's degrees, specifically degrees in arts and sciences. There is

a remarkable difference between an entire curriculum focused exclusively on courses in religious studies, as is presently the case at CCC, and a bachelor degree of arts or a bachelor degree of science, as accredited currently at numerous public universities across Ontario.

For those of us such as myself who teach in the faculty of arts and social sciences as a fully credentialed professor, it is well understood that arts programming is intentionally broad and not exclusive to one disciplinary focus.

On the question of the bachelor of science, Mr. McVety has been quite vocal about his disregard for evidence-based research that challenges his religious views. Potential disregard for evidence-based science would stand outside the regulatory norms of any accredited bachelor of science program in any of the credentialed universities in Ontario. It would also contravene the norms of academic freedom.

Given that there are many universities across the province of Ontario that are able to achieve standards of excellence in granting arts and science degrees, we ask why this one institution will allegedly be allowed to set itself apart, to manoeuvre around public accountability frameworks and join the ranks of the university community without any evidence of whether it meets established professional standards.

We have already expressed our grave concern in our written submissions about the faulty process engaged in pushing for CCC's change to university status. We have flagged the stealth by which this proposal for new degree-granting status has been slipped into an omnibus bill with which it has no thematic connection, as well as our concerns about the evident political closeness between Mr. McVety and Premier Ford.

Finally, we also stand opposed because Mr. McVety holds widely known views that are inconsistent with equity principles that CUASA, our organization, adheres to, and that arguably could contravene the Ontario Human Rights Code. The institution's code of conduct prohibiting sexual sin includes references to passages that condemn homosexuality and imply a ban on free speech.

Mr. McVety also publicly promotes that view that Muslims represent a demographic "threat" to Canadian society. It is one thing for a private citizen to hold views that are arguably in contravention of human rights standards, it is quite another for the head of an institution that seeks access to university degree-granting status to do so.

In light of the strong and broad opposition of 14 Ontario universities and other groups, the questionable process by which this matter has been advanced and the risk it poses to the integrity of the university system and its role in protecting human rights, we urge the Ontario government to withdraw schedule 2 of Bill 213. Thank you for your time and attention.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** We'll now turn to our third presenter, from Wellington Water Watchers. Please state your name for the record, and then you may begin. You will have seven minutes.



**Mr. Robert Case:** Good afternoon. My name is Robert Case. Chair, committee members, thanks for this opportunity to delegate on this bill. I'm the chair of the board of directors of the Wellington Water Watchers, Wellington Water Watchers being a non-profit, non-partisan grassroots citizens' organization dedicated to the protection, restoration and conservation of drinking water in Ontario. We have about 38,000 supporters, the vast majority of whom are here in Ontario. My position in the organization, for your information, like all board members and most of our personnel, is actually something I do as a volunteer without remuneration, as an active and concerned resident of this province.

I'd like to focus my comments on the proposed amendments to the Ontario Water Resources Act and schedule 18. In that regard, I have six points I'd like to make, the first one being that we are quite fully in favour of the proposal to require water bottling proponents to get the support of the local host municipality in order to proceed with an application for a permit to take water for bottling. We think this is actually an excellent initiative that responds, at least in part, to what we hear people in places like Centre Wellington township and elsewhere in Ontario calling for, and so good on this government for that proposal. That's my first point. We just think it needs to go a bit further to have its full impact.

This is my second point: I hear increasing frustration in our networks that while municipalities are being given a little bit more power in this, there's no acknowledgement in this context at all of also extending more direct decision-making to relevant First Nations. Whatever the rationale for this, First Nations jurisdiction appears to be a troubling omission in these amendments and a glaring double standard, and probably also a contradiction to our country's constitutional commitment to upholding treaty rights and our international commitments under the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We would urge you to add to this bill a requirement that the proponent also attain the free prior informed consent of any First Nation relevant to the water-taking application.

I would refer the committee, actually, to the written submission of my colleague Rod Whitlow of the Six Nations of the Grand River. We were disappointed to hear, as I imagine he and his committee were, that he was not accepted to make a delegation to this committee this afternoon. But there is a written submission from him.

The third point: In addition to First Nations, just given the way that water flows and the way growth evolves, we stand with places like the city of Guelph, where I live, in asserting that any municipality affected by the water-taking permit should also be included in the approval process, not just the local host municipality. My understanding is that the provisions of the Ontario Clean Water Act, just as an example, extend beyond municipal jurisdiction. Our organization's supporters would expect the same for the proposed amendment to the Ontario Water Resources Act. So the call there is to add in some provision for required input from other municipalities, not just the local host municipality.

My fourth point would be to challenge, quite directly, the 379,000 litres per day threshold for this requirement for municipal consent. Frankly, I think you're going to have a hard time convincing people who are concerned about water bottling that using this new threshold they're introducing, rather than the 50,000 litres per day usually used for permits to take water, is anything other than an enabling loophole. It undermines the credibility, in a way, of the rest of this provision. We think all applications for a permit to take water for bottling should be subject to the proposed legislative change.

My fifth point is the question of why the municipal consent provision would only apply to new permits and not to permit renewals. Much can change in a five-year period—more in a 10-, 15- or 20-year period—in terms of climate, growth and development and any associated groundwater flows. We think that a review of municipal consent on a timeline consistent with permit expiration and renewal would make a lot more sense than a one-time consent that is not that easy to withdraw, even with changing conditions.

**1420**

My sixth and final point maybe diverges a little bit from Bill 213, but it's really hard for some of us not to wonder why this government would extend this kind of power to local host municipalities regarding permits to take water for bottling, but not in the case of other industries as well. Our view is that changes recently made by this government to the Ontario Aggregate Resources Act have actually taken some power away from municipalities to govern their groundwater sources around things like blasting and excavation below the water table. So we applaud this government for introducing this principle of municipal consent to the permit-to-take-water system related to water bottling, but we urge you to also apply it to the permitting related to other industries as well, including the aggregate industry.

Just to reiterate, we fully support the move to put a requirement of municipal consent into legislation governing the permit-to-take-water system for bottling in Ontario. We believe this is a smart amendment, that it is actually better for people and it addresses some very real concern on the ground—

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute.

**Mr. Robert Case:** Thank you—but we think it should be amended to, as mentioned, also require free prior, informed consent of First Nations; to include input from all municipalities affected by the permit; to apply to all applications for water bottling, not just those above the 379,000-litres-per-day threshold; to apply it to all permits to take water at the time of application and at each renewal; and we think the principle of municipal consent should be applied to other applications for permits to take water beyond water bottling, including particularly those related to aggregate extraction. Thank you.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you very much. At this point, we'll turn to our first round of questions. The government members may begin for seven and half minutes. MPP Skelly.

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** Thank you all for your presentations this afternoon. I'd like to continue our conversation with Robert Case.

Robert, the Nestlé issue has come up several times, in fact, since we were elected and since my first venture into provincial politics, but I'm unfamiliar with your group. Can you give me a little bit of history behind how you formed your group, when you decided it was important to pursue opposition to this particular bottling process and what has transpired since WWW was formed back in—was it 2007?

**Mr. Robert Case:** Yes, 2007. Boy, how much time have I got?

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** We have seven minutes, so there you go.

**Mr. Robert Case:** Wellington Water Watchers formed when people started to realize that Nestlé Waters had bought out Aberfoyle Springs, and that was a bit of a shock to a lot of people in the community. There was a bit of kitchen-table organizing that happened around that.

At the same time, there had been some information that came forward that the Dolime quarry, as they call it, in Guelph-Eramosa just outside of Guelph, was having some problems in terms of a breach in the aquitard protection of the groundwater there.

Those two issues kind of came together, but the momentum that started to grow from there really was community up around Nestlé. People were really concerned about: What does this mean for our long-term water security? What does it mean for plastics pollution? Doesn't that introduce another outlet for a fossil fuel-intensive plastics manufacturer? What about municipal jurisdiction as related to water? So that was the first campaign in 2007. It generated something like 8,000 objections to the ministry around this application, and it has grown since then. In fact, the opposition has grown across the province.

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** Can you explain to me, Robert, the difference without—well, I'll let you decide how you want to speak to it, but you said that you were opposed to Nestlé purchasing Aberfoyle Springs. What was the difference between the two ownership styles or perhaps the composition of the two companies that sparked, that triggered the opposition?

**Mr. Robert Case:** I think part of it, at least, was the perception that we'd gone from a locally owned smaller company to this internationally owned company that, really, is driven by a return on investment to shareholders around the world. Nestlé certainly has a bad reputation, but I think more than anything it was the way that Nestlé coming to town brought visibility to this issue. I'm not sure that, if we went back and said, "Okay, give it back to Aberfoyle," I don't think the opposition would change at all. I think leasing it to a locally owned co-op water-bottling plant, people would still say, "Well, is that really what we want to do with the water?" So I think the Nestlé—

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** It focused attention on the issue.

**Mr. Robert Case:** It brought attention to the issue and made people talk and have these conversations that are really driving it today.

Nestlé is talking about trying to sell its Canadian properties. That has done nothing to mute the opposition, as far as I can see, to this industry. In fact, it's lit a bit of a fire under it. It doesn't matter what the company is—

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** Back in 2007, were there any restrictions to the amount of water that could be taken from the land and sold by these companies?

**Mr. Robert Case:** The restrictions were on a permitted amount, so the application, as it is now, was for—I think in Aberfoyle it was 3.6 million litres, and 1.1 million in Hillsburgh. So the restriction on the amount was there through the permit-to-take-water system. It remains in place today.

But I think what's happened—a big issue recently was Nestlé's purchase of the Middlebrook well in Centre Wellington, outside of Elora. The permits in Aberfoyle and Hillsburgh didn't grow, but another well was added on with the hopes of pumping another 1.6 million litres. We're not really sure what other properties Nestlé had their eyes on at that point. It looks like a move to expand the operations. That really got a fire lit under a lot of people, a lot more people across the province, and actually internationally. We've had quite a bit of international attention on this issue.

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** And since, again, 2007, besides schedule 18 that you've referred to, that you said that you do support, what government initiatives were brought forward, in your opinion and that of the group that you represent, to help address the concerns that you were raising—or was there any other legislation brought forward since 2007 to deal with the concerns that your group has raised?

**Mr. Robert Case:** I would have to say our group fundamentally does oppose this particular use of water, ultimately, but there have been some helpful moves by this government and the previous government. I think this municipal consent is a major leap forward.

There have been some regulation changes. I think the previous government added in at least a requirement for a permit to take water to have some consultation with First Nations. There is an addition under the previous government, upheld by this government—not changed, I don't think—for additional scientific assessments before permits are granted.

It's currently under a moratorium, and we're thankful to this government for extending that moratorium, so that there would be time to look at this industry and look at the big picture of water governance in the context of population growth, climate change and these jurisdictional issues—municipal water needs and First Nation jurisdictions and all of those sorts of things. So there has been some progress made at a legislative and a regulatory level, I would say. But we're still pushing for it to go a bit further in terms of restricting, if not—

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute left.

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** Okay. Madam Chair, those are our questions. Thank you so much.

**Mr. Robert Case:** Thanks.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** We'll now turn to the independent Green Party member. MPP Schreiner, you have four and a half minutes. You may begin.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Thanks to all three presenters for taking the time to come to committee today.

Of course, it's always nice to have one of my constituents come to committee, as well. I appreciate Wellington Water Watchers bringing some attention to schedule 18. We haven't had an opportunity to examine this schedule to this point. I really appreciate your very balanced and pragmatic presentation, and your very specific suggestions about how schedule 18 could be improved. That's one of the jobs of committees: to look at legislation and figure out ways that we can make it better.

I know the city of Guelph has raised concerns about the fact that affected municipalities don't have the same rights as a municipality in which the water is actually being taken out of. I was hoping maybe you could elaborate on how important it is, because I know for a municipality like Guelph which is one of the largest cities in Canada that relies solely on groundwater, a lot of our intake wells are outside of the city limits, so what happens in the adjacent municipalities has a direct impact on the city's quality and quantity of water. Can you maybe just share a bit more on that?

1430

**Mr. Robert Case:** Well, I'm not a hydrogeologist or whatever, but the fact of the matter is that water does flow back and forth under municipal boundaries. We're tied together in the groundwater system, and the taking in one area can affect taking in another. Even within a municipality, I think it's important to realize that you can't just stick a pipe in the ground anywhere and produce enough water to service the city. The way aquifers work is there are very specific locations where you can do that. For example, I think of the Millbrook well. I've learned that if the Millbrook well goes ahead for water bottling and pumping, that limits the municipality's ability to generate more water anywhere within, I think, a one-kilometre radius of that well.

As Guelph pushes south, with its growth overflowing its boundaries—it's looking for more water now. It's not even that limiting the effect on its sourcing water outside the jurisdiction, but even within the jurisdiction, what's taken in neighbouring communities can have an impact on the ability to source the water needed to grow, according to the Places to Grow legislation.

I don't know if I can be more clear than that. It really is a matter of taking a look and every community having an opportunity to have input and talk about how it's going to affect them—their population growth, development growth and those sorts of things—before a permit for something like water bottling goes ahead. I'm not sure if I'm answering that very well, Mike, but that's my shot at it.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Thanks, Rob. That's great. I appreciate it.

I know Six Nations have been very vocal on this issue. There's a big billboard, if you drive outside of Guelph, from Six Nations. Can you maybe just talk about the importance of including First Nations and treaty holders in the particular provision of the proposed changes?

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute left.

**Mr. Robert Case:** Six Nations claims traditional rights over this part of Ontario, including both the Haldimand tract, where the Millbrook well is, and Aberfoyle. I think that really does need to be settled, not just in terms of morality, but in terms of long-term legal vulnerability. We really need to sort that out.

There is a bitter irony where Six Nations—I think only 9% of the households have clean water pumped into their houses, while water bottlers are proposing to draw water out without even their permission or any dialogue with them right from the Haldimand tract. It's both in terms of water security in Indigenous communities and for getting ahead of legal challenges regarding jurisdiction, treaty rights and that sort of thing in the future. I think it's important for all those—

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you very much. That's all the time that we have for this round.

We'll now turn to the official opposition for seven and a half minutes. MPP Sattler, you may begin.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Thank you to all the presenters. I think that the diversity of presentations that we have received really demonstrates what a grab bag omnibus bill this is.

I want to start with you, Professor Vellino. You had pointed out that this is an omnibus bill that has schedule 2 buried in it. That doesn't seem to have any kind of understandable connection to how it is smarter for business and better for people.

But you started out your presentation, Professor Vellino, talking about the faulty process that is reflected in this bill in pushing for Canada Christian College to become accredited. I wondered if you could elaborate on that a little bit more based on your experience. The government says, "Oh, this is the way we always do it. We have enabling legislation in case an institution passes the PEQAB process." But I'd like to hear your comments on that.

**Dr. Brenda Vellino:** Thank you for your question. I guess I'd just say that it doesn't seem to me, at least in my experience at Carleton University when we have a new program that's going to be even added to an existing and fully established program, that the review process for that program begins before the approval of the program. You can't get approval before the program is reviewed. It has been reported that the CCC has not completed its accreditation process for the programs it proposes and it asks the government to endorse—and endorse by law—so it seems to us that this isn't following a relatively by-consensus, agreed-upon academic process for credentialing.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** You also talked about the difference between hateful views that are espoused by an individual and hateful views that are reflected in an institution when it is the president and the founder of an institution who is expressing those opinions. Can you talk about the importance of institutions of higher learning adhering to the Ontario Human Rights Code, and how undermining the Ontario Human Rights Code would make Muslim students feel on campus, would make LGBTQ+ students feel? Why is it important within the post-secondary sector that institutions adhere to the Ontario Human Rights Code?

**Dr. Brenda Vellino:** Again, I guess I'd be speaking from principles that are broadly understood and shared amongst the university sector. If you look at the human rights codes for universities themselves, human rights principles that are tied to the Ontario Human Rights Code are front and centre of the organizing principles of every publicly funded university in Ontario. Certainly that is central to our principles as a faculty association, as well, for the reason that we believe that adhering to the human rights principles of the province, and indeed of the country, is essential work.

But also, as teachers, as most of us in faculty associations are, the well-being of our students is paramount, and that means all of our students in our classrooms and on campus. Creating an unsafe learning environment for them by people in leadership expressing views that are against the groups that they belong to is, I think, clearly a problem for fostering well-being amongst our students.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** The government has indicated that if Canada Christian College doesn't pass the PEQAB process, then they simply won't enact this schedule of the bill. Would you have concerns about that approach and the fact that just including this schedule 2 in Bill 213 somehow legitimizes Canada Christian College as qualified to have this status of a university? Would that cause a concern to you, if schedule 2 was just simply not enacted?

**Dr. Brenda Vellino:** Yes, and I'm going to pass this over to Christal Côté.

**Ms. Christal Côté:** Hi, it's Christal Côté. I'm the director of CUASA. We do have a concern in general, specifically for the reasons of procedure. This is most uncommon, very uncommon. Even to have it sitting shelved in any capacity in terms of the law, it's still there, and it will legitimize to some degree the CCC. What's very striking about it, as well, is that there is also no obvious connection to this government's August 2018 free speech policies that were levied against the universities either. So to us, even having it in a shelved capacity or sitting there as a conditional piece of legislation assuming accreditation may indeed be had at some point still doesn't give us the connected—

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute left.

1440

**Ms. Christal Côté:** So the free speech policy is also forming part of our concern as well, too. That's noticeably absent here in this omnibus bill.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Can you just elaborate on that a little bit more, the connection with the free speech policy?

**Ms. Christal Côté:** In August 2018, there was the free speech policy that the universities were required to put in place across all campuses, and universities were also required to create a complaint mechanism process for students who felt that their speech was being stifled. So that would go to the question, perhaps, of the Muslim student, as an example, on CCC campus and whatnot. That was required of all the public universities, but what we noticed is that in this capacity, dealing with a more private institution falling outside of our traditional accountability framework pieces, is that they would not be required to have that type of policy. Now, such a policy was not introduced by way of legislation or brought in through a bill, as an example. It was brought in through the regulatory—

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you. That's all the time that we have for this round. We'll now turn to the government for seven and a half minutes of questioning. Who would like to begin? MPP Piccini, you have seven and a half minutes.

**Mr. David Piccini:** I'm going to just have a question first for Carleton. Thank you both very much for coming before committee today. I very much appreciate Carleton's ongoing work. I've visited the campus a number of times, although I'm a University of Ottawa alumni, so don't hold it against me.

My question for you on the process—just because we're talking about a number of different processes, and I'm concerned that this might conflate a misunderstanding between policies that have existed for a number of years between private institutions in the province of Ontario and policies and influence government is able to exert over public institutions in the province of Ontario. So I just will start first with just a general question: Do you support private, faith-based institutions in Ontario and the long history that they've had?

**Dr. Brenda Vellino:** Thank you for that question. Yes. The short answer: Yes.

**Mr. David Piccini:** And what is the process that universities go through for a sort of a peer review or accreditation of university programs? Just for the benefit of everybody else here.

**Dr. Brenda Vellino:** I'm going to punt that to Christal, please.

**Ms. Christal Côté:** Sure. Very broadly speaking, what will happen—and I can go by way of example at Carleton University, especially on the new programming—is a faculty board will convene, which is the conglomerate of all the professors credentialed on the subject matter, and they will put together the proposed scheme. That will be brought to the senate, and then it will enter an experimental phase, as an example, to see whether the programming is viable and sustainable and also is meeting all of their requirements that the university would expect and standards and concerns for the students and whatnot.

The senate is essentially the equivalent of a congress of all university community representatives, including those students, as an example. And then from there, of course,

what would happen over time is that the programming itself would receive authorization from the senate and the academic bodies—not to be confused with the accreditation that could happen with credentials or micro-credential systems that would be included.

Concurrent to that whole senate process and review process would also be conditional requirements that any accreditation body could be levied under the circumstances. That could come from engineering associations. That could come from certified general accounting credentials. There are all kinds of different types of accreditation bodies that exist out there, particularly in the sciences.

So all of those processes will convene and occur over a span of several years, not just by way of paper and a single submission to the government.

**Mr. David Piccini:** Just for everyone, have you, Carleton University, gone through the PEQAB process recently at all, through the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board?

**Ms. Christal Côté:** I don't believe so, not recently. But then, mind you, Carleton also had a broad dearth of education programs.

**Mr. David Piccini:** No, I know, it was at university before PEQAB was established. I just wanted for the—because you talked about the process and a faulty outside process. So can you point to where this institution has gone outside the PEQAB process that has existed before, that has been widely accepted and utilized, independent, for the last two decades?

**Dr. Brenda Vellino:** Christal, I don't know if you have an insight on that answer.

**Ms. Christal Côté:** That has always been part of our concern, and that's the concern of the broader community: that more commonly, all these documents are made available, and associations aren't required to go on a search or a hunt for them, particularly if public. I think this is part and parcel—

**Mr. David Piccini:** Sorry, I've just got to interject there, and I apologize for interrupting. Have you visited the PEQAB website and viewed the current applications to date?

**Ms. Christal Côté:** No, we have not.

**Mr. David Piccini:** It's just building on what you said, because I think you mentioned a very good point, and I don't want to lose it. Sorry again.

All institutions, their applications are public, for the public to review. I'm curious: When you go through your review process in Carleton that you mentioned, is that public, from initial application? When does it go public, for the public to review?

**Ms. Christal Côté:** My understanding for our particular programming is when it receives its first institutional checkmarks and that paperwork gets forwarded—now, when exactly it gets published in the scheme, that I don't think is a set period of time in any year. I think it's really dependent on the programming as well. But, otherwise, I don't think I'm understanding your question about—

**Mr. David Piccini:** No, just on the specific process here, everybody that has applied via PEQAB for nomenclature—in this case, this institution has required a nomenclature change, which many before it have requested, and organizational review. On that organizational review, just because I wanted your thought process here: If we're going to talk about PEQAB and how we look at that body and how they oversee, I'd absolutely welcome that. But I'm trying to ascertain why you both didn't come for the omnibus bill last fall that brought forward other institutions through the same process. If the process itself—because you said that this is a faulty process. I personally would dispute—this process is a strong, independent process. But you've said that this independent process—

*Interjection.*

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Sorry, MPP Piccini. I notice MPP Glover has his hand up. Yes, MPP Glover?

**Mr. Chris Glover:** Yes. I want to raise a point of order, Madam Speaker. We were told last week that we have to let the deputants finish their answers.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** MPP Glover, first of all, that's not a point of order. Second of all, I've been lenient because I understand that, given the limited amount of time, MPPs would like to make sure that their questions are being answered. I've been lenient with both sides during this hearing. I have allowed MPPs to interject with presenters in order to get to the answer they're seeking. I've done that, and I've been lenient for both the official opposition as well as government.

At this point, MPP Glover, unless you have an actual point of order, I would recommend that we allow proceedings to resume, because we are on a time allocation, and I don't want to cut off anyone's time because they decided to raise a point of order.

We'll now resume. MPP Piccini, if you want to finish your sentence, I'm going to—

**Mr. David Piccini:** How much time do I have?

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** I stopped the clock. At this point, you have one minute and 34 seconds left.

**Mr. David Piccini:** Yes, I very much value this dialogue, so I apologize that it has either offended you or MPP Glover. I just wanted to zero in on that public piece there, because I think it's important for everybody to note that on the PEQAB website, one can go on, irrespective of the institution that brings forward an application, be it for nomenclature, be it for organizational review—I've got it open right now: [peqab.ca/currentapplications](http://peqab.ca/currentapplications). One can click and see the institutional application.

I was just curious, on that piece, while we have experts before us, where you would identify—

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute left.

**Mr. David Piccini:** —I mean, it talks about organizational abilities. There's a financial piece. And PEQAB, of course, consists of educational experts. If you were to identify an area of the PEQAB process—and specifically within the organizational review, because

that's very much the schedule in question here today—what would you improve within the PEQAB process, specifically within the organizational review component?

**Ms. Christal Côté:** To answer your question—because I think I understand it better now than originally. Our apologies if, when we made the statement of faulty process, it seemed we were speaking about the whole scheme. We weren't actually doing so. We were speaking specifically about the CCC's approach.

We have no concerns about the general scheme and framework, which is why we equally do support faith-based institutions who have followed that proper public scheme, that proper application and go through the right and correct authorities. Our position is that CCC has indeed not done so—

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you. That's all the time we have for this round.

We'll now turn to the independent Green Party member for four and a half minutes. You may begin.

1450

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Rob, I'm going to direct a few more questions your way. My apologies to the other presenters, we've had a lot of opportunity to discuss schedules 2, 16 and 24, and 18 is of particular importance to my riding.

Rob, you talked about the importance of applying the municipal input into renewals, as well as new and increased permit applications. One of the points you made was around change over time. I'm just thinking, the city of Guelph had 115,000 people in 2007; it's 133,000 today. We're supposed to have 170,000 by the end of the decade. I'm looking at Centre Wellington, an adjacent community directly affected by this. Their population is about 28,000 right now. It's going to almost double over the next 25 years to over 50,000. Obviously, demand for water is going to change.

I'm just wondering if you could maybe elaborate on the importance of what I think you're saying is a good move the government has made here: applying it to renewals as well as new and increased permits.

**Mr. Robert Case:** Yes, I think you hit the nail on the head with the way you described it, because not only is the population changing—and in some ways population growth is beyond the municipality's control. It's pretty much planned out in the Places to Grow Act. A place like Centre Wellington is, on the one hand, kind of legislated to accept a certain amount of population, then on the other hand, unless this legislation gets changed, it doesn't have control over who is taking how much water, for what purposes and when, and who gets priority over access to the wellheads and those sorts of things. So I think the population can grow, new evidence can come forward, also provincial and municipal governments change.

The way it works now is usually a permit is made for five years, though sometimes two years. When it comes to expiry, there are some hoops to jump through, but it's almost a rollover into a new permit. So it seems crazy to me that a withdrawal of support from the municipality—the proposal says that the minister “may” consider that

opposition; I think the minister “should” consider that opposition, especially given that there is no time limit. I mean, Nestlé has been pumping in Aberfoyle and Hillsburgh since 2000 continually—that's 20 years. Things change a lot in that period of time. So I think it's an appropriate time to reconsider, and if things are going well and five years go on, the township says “Yes, go ahead,” or things are not going well, the councillors say, “Actually, we don't want to do this anymore.” I think that's just as appropriate as having municipal consent at the beginning, 20 years ago, when we didn't know as much—giving that consent, and that consent standing the whole time.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute left.

**Mr. Robert Case:** I do think that the permit expiry and renewal period is a legitimate and logical time to reconsider municipal consent.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** We're almost out of time, so if I could maybe summarize your presentation a little bit: There are some good elements in schedule 18, and we have an opportunity to tweak it through some amendments to improve it, to address some of the concerns that your organization has, the city of Guelph has and others. So you would be supportive of this schedule provided that we can make some amendments to improve it to address the concerns you brought to committee.

**Mr. Robert Case:** Yes, I would say that is the case. The fundamental point about municipal consent, we support. We think that's a very positive step for everybody. Just like I said, it needs to be just expanded a little bit further.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you, that's all the time we have.

We'll now turn to the official opposition for seven and a half minutes. MPP Fife, you may begin.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Thank you, Chair. I'm going to share my time with MPP Glover.

Very quickly, I just want to say to Raymond that we share your concerns and we're going to be addressing them in clause-by-clause on Wednesday.

Also, to Robert, I just want to say, you've raised two very good points around permit renewals and then also a missed opportunity to address around aggregate. That's very political right now in the province of Ontario, partly because of the action that this government has taken.

Then I just want to say to Christal and Brenda, thank you very much for your presentation. You've actually echoed many academics who have come before this committee from Queen's to St. Jerome's at the University of Waterloo, where I'm the MPP. But I'm also an alumna of Carleton so I'm happy to see you here as well.

Christal, I want to go back to where MPP Sattler left, because you made a very good point which has not come up yet thus far, and that's around the freedom of speech regulatory scheme that the government brought in. You had mentioned that CCC had not had to develop a policy. This comes within the context, obviously, of some of the comments that the president of CCC has made, and we do regard the language that he has used as homophobic,

Islamophobic, transphobic and, with regard to his comments around Haitians, to be racist, pure and simple—racist.

How do we square this? Because the government has argued process, and you've heard some of the arguments there, but on university campuses the freedom of speech piece is very key. If you did have a member of the LGBTQ community at CCC, how safe do you think they would feel in that context? Christal, you can go first, and maybe Brenda will comment.

**Ms. Christal Côté:** Right. I don't think anybody would feel safe in that context, to be fair. Essentially, what's occurring here is schedule 2 is being used as an escape hatch from a free speech policy that already exists. What's very much concerning here is not only the step-around and, really, the wilful ignorance of the Human Rights Code, as it relates—we're all very familiar with this—but also about a policy that was very much brought forward onto university campuses with a full requirement for a complaint process to make sure that it was fair for students who were put in that type of predicament.

It was also designed not to censor people's thoughts and opinions and to allow them to grow and learn freely on a university campus. So what's of concern here in this type of institutional model and what we are seeing is that schedule 2 is working around a policy that this government has already asked all the other accredited universities and credentialed professors out there to honour and respect.

In our view, schedule 2 is the escape hatch from something that they expect everybody else to do, but not this particular college.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Brenda, did you want to comment as well?

**Dr. Brenda Vellino:** I would just add that any student who was on CCC campus who was gay or lesbian would definitely feel that they had to hide their identity because it would be unsafe to be fully present as who they were.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** The president of CCC has also been on the record as saying that educational institutions should be teaching creationism as well. Do you think that the dean of science at Carleton would concur with teaching creationism on our university campuses?

**Dr. Brenda Vellino:** No. That's what I was pointing to when I was suggesting that the religiously held views impede, potentially, or clash with some of the agreed-upon academic standards around teaching of science.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Thank you for getting that on record. I'm going to go over to MPP Glover, my colleague. Thank you.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** MPP Glover.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** I want to thank all of the presenters for being here.

I want to follow up with what MPP Fife was asking about. In 2018, the government announced that they would be bringing in this freedom of speech requirement for all public colleges and universities. But as you've pointed out, schedule 2 of this bill actually exempts Canada Christian College from that same requirement that they just imposed on all the other institutions, all the other

universities in Ontario, and yet, they're arguing that Canada Christian College has the right to a fair process here. Is your argument basically that this isn't a fair process, because they're actually being given special treatment under this schedule?

**1500**

**Ms. Christal Côté:** Yes, I believe that very fairly sums it up. Unfortunately, in this circumstance, no other university or college in 2018 was afforded this degree of leisure in approach. There was no fair process, I would say, implemented. The universities and colleges were just told they were going to do it and they were going to have it implemented with a one-year timeframe.

So I think that goes straight to the heart of the process. The question is: Everybody else has been expected to follow fair process. Every other institution has indeed followed that process, except for one, and that's Canada Christian College. All they need to do is just pass schedule 2. To us, that's where it's wholly insufficient and unfair to students, professors, academic institutes across the whole of the province.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** Okay. There has also been a comparison between the process that OCAD and Algoma went through and the process that CCC is going through. Can you comment on that?

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute left.

**Dr. Brenda Vellino:** I would just like to say that OCAD and Algoma already had well-developed programs in all of the ranges of offerings that had already gone through certification and accreditation processes. There's a huge difference between an institution that has not up till now offered any programming for a bachelor of arts and bachelor of sciences to suddenly be pre-approved for offering this type of programming, before they've actually gone through the proper accreditation processes. So I think there's a huge difference. There's a similarity, perhaps, in name only: the college status of those institutions.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** How much time is there left, Madam Chair?

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** About 15 seconds.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** Okay. I won't bother starting another question, but I want to thank everybody for being here. Thank you, Brenda, Raymond and Christal. Thank you so much, everybody, for being here.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you very much. This concludes this round. I would like to thank our presenters. You may now step down. You're released from the committee.

MS. AKANKSHA SHARMA

GBL INC.

MR. BENJAMIN DICHTER

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** We'll now turn to our next group of presenters. Each presenter will have seven minutes, followed by a round of questions.

We'll begin with Akanksha Sharma. Please state your name for the record, and then you may begin. You will have seven minutes.

**Ms. Akanksha Sharma:** [*Inaudible*] divinity program at Canada Christian College. I'm here this afternoon to speak in favour of schedule 2 of Bill 213.

I still remember my first day at Canada Christian College. I was very nervous, but I was immediately surprised to see how welcoming the college was. That morning, the president himself personally greeted me. His humbleness and kindness deeply touched me. At that moment, I felt peace in my heart. All my fears and anxieties disappeared.

As I continued my education at this great institution, I developed a closer relationship with many of the faculty and staff. All the professors, including Dr. McVety, made themselves available to the students 24 hours a day, seven days a week. I cannot express how much love and support the college provided to me when I needed it most.

I needed this loving environment because I belonged to a Brahman family, the highly priest caste in Hinduism. When I became a Christian, I was much oppressed by society, as well as by my family. In fact, for a while, my family disowned me. Even now, things are very difficult. Because of this hard situation, I decided to move to Canada to find refuge and practise my faith freely.

When I moved here, I met many other students who had faced the same type of religious persecution in their own countries. Canada Christian College has supported all of us in the difficult times. I am so grateful to Canada Christian College for creating such a loving environment for people like me. I'm even more thankful that I could pursue my degree without getting into debt, because Canada Christian College is far more affordable than most other schools I looked at in Ontario.

However, because of the ongoing torture and blame game against my college by many politicians, I am grief-stricken to face the same religious persecution that I felt in India. When I moved here, I thought Canada was a different country, where all are welcome and can express their views and beliefs freely. I guess I was wrong.

I have been reading and following the news, and it's horrifying to see that people are calling my college an institute of hate. This is not true. We are taught to love all people because God loves all people. We are taught that we should respect and honour people of all races, religions and sexual orientation. I am very sad to see so many people lie about us day after day.

I am an ordained Indian pastor who believes in the same Bible as other Asian cultures. Whether or not you know this, Indian, Sri Lankan, Chinese or Korean churches are not the same as Western, white churches. I am not sure why we are told when we arrive in Canada that we will be accepted but later are told we are hateful or must change our beliefs. Today, in Christianity, there are strong divisions between the West and non-West. Just because a white pastor calls us hateful, transphobic or Islamophobic doesn't mean it's true.

My fellow students are ordained pastors in Tamil churches, Chinese churches, Korean churches, Ethiopian churches and Colombian churches. They may be different than the Canadian churches, but it doesn't mean that they are hateful or wrong. Canada is supposed to be welcoming and inclusive to new Canadians. If this is true, then it needs to allow for non-Western expression of Christianity.

I have spent four years in this college and have seen people coming from all across the globe. We have Indians, Pakistanis, Africans, Jamaicans, Indonesians, Koreans and Saudi Arabians. I have the privilege to know them all and to learn about their cultures. This institution has taught me to show love and respect towards people of all religions. It is my belief that, while we are all different, there is really only one race, that is, the human race.

The knowledge I have gained from this college has encouraged me to uplift the weak and the vulnerable in society. I have seen many of my friends who graduated from this college serve the community through volunteer and paid work. I have seen my professors pushing their students to succeed. All of the students have put their time and effort into pursuing their degrees. Most made numerous sacrifices and are having their education damaged by baseless allegations. Today, current students and graduates are in fear and trembling. They are wondering if their degrees will be recognized after all the hateful allegations that have been made against the college.

I am planning to pursue doctoral studies. I have the right to a university education in Christian education. I can't think of going to a university other than Canada Christian College, because the professors are so passionate and knowledgeable. They set a very high standard and push the students to bring out their maximum potential. I have a bachelor's in biochemistry from the University of Mumbai, and my studies at Canada Christian College have been just as rigorous, if not more so.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute left.

**Ms. Akanksha Sharma:** I want to ask some questions on behalf of the student body. Are Christian students less valuable than non-Christian students? Are Christian students not entitled to claim the same constitutional rights? Why are we targeted? Why do so many politicians hate us? Why do they think they can push us around?

In conclusion, I request that you keep your political agenda to yourself and stop damaging our lives. I feel that I am a victim because I'm receiving the same persecution I left behind in India. I am a victim because I work hard for my degree and there are politicians trying to steal that from me. I would call these politicians Christophobic. This act of hatred toward the students is very, very hurtful. I request that you stop stealing our rights.

I strongly believe in Canada's government, and I know a fair decision will be made by this committee to support schedule 2 in Bill 213. Thank you.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you very much for your presentation.

We now turn to our next presenter, GBL Inc. Please state your names for the record, and then you may begin. You will have seven minutes.



**Mr. Navaz Cassam:** Hi. There are three of us here from GBL: myself, Navaz Cassam, Margie Benedict and Laura LaRiviere.

I am going to share my screen. We put together a PowerPoint presentation. Hopefully everybody can see what's on there right now.

1510

First off, thank you, everyone, for letting us speak on feedback for Bill 213. We will be focusing on one subsection of the bill. That's section 18 under the Pension Benefits Act.

To recap, this is our team: myself, Margie and Laura. We're an actuarial consulting firm. A little bit about GBL, because I'm not sure if anyone's heard of us on this committee: We're two offices—in Calgary and Toronto—we're an actuarial consulting firm with over 120 years of experience, and we're the market leader in individual pensions plans. That will be our key discussion point today as it relates to Bill 213.

As we mentioned, we're going to focus on the exemption of individual pension plans, which we refer to as IPPs, from application of the act.

Some background: We have thousands of clients that have individual pension plans. In 2019, hundreds of our clients and some of our competitors' clients sent letters to the EVP of pensions of FSRA outlining their frustration at the regulation, or lack of regulation, and the little perceived value they got from being part of FSRA and having FSRA oversee their pension plan. One of the key points of contention was the fact that fees went from approximately \$250 per year to \$750 per year. So we're talking fees that almost tripled in value, and these are one- and two-member pension plans; they're small business owners, so pouring out an extra \$500 a year was very onerous for them to save for their retirement.

Following that, we did receive some feedback from FSRA and then were delighted to see Bill 213. Just to recap, we've only outlined the parts that relate to the Pension Benefits Act and the exemption of IPPs in schedule 19. Ultimately, what it says is that "connected" plans are going to be exempt under the act. We pulled it out from the bill here, but ultimately any former member, member or retired member of the plan, as long as they're considered a "connected" employee, will be exempt from FSRA. That doesn't mean there is no oversight; there's still oversight with CRA in these pension plans. It just means that FSRA won't be associated with these plans. These are connected individuals who own 10% of the business. Ultimately, it's business owners saving for their own retirement.

We have a little bit of a recap here: What is an IPP? It's a defined benefit pension plan with three or fewer members. The connected person has to be legitimate on this plan, so at least 10% of the business is owned by a member of the plan. It really focuses on small business owners and helps them save for retirement, which is really important, right? It allows them to harness savings. [Inaudible] small business owners is just tough, depending on the environment, so now more than ever the additional

money they would save can really help them for retirement.

Our view is that we, along with our clients, 100% approve and support the bill and the changes outlined in the bill. We do feel these are the right decisions and we're thankful that the Ontario government has made these changes. These changes do allow thousands of Canadians to save more for retirement, it does reduce the red tape associated with the connected person, and, on the flip side, we feel like the Ontario regulator can focus more on protecting arm's-length pension plans, so those that aren't connected, where a change of employer can make it really impact or negatively impact members.

In general, IPPs are already exempt from key sections of the Pension Benefits Act in Ontario, such as they can already reduce benefits upon termination or retirement, which is different than what is allowed for arm's-length members. Mandatory funding requirements are generally unenforced, so again FSRA does not play a role in these plans as they would in other pension plans in Ontario. And the IPP valuation assumptions that we use in the funding limitations are governed by CRA. They're not the same as the other pension plans governed under the PBA. Again, the CRA is already there outlining maximum restrictions and so forth.

FSRA-specific support: We talked about it. It utilizes unnecessary resources from FSRA to monitor pension plans where the rules are different. It is a big, large burden, right? The fee itself, it's \$750 a year for a one-person plan. It's quite onerous. If you look at the amount of money they're going to lose out at retirement from that, it's quite astronomical.

Then we've also received general feedback from FSRA, because we do talk to them a lot, working with them on thousands of plans. Their feedback is also that they prefer the exemptions.

Other jurisdictions, many provincial—

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute left.

**Mr. Navaz Cassam:** —have already exempted IPPs from provincial legislation. BC, Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec and Nova Scotia are already there. PEI follows the federal body as well. The CRA does provide oversight in terms of deductions, contributions and benefit entitlements.

In summary, I just want to say we do support it and we commend Bill 213, specifically section 19, and GBL supports this. That was under seven minutes.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you very much for your presentation.

We'll now turn to our third and final presenter, Benjamin Dichter. Please state your name for the record and then you may begin. You will have seven minutes.

**Mr. Benjamin Dichter:** Hi. I'm Benjamin Dichter. I am the co-founder of a group called LGBTory.

Several weeks ago, I received an email targeting Canada Christian College from a group called NCCM. This is a little bit concerning given their background. Allow me to give some specifics, and I'll explain what I mean and why it's relevant to the bill in question.

According to the CEO of NCCM, he posted on June 5 of this year, “A bunch of awful people showed up in Ottawa to scream about the redemption of Christ.” It appears Mustafa Farooq has an anti-Christian bias, referring to Christian preachers as “awful people,” but we’ll get back to him in a second.

Then there are the voices from the perceived leaders of the communities linked to NCCM and their views on the LGBT community. Imam Abu Bilal Philips, a Canadian Muslim scholar, says, “Islamic law says that if you’re caught in the act” of gay sex “in an Islamic state, you will be executed. If you’ve been seen by four witnesses etc. execution—that’s the law.”

Next, we have Wael Shihab, imam from Masjid Toronto, affiliated with the Muslim Association of Canada. He says, “Homosexuality is a sinful act in Islam ... we should not associate with them and should not take them as friends.... In Islam, changing one’s sex is not permissible if the person (male or female) has complete male or female sex organs.... Islam has a clear stand on this issue, as it emphatically forbids homosexuality and lesbianism and regards them as a violation of the commands of Allah. It states clearly that same-sex marriage poses a serious and dangerous threat to human societies and communities.”

Yusuf Badat, imam and director at the Islamic Foundation of Toronto, on transgenderism: “These individuals can gain mental treatment and guidance through counselling and therapy.... It is prohibited to have a sex reassignment surgery in Islam.”

Imam Abdullah Hakim Quick, director at the Canadian Council of Imams: “So he said: What is the position of Islam on homosexuality? They ask me. So newspaper, right? So I said: Put my name in the paper. The position is death. And we cannot change Islam.... It (homosexuality) goes with Zionism,” apparently. “And really it seems like, Allah knows best, if they are Dajjal’s (Antichrist) army while it is mostly Jews but probably there will be homosexuals with them too.” Very tolerant.

Imam Syed Soharwardy, the founder of Muslims Against Terrorism: “According to the teachings of Islam, homosexual behaviour is an abnormal behaviour and must be cured. Homosexuality is completely forbidden in Islam.”

Mazin Abdul-Adhim, a Muslim scholar from London, Ontario, an imam: “I believe that homosexuality is absolutely not genetic in any way, shape or form. It is entirely conceptual, period....” Further down the quote, he says, “It is a sexual perversion, an illness of the desires, and it must be accepted as such.”

Imam Rizvi of the Jaffari centre, in his book *Marriage and Morals in Islam*: “In the Islamic legal system, homosexuality is a punishable crime against the laws of God.”

Arif Jahangiri, the secretary general of ICNA Canada says, “The Prophet (Mohammed) told us that homosexuals are cursed by Allah as are the men who imitate or dress up like women.”

## 1520

Excerpts from the book *Minhaj Al-Muslim*, which was available at ICNA Canada’s bookstore in Toronto, had fixed punishment of homosexuality as stoning to death.

These are quotes coming from groups and leaders aligned with NCCM and Mustafa Farooq, and this was just the tip of the iceberg. I could go on for hours with these quotes.

If the government accepts Mustafa Farooq and NCCM’s definition of bigotry as outlined in their statement, then Mustafa Farooq must equally apply that standard to himself and NCCM and their affiliated organizations and imams guilty of hateful rhetoric toward the LGBT community.

The email I received that I started with, which was signed by Mustafa Farooq, states, “McVety also has reportedly stated, ‘Islam is not just a religion, it’s a political and cultural system as well and we know that Christians and Jews and Hindus don’t have the same mandate for a hostile takeover.’”

But what does Mustafa Farooq have to say about this? He says in a Facebook post, “In terms of civic disobedience, while definitely important, we have to look more closely at the civics. How are we Muslims going to recreate Cordoba,” the Caliphate or Islamic state, “in Edmonton/Toronto/Montreal/any Canadian city? We have a massive task ahead of us, but I really believe that it is one at which we can succeed, one in which we erase these artificial ‘nation-state’ identities and move together to pursue Jannah.”

Mustafa Farooq, the head of the NCCM, in his own words advocates for the gradual Islamization of Canada by erasing its national identity. This rhetoric has also been repeated by other prominent imams in the community, including Shaikh Abdool Hamid, the senior imam of Masjid Toronto.

A couple of years ago, the LGBT community was shocked by the lack of action by higher-ups in the Toronto police services with regard to serial killer Bruce McArthur, who targeted the LGBT community.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute left.

**Mr. Benjamin Dichter:** I hope that Toronto police and mayors John Tory, Patrick Brown and Bonnie Crombie will not repeat the same mistake by ignoring clear and documented hatred for the LGBT community espoused by individuals and groups linked to NCCM, despite the rhetoric of shielded identity politics when it is politically expedient.

Personally, I have gotten to know Charles McVety over the past several years and been to Canada Christian College many, many times. Not one person at Canada Christian College has ever advocated any kind of violence toward the LGBT community, unlike what I have just quoted. Again, these are their words. In fact, I’ve repeatedly heard Dr. McVety say over and over again, “We love all of God’s children.” With regard to the smear against them, I strongly suggest you consider the source. Thank you.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you very much. At this point, we’ll go to our first round of

questions, beginning with the official opposition for seven and a half minutes. Who would like to start? MPP Sattler, you may begin.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I want to thank the presenters. I suspect, Mr. Cassam, that you were a bit surprised by the other presentations that were on the panel, but I appreciate you coming forward and sharing your perspective on the changes to assist small business owners plan for their retirement. So that schedule of the bill is obviously important, and we have heard other presenters come today and express support for some of the specific actions that are outlined in this bill.

I wanted to focus my questions on Mr. Dichter. But before I do that, I wanted to say, Ms. Sharma, thank you so much for your presentation and for sharing your experience as a student in a faith-based institution and what that meant to you. Thank you for coming to us today.

Mr. Dichter, you quoted a lot from the National Council of Canadian Muslims, which is not applying to become a university in Ontario. However, I just wanted to ask you about some of the things that you have been quoted as saying, given that you came and quoted from somebody else, another organization that has appeared before this committee. But before I do that, can you just confirm for us that you are a former candidate of the Conservative Party of Canada?

**Mr. Benjamin Dichter:** Yes, I was.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** And in the last federal election you left the Conservative Party to endorse Maxime Bernier and the People's Party of Canada?

**Mr. Benjamin Dichter:** No, but I gave a speech at his rally explaining specifically why I thought it would be well advised for current Conservative members at the time to support Maxime.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Right.

**Mr. Benjamin Dichter:** But I am still a member of the Conservative Party to this day.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Okay. At that rally, media reports quoted that speech that you gave to a People's Party of Canada meeting, and in that speech you said you viewed the Liberal Party as being "infested with Islamists," and you pointed to a Conservative Party that is moving down the same road and lacks the guts to do anything about it. Can you explain what you meant by that comment, and specifically what you meant by your reference to the Conservative Party lacking the guts to do anything about it?

**Mr. Benjamin Dichter:** Sure. Well, we can go back to many of the quotes that I've just outlined, which I can go on, like I said, for hours quoting some of the rhetoric that's coming out of certain communities. The Liberal Party has done absolutely nothing not only to oppose it, but they have gone out of their way to go to reach out to extremist groups in some of these mosques that have some of this hateful rhetoric.

For example, there was a former director of one of the organizations in Vancouver who repeatedly had been recorded saying things like the Zionists are the enemy and Israel is the enemy of the Canadian people and all that sort

of stuff. She repeatedly had been getting photo ops with Justin Trudeau at events which he had been invited to. He had given speeches at some of the organizations that I just quoted. He has gone there to give speeches and talk about how he "aligns with their worldview."

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I understand other things that you were quoted as having said at that rally include this: "Despite what our corporate media and political leaders want to admit, Islamist entryism and the adaptation of political Islam is rotting away at our society like syphilis." You went on to say about the Conservative Party, "What do our Conservative politicians do? They meet with extremists and they put at risk modern and secular Muslims who want to integrate into Canada and to leave the garbage of their birth country behind them."

Do you consider that, Mr. Dichter, as hate speech? If not, do you consider that kind of language as acceptable in the context of a post-secondary institution?

**Mr. Benjamin Dichter:** Well, I think one has to be very careful and use specific definitions; the difference between somebody who is Islamist and espouses extremist rhetoric as opposed to somebody who is Muslim. I'll give you an example. Several years ago, in 2018, if I'm not mistaken, many of my Muslim political refugee friends came to the Pride Parade and they held a rally. What they were doing was condemning the extremism from their birth countries and that they support the LGBT community and acceptance. And they were attacked—these are Muslims. They were called Islamophobes. This sort of thing goes on regularly within our society.

When I reference the problems with our political structure and our political class—for example, I quoted Imam Rizvi in here. Imam Rizvi, in one of his many videos, explains how he aligns with the ayatollahs of Iran. Now, this is the guy who York Regional Police goes to for consultation.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute left

**Mr. Benjamin Dichter:** So if you want to know why secular Muslims are silent and do not talk about the extremism, that's why, because politicians are not distinguishing the difference between my friends, secular Muslims who were persecuted and jailed and escaped to Canada—they don't distinguish between them and the Islamists. Instead, what our political class is doing is opening the doors for them.

1530

You see what's happening in countries like France and Germany and England, where their national intelligence services have released reports explaining how these Islamist groups are growing, and they're growing with the protection of our political class. That's why, to our shock, when Macron came around and did a full 180 and said political Islam is the enemy of the state of France, he was not talking about Muslims. He was not talking about secularists or even religious Muslims who don't espouse extremist ideology. He's talking about extremists, and that's what I'm talking about.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you very much. That's all the time we have for this round.

We'll now turn to the government for seven and a half minutes. MPP Piccini, you may begin.

**Mr. David Piccini:** I'll just start by saying thank you to all the presenters. I'm sorry how things have unfolded here. Certainly, we have had other presenters, including Mr. Farooq, who I had a wonderful dialogue with. I didn't question him about, certainly, his work for Rachel Notley, because I value that he worked in government for an Alberta NDP party, and I think it's valuable. I don't think this is what this committee is about. I think this committee is about process and it's about government legislation.

My first question is for Akanksha. My first question is for you about legislation and, specifically, as some of the rhetoric we have heard from members opposite has led to a lot of hatred directed towards yourself and other graduates, I'm just wondering if you can, for the benefit of everyone—are you aware, at this institution—certainly, it's just going through the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board process actively now as we speak. Would you advocate for the institution or are you aware of anyone in the institution actively asking for any sort of special treatment, or would you prefer that you go through the fair and open and transparent process that everybody goes through?

**Ms. Akanksha Sharma:** Yes, I would certainly say that the process should be fair and just, like every other college. There's just one part that we feel really bad—that we are being discriminated against and our college is attacked over and over again. For several years, this war has been going on and we're just tired of this. We're really exhausted. All the student body, everybody, they're just waiting for this process to end.

We really want our degrees from a university. When we finish our education, when we present our CV, when we go and apply for jobs, it's very sad that we have to write "college" on our CV, as said by our academic team. So it will be great if our college becomes a university. It will be great for all the students.

**Mr. David Piccini:** That's what is called a nomenclature change on the PEQAB website. That's something we rarely hear the opposition actually reference, any of the process. I think it reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of the process. But that reflects a nomenclature change on the PEQAB website.

How long has your institution been granting PhDs and master's etc.? Are you aware of how long that has happened?

**Ms. Akanksha Sharma:** I think since 1999.

**Mr. David Piccini:** Okay, thank you. And I'm sorry. You spoke about where you come from. I think Canada is a wonderful country where we all come. My own background isn't just reflective of the vowels of my Italian-sounding last name; I have family from a number of different backgrounds. I've had the opportunity to work around the world. One of the things, as I've mentioned to other presenters, that I love about our country and our province, when I return home, is we can practise our faith freely. That's something that, certainly, I was not afforded when I travelled to other jurisdictions that I had to work

in. I'm often signing attestations that we wouldn't practise our faith, and that actually singled out the LGBTQ community, which we find abhorrent here in Ontario.

So certainly, I think the equality to practise one's faith—you support Ontario's long and proud history, supported by a number of parties, of faith-based institutions in this province?

**Ms. Akanksha Sharma:** Yes, I do.

**Mr. David Piccini:** And how has some of what you have heard—certainly the paternalistic nature through which I am targeted on social media from members of the opposition, certainly that patronizing nature has fuelled a lot of hatred and comments. How has that affected you and how has that sort of hatred affected you and other graduates and current students of the institution?

**Ms. Akanksha Sharma:** It has affected our mental health. All the allegations made by the opposition party against our college or against our president are baseless.

The college has just taught us how to love and to treat everyone equally, with respect, irrespective of their belief, their origin or sexuality. Love is the foundation of Christianity and this what the Canada Christian College stands for, and this is what I've experienced there.

**Mr. David Piccini:** Sorry, I'm just going to have to stop you right there because I think a lot of people here would dispute, necessarily, that there haven't been statements made. But that's not what we're here for; what we're here for is on this process. Do you feel as institutions the government should deviate from this open process applied to institutions to start allowing, perhaps, opposition members to go through faculty lists and assess what faculty have done? Or do you think we should stick to a fair and open process that looks at institutions, their merits, and that reviews their structure through an independent process? What would you prefer to see?

**Ms. Akanksha Sharma:** I think I would stick to the process, yes.

**Mr. David Piccini:** And in your education at this institution, you're not aware of, or have seen personally firsthand, any of the things that have been accused by others, accusations that have been levelled? There are a lot of accusations that have come out about the institution. What has your experience been as a student and a graduate?

**Ms. Akanksha Sharma:** Like I mentioned earlier, all the accusations made against our college are baseless. With so many lies against our college, I don't trust any of the statements made by them.

**Mr. David Piccini:** Akanksha, isn't this what we're really here about? It's not about members of the Legislature or individuals. This is about an independent process that all institutions have to go before. Certainly, a lot has been talked about enabling legislation. You're before a nomenclature change and an organizational review.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute left.

**Mr. David Piccini:** Are you aware that organizational review and the nomenclature change—I think this independent process will let that process run its course, but when it's done and this process is done, do you think that this independent process makes you more or less likely to

pursue an education from any one of Ontario's post-secondary institutions?

**Ms. Akanksha Sharma:** Honestly, there is one thing that I would like to point out: In Bill 213, there are a couple of other schools and colleges mentioned. It's really sad to see that only Canada Christian College has been targeted. I just feel like we are going through a simple, fair process and, like I said earlier, I believe in the justice system. I think a fair decision will be made or—

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you. That's all the time that we have for this round.

We'll now turn to the independent member for four and a half minutes. MPP Schreiner, you may begin.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Thank you to all three presenters. I will have to apologize; I had to step into the House for a debate and came back late, so I missed all three of your presentations. I am asking questions a bit blind. If I'm asking a question that has already been addressed in your presentation, I apologize.

I wanted to direct my first question to GBL Inc. Schedule 2 has dominated a lot of the conversation of this bill, which means we haven't had a chance to address some of the other schedules of the bill. We've had others come to present and offer some recommendations of how the schedule on pensions can be altered or changed to improve the bill or address concerns. I'm just wondering, did you bring any recommendations of changes to the bill you would like to see, moving forward?

**Mr. Navaz Cassam:** As it relates to the section we presented on, which is the focus on exemptions to the IPPs, we thought it was well-written. We did see it when it was first proposed, and it's in line with the other jurisdictions, and I think it's fair that they're focusing on connected individuals, which is really where the CRA steps in and provides the guidance.

1540

As written—I don't know, Laura or Margie, if you guys have any suggestions on that or any changes that we might have wanted?

**Ms. Laura LaRiviere:** No, we didn't propose any changes to the legislation as written.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Great. Thank you for your time on that.

I'll direct my next question to Ms. Sharma. I certainly feel for any student at any academic institution who feels threatened. Nobody in our province should feel that way because of the college or university they attend.

I'm wondering if you feel as a student if there's a way to separate, or if the institution separates the words that Mr. McVety uses in the way in which he describes the LGBTQ+ community or the Muslim community, the Haitian community etc. from the practices of the institution itself.

**Ms. Akanksha Sharma:** Dr. McVety was my professor. He taught me systematic theology 1, 2 and 3. For four years, I've known Dr. McVety so well. He's such a humble person. He's so generous. All I've learned from his classes is that there is only one race—that is, the human race—and we have to respect every single human being

and we have to treat them with love and respect, irrespective of their sexuality, their origin, their caste or their belief.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Even though you probably are aware of some of his public comments and the fact that even the Christian television network removed his show from their airwaves, you don't equate his public comments that are clearly on the record with discussions or conversations that happened on campus?

**Ms. Akanksha Sharma:** Well, we never had any such conversation. But if you want to know him, you should directly talk to him about it, because all you do is just lie.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute left.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Okay, I appreciate that. Can you see where some groups in society would feel threatened or feel like hate might be directed toward them based on Mr. McVety's public comments?

**Ms. Akanksha Sharma:** As I just mentioned earlier, I think you should talk to Dr. McVety about it.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Okay, great. I appreciate that. Maybe I'll have the opportunity to do that.

I want to thank all of you for coming to committee today.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you very much. We'll now turn to the official opposition for seven and a half minutes. MPP Fife, you may begin.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Thank you to all the presenters. I'll just start with GBL. I want to say thank you for the PowerPoint. You clearly articulated why you're supportive of those schedules. I'm sure, as my colleague mentioned, you must be very surprised by why an economic development and recovery piece of legislation has this particular component, which is obviously very divisive. I just want to say thank you for your time, because that PowerPoint actually explained very clearly your position.

I want to say to Ms. Sharma, it takes a lot of courage to come out to one of these committee meetings and share your perspective and your views, so thank you for that. I did want to touch on a couple of the points that you raised, though, particularly around Canada Christian College being a college and how you would prefer it to be a university.

Universities have a very open and transparent financial transparency procedure whereby they have a board of directors, and all of the funding and financing that goes into those institutions is reviewed by a board of directors and it's determined if the money is being spent correctly. Is there such a board of directors at the Canada Christian College?

**Ms. Akanksha Sharma:** You had the opportunity to talk to our dean, who was there on Friday, but I guess you just wasted time playing politics.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Well, no, actually. I'm asking a question around financial transparency. As a student whose money goes into the institution, I was wondering how involved students were and how the money was being spent, because it has been determined that Charles McVety has borrowed \$590,000 from CCC, and his son has also borrowed \$280,000 from CCC. That simply wouldn't be

allowed under a university structure, because there's a very clear line that delineates personal funding and professional funding as per a public institution. That was a point that I had a question on. I don't believe it's playing politics. I believe it has to do with transparency of where the money is going.

I do want to, though, touch on the fact that MPP Piccini, who has expressed some hurt feelings as well, has mentioned that this is simply a name change, changing the name of Canada Christian College to a university. You said that it would be a shame to graduate from a college. Both my children attend college. They'll be proud graduates to graduate from a college. But has the leadership at CCC already told you that you will be graduating from a university or is it pending? Have they been very clear about their communication with you?

**Ms. Akanksha Sharma:** No, they never said anything like that.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Okay. And then I just want to touch on a few points, because the person that you're describing, Ms. Sharma, and the person that has publicly made statements about gay people who prey on children and Haitians who practise Satanism is very different than the person that you have a personal relationship with. When Mr. Piccini is mentioning that this is just a process that is supposed to be followed, in fact the government did give preferential treatment to Mr. McVety and Canada Christian College. And so I feel like there is a miscommunication here between who heads up the Canada Christian College and what he has said publicly, versus the person that you see. That's very concerning for me.

But I do want to say that I appreciate your perspective and the way that you value your education. Once again, it takes a lot of courage to come forward. Thank you very much. I have no further questions, Madam Chair.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you. We'll now turn to the government for seven and a half minutes. MPP Piccini, you may begin.

**Mr. David Piccini:** Akanksha, you'll see again how we get into individuals and name-calling. I've not once referenced members of the opposition here. I'd rather just talk, writ large, about opposition government.

I think again to comments referenced. It's not about one's feelings towards a process; it's about an independent process. I would encourage everybody here on committee to review PEQAB's organizational review. I understand that as a graduate you're not expected to know about the PEQAB process, but for everybody's benefit it does include in its organizational review—a review, and I've never once claimed that this was just a nomenclature change. Part of the organizational review does include expanded degree-granting, as OCAD and Algoma applied for in the red tape bill of last year, of which we didn't see nearly this robust debate.

But nonetheless we're having it, so let's talk about the process. It does include a financial transparency piece. I'm sorry that you have to be grilled and questioned about that in that organization, but thankfully for you and for everybody, PEQAB includes a very robust review that's

applied equally to everybody that comes forward. I just wanted to mention that.

My question, though—thank you very much for speaking—is to Navaz and the team. I appreciate you coming forward to speak to committee. Your deposition is greatly appreciated, and the ongoing work that you and your team are doing. My question was on harmonizing regulations. If you can tell me what specifically other jurisdictions—we've heard a lot of presenters talk about being competitive as a province here. Can you speak to what harmonizing our practices in line with other jurisdictions does to make us a more competitive province? Thank you.

**Ms. Laura LaRiviere:** Sure, yes, I can speak on that. I think I'm the only one unmuted. As we mentioned in our presentation, across Canada obviously every province has their own provincial pension legislation. In certain provinces, plans for connected persons or significant shareholders are exempt, which gives them more flexibility and more ability to save for their own retirement. We're talking about small businesses that are trying to just get a competitive—similar to what you would get if you work for a large company or the government; they get pension benefits. Oftentimes, small businesses struggle to provide that for themselves, and the easier the province can make it and the less red tape, especially when you are monitoring something that you're promising yourself, from our view working with small businesses, has always been a huge plus.

**1550**

So we see more people willing to set up these plans in legislation where there isn't this red tape that Ontario currently has, because fees are lower, there's more flexibility, those sorts of things. So we think it's a really positive change to move in line with those other provinces, and will give Ontario small business owners the opportunity to save for their own retirement without the high fees that monitoring comes with, as well as the restrictions that they're trying to apply, rules that are really developed to protect arm's-length employees that don't really always make sense when you're applying it to someone providing a benefit to themselves.

**Mr. David Piccini:** Okay. Quickly just one further, and then over to my colleague, MPP Wai. We have talked a lot and people have wondered why different things are in a red tape reduction bill by the minister in charge of that, be it the ability to graduate and actually be recognized for the PhD or whatever that you have graduated from, or be it financial reform, modernizing our regulations etc. So can you speak to the importance of the government's commitment to addressing red tape in all of our bills, similar to last fall and the red tape bill and to this piece, and just explain to us a bit of what you perceive red tape to be, and how important it is to address this?

**Ms. Laura LaRiviere:** Sure. We can only, obviously, speak from the pension side, as that's where our expertise lies. But from dealing with clients and members and people who live in Ontario, work in Ontario and build their business in Ontario, I think that they do prioritize that they have built this, that they want to save for their own retirement and that oftentimes, the cost and the time to deal

with legislation or what's sometimes called red tape can be a deterrent for them.

**Mr. David Piccini:** Okay. Thanks, Laura; I appreciate that. Over to my colleague, MPP Wai. Thank you.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** MPP Wai? You have two minutes and 20 seconds left.

**Mrs. Daisy Wai:** My question is for Mr. Cassam. Thank you for your PowerPoint. It's very careful and directs us as to why you support this in business. I also have been speaking to some people in the community in Richmond Hill. They don't seem to have a clear understanding of what red tape is and why we need to address Ontario's overregulation to help out small businesses. Can you tell me why addressing red tape and regulatory burden is particularly important for Ontario's economic recovery?

**Mr. Navaz Cassam:** Yes, for sure. Red tape, as we perceive it, is when you're paying for something or you have delays and stuff where there's no real perceived value returned. So as Laura referenced with individual pension plans for connected members, they're paying a fee, but there's little oversight given, there's no real enforcement coming, because a lot of it is done by CRA itself. In some of these reports, you have delayed it because now you have to wait for an approval and other processes that will take place, but those are more like a rubber stamp. It kind of flows through and CRA really becomes the body that enforces it and ensures that you're not overfunding—

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute left.

**Mr. Navaz Cassam:** —and doing that kind of stuff.

So reducing red tape is huge for small businesses, right? When you talk about \$250 or \$750 for a small business, that's monstrous. When you have a big company, that's a drop in the bucket.

**Mrs. Daisy Wai:** Thank you very much. I will have to let you tell more of the people in the small businesses so that they understand and they agree with what is going on. In fact, we have our minister going around town to promote and to make sure that we know what red tape we should reduce. Is there any particular red tape that you have in mind that you think that we should also look into?

**Mr. Navaz Cassam:** Off the top of my head, no. I'm sure if we spent a little bit of time thinking about it, stuff would come up. But unfortunately, right now, there's nothing that comes to mind.

**Mrs. Daisy Wai:** Thank you. I'll tell our minister. They have been very thorough, and I understand that it started when—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner):** I'm sorry to interrupt. That's all the time we have for this round of questioning. I want to thank all the presenters for joining us today and let you know that you're all released to go now, so thank you.

CANADIAN UNION OF PUBLIC  
EMPLOYEES

CANADIAN NATURAL GAS  
VEHICLE ALLIANCE

MR. JUSTIN STONE

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner):** We'll now begin the next round. The first presentation will be by the Canadian Union of Public Employees. You will have seven minutes for your presentation. Please state your name clearly for Hansard. You may begin your presentation.

**Ms. Susan Gapka:** Good afternoon. My name is Susan Gapka. My pronouns are she and her—elle, en français, s'il vous plaît. I'm a member of CUPE Local 2998 and work as an education and training facilitator at The 519 in the heart of the LGBTQ2S village in downtown Toronto.

I am pleased to be with you today for hearings on Bill 213, and I am speaking as a member of the CUPE Ontario executive board, where I serve as a representative for the pink triangle committee. Our committee works to create safer, fairer workplaces for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, two-spirited, intersex and queer union members. Through political action and key events, we advocate for harassment-free workplaces and communities.

Our members, especially racialized and Indigenous members, have been disproportionately negatively impacted by COVID-19, and we are concerned that this legislation, which contains schedule 2, legitimizes Canada Christian College with a leader with a long and vocal history of anti-LGBTQ hatred, disdain and condemnation.

CUPE is Ontario's largest union, and among our 280,000 members are thousands of employees throughout Ontario's university community. We represent approximately 38,000 members working in Ontario universities. We represent academic staff, teaching assistants, research assistants and sessional lecturers. We represent administrative staff in department offices, skilled trades and blue-collar staff. We represent librarians, lab technicians and IT professionals. CUPE represents virtually every class of non-management employee at Ontario universities, save and except for faculty.

I say this because we're going to focus today on three schedules: schedules 2, 25 and 29, which would confer university status on Canada Christian College, Redeemer College and Tyndale University College respectively.

Let's be clear: If the government was coming forward with a new public university or college, we would not be here speaking in opposition. CUPE has a problem, however, in awarding university and degree-granting status to private institutions that promote discrimination in Ontario, institutions that breach the Ontario Human Rights Code and try to shield their hatred against our members by cloaking it in language about the sanctity of wedlock and a biased view of the Biblical scriptures.

I want to remind you that in 2003, the Ontario Court of Appeal issued a decision immediately legalizing same-sex marriage, which was followed by the Civil Marriage Act

in 2005, making Canada the fourth country to strike down the banning of same-sex unions as unconstitutional.

CUPE has a problem with assigning an authority to issue bachelor of science degrees to a school run by someone who rejects science entirely and tells their students the world was created only 6,000 years ago.

Religious freedom does not override human rights protections on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression. Our rights coexist.

CUPE has a problem with allowing private institutions to grant degrees in these schools, despite discipline for any sexual activity, any sexual expression that is not opposite-sex activity in a heterosexual marriage—it's just hard for me to say that. CUPE also has a huge problem disrespecting the will of the Legislature which last week, on Monday, passed a motion that "the Legislative Assembly calls on the Ford government to condemn the extreme and hateful invective of Charles McVety and oppose any efforts to make Canada Christian College into an accredited university."

1600

Let me tell you, as chair of CUPE's pink triangle committee, while enjoying the support of my co-workers and my union, I know something of what it feels like to be the target of the kind of hatred that is being promoted in schedules 2, 25 and 29. As a youngster, I grew up in Trenton, Ontario, on a military base, the home of Air Transport Command. I felt shame and guilt about wanting to live as a woman and to change my name to Susan. It was illegal back then. I ended up running away from home as a teenager and became homeless on the streets of Toronto, before turning my life around more than 23 years ago.

I located housing and social supports and enrolled at George Brown College in the community worker program. It was in my second year, with the protection and support of faculty, staff and the student association, that I came out as my authentic self. I also came out while working at Toronto city hall as a student placement in Councillor Olivia Chow's office.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner):** You have one minute.

**Ms. Susan Gapka:** Thank you.

It was these supportive environments which inspired me to enrol at York University in a specialized honours in public policy and administration. I excelled, despite the challenge of being a recently out trans woman on a large campus—soon elected to the board of governors, the chair of the student senator caucus and the York Federation of Students, where I learned much about collegial governance and academic freedom.

I can remember being timid going into a course instructor to write about trans research, so I joined a group of professors and helped them to create their undergraduate sexuality studies program. I helped develop the academic rigour and remember being a student senator when the final proposal was approved. This was one of my proudest moments in the academy, yet I could not have

accomplished this work as a youth when my environment was abusive, hateful and painful.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner):** I'm sorry to interrupt, but, unfortunately, that's all the time we have for the presentation. Thank you for your presentation.

I will now call on the Canadian Natural Gas Vehicle Alliance. You will have seven minutes for your presentation. Please state your name clearly for Hansard, and you may begin.

**Mr. Bruce Winchester:** Hello, my name is Bruce Winchester. I am the executive director of the Canadian Natural Gas Vehicle Alliance. I'd like to say that I welcome this opportunity to provide Ontario's Standing Committee on General Government with some observations about red tape reduction as they relate to Bill 213.

Let me congratulate members of this Legislature for committing to reduce red tape, or excessive regulations. Second, let me highlight the work done by the government of Premier Ford, led by Prabmeet Sarkaria—he is the Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction. The Ford government, in its 2020 report, has already managed to reduce excessive regulations by about 5%, and that translates into \$330 million in net savings for Ontario. That's what we're here to talk about: the things that help Ontarians out.

I'm the executive director of the Canadian Natural Gas Vehicle Alliance. We're an industry association that works to encourage the deployment of gaseous fuel transportation in Canada and in Ontario. Our members include a lot of leading suppliers: organizations like Enbridge Gas, Emterra, the city of Toronto, Green For Life, Waste Management and other fleet users like that.

Our members are very conscious of the need to ensure safe usage of gaseous fuels. Ensuring public safety as well as providing a safe working environment are the bare minimum when it comes to industry standards. Working with international and national codes and standards development organizations like the CSA Group, our members contribute toward ongoing improvements to support exemplary safety objectives.

Though distinct from the matters considered in Bill 213, the government of Ontario has recently introduced new measures that align with the best safety practices and also reduce the administrative burden placed on gaseous fuelling facilities in Ontario. For almost three decades, Ontario has lagged the world, imposing costly burdens associated with this operation engineer requirement—and these are for large-scale gaseous refueling facilities. But as of October, our province now has a rational risk-based approach. The resulting annual savings will help deploy more natural gas and renewable natural gas vehicles in the province. In turn, this will make Ontario both competitive and reduce emissions.

As legislators, I would encourage you to look more closely at existing laws and regulations to find other opportunities to adopt global best practices and to eliminate statutes that reproduce the efforts of standards development organizations. Wherever possible, legislation should be adjusted to incorporate codes and standards



by reference. This process allows for ongoing adjustment without locking in administrative costs. Moreover, the technical safety functions of the government can be more in line with codes and standards, which are developed with significant support from industry risk and safety experts. The question is, why duplicate work that's already being done?

With regard to Bill 213, I'd note that this is part of a bigger set of changes that are occurring here in Ontario and elsewhere in North America. The federal government has established a joint working group with all of the provinces to find and fix examples of excessive regulatory red tape that are hindering progress. Working with this group, Ontario has led in CRN reform.

The CRN, or Canadian registration number, is one of the greatest examples of false advertising. It's actually not a Canadian registration number at all. In fact, there used to be different provincial regulated standards for pressure vessel installations—these are the ones you use in gaseous fuel equipment—each one creating a unique provincial CRN. So it was a bunch of CRNs, not one CRN. Getting equipment approved used to require approval in each province. Today, we have a more streamlined approach that's being applied. This has increased access to more products and has saved millions of dollars in compliance costs. The installations are as safe as ever, they just require less red tape to get approved.

The government should work closely with industry and standards development organizations to find more opportunities to reduce this kind of burden. The Ford government is to be congratulated for its work to date, but we encourage the legislators to continue supporting these initiatives and find even more savings for Ontarians. By introducing Bill 213, this is one very important step in delivering on new red tape reductions, but I would encourage members of the Legislature to support this bill and to look for more opportunities and work with risk and safety experts to unlock greater potential for Ontario.

The gaseous fuels industry in Ontario: Using natural gas buses in Hamilton has saved more than \$2 million each year. Contract waste collection services using natural gas vehicles have saved municipal taxpayers money while also reducing more than 10 megatons per year in greenhouse gas. And the city of Toronto's renewable natural gas-fueled fleet has achieved net zero emissions by turning waste into fuel.

What's next for gaseous fuels? The sky is the limit—at least as long as we support the right kind of red tape reductions today to build a better future for tomorrow. Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner):** Thank you for your presentation.

I will now call on Justin Stone. You will have seven minutes for your presentation. Please state your name clearly for Hansard, and you may begin.

**Mr. Justin Stone:** Great. Good afternoon, committee members. My name is Justin Stone. I do not belong to any organization. I am simply a citizen, but I am a small business owner who lives in Kitchener, Ontario, who

works with kids. I understand the importance of making inclusive and welcoming spaces, and where I have gained exposure towards people who are non-neurotypical, who are of different sexual orientations, it has very much helped to broaden my horizons.

I come before you today to speak about Canada Christian College, and I implore you to strike schedule 2 from Bill 213. Canada Christian College is a dubious institution, and if it truly deserves university accreditation, then due process should run its course through the CCC's application to the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board.

This schedule is unnecessary. What burden does it ease? It is giving assistance to an institution that does not need it. What's more, this appears to be a gift of sorts. Doug Ford, who ran his election campaign events at the college, has failed to disclose to Elections Ontario that any payment has been given for such use of such facilities. We are left to surmise that these facilities have been donated to him and that this is a protracted but clear conflict of interest.

**1610**

As well, the college is run by the ill-reputed Charles McVety, who sits on the college's board of directors as president. McVety is an alleged Islamophobe and transphobe and has been condemned by the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council for conflating homosexuality with pedophilia. In 2005, he was the senior director of the Defend Marriage Coalition, which was a lobbying group pushing to repeal same-sex marriage in Ontario.

While this is unpalatable, it would not be as relevant if Charles McVety maintained an appropriate professional distance from his college. But sadly, that is not the case. In 2018, social media posts from Charles and his wife, Shannon, show pictures of ATVs and boats paid for with college funds. As well, due to a leak from the college's application to PEQAB, we know that substantial loans were given to both him and his son Ryan McVety, who also sits on the board of directors as vice-president.

In 2018, Charles was loaned the amount of \$597,000. As of last year, \$555,000 still remains outstanding. His son Ryan was loaned \$280,000 to help purchase his home in Whitby and, as of last year, has around \$300,000 that remains outstanding across two different loans given to him by the college. Furthermore, investigations by the Toronto Star in a forensic account reveal that these loans put a significant drain on the college's finances. The analysis identified indications of unsecured lending and timely remittances, unprofessional accounting, unaudited reports and unclear disclosure.

Last, the college's balance sheet on the CRA website shows around \$1 million as amounts receivable from non-arm's-length persons, which is pertinent since both McVety and his son are listed as non-arm's-length persons on the college's list of directors. These financial transactions are Byzantine and highly suspect, giving the impression that the CCC acts as a bank for the McVetys.

My last comment is in regard to the CCC's application to PEQAB, because included in the application is the

ability to award degrees in science. Charles McVety, who can't seem to maintain professional distance from his college, is a creationist. In 2018, McVety spoke at a conference hosted by the college saying that the world was only 5,778 years old, and had invited Ken Ham to these events as well. Mr. Ham is one of the founders of the Creation Museum in the United States, which does not believe in the theory of evolution and literally believes that the world was created in seven days.

McVety has been an ardent critic of Ontario's sex ed curriculum in 2015, which was also struck down by the Ford government, despite the WHO conducting reviews that showed that sexual education leads to delayed sexual activity and overall safer behaviours. If Charles McVety does not want to accept the truths that are widely accepted by science, then so be it, but he should not be able to award degrees in sciences from the college that he controls.

To conclude, I implore the committee to strike schedule 2 from Bill 213. The Canada Christian College is a suspicious and opaque institution run by an ill-reputed man who appears to use the college for his own personal gain. The university is an institution dedicated to innovation, higher learning and professionalism. None of these qualities are embodied by Charles McVety or his college. If I am wrong, then let the final arbiter of this decision be PEQAB. Let the college stand by its own merits and let due process run its course. Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner):** Thank you for your presentation.

We'll now begin the rounds of questioning. The first round of questions will be with the government members. You will have 7.5 minutes. I recognize MPP Skelly.

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** Thank you to all of the presenters this afternoon. It has been a long day. I know many of our colleagues have been with us all day, and we appreciate you joining us so late in the afternoon.

I'd like to talk to Bruce Winchester about some of the things that I appreciated that you raised this afternoon. I have been privileged to sit on a number of committees since I was elected, and one in particular was the committee on finance and economic affairs. We sat throughout the summer and held the largest-ever stakeholder consultation in the history of this province. Also, I am fortunate enough to be parliamentary assistant to Minister Sarkaria, who is the Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction.

As you accurately pointed out, our government is laser-focused on identifying red tape. It's very frustrating when I hear from members of the opposition that it's just lip service and that red tape reduction really isn't a burden to small business. But as a person who works in the field and deals with this on an ongoing basis, can you explain to my colleagues the need to address red tape when you are trying to compete on an international scale, and how red tape really acts as a barrier to economic advancement, economic growth?

**Mr. Bruce Winchester:** Sure, I'm happy to provide some comments. First of all, we operate in transportation, where public safety and employee safety are really

important. So we're not talking about getting rid of necessary regulation or necessary codes and standards, we're talking about getting rid of the things that are overly complicated, that add unnecessarily to costs and, in the end, don't actually accomplish anything from a public safety or employee safety point of view.

In our industry, one of the issues for us was the operation engineer that I talked about. That can add hundreds of thousands of dollars in annual costs for a gaseous fuelling station under the old rules. Those are fuelling stations that are used for natural gas vehicles that will reduce emissions and that will reduce costs for the fleets that use them. Those same kinds of regulations can prevent innovation, like the use of renewable gases, or even maybe future uses of things like hydrogen that people are talking about right now.

Again, we need to be careful that we use these gases carefully and safely. But if you have got a system that says X number needs to be obtained without looking at the relative risk of that installation, you're going to create a situation where you have to employ people who don't need to be employed, and that costs money and that adds to the cost of operating that establishment.

So we found, amongst our members, that this move will save them literally hundreds of thousands of dollars. It's not that they don't want to employ people; they would just rather spend that money employing the person that gets the next fleet and the next station built, and the next piece in the chain of moving away from more polluting fuels like diesel and toward ones like natural gas that actually emit less and, in the case of Ontario, are helping to contribute toward long-term greenhouse gas reductions. So you need to be competitive, yes, but you also need to be in line with what's going on in the world.

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** I also want to echo one of the points that you raised, which was that addressing and eliminating red tape doesn't necessarily jeopardize the safety of a community or the safety of a workforce. It's simply acknowledging and eliminating these burdensome regulations.

Previous to my election to provincial government, I worked as a municipal councillor and heard from many, many, many businesses that raised issues with the length of time it took to get anything built because of the layers and layers and layers of red tape and the bureaucratic nightmare that they faced trying to move forward. They reminded me that the time that it took to get something built was costing them money, and it hurt that competitive edge. We heard that from a number of businesses south of the border who said, "Are you kidding? We wouldn't come to Ontario prior to a Conservative government because we can't get anything done, and we need to compete internationally and we need to move quickly."

Can you speak to how red tape can also cause delays, which in turn costs money and, again, erodes that competitive edge?

**Mr. Bruce Winchester:** Yes, there—  
*Failure of sound system.*

1620

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner):** I think he—is he frozen? I'm sorry, I think we may have lost the witness—

*Interjection.*

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner):** Oh, there. He's back.

**Mr. Bruce Winchester:** Am I back? Sorry, my apologies.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner):** You're back, yes. You froze briefly there for a second.

**Mr. Bruce Winchester:** That's a side issue about regulated telephone and Internet in Canada that we don't want to talk about today.

The issue with delay—

*Failure of sound system.*

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner):** Just so you know, we have stopped the clock.

MPP Skelly, I'll recognize you if you want to ask a question of another witness.

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** Actually, Mr. Chair, I was going to let you know that my colleague MPP Piccini—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** Sorry, Bruce. You have been cutting out.

To all presenters, I might suggest that if you do have a problem with your Internet, just turn the video off. It often allows a better opportunity to answer the questions.

MPP Piccini, I know, wants to jump in as well. Bruce, I think you're still frozen, so maybe I'll—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner):** Yes, I think we'll just move to another witness. I'm sorry about that, Mr. Winchester. You can, as MPP Skelly suggested, try turning your video off and/or reconnecting. We have stopped the clock.

I will now recognize MPP Piccini.

**Mr. David Piccini:** How much time do I have?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner):** A minute and 35.

**Mr. David Piccini:** Okay, perfect. Thank you.

Again, thank you to all the presenters. Internet and broadband is something we can all agree we need to improve in this province and across the country.

Justin: My quick question for you is, do you support faith-based institutions in the province of Ontario?

**Mr. Justin Stone:** I guess not. I support post-secondary institutions. I myself am a Catholic, so I believe in God, but certain things I would disagree with with Charles McVety's college. Most Christian theologians wouldn't have a creationist—

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner):** One minute.

**Mr. Justin Stone:** They would believe in the prime mover, that God would set up the initial conditions of the universe, for instance. That is how we actually see the world, not that it was literally seven days.

**Mr. David Piccini:** I just wanted to know what your thoughts were on faith-based institutions. It's good to know. I understand and disagree, but I respect your

opinion that you don't support faith-based institutions in the province of Ontario.

No further questions. Thank you, Chair.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Mike Schreiner):** We'll now turn to the official opposition. You'll have 7.5 minutes for your questions. I recognize MPP Fife.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Thank you to all the presenters. I did have a question for Bruce, but we'll see if he can get back on.

Justin, I'm going to start with you. Thank you very much for appearing today. We haven't had a lot of individual citizens who have been paying close attention to this issue come forward. It has been a very divisive debate, quite honestly. I think all of my colleagues would agree with that.

I wanted to hone in on—please articulate what your major concerns are. You went through a bunch of them, but what is the dominant issue—or the barrier for you to support schedule 2? Just so you know, we're going to be trying to remove schedule 2 from Bill 213 in its entirety, because we find that the process is not open, transparent or fair, for instance. But please go ahead, Justin.

**Mr. Justin Stone:** Frankly, I'm confused about what burden this is easing for the college when due process already exists through the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board.

From what financial information that we know through their application and through a lot of public information, there are some things that trip some red flags for me. I'm okay with these financial statements being private and being examined by a board, but skipping that process or not actually getting down to the root of them and examining them, to me is unethical.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** We've heard similar concerns and we've articulated some of the concerns around the finances around CCC, so that's helpful.

Obviously, this is emotional on many levels, because when someone is out in the community and they are saying the things that Mr. McVety has said—we see that as very harmful action, and we see no reason for him to get special treatment and to be fast-tracked through legislation, no less. I mean, sure, put it through PEQAB, but why embed it in a piece of legislation, especially when there are so many ongoing concerns?

As Bruce has indicated prior, there are some priorities that need to be addressed right now in the province. COVID-19 has huge economic and inequality impacts on people across the province. This bill has a few components which are helpful in some regards, but why is this a priority? So I thank you for coming forward today from Kitchener to raise those concerns.

The rest of the time I wanted to give to Susan. If you can wrap up your statement and then specifically, Susan, talk about how you are perceiving that this government is making schedule 2 of Bill 213 a priority.

**Ms. Susan Gapka:** Thank you, Catherine Fife, MPP. I was almost closing. We just wanted to suggest that the Legislature respect the PEQAB process—do not circumvent that by promoting hate, legitimizing hate—and

amend schedules 2, 25 and 29 out of this bill, because lives depend on it.

What was the other part of the question?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I think you sort of articulated it. The question for us as the official opposition is why schedule 2 has such weight with this government and is a priority when we have an economic crisis, a health care crisis, and Bill 213 is supposed to be helping businesses and supporting people. Most of the delegations, Susan, that have come on today are surprised that schedule 2 is embedded in this very large piece of omnibus legislation.

We're trying to convince the government to pull schedule 2 so that Bill 213 can just move ahead and we can accelerate some of the supports, while they are small, to help businesses. What does it say to you, that this is a priority and that Charles McVety is getting this special attention?

**Ms. Susan Gapka:** Well, it does seem to circumvent a review process. I talked about my academic experience and the rigour. Carleton University talked about that a little earlier today.

I am so glad that I wasn't on the last panel, which I found very, very difficult to listen to. I found those comments to be similar to the ones—I was in the room where you're sitting now as we passed legislation in the previous government around amending the Ontario Human Rights Code to include gender identity and gender expression, to make schools safer and create GSAs. When I hear those kinds of comments, they are very hurtful and painful. To have the major spokesperson of one of the colleges be sitting in the room espousing those—it was not so much me, but when the sex ed curriculum was attempted to be cut a couple of years ago as one of the first initiatives of this particular government, young people were coming to me and telling me how frightened and scared they were, and that they felt that this was really shutting the door on their hopes for love and life and a future. I tried to assure them that it would be okay, but here we are, a pandemic relief bill, and it seems to have been snuck in in some regard in an omnibus bill. It belongs somewhere else and not in Bill 213.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute left.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** The 519 also came and deputed on Friday. I think they made a made a very compelling case for moving forward in a very inclusive manner around the economy and the signals that schedule 2 sends to the LGBTQ community—that this one individual is getting this kind of attention when we should really be focused on moving forward around economic recovery in an inclusive manner and bringing everybody along for that.

1630

Thank you for sharing your personal story. You've been on quite a journey, and every time you come to a legislative committee you make us better people. Thank you very much, Susan.

**Ms. Susan Gapka:** Thank you. We want to see more LGBTQ people employed, with decent jobs, working,

getting educations and feeling like they have a bright and hopeful future for themselves.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** We'll now turn to the government for seven and a half minutes. Who would like to begin? MPP Piccini, you have seven and a half minutes.

**Mr. David Piccini:** I just have a quick question for Susan. Thanks for the work you do, Susan, and for coming to committee. I think that we can all disagree on processes and things and legislation, but that's the beauty of Ontario.

My question to Susan: You referenced finding things hurtful vis-à-vis other depositions. I'm just wondering, of all the depositions today—because we've heard so many, and as I said, I don't necessarily agree with everything that has been said. I know we don't have access to Hansard, but what specifically was said by a specific presenter?

**Ms. Susan Gapka:** I found the comments by the previous speaker who had been a graduate of the college and my experience with its leader, McVety, completely inconsistent. Are there two, three McVetys? Because what I'm familiar with—and it is in Hansard; I looked it up. I was sitting in the room. The condemnation of trans and gay people comes from Aristotle in theory, where men were in charge of families, and women and children and animals were seen as less significant. Trans people were included in the animal category in a lot of those comments, and that was also used by John Locke and used as a mechanism for colonizing North America, that there's a hierarchy.

I found those comparisons of trans people to be at risk of causing harm, when we'd been perpetrated as comedy or tragedy, as perpetrators of crime; when just last week on Trans Day of Remembrance, on November 20, we commemorated 444 trans people globally murdered violently because of violence to trans people.

**Mr. David Piccini:** Certainly I stand with you and deplore and decry anything directed toward our LGBTQ community, our trans community. We have to work always to strive, be it some work we've done along the Highway of Heroes, the 401, with social service agencies, first responders—but I'm digressing beyond the purpose of this schedule here, which is really the process around this institution.

As I said, last year in the red tape reduction bill, OCAD and Algoma went with identical requests to PEQAB. One hasn't completed the PEQAB process. Still, the enabling legislation gave them the ability—but PEQAB hasn't concluded. Therefore, they're not offering what they've been given the ability to offer. Have you had a chance to visit the PEQAB website yet and review this institution's application?

**Ms. Susan Gapka:** I am so glad you asked me that question. I am seized by this matter. I wrote a letter to the editor saying, "Is this a trick or a treat, and who's the trick or treat for?" I should have opened it up. But I did submit a concern individually, because this has been really a big deal for me, as it is for many deputants that came here.

**Mr. David Piccini:** But isn't that the beauty of this process that you just mentioned, that you've had the ability to write it in through PEQAB? That's the process we're upholding here. That's the beauty, that we have the ability to write it. I think it's incumbent, not on me, as a legislator, but on the process comprised of individual experts at PEQAB, to then provide the recommendation to the minister. Would you not agree?

**Ms. Susan Gapka:** Well, in some regards—it just seems that this was the only opportunity to debate. We're in a pandemic. Our workers are on the front lines. They're in hospitals, in universities, trying to keep people safe. They're dying from catching COVID on the front lines. We don't have the opportunity to have a media event at Queen's Park, to rally on the lawn of Queen's Park to raise our protest. If there were an opportunity to speak to the review board, I would have taken it.

**Mr. David Piccini:** Are you familiar with the ways in which an institution can be given the ability? It's either via minister's consent, which is a signature, via a private bill or via open legislation. A lot has been made over the manner. Which do you think is the most transparent of the three?

**Ms. Susan Gapka:** I think it's really a bit of a double-edged sword here, because it is transparent, but transparent doesn't mean "very good." Transparent could be, "We're going to do this whether you like it or not, because we have a majority." It was the official opposition who brought it to light that this particular schedule was in there. Whether we would have noticed it or not without that, I'm not sure. But I was horrified to find out that under a bill that's supposed to help the economy and protect people, it actually seemed to harm people like myself more than ever.

**Mr. David Piccini:** And has there been a specific—I'm just trying to stick to the process here, that independent PEQAB process. Do you have any recommendations? Is there anything about that process, which, as I said, institutions went through in the last round of red tape—I think if we have an issue with the process, we can talk about that process. But of those three that I mentioned, you would agree that the most transparent is putting it before a bill. Would you agree that we need to wait, ultimately, for the PEQAB review, which we're going to do?

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute.

**Mr. David Piccini:** Just in the last minute: Yes or no, do you want to see the PEQAB review, which is independent?

**Ms. Susan Gapka:** I would have hoped that would have happened before this bill went through. I'm hoping that they will see it the same way many of us have.

**Mr. David Piccini:** Just quickly there, can you point to any specific act? Like I mentioned, last year, the same thing happened. Has any institution gone forward with the ability before the PEQAB process, ever in history?

**Ms. Susan Gapka:** I was shocked to find in the application that there's a five-member executive committee and three of them for Canada Christian College have the last name McVety. For me, that just came up as conflict of

interest on just so many levels. That's the one thing that stands out for me.

In the last 10 seconds, I just want to tell you there's a wonderful Quinte pride that I went back to and was the grand marshal of—

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you. That's all the time that we have for this round.

We'll now turn to the independent member. No? He's not there? All right. This concludes our round of—

*Interjection.*

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Oh, sorry, official opposition. We'll turn to the official opposition for seven and a half minutes. MPP Sattler, you may begin.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I want to thank the presenters for coming here today.

I wanted to first direct my question to Mr. Stone, because I think that there was an attempt to sort of call into question your presentation today. On Friday, we had a presentation from UFOA, the association that represents all faculty associations in the province, and they expressed very similar concerns as you and Ms. Gapka about schedule 2. The presentation was led by Dr. David Seljak, who is a professor at St. Jerome's University, which is affiliated with the University of Waterloo. As all public institutions in the province of Ontario, St. Jerome's University, a public faith-based institution, is required to adhere to the Ontario Human Rights Code, as every other public institution is supposed to.

I wondered if you could speak to the importance of post-secondary institutions adhering to the Ontario Human Rights Code as a condition, really, of claiming the status of university.

1640

**Mr. Justin Stone:** Yes. I didn't go to St. Jerome's itself, but I myself am a graduate of the University of Waterloo. I graduated with a bachelor of science and kinesiology. I have no problem with theology, but, yes, adhering to the Human Rights Code is really just a matter of respect and respecting individuals and validating who they are. If you can't validate someone's sexual identity, if you can't validate someone's religion, then we don't really have this sort of marketplace ideas. A university is a place where ideas are supposed to cross-pollinate. That's how we get innovation. If people are scared to speak up, if people do not feel comfortable or welcome in that space, then how are they going to speak to those things? How are they going to state their ideas or even speak at all? They might just remain silent within that institution.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Right. Thank you very much.

I'm going to ask a question of Ms. Gapka and then pass it over to my colleague, MPP Glover. Ms. Gapka, thank you so much for sharing your personal journey of your becoming who you are through the process of attending an accredited university, Carleton, and what that meant to you.

In your presentation, you referred to the motion that was passed by the Ontario Legislature expressing the will of the Legislature to condemn the hateful invective that has been expressed by Charles McVety and to oppose

efforts to allow Canada Christian College to assume the status of university and to award degrees. What message would it convey to you if, in the wake of that motion expressing the will of the Legislature, this government decided to go ahead and pass Bill 213, including schedule 2, and ignoring that very important debate that took place last week at Queen's Park?

**Ms. Susan Gapka:** Thank you, MPP Sattler. I was looking to see who voted for which and all I could find was 29 to 27. But what that tells me is that the official opposition is doing their job as an official opposition, bringing this to light and finding that that is the most important matter to bring forward on an opposition day. That and all of the different deputations speaking specifically to this in an entire piece of legislation says it's on people's mind. That's our responsibility, our duty as citizens to hold the government to account when they go astray, and it seems to be that's what we're doing here.

I also want to remind us of what Cheri DiNovo did say this morning is that we passed the Ontario Human Rights Code by bringing all three parties together. We had members of the elected parties, and we would do that now with the Green Party, but the Progressive Conservatives, the NDP and the Liberal Party—we all agreed this was an excellent idea, we're going to pass this piece of legislation, the first time in 25 years that the Human Rights Code was amended to include gender identity and gender expression. We led the country in doing it. We were a shining light for other provinces to follow and the federal government to eventually follow as well. Those are the values that I hold dear, that we're able to work together to find important issues.

I'll be watching the clause-by-clause tomorrow and taking a record of who votes on which, but it's really important that we be a better Canadian society and that we be more kind and loving, especially in the time of this pandemic when LGBTQ2S people are being laid off, are losing their housing. Many other communities are struggling as well, but we are at more of a disadvantage than many other communities—racialized, Indigenous communities—that we really need to send a clear message that we oppose the legitimization of anti-LGBTQ hate and discrimination.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Thank you.

**Ms. Susan Gapka:** Thanks for asking.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute. MPP Glover?

**Mr. Chris Glover:** I've only got one minute so, Susan, you mentioned that you were here two years ago to pass the changes to the Ontario Human Rights Code, and now you're here to defend the Ontario Human Rights Code against a bill being presented by the government side. Can you just comment on the contrast?

**Ms. Susan Gapka:** It's not better for business to have to spend taxpayers' money that we need for front-line workers and health care workers to fight any legal cases that come out of moving forward in accrediting a university which clearly has a position around heterosexual marriages, and that would be treating people differently—

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you. That concludes our time. At this point, I would like to thank our presenters. They are now released.

## CONTINUING EDUCATION STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION OF RYERSON

### COACH CANADA

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** I would now like to call upon our final presenters. They will have seven minutes for their presentations, followed by a round of questioning.

At this point, I would like to call upon the Continuing Education Students' Association of Ryerson. Please state your names for the record and then you may begin. You will have seven minutes. Thank you.

**Ms. Maddy Fast:** Thank you to the Chair and the members of the standing committee. My name is Maddy Fast, and I use she/her pronouns. I'm speaking to you today as a student and as the vice-president, equity and campaigns, for the Continuing Education Students' Association of Ryerson, known as CESAR, representing over 16,000 part-time and continuing education students at Ryerson University.

I'm speaking to you today to ask you to remove schedule 2, Canada Christian College and School of Graduate Theological Studies Act, 1999. As members of the committee are aware, universities and educational institutions are charged with a particular responsibility to educate and to foster an atmosphere of open and informed public debate. It's particularly important, given this responsibility, that they are built on a foundation of respect and inclusion.

A prerequisite for any institution of higher learning, and especially one accredited to award degrees in the arts and sciences, is respect for evidentiary data and the scientific method. Most Ontarians would agree that our schools, colleges and universities should not be in the business of offering instruction or furthering arguments that reject empirical data. It's for this reason that we ask you to remove schedule 2 of Bill 213.

According to promotional material publicly available, the college teaches that climate science is "earth worship" and its leadership has described a measure to protect against pollution and environmental degradation as "funding the one-world government of the Antichrist." The scientific community has made clear that man-made climate change threatens the health, prosperity and security of future generations in Canada and around the world. For this reason, we believe many of your constituents would agree with scientific evidence that climate change is a serious threat to us all. We are sure your constituents would expect you to protect the academic integrity and fact-based education of institutions of higher learning and not dilute the quality and credibility of post-secondary education.

As a student leader, I must categorically denounce and reject the extensive history of bigoted and discriminatory

statements made by Canada Christian College's president, Charles McVety, whose attitudes towards the queer community have been described by the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council as "malevolent, insidious and conspiratorial."

Mr. McVety recently played a prominent role in a campaign to remove teaching gender identity from Ontario's public schools, as part of a wider effort to undermine decades of progress made towards improving our sex ed curriculum. This effort was strongly rejected by parents, students and teachers, and this government had to listen to the majority of Ontarians.

Just as institutions of higher learning need to be grounded in a solid foundation of evidence and respect for the scientific method, they also have a responsibility to pursue equity and foster an environment that is safe and inclusive to queer and trans students, and also people of diverse faiths and cultural backgrounds.

1650

Furthermore, Mr. McVety has long expressed hateful views towards people of other faiths, particularly Muslim people, a discriminatory attitude reflected in the college's curriculum, which teaches students not to respect people of other faiths but instead about how to convert them. To this end, Mr. McVety once hosted a prominent Islamophobic politician from the Netherlands to warn Canadians about what he called "the threat of demographic jihad."

The record of this college and its leaders shows clearly its intention to further spread homophobic and Islamophobic rhetoric. These positions go against the values held by Ontarians of inclusivity and respect. They also go against the values of most post-secondary institutions in the province in incorporating equity, diversity and inclusion into strategic mandates and academic planning. This college cannot meet the needs of students who expect to be taught a scientific curriculum that will prepare them to enter into the academy as adequately equipped as their peers and for their identities to be respected.

If this government rubber-stamps Canada Christian College's request, students will be actively misled about the quality of the education they will receive and the discriminatory attitudes that will be impressed upon them.

As student union leaders, we see first-hand the impact that hateful rhetoric has on students. Some institutions hide behind the guise of freedom of speech to spread what are really oppressive views. We've seen that society is finally beginning to understand the life-and-death impact racism has on Black and Indigenous lives. As students, we fight to stop systemic racism. Granting university status to this college founded on discriminatory attitudes would further encourage systemic oppression.

Instead of legitimizing and rewarding an anti-queer, anti-Muslim, anti-science private school, attention should be paid to properly funding post-secondary education that is public, that would allow universities to lower tuition fees and make higher education more attainable for low-income people. Every effort should be made to empower and protect marginalized students who already face discrimination and oppression because of their diversity.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute.

**Ms. Maddy Fast:** I believe that by granting accreditation to Canada Christian College, the government of Ontario would in effect be signalling its approval and acceptance of discriminatory values and attitudes, attitudes which are homophobic, transphobic, racist, Islamophobic and anti-science. I urge you to strike schedule 2 from this bill. Thank you.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you.

We'll now turn to our second presenter, from Coach Canada. Please state your name for the record, and then you may begin. You will have seven minutes.

**Mr. John Emberson:** It's John Emberson. I'm president of Coach Canada. I want to talk about the de-regulation of the intercity busing.

Coach Canada has been in business for 64 years, providing services throughout Ontario, both intercity and charter. On our intercity lines, primarily under our Megabus label, we carry about 1,100,000 passengers a year. On our charter services, we serve schools, tourism and a large number of private charters like that. We carry about one million passengers a year there as well.

COVID has had a significant impact on us. Our revenues are down 92%. Our intercity passenger lines are down 88%. In July and August 2019, we ran 3,100 charter trips. In July and August 2020, we ran 16.

The timing of this for July 1, 2021 couldn't be worse, from our point of view. We're hoping as the vaccinations come on, that possibly by April or May of next year, 2021, we'll start coming out of this and we'll start rebuilding our organization, bringing drivers back. We'll have to put a lot of drivers through training and bring on new drivers as well, because I'm sure we've lost some drivers. We've had to lay off a large number of people during this process.

Then to have competition introduced to us on both the intercity and the charter side on July 1 would be pretty devastating. Any new competitor coming into this market will have a significant advantage to the carriers who have worked through this market for years.

During COVID, I have to state that we ran on our lines a basic service, a limited service, but we continued running on our lines to provide some essential service to Ontario.

The July 1, 2021, date is difficult. We're going to need time—and it's not months; it's probably a year a two—to try to get where we could be in a position for competition on our services.

I also want to comment on some of the benefits people are looking at on this, and it's related to the small, rural and northern communities and whether or not that's going to come to fruition. Our opinion is that that's not going to happen unless there are subsidies granted to those communities. I don't think private carriers or any carriers are going to come in and jump into those markets.

I'll give you an example. We operate a line between Hamilton and Kitchener today. It goes on Highway 8 through Dundas, Branchton-Sheffield up to Cambridge and Kitchener. We run that. We average eight people per trip on an average fare of \$12.50. That's total revenue of \$100 per trip. That doesn't work on a motor coach, it

doesn't work on a minibus. It won't work on a transit van or a sprinter van. It won't work on a small van. It won't work on a taxi or an Uber type of demand service. That's going to require some sort of subsidy.

We service today 30 communities, six of them on this particular line. On day one of deregulation, we will have to stop that service because we'd lose money on it. We used to be able to cross-subsidize ourselves from our high-volume lines. With competition from GO Transit, we can't do that anymore. I think when we get into deregulation, there are going to be about 83 communities between us and the other carriers in Ontario that are going to be disenfranchised by losing their services.

Safety is another issue we want to bring up. Safety is very important. It's a basic right for anybody stepping on a bus in Ontario, to have the knowledge that they're going to have safe passage. Before day one of deregulation, there has to be a significant improvement in the regulations around hours of service, electronic logs, insurance, insurance limits and, more importantly, a robust enforcement of all that. We don't want to be in a situation—we've seen the experience in the USA where they're trying to play catch-up. When you're trying to play catch-up, you always get these accidents—severe accidents, buses running off the road etc. like that—almost primarily related to driver fatigue, because drivers are not managing their hours, the companies in charge of them are not managing their hours and the enforcement is not managing or overseeing those hours. We think day one of deregulation that that's an important thing. There's a lot of work to do there. There's a heavy investment in enforcement to get there. I can't see that happening by July of next year.

That concludes my presentation.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you very much. At this point, we'll now turn to our questions, beginning with the official opposition for seven and a half minutes. MPP Glover, you may begin.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** Yes, thank you both, John and Maddy, for being here today.

Let's see. I'll start with a couple of questions for Maddy. Maddy, you're currently a student at Ryerson University?

**Ms. Maddy Fast:** Yes.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** Okay. One of your concerns that you mentioned, as well as equity, was that if the government grants the name of "university" and degree-granting powers to a college whose director speaks against the scientific method and scientific findings around climate change and evolution, this would dilute the meaning of a university degree in Ontario. Is that it?

**Ms. Maddy Fast:** Yes. I mean, my main concern is that these students will eventually [*inaudible*] the college, as soon as it's accredited to give degrees in the arts and sciences, is these students will eventually be placed in a position where they're doing peer reviews. They're expected to compete on the same level as students who went through education that is grounded in empirical data and in what is really a scientific consensus on climate

change, and it puts those students at a real disadvantage. When they go into peer review studies, that does reflect on all of us in Ontario. When folks are looking at the peer review studies and seeing that these students are students in Ontario, they will infer from that what the quality of education that we are experiencing is.

**1700**

We're looking to protect that for all Ontario students, as well as for students who may be actively misled as to the quality of education that they will be getting and the credentials of the instructors who will be giving that information. There was a great speaker who spoke last Friday, from OCUFA, on the lack of credentials.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** And the other thing that you said is that if the government grants Charles McVety and his college the name of "university" and the ability to grant university degrees, that this actually sends a message of condoning the Islamophobic, the homophobic and the transphobic comments and activities of Charles McVety. Am I correct in restating what you said?

**Ms. Maddy Fast:** Yes, that's exactly the signal that students are getting by this [*inaudible*]. If this passes, this is what students are getting from the government.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** Right. And we have heard, actually, from a number of speakers who are deeply concerned about that, especially considering the amount of Islamophobic attacks in our country of late, and also the long history of oppression of transsexual, homosexual and LGBTQ2+ people. Okay, thank you. Thank you for being here, Maddy.

My next question is for John. John, we have heard from a number of transit companies over the last couple of days, and the way I have come to understand what their ask is, is around schedules 16 and 24 of the bill that open up the Ontario market for competition from Quebec. This competition is unfair because the Quebec companies have an unfair competitive advantage in that they have access to the Montreal market, which Ontario companies don't, and so it puts the Ontario companies at a competitive disadvantage.

The other competitive disadvantage that I'm hearing about is with the—in Ontario, we need some regulations in order to service the routes that you were talking about. First of all, is that a fair summary of the situation and of your ask, that you are asking for schedules 16 and 24 to be removed?

**Mr. John Emberson:** Yes, that is fair. Just to comment on that, too, in terms of Quebec operators: It's not limited to Quebec, but also USA operators coming in. If they pick up on a charter that has a multiple number of days associated with it and go into the US, they have the right to pick up in Canada as well. So that's allowing them and Quebec companies to come in and disavouring ourselves and Ontario workers. The other side of that: Quebec is remaining to be regulated. For us to go into Quebec, we have to have authority to operate any charter trips inside Quebec from Ontario.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** So there's no reciprocal access to that market?



**Mr. John Emberson:** No, there is not, either in US or in Quebec.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** So we're basically opening ourselves up, and the danger that has been expressed is that a lot of the Ontario operators will lose their business.

**Mr. John Emberson:** I think with COVID, that's a fair assumption. Even larger companies like ourselves will face a lot of financial difficulty as we go through this. Right now, I see the light at the end of the tunnel.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** You also mentioned that your company is large enough, there's some fairly lucrative routes that you're able to use to cross-subsidize routes that actually can't break even, and you said that if this comes through, there are probably 83 communities that would lose their bus service. Do you have a list of those 83 communities?

**Mr. John Emberson:** Yes, I can forward that in. It would include our six communities that we operate in between Hamilton and Kitchener.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** Could you send that?

**Mr. John Emberson:** But, yes, we do have a list of those 83 communities we could provide.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** Could you send that to my office, please?

**Mr. John Emberson:** Yes, I will, Mr. Glover.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** Thank you very much for being here, and thank you, Maddy. I'll pass it to one of the other members of my caucus.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Who would like to ask questions from the official opposition? MPP Sattler, you may begin.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** How much time do we have?

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** You have just one minute, actually.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I just want to ask my question to Maddy quickly. The government has said that if Canada Christian College doesn't pass the PEQAB process—and maybe we'll have to wait a year, a year and a half or more to find out—that they simply won't enact schedule 2 of Bill 213. Does that address the concerns that you've raised about the legitimization of an institution like Canada Christian College?

**Ms. Maddy Fast:** Certainly we expect the government to always be promoting messages to students and to their constituents that tolerance and respect for people of all identities is a priority. So regardless of what happens to the schedule, that will still be a concern, but certainly striking schedule 2 from the bill—

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you. That's all the time we have for this round.

We'll now turn to the independent member for four and a half minutes. You may begin.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Thanks, John and Maddy, for joining us today. We really appreciate your presentations.

I'm going to direct my first questions to you, John at Coach Canada. You talked about, I think it was, 86 or 87 communities that you think are likely to lose service. Did I hear you correctly with that?

**Mr. John Emberson:** It's 83 communities.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Oh, 83 communities. Can you just elaborate a bit more on why those 83 communities will lose service?

**Mr. John Emberson:** In the past, the whole development of the authorization was to have some high-volume lines that you could use to support your low-volume lines. In our case, our high-volume lines would help us support the Hamilton-Kitchener line, so we can take our profits and subsidize that into that line. When we come into a competition, there would be other operators in our high-volume lines, so we won't have this much profit to then turn and subsidize onto the Hamilton-Kitchener line. The other operators in Ontario go through the same thing.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Do you expect any of the new operators coming into the market to pick up any of those routes?

**Mr. John Emberson:** I do not see that happening. I think that's a big hope, that that will happen, but when you start talking about passenger counts of eight or four or two people on a trip and you're covering 50 miles or 100 miles—or, up north, even farther—you just can't make that work. If it can work and people can do market studies around it, maybe a realistic thing to do here is a request for interest out to parties, to kind of see, based on these circumstances and giving them some good data, how many people might travel from community to community.

Who would be willing to participate in that? I think you would get a pretty low response. You will get some people who will start it, but when they find out that there are no profits to be made, that you can't sustain a business and invest into a business in it, it will probably stop.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I know you say you're going to send us a list of communities—I certainly appreciate all committee members receiving that—but I'm guessing a lot of those are rural communities?

**Mr. John Emberson:** They're all small and rural communities, but I'll tell you, Hamilton to Kitchener is not a small community.

My experience is finding that if you're Toronto-centric, with the lines going into Toronto, you probably have enough volumes to support a large service, with good frequency, and if you have good frequency, you can build up your passenger counts.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I can tell you, my constituents would love it if you would swing over to Guelph and do a Guelph-to-Hamilton, and a Guelph-to-K-W as well.

**Mr. John Emberson:** We used to do Guelph to Hamilton, years ago.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I know; I know.

Some people have said the timing of this is off, but people have also raised concerns about safety issues. It seems to me that safety concerns—I don't know if that's a timing issue or just an issue. Can you maybe address the safety concerns as well?

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute left.

**Mr. John Emberson:** With safety, I'm primarily concerned about two items. One would be the hours of service and monitoring that. Everybody is going to electronic logs. Ontario, I think, is starting to move in that

direction. It's going to take time, investment and dollars for all these companies to get there, and nobody is going to have the money to do it, but once you have the electronic logs, it's tracked automatically and it becomes a much easier thing, from an enforcement point of view, to track onto.

1710

The other side is, from an insurance point of view, making sure you've got the right regulations around insurance. The limits are well below adequate. They should be up around \$1 million per person. They're not, and there's no enforcement of that. There are multiple operators operating between Toronto and Montreal today. They operate outside the authority of the MTO. They operate non-commercial vehicles and they don't have adequate insurance.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** So addressing insurance is going to be—we've heard others say this—critical for the industry to survive the COVID pandemic.

**Mr. John Emberson:** Yes. It also presents a barrier to the marketplace. You've got to be able to get insurance to come into the marketplace—

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you. That's all the time that we have for this round.

We'll now turn to the government for seven and a half minutes of questions. MPP Skelly, you may begin.

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** I want to thank both the presenters from this afternoon for your presentations. My colleagues and I have been listening intently to the comments that you've made. We have heard similar comments made earlier by presenters. So we would like to thank you, but, Madam Chair, on that note, the government has no questions for the presenters.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Thank you very much.

At this point, we'll turn to the official opposition. MPP Sattler, seven and a half minutes: You may begin.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Actually, before I ask my question, I wanted to correct my record. I mentioned a presentation from UOFA on Friday; it was actually a presentation from OCUFA.

I wanted to turn back to Ms. Fast from the Continuing Education Students' Association of Ryerson. You were in the middle of talking about the importance not just of not enacting schedule 2, but of removing schedule 2 from Bill 213. I wondered if you could elaborate on that a bit, about why that is symbolically important.

**Ms. Maddy Fast:** Thank you for this opportunity. It's clear that when schools are looking to be certified, they should follow the full process. That is what has happened with Ryerson. That's happened with other colleges who were seeking university status. That's what we're looking to happen in this situation.

I'd like to also echo one of the previous speaker's comments from today: The tyranny of the majority should never decide on the rights of the majority, and not all processes are good processes. Ryerson and other universities followed the full process. PEQAB has not come forward with their recommendation yet, and students

should be able to expect that the school they're applying to has been properly certified, following that full process. That's why it's important.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Right. Thank you very much.

The other question I wanted to ask you is whether you are aware of the motion that was passed in the Ontario Legislature last week by a majority of MPPs who voted to condemn the hateful invective of Charles McVety and to oppose efforts to grant Canada Christian College the status of a university and the ability to grant degrees in arts and sciences. That motion expressed the will of a majority of MPPs who speak for every person in the province of Ontario. I just wondered what message it would convey to you if that motion—which was non-binding, I want to be clear—is on the books and yet this government decides to ignore that motion and instead use its majority to pass Bill 213, including schedule 2. What message does that convey to you?

**Ms. Maddy Fast:** It's a very contradictory message. Students, particularly myself as a queer student, appreciated the motion that passed in the House last week of solidarity with marginalized students and the scientific community. I certainly think that it's a contradictory message for that motion to pass and then for the government to rubber-stamp this college through this committee. I think the message that was sent last week is the right one. I would encourage members here to echo that message promoting the values that Ontarians do believe in: tolerance and respect.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Thank you very much.

Mr. Emberson, I wanted to ask you a question—our final presenter of today, but one of many representatives of bus companies who have come forward to speak to this committee. Many seem like they were taken by surprise seeing schedules 16 and 24 suddenly appear in Bill 213. We have heard that there have been years of back and forth about the possibility of deregulating the bus industry, but I just wanted to hear from you about what kind of consultation took place with your sector, your industry prior to Bill 213 coming forward and what kind of feedback you had provided during that consultation about the schedules that are included in this bill.

**Mr. John Emberson:** We have, over the years, been consulted on this topic several times. We've provided very detailed responses on it very similar to what I'm talking about today, other than the timing issue—a lot of facts around safety and how that has to go forward if we're going to go into this.

We're not afraid of the competition, but it needs to be on a level playing field. If we get into a situation where people are cutting their costs, similar to what happened in the school bus industry years ago—if people are cutting their costs and charging lower fares, it's going to be difficult to reconcile safety in that reduced cost. So it becomes an important item to us.

Safety is paramount here. We just don't want to be in a situation in this industry where we're going backwards. It needs to be up front and centre. If we can deal with that, that's an important topic.

The other side of this is getting service into the smaller communities outside of Toronto. It's going to require subsidies no matter which way we go. There are possibilities there in terms of doing that. We've stated a few times that if we can go back to a couple of lines we've operated that were commercially sustainable, which were taken over by GO Transit, we can operate them in a manner that would be consistent with what GO Transit wants to do and then take those subsidies that GO Transit is getting and move them into the smaller communities, the northern and rural communities.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Mr. Emberson, I just wanted to give you a chance to complete your feedback about insurance in response to the question that was asked by Mr. Schreiner about the importance of insurance. You mentioned insurance as a barrier to accessing the market. Can you elaborate a little bit more on that?

**Mr. John Emberson:** Yes, two points on that: It's not just a barrier, but it's protection for the individuals riding the bus. Heaven forbid there's a serious accident and there's inadequate insurance coverage, like what's going on today, or insurance limits that will not provide people with the care and the treatment they need.

Then from an insurance limit point of view, the limits today are too low. They need to be increased. By increasing the limit on insurance, you force companies into a situation where they have to deal with the insurance provider to prove that they're a good, safe provider.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** Twenty seconds.

**Mr. John Emberson:** They may get away with it for one year, but they won't get away with it long-term.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Thank you very much.

**Mr. John Emberson:** You're very welcome.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** At this point, we'll now turn to the independent Green Party member for four and a half minutes. MPP Schreiner, you may begin.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Maddy, I wanted to ask you a few questions in this round. You brought up concerns around science. I'm thinking, okay, so here you are; you're a continuing student from Ryerson, you're speaking about another potential university that, in some respects, may directly affect you or may not affect you, but you're obviously very concerned. So I'm curious how this whole issue with Canada Christian College affects the reputation of other universities in Ontario and degrees from Ontario universities, potentially, given the problematic scientific views of Mr. McVety.

1720

**Ms. Maddy Fast:** Thank you for this question. Really, I'd like to restate what I said before: These students will be put on what is supposed to be a level playing field with their peers. These are students who are all studying the same subjects and expect to be taught curricula which are on par with each other. These students will then go out into the academic world, teaching and trying to contribute to the academic community. It will reflect on all Ontario students when you see an Ontario college or university placed under the name of work that is being peer-reviewed that is not up to par with what is expected from students at

most universities and what is expected from the scientific community and the academic community in the world as accepted and proven scientific facts and what is the accepted curriculum.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Do you have concerns that the Canada Christian College's admissions process violates the Ontario Human Rights Code, especially the provision around requiring a pastor's letter for admittance?

**Ms. Maddy Fast:** Yes. Thank you for this question. The admissions process for Canada Christian College is really unlike what I've seen for any university. When I applied to go to the Chang School at Ryerson, where I study, they did not ask me for a pastor's letter. I've never heard of that before to get into a school. Yes, I do see students or folks who want to be students potentially applying challenges based on that admissions process and also some of the other information they ask. Students shouldn't have to divulge their sexual orientation, whether or not they're queer or trans, to get into a school. It should be based on the basis on your grades and your willingness to contribute to the academic community with your research and the work that you'll be doing, not your identity, your sexual orientation or whether or not you have approval from an approved pastor.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I think for most universities in Ontario, it seems like the president might serve for five years, maybe 10 years at the most.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** One minute.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Do you think it's questionable that it appears that this particular institution seems to have a family lineage when it comes to its president?

**Ms. Maddy Fast:** I would say that is unusual. That's not something that you see at public colleges and universities. It's not something that I think most students are looking for when they're coming to school. They're looking for a good education. They're looking for a community that will be accepting of them and their identities, and I think that's very atypical for a university or a college that's looking to be accredited as a university to be passed through the family in that way.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Great. I'm probably almost out of time, so I just want to thank both presenters for coming in today and providing valuable information to the committee. Thank you.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** We'll now turn to the government for a final round of questions of seven and a half minutes. MPP Skelly, you may begin.

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** We have no questions.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** At this point, that concludes our final round of presentations. I just wanted to thank the presenters for their time today. You are now released from committee.

At this point, this concludes public hearings on Bill 213—MPP Piccini, you had your hand raised?

**Mr. David Piccini:** I was just waving, as Mike and Sheref were. Thanks to all the presenters.

**The Chair (Ms. Goldie Ghamari):** All right. Yes, thank you, everyone.

This concludes our hearings for Bill 213. As a reminder, the deadline to send in written submissions is 7 p.m. today, and the deadline for filing amendments is 5 p.m. tomorrow, Tuesday, December 1, 2020.

I'd like to thank all the committee members. I know it has been a long couple of days, and I just wanted to thank everyone for their co-operation and their participation as we work together to make these technological hearings a success. I just wanted to thank everyone for their continued collaboration on that.

I also wanted to take a moment and thank legislative staff, Hansard, broadcast and recording, as well as our amazing legislative Clerk, Isaiah Thorning. He has been working non-stop around the clock, so a big round of applause for Isaiah. I might be biased, but I do think he is the best committee Clerk in the Legislature, and I'm putting that in Hansard.

At this point in time, the committee is now adjourned until 9 a.m. on Wednesday, December 2, 2020. Be safe and well, everyone. Thank you.

*The committee adjourned at 1731.*







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