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Jeudi
27 octobre 2022

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CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Thursday 27 October 2022 / Jeudi 27 octobre 2022

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022, Bill 23, Mr.

Clark / Loi de 2022 visant à accélérer la construction de plus de logements, projet de loi 23, M. Clark

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy	917
Ms. Peggy Sattler	919
Mr. Logan Kanapathi	919
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	920
Ms. Andrea Khanjin	920
Ms. Catherine Fife	920
Mr. Nolan Quinn	923
Mr. Chris Glover	923
Mr. Rob Flack	924
MPP Lise Vaugeois	924
Mr. Anthony Leardi	924
Mr. Mike Schreiner	924
Ms. Andrea Khanjin	925
Mme France Gélinas	926
Ms. Andrea Khanjin	926
Ms. Peggy Sattler	926
Second reading debate deemed adjourned	927

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉES ET DÉPUTÉS

illumi Mississauga

Mr. Deepak Anand	927
------------------------	-----

Housing

Mr. Guy Bourgouin	927
-------------------------	-----

Deborah Foster

Ms. Andrea Khanjin	927
--------------------------	-----

Arrowhead Coffee Company

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens	927
--------------------------------------	-----

Municipal elections

Mr. Ric Bresee	928
----------------------	-----

Health care funding

Ms. Marit Stiles	928
------------------------	-----

Billy Bishop Museum ceremony

Mr. Rick Byers	928
----------------------	-----

Social assistance

Mr. Mike Schreiner	929
--------------------------	-----

HMCS Oakville

Mr. Stephen Crawford	929
----------------------------	-----

Ajax Pumpkinville

Ms. Patrice Barnes	929
--------------------------	-----

Report, Financial Accountability Officer

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott)	929
-------------------------------------	-----

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEUSES ET VISITEURS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott)	930
Mme France Gélinas	930
Hon. Kaleed Rasheed	930
Mr. Michael Mantha	930
Ms. Goldie Ghamari	930
MPP Jamie West	930
Ms. Laura Smith	930
Mr. Mike Schreiner	930
Hon. Graydon Smith	930
Mr. Kevin Holland	930
Mr. John Yakabuski	930
Mr. Mike Harris	930

QUESTION PERIOD / PÉRIODE DE QUESTIONS

Public Order Emergency Commission

Mr. Peter Tabuns	930
Hon. Paul Calandra	930

Public Order Emergency Commission

Ms. Chandra Pasma	931
Hon. Paul Calandra	931

Public Order Emergency Commission

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky	932
Hon. Paul Calandra	932

Long-term care

Ms. Christine Hogarth	933
Mr. John Jordan	933

Services de santé dans le Nord / Northern health services

M. Guy Bourgouin	933
Mrs. Robin Martin	934

Housing

Mrs. Daisy Wai	934
Hon. Michael Parsa	934

Indigenous children and youth

Mr. Sol Mamakwa	935
Hon. Merrilee Fullerton	935

Public Order Emergency Commission

Mr. John Fraser	935
Hon. Doug Ford	935

Mining industry	
Mr. John Yakabuski	936
Hon. George Pirie	936
Public Order Emergency Commission	
MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam	937
Hon. Paul Calandra	937
Public safety / Sécurité publique	
Mr. Vincent Ke	937
Hon. Michael S. Kerzner.....	937
Conservation authorities	
Mr. Michael Mantha	938
Hon. Graydon Smith	938
Child abuse prevention	
Mr. Anthony Leardi	938
Hon. Merrilee Fullerton	938
Government investments	
Ms. Catherine Fife.....	939
Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy.....	939
Affaires francophones	
M. Andrew Dowie.....	940
L'hon. Caroline Mulroney	940
Child care	
Ms. Bhutla Karpoche	940
Hon. Stephen Lecce	940
Notice of dissatisfaction	
The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott)	940
Business of the House	
Hon. Paul Calandra	940

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

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott)	941
Mr. Deepak Anand.....	941

**REPORTS BY COMMITTEES /
RAPPORTS DE COMITÉS**

Standing Committee on Justice Policy	
Mr. Lorne Coe.....	941
Report presented	941
Standing Committee on Government Agencies	
The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott)	941
Report deemed adopted.....	941

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

Strengthening Post-secondary Institutions and Students Act, 2022, Bill 26, Ms. Dunlop / Loi de	
---	--

2022 sur le renforcement des établissements postsecondaires et les étudiants, projet de loi 26, Mme Dunlop	
First reading agreed to.....	941
Hon. Jill Dunlop.....	941

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

Protecting Agricultural Land Act, 2022, Bill 27, Mr. Vanthof / Loi de 2022 sur la protection des terres agricoles, projet de loi 27, M. Vanthof	
First reading agreed to.....	942
Mr. John Vanthof	942

**STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS
MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES**

Child abuse prevention	
Hon. Merrilee Fullerton.....	942
MPP Jill Andrew	943

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Social assistance	
MPP Jill Andrew	943
Injured workers	
Mr. Michael Mantha.....	944
Tenant protection	
MPP Jill Andrew	944
Social assistance	
Mr. Michael Mantha.....	944
Social assistance	
Ms. Sandy Shaw	944
Social assistance	
MPP Jill Andrew	945
Affordable housing	
MPP Jill Andrew	945
Health care	
MPP Jill Andrew	945

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022, Bill 23, Mr. Clark / Loi de 2022 visant à accélérer la construction de plus de logements, projet de loi 23, M. Clark	
Ms. Peggy Sattler	946
Mr. Andrew Dowie	947
Mr. Wayne Gates	947
Mr. Rick Byers	948
Ms. Chandra Pasma.....	948
Mr. Stephen Crawford.....	948

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy.....	948
Ms. Sandy Shaw.....	951
Mr. Rob Flack	952
Mr. Wayne Gates	952
Mr. Logan Kanapathi	952
Mr. Chris Glover	953
Ms. Chandra Pasma.....	953
Mr. Rick Byers	955
Ms. Peggy Sattler	956
Mr. John Jordan.....	956
Mr. Chris Glover	956
Mr. Stephen Crawford.....	956

Mr. Michael Mantha.....	957
Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon	957
Ms. Andrea Khanjin	958
Mr. Chris Glover	959
Mme Lucille Collard	959
Ms. Andrea Khanjin	959
Mr. Wayne Gates	962
Mr. Deepak Anand	963
Ms. Sandy Shaw.....	963
Mr. Rick Byers	963
Mr. Michael Mantha.....	963
Mr. Graham McGregor	964

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 27 October 2022

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 27 octobre 2022

The House met at 0900.

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

Prières / Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MORE HOMES BUILT FASTER ACT, 2022

LOI DE 2022 VISANT
À ACCÉLÉRER LA CONSTRUCTION
DE PLUS DE LOGEMENTS

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 26, 2022, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 23, An Act to amend various statutes, to revoke various regulations and to enact the Supporting Growth and Housing in York and Durham Regions Act, 2022 / Projet de loi 23, Loi modifiant diverses lois, abrogeant divers règlements et édictant la Loi de 2022 visant à soutenir la croissance et la construction de logements dans les régions de York et de Durham.

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

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Good morning, everyone, and colleagues in the House. I will begin this morning by saying thank you to my colleague Minister Clark for your tireless leadership and dedication to an important issue that matters to so many Ontario families, seniors and those who are vulnerable.

Everyone in Ontario should be able to find a home that is right for them, but that is simply not the current reality. Too many people are struggling with the rising cost of living and with finding housing that meets their families' needs. Ontario needs more housing, and Ontario needs it now.

Tout le monde en Ontario devrait pouvoir trouver un logement qui lui convient. Mais la réalité actuelle est tout autre. Trop de gens ont du mal à jongler avec le coût de la vie qui augmente et avec la recherche d'un logement qui répond aux besoins de leur famille. Il faut plus de logements en Ontario, et il les faut maintenant.

Attainable housing has undoubtedly become one of the most important topics of the day, which is exactly why this government, and Minister Clark and the Premier in particular, have led the charge in stepping up to the plate to address and tackle this issue head-on.

It is not the only subject, however, that has continued to dominate headlines. Geo-political crises and supply chain issues continue to strain society, especially as far as people's pocketbooks are concerned. This is not lost on

our government. It is also why today it is my sincere honour to address the measures this government has taken in our mission to help keep costs down in this province, particularly as it relates to the housing file, and I'm pleased to be here today to speak to the government's recently introduced More Homes Built Faster Act.

It is very clear to this government that families, seniors and people from every corner of this province are looking to cut back on their household expenses. Our government believes this is an opportunity to help support people through a very challenging time. As I mentioned earlier, over the last four years the government has introduced many new policies to build more housing against the backdrop of a system that is not working as well as it could.

In 2019, we created the province's first-ever housing supply action plan to cut through the red tape and get more homes built faster. Last spring, we introduced our More Homes for Everyone plan, and we have committed to introducing a housing supply action plan every year to meet our commitment to build 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years, and our government is taking bold action to get those 1.5 million homes built over the next 10 years.

While I can say the government's new policies are working, we know more work needs to be done to reach our goal of building 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years to address this province's housing crisis, starting with reducing red tape and delays that are holding back the construction of housing. We must reform these processes at the provincial and municipal levels to ensure everyone can find a home that meets their needs and their budgets.

D'abord, réduire les formalités administratives et lever les obstacles qui retardent la construction de logements et créent d'importantes difficultés pour les jeunes et les familles, les nouveaux arrivants, et les aînés qui envisagent de prendre un logement plus petit—nous devons réformer ces processus aux paliers provincial et municipal pour que chacun puisse trouver un logement adapté à ses besoins et à son budget.

Our government is building a durable foundation for action that will increase housing supply and attainability over the long term, even though we know that the effects of this plan will not be felt overnight. The proposals contained in this legislation, if passed, would ensure cities, towns and rural communities grow with a mix of ownership and rental housing types that meet the needs of all, from single-family homes to townhomes and mid-rise apartments. We remain committed to releasing a new action plan every year over four years to help build more homes and make life more affordable for Ontario families.

Before I go any further, let me just share some of the actions we have taken to date on this file. I want to spend a moment echoing what Mr. Clark said earlier this year at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference. Ontario cannot tackle this housing crisis on its own. Municipal councils play a crucial role in increasing the housing supply. The province cannot do it alone, so our government has been working closely with municipalities to identify opportunities and solutions to help us collectively and effectively address the housing crisis. What we have heard from them was very clear: Municipalities need the tools and flexibility to get shovels in the ground faster.

Les conseils municipaux contribuent grandement à enrichir l'offre de logements. La province ne saurait le faire seule. Notre gouvernement travaille donc en étroite collaboration avec les municipalités pour trouver des occasions et des solutions susceptibles de nous aider à contrer collectivement et adéquatement la crise du logement. Le message des municipalités est clair : elles ont besoin des outils et de la souplesse nécessaires pour pouvoir mettre leurs projets en chantier plus rapidement.

That is why the province has also passed the Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act in September in respect of our cities in the most urgent need of new housing, namely Toronto and Ottawa, where more than one third of Ontario's growth across the next decades is expected to take place. Thanks to that legislation, if proclaimed, mayors in these two great cities would get the ability to drive policy changes, select municipal department heads and bring forward budgets. These changes are intended to be in effect on November 15, 2022, in Toronto and Ottawa, the start of the new municipal council term.

0910

Efficient local decision-making will help to expedite the development timelines, which is why we have enabled municipalities to take the opportunity to bypass red tape and get housing built faster.

Our work with municipalities does not stop there. We're also encouraging gentle intensification by giving some property owners the right to build up to three units on most urban residential lots without lengthy planning approvals and development charges. And we are creating a new attainable housing program to drive development of housing. Sites across all regions of Ontario will be considered, including those in the north, central, east and southwest regions.

We are building more homes near transit, unlocking an innovative approach to design and construction, and getting shovels in the ground faster. We are continuing to introduce consumer protection measures for homebuyers and using provincial lands to build more attainable homes so, whatever their budget, Ontarians can find a place to call their own.

We're also introducing changes to renew and update our heritage policies to reduce red tape, strengthen the criteria for heritage designation and provide clearer, fairer and more transparent guidelines. This is good policy work that will drive meaningful change.

I will now turn my attention to renters, as there are measures we are considering at this time that could help those who rent—for example, units sitting empty in incidences where they have been purchased as an investment, but not rented out. Too many units are sitting empty while would-be homebuyers and renters sit on the sidelines, priced out of the market. To encourage these property owners to rent or sell their unoccupied units this winter, Ontario will release a policy framework setting out the key elements of local vacant-home taxes. We're also going to look at how the property tax assessment system can better support affordable rental housing.

Mr. Speaker, we are also calling on the federal government to come to the table and work with us on potential HST incentives, including rebates, exemptions and deferrals to support new ownership and rental housing development, because all levels of government need to work together to get more homes built and address the housing crisis.

These actions are all part of our government's broader approach to support everyone—everyone in Ontario—living in a home that meets their needs and meets their budget. Let me be clear: As part of this commitment to tackle Ontario's housing crisis, we need to prioritize Ontario families and Ontario homebuyers. That is why our government got to work immediately. On March 30, 2022, we increased the non-resident speculation tax to 20% from 15%, and expanded the tax to apply province-wide, beyond the greater Golden Horseshoe. These changes further deterred non-resident investors from speculating on Ontario's housing market. This measure helps make home ownership more attainable for Ontario residents, and that is exactly why we are now increasing Ontario's non-resident speculation tax rate from 20% to 25%, to prioritize Ontario families and Ontario homebuyers. This increase will mean it is the most comprehensive non-resident speculation tax rate in the country.

Following this, Ontario will also consult on potential measures to address concerns related to land speculation. For example, the province will explore ways to discourage construction slowdowns that may be artificially driving up prices of new homes for Ontario families through land speculation.

Speaker, Ontarians sent our government a strong message when they re-elected us earlier this year: They expect us to deliver on our pledge to get more housing built. Over the last four years, our government has introduced dozens of new policies under our first two new housing supply action plans: More Homes, More Choice in 2019 and More Homes for Everyone in 2022. These have helped to substantially increase housing starts in recent years, but we know we need to do more to hit our target of 1.5 million new homes over the next 10 years.

We are introducing this plan now to accelerate the progress begun with our previous housing supply action plans. It is a clear indication that our government understands the urgency of the housing supply shortage and is moving fast to tackle it. For various reasons, too many people continue to struggle with the rising cost of living and with finding housing that meets their family's needs.

Ontario needs more housing; Ontario needs it now. Ontario's housing supply crisis is a problem that has been decades in the making and will not be resolved overnight. That is why we have committed to introduce a housing supply action plan each year over the next four years. It will take both short-term and long-term strategies and a commitment from all levels of government, the private sector and not-for-profits to drive change.

Addressing the rising cost of living and helping keep costs down are pillars of our government's plan in so many measures that have already been announced and are already under way in Ontario. We stand here proud and ready to continue to support the people of this province, especially in this ongoing period of challenge and uncertainty. Everyone in Ontario should be able to find a home that is right for them. Families in Ontario should not have to choose between food and filling up their gas tank. That is our bottom line, and it will always be our bottom line.

In spite of the challenges we have collectively weathered, and will continue to weather, my belief in Ontario remains firm: I'm proud of the people of this province and proud of the workers of this province and of their resilience. This period of ongoing economic turbulence and uncertainty is real. That is why it's my firm belief that governments must remain flexible and responsive, with a fiscal plan solid enough to respond to any challenge, and that is exactly what this government is doing. Until then, I will say this: I firmly believe our collective strength will continue to carry us forward through any challenge. We, as Ontarians, are standing strong together, and together with sheer resolve and a government that has your back, we will get it done.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll now ask for questions to the Minister of Finance.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Thank you to the Minister of Finance for his comments. One of the changes that is proposed in this bill that has raised alarms with many people in this province are the changes to conservation authorities. People rightly point out that what has been of greatest concern around this government's approach to conservation authorities is the development of warehouses on wetlands. The question that critics have raised is whether this bill is actually about building housing, or is it about allowing more warehouses on protected wetlands. Can the minister tell us exactly how limiting the ability of conservation authorities to protect sensitive wetland areas is going to help spur new housing in the province?

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Can another minister reply?

Interjection.

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

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you to the member opposite for this question. I think, as the Minister of Natural Resources would have responded had it been directed to him, Mr. Speaker, that the conservation lands are being protected here for the purpose that they were set

up for when Hurricane Hazel came through in the 1950s. They were set up to protect the lands against floods and propose flood mitigations. That remains at the core of the conservation authorities, and our minister has very articulately put forward concisely that's what this plan addresses. In fact, they've done a very good job to make sure that flood mitigation, that protecting the lands against flooding, to protect homes further downstream—that is their core responsibility. That remains intact, Mr. Speaker, and that is a core part of our plan to move forward.

0920

But at the same time, Mr. Speaker, the status quo is not an option in this province. Some 200,000 more people come to this province every year to call home. Where are they going to live? We have too many people that can't afford or can't attain houses for their—front doors and back doors and apartments and rental units that meet their needs, that meet their budgets.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would submit that this plan is dealing with the challenges in front of us boldly, and taking us on behalf of all Ontarians to provide them the dream of home ownership.

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

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you, Minister, for your presentation. Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to see our government is continuing to take the housing supply crisis seriously.

This morning as I was driving on the DVP, a small builder called me asking how our new bill can build more housing faster. He has been struggling with a development application for five years to build five houses, going through the bureaucratic jargon and all kinds of red tape there is at the municipality.

I'll ask the member: Can the member please let us know why our government is not only building more houses but also building more houses faster? That is very critical to alleviate the housing supply crisis urgently and introducing yet another plan. Please could you elaborate why we have to build more houses faster?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The question is to the Minister of Finance, and I'll recognize the Minister of Finance to reply.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for making sure I respond to that question.

I appreciate the genesis of that very thoughtful question—to the member opposite. What we have to acknowledge in this province is that the dream of home ownership is the dream of many families. It's the dream of many hard-working Ontarians. It's the dream of many people that come to this province for the first time, like my family. You've heard me say before, I'm the son of Hungarian World War II refugees who came through the ocean into Halifax, into Ontario—my mother, whose family set up in Port Colborne; my father here, with not a nickel in their pockets, not a proficiency in the language. And this province was welcoming to them. They were able to find jobs. They were able to raise a family. They were able to

send us to school and had the opportunity and the freedoms that they did not have from where they came.

And one of the core rights, really, for people that come from wherever they come from, is to be able to have a home, Mr. Speaker. We cannot let the people of Ontario down. We didn't let my family down back in the 1950s and 1960s, and we're not going to let the people of Ontario down right now. We need more homes. We need faster homes. We have to work federally, provincially, municipally. We have to do it together so the dream of home ownership exists for everyone in this province.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I have a question to the minister. Under Bill 23, building more houses faster—this government is always in a hurry.

So I'm questioning the government under schedule 8. There are four new sections and subsections that had been proposed under this schedule 8—the Ontario Underground Infrastructure Notification System Act. It says here:

“The minister may appoint a chair of the board of directors from among the members ...”

“The administrator shall report to the minister as the minister requires.”

“The minister may issue directions to the administrator with regard to any matter within the administrator's jurisdiction and the administrator shall carry them out.”

“No action or other proceeding shall be instituted against the administrator or a former administrator for ... any act done in good faith in the exercise”—you understand where that is going. But the crown is going to be liable for it.

So my question is, can the minister provide a specific example and legal case where an administrator was held personally liable to explain why this new section is so imperative when we're talking about building homes?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you for that question and, of course, the minister who tabled the legislation yesterday will have lots of opportunity to get into the details within the legislation. But what is paramount here, and I'll come back to it again: We have to build more homes, and we have to build them faster. I think we can all agree that that is a noble objective. We need affordable and attainable housing in this province, and the status quo is not an option.

We saw last year, for the first time—I came to this province in 1985, and in 1987, two years later, 100,000 homes were built. The next time over 100,000 homes were built was in 2021. We have not been building enough homes and apartments and condos and family dwellings in this province for 30 years. That is the challenge that we collectively face. Yes, we'll go through the specifics and make sure we get the best possible policies and programs in place, but we have to agree—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you.

Next question.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I want to thank the finance minister for all his work. He knows I'm very passionate about our seniors in our community, and of course this bill

touches a lot of demographics. He's done a lot of work in terms of letting seniors renovate their homes and be able to stay in their homes longer, but it all comes down to supply in this bill.

I wanted to ask him in terms of the different demographics this helps, from seniors to new immigrants. Yesterday, we heard new census data come out that, in 2021, 23% of our population has been increased by landed immigrants—the largest since Confederation—and that's going to increase by 34% by 2041. I want to ask him how this bill addresses all different demographics in our province?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: What a terrific question, and thank you for the hard work you're doing in your riding.

I'll talk about both the newcomers as well as seniors, because you addressed both in your question.

First, on the newcomers: back to my mother, in 1944, when she separated from her family—didn't know if they'd ever be connected again. When they moved to Montreal from Ontario, I remember my mother and her brother, my grandmother and my grandfather and three great-grandparents all living under one roof. For many families, that's the dream of home ownership. Everyone's circumstances are a little bit different. So we're trying to do what they were able to do many years ago.

With regard to seniors, I hear it all the time, and you're absolutely right: making it easier to live at home longer by investing in infrastructure, as well as health care that comes to your home, and other programs like the community paramedicine program. You're absolutely right: The home and community care, the \$1 billion that we're putting in there, is all driven so that seniors can live at home longer, where they want to be.

But we're also very mindful that your house—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} France Gélinas): Thank you.

Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure for me to join the debate on Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act.

Before I begin, though, I just want to say thank you to all the people who have reached out to the member from Hamilton Mountain. She's suffered a sudden death in her family, and I know the government side and this side, including the independent members, have reached out to her, and I think that that is a hopeful moment for us.

I also wanted to talk about a theme that has emerged over the last four years and now continues into this term, around the legislation that the government brings forward, and it's sort of the theme of what you see is not always what you get. On housing, though, every member of this Legislature is experiencing huge pressure in our communities to build affordable housing and to ensure that that housing is where people live and work. That's one of the key pieces that I'm going to be focusing on as I comment on Bill 23.

I wanted to give some context for those comments, because in Waterloo region, with a population of some 600,000, the regional government has just sanctioned a tent city. It's part of a broader plan, but people in Waterloo

region have literally no place to live, and so they've taken matters into their own hands. These people are members of our community who have been displaced, who have suffered illness in their family, who have lost their jobs. Many of them were contributing to the local economy prior to the pandemic. Then there's also the complications around mental health and addiction and the lack of resources.

0930

So it's really through a combination of circumstances—and in some instances, for some folks, truly a perfect storm—you have people and families who are living in tents in Waterloo region. As the winter approaches I hope that we can all express our collective concern that living in a tent in Canada is something that should fill all of us with a sense of responsibility to address this in a meaningful way and with urgency.

With Bill 23—in some respects there are parts of this legislation that are encouraging. Some of the intensification pieces are exactly some of the stuff that we have advocated for, for years. The fundamental difference, I think, in the way that we approach housing and the way that the government does is that we do see a role for government to play an active role in investing and directly building affordable housing. Prior to the 1990s, the government filled that gap, where the private sector was not building affordable housing. The private sector is not going to build affordable housing. They are not. There is no money in building affordable housing. So there is a role for government to directly play in direct development and funding of truly, deeply affordable housing.

Right now the not-for-profit sector—I'm thinking of an organization in Hamilton and now Waterloo region, Indwell—are filling that gap, but 30 units at a time, 40 units at a time. We know that for the 60 people who are living in tents in Waterloo region, that housing will not come online in time for them. So they are looking at a very cold winter.

It's not that municipalities have not been trying, but they do have financial limitations to doing so. The mayor of Kitchener, who was just recently elected—congrats to him—said that this hybrid shelter outdoor model—that's what we're calling it—obviously it's a transitional piece of housing programming, but it's going to require wraparound services. This is a quote from him, that it will need investment from upper levels of government to ensure there will be wraparound supports.

So municipalities—all the hotels, all the motels, everything is booked, everything is full. There's no other place, so this is where one of the most affluent communities in Ontario is really trying to formalize a tent city.

The region goes on to say that paying for such a plan wasn't accounted for in the region of Waterloo 2022 budget, which is really interesting, when the Minister of Municipal Affairs says, “Oh, municipalities have all this money in reserve”—\$8.2 billion, I think he said. When a municipality like Waterloo is factoring in \$3.4 million just from September to December of this year and \$10.2 million for 2023 to maintain and protect vulnerable

citizens—in tents—I don't think that the minister is factoring in these costs that municipalities have. One of the regional councillors said, “While the price tag is big, we can't afford not to do it.”

I wanted the context for where the region of Waterloo is. They're trying to find creative solutions. I don't think any one of us ever thought that we would be sanctioning a tent city, though. It's quite a statement.

I'm going to focus my comments today on schedule 1 and schedule 2, because this is a big piece of legislation. We saw it get walked in and the House leader sort of heckled that it's an omnibus piece of legislation if it's more than three pages. There's a lot in this bill that needs our scrutiny, Madam Speaker.

Schedule 1, in particular, is of concern to us, because it will encourage the displacement of already existing rental units. I'm hoping that the government has a review of schedule 1.

But this is section 111, which the city of Toronto uses to require the replacement of affordable rentals that are demolished or converted during redevelopment. What our concern is, essentially, is that it is unclear what limits the government is seeking to impose. It has launched a consultation after the fact, which I have to say is not always the best way to consult, but this provision puts tenants at risk of being displaced from their neighbourhoods and threatens the inclusivity of growing cities. We're already seeing this happening in our communities, but schedule 1 may accelerate this development.

In Waterloo region, we're seeing renovations, demovictions, and those units are being flipped over and they're being turned into condos, essentially. In one instance, an entire building of seniors was displaced. Our office worked diligently to try to find them some options; many ended up living with family because they had no other choice and they had no other options. Then one group of ladies, who I like to call the golden girls, three of them who were displaced, found a one-bedroom together and are living together. I'm sure that this is not how they saw their retirement. I'm pretty sure that this is not how they saw themselves living out those last golden years: in a one-bedroom apartment with three senior ladies.

I do like to remind the government that we have a responsibility to seniors in the province of Ontario. Many of these seniors are women, they are on fixed incomes, and they really and truly have no option. When those rental protections are not there for them, they obviously have to find some creative options, but sometimes these moves put them at risk. Our colleague is trying to make some arrangements around regulations around group homes to ensure that when people move from an apartment, if they're renovicted or demovicted, and they end up in one of these privately run homes in a room, that they're protected and that they're safe. Clearly that is not happening in Ontario right now.

Schedule 2: I have to say, I'm going to quote heavily from the Narwhal, because I'm a big fan of the work that they do. Fatima Syed and Emma McIntosh really did a deep dive on this piece of legislation, in addition to our

excellent researchers with the NDP. These are the main concerns around the changes to the Conservation Authorities Act: instead of requiring approval of the minister before selling or disposing of land that was paid for by a provincial grant, the conservation authority need only give the minister notice of the sale or disposition; and the ERO notice indicates that the province intends to require, via regulation—so they're following in the pattern of the Liberals of bumping everything down to the regs—that conservation authorities identify land suitable for housing development.

This is not the work of a conservation authority. This is not their mandate. Their mandate is to protect the land, to prevent flooding and to ensure that watersheds are protected.

There's a long history of conservation authorities. We went through that last time the government had a go at conservation authorities, so we don't need to go there again. But I have to say, when the Premier says to the Toronto Region Board of Trade, as he did on Tuesday, "We want to build the right type of housing in the right places," I feel like the Premier doesn't really understand the right type of housing that is needed, and has a very different definition of affordability, and also around the right places. We see the right places around the core infrastructure, where you have transit, where you have work and employment options, where there is green space and does not contribute to more sprawl, which actually adds to the tax base. Every new subdivision that is built, the next subdivision is paying for it from a taxation perspective. The costs that municipalities are incurring through this process can't be downloaded anywhere except to the property tax base. This is something that I wanted to put on the Ford government's radar.

At the time, though, there was no—when the Premier was at the Toronto board of trade, there was no mention, of course, that the plan depends, in part, on a massive gutting of conservation authorities, which oversee and protect vital and deteriorating watersheds.

0940

So to understand the full scope, there was a briefing. Our critic has done a great job on this file; she did her one-hour lead yesterday. But there was also an internal government document which was shared with some stakeholders. In that document, which was actually later confirmed through the legislation, some of these changes are unprecedented around conservation authorities. The legislation will repeal 36 specific regulations that allow conservation authorities to directly oversee the development process. If passed, it would mean Ontario's conservation authorities will no longer be able to consider pollution and conservation of land when weighing whether they will allow development.

There is a climate crisis. It's pretty bad when the Insurance Bureau of Canada issued a response to this legislation and said, "Hey, listen, people. Climate change is real. There's a cost to not planning for and being responsible for sustainable development, and this actually

impacts the entire well-being of the province—not just our health, but also the economy of the province of Ontario."

The government is also seeking to force the agencies to issue permits for projects that are subject to "a community infrastructure and housing accelerator." So this is a new tool that allows the province to expedite zoning changes. The important part, on this piece, is that it will limit authorities' ability to weigh in on developments to issues of natural hazards. Once again, this is the core business of conservation authorities. The changes are aimed at reducing the financial burden on developers and landowners making development-related applications and seeking permits from conservation authorities.

The Ford government repeatedly denied this Tuesday, and I'm probably going to hear this again today. Yet, under the new proposed rules, conservation authorities would also be compelled to identify and give up any land that they hold that could be "suitable for housing." This is a major change. Conservation authorities have been looking around the crown property that they are duly responsible for, and saying, "Oh, I think some nice houses could go over there in that corner." And our agriculture critic has already pointed out—how many acres of land are we losing?

Mr. John Vanthof: Three hundred and twenty.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Three hundred and twenty acres a day we lose in the province of Ontario to development. Of the 36 conservation authorities, 31 of them are in high-density areas in Ontario, in the southern part of the province. So there is no doubt that schedule 2, as it's currently constructed, will have a negative impact on sustainable development and planning.

I think that they're here today. Conservation authorities—are they here today? I'm sure that they have some very interesting things to say.

I do want to say, the provincial government, the 444 regional and local municipalities, and the 36 conservation authorities—of these, the ones most directly tasked with looking out for animals, land and environment during the planning process are conservation authorities. Today, for the second time in under four and a half years, this government has had a go at them.

I think that we have to remember the Premier's comments in 2018 when he said, "Listen, on paper we're not going to go into the green belt." Then he met with those developers and said, "You know what? We can open this up," and then had to backtrack again.

The focus on conservation authorities, I think, for us, is worrisome on a couple of levels. I do think it's important to also point out that conservation authorities are doing their job well, especially given the history of the province. If it's not broken, at least try to embrace this philosophy of doing no harm.

Moving on, I think the response from communities like Waterloo, for instance, is going to be really interesting, because we just went through an extensive planning process. The developers are not that happy with it, but the focus has been on the intensification of housing within a

hard line around Waterloo region, and I think Hamilton has actually had the same conversation.

Schedule 9, just to move off conservation authorities for a second, specifically deals with the Planning Act, this elimination of the land use planning responsibilities of the following upper-tier municipalities: Simcoe, Durham, Halton, Niagara, Peel, Waterloo, York and other prescribed upper-tier municipalities. This means decisions about official plans, zoning bylaws, subdivision plans and consents within a region will now be made only by lower-tier municipalities.

For the last two-plus years, Waterloo region has been meeting with community groups. Waterloo region is a very engaged group of citizens who care deeply about how their community grows. The good places to grow legislation that the previous Liberal government brought forward, which had us intensify—that has been working. It may not be always the prettiest housing, but it ensures that people actually have a place to live, and it's primarily around transit.

So when you have a regional municipality like Waterloo doing exactly what government has asked them to do and then you throw schedule 9 in and you remove that responsibility for the very thing that you asked them to do, I would have to say it's a little bit insulting.

I want to try to say a few good things, because I always try to. The non-profit housing developments, including co-ops and residential units mandated under an inclusionary zoning bylaw are exempt from development charges. That should help with some of the barriers that the not-for-profit sector has seen in our respective communities. Also, the intensification piece, as I've mentioned, that Bill 23 actually deals with, is somewhat encouraging. We'll have to see how that plays itself out.

But the municipalities under this piece of legislation now have to waive community benefit charges and parkland dedications for the percentage of a development that is affordable or attainable residential units as defined under the Development Charges Act, as well as for residential units required under an inclusionary zoning bylaw—that may raise some ire of the municipalities.

In summary, Madam Speaker, I just want to say, I feel like if the government was truly concerned and interested in accelerating affordable housing, having a more reasonable definition of what affordable is would be a good start, and we do need a strong public sector role to get done what the private sector will not do and can't be done. The private market can't be expected to build homes for low-income people, and increasingly, it isn't even building homes for the middle class.

Unfortunately, this piece of legislation misses that part, but as I said, there are good parts of it that we're still exploring, and I look forward to the questions and answers from the members of the Conservative caucus.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Questions and answers?

Mr. Nolan Quinn: We know that when push comes to shove the opposition always opposes building more homes. The NDP often selects their candidates by looking

for the most NIMBY—not in my backyard—local city councillors.

The MPP for Toronto Centre and former Toronto city councillor is quoted in the media saying, “Good luck trying to build your tower or ... condo if we don't give you the road occupancy permit. Good luck if we don't give you that permission to remove that single ... little tree. It is ... not going to happen.”

Speaker, my question to the member opposite is, how can they support the building of more homes while their own members have a history of putting up roadblocks to new housing?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I can effectively counter that but not in a 30-second period of time.

What we have said, actually, is that we fought for inclusionary zoning. The Conservatives did not support that. We fought for intensification. The Conservatives did not vote for that. What the member failed to address in my comments is why you are insisting on building housing that actually will be unsustainable, that the Insurance Bureau of Canada says is financially and fiscally irresponsible.

If you want to have a discussion around our record on housing, it is very strong. In fact, some of the aspects are even contained in the legislation. But what we're not willing to do is move forward without a sustainable plan that's focused on affordability and attainability. We want to make the legislation better. That's part of our job.

0950

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

Mr. Chris Glover: The member from Toronto Centre was a city councillor just before she became an MPP. Toronto has 252 cranes working on construction projects in this city. It's five times the second-highest number of cranes in the crane index, which is Los Angeles. This government sets population targets for our cities, including the city of Toronto. Toronto is on track to exceeding the population targets and the housing that's needed to achieve those.

So the question is, why is this government, through this bill and through the strong-mayors bill, undermining the power of the city council of Toronto, which has been so successful in achieving the population targets and building the housing that we need in the city of Toronto?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I think that based on a previous question and based on the member from Spadina-Fort York's question, people see affordable housing very differently, and that is very clear, unfortunately, in this legislation.

The government is actually changing what is considered to be affordable and—well, I think they made it to 80%. Yes. They defined an affordable residential unit as being a rental unit where the rent is no greater than 80% of the average market rent—80%. That doesn't leave a lot of extra money for food, for living your life.

Toronto has its own challenges, Waterloo region has its own challenges. A piece of legislation that recognizes that those communities are different and plan differently—I think by this stage of the game the government could have

brought forward legislation which recognizes those differences.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

Mr. Rob Flack: We all know that municipal fees on new developments have continued to increase and approval delays continue to grow longer and longer. I think of members opposite here—in London, I think it's over five years or close to five years, from beginning to end, before we can even begin to build a house.

Delays in new housing are now 40% longer than they were only two years ago. Since 2020, in the GTA, we've got a 36% increase. Municipal charges are adding nearly \$117,000, or \$53 per square foot, to the cost of a low-rise home in the GTA.

So a simple question: At the time we find ourselves now, with a housing crisis throughout this province, who does the opposition think picks up the costs of these excessive development fees? Who do these costs get passed down to?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I guess the member is kind of making my point. When the minister who's responsible for municipal affairs says, "Listen, municipalities have over \$8 billion in reserves just sitting there like it's a big piggy bank"—if the municipalities dip into those reserves and are charged under these new rules to move forward and lose out on the funding that is generated through development fees, then the property taxpayers are going to pay the price. So this bill becomes a downloading to the municipalities.

I know the government side views municipalities—they are creatures of the provincial government, and you have overridden many of their rights and responsibilities over the years.

Come November 15, there are a number of new councillors that are elected across the province. I think schedule 9 is going to be hugely problematic for the government.

So in the end, this legislation will increase property taxes on the tax base.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

MPP Lise Vaugeois: During the last session, this government already undermined the ability of conservation authorities to manage where development takes place in relation to wetlands and watersheds. In this new legislation, they've further undermined their ability to fulfill their responsibilities by removing the ability to monitor potential development for pollution. No community is going to be happy with development that threatens the health of the land, air or waterways. So it's beyond me that they would remove this ability from conservation authorities.

Second, they are pressing conservation authorities to offer up conservation lands for development. We have these lands for a reason. They've been fought over, fought to attain. So I'm wondering why the government is creating conflict within communities over revered conservation areas, and equally, why they are asking conservation authorities to abandon their responsibility to monitor for pollution.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you very much for the question from Thunder Bay–Atikokan, who asked a question about what I said. Thank you very much for that.

I think the conservation authority piece—the government is betting on the housing pressures to outweigh the environmental and progressive sustainable planning practices. It's a bit of a gamble, I would have to say.

Brian Denney, who is the former chair of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, said, "So when the government tells" conservation authorities "to get back to their core mandate, it's just another way of saying, from a developer's perspective, that they want conservation authorities to get out of the way."

Then another quote: "Conservation Authorities can be an easy scapegoat" for governments "because it's an extra layer, an extra body, an extra approval that's required before shovels can go into the ground," said Kellie McCormack, Conservation Halton's director of planning and regulations.

Conservation authorities are not out to stop development. They're out to stop unsustainable, dangerous development.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Speaker, during the member from Waterloo's comments, I think she said words to the effect of the following: "The private sector isn't even building homes for the middle class."

Now, when I heard those words, it sounded like she was blaming private sector home builders for whatever delays or lack of supply is happening. But in my experience, home builders are coming to me all the time and saying, "Anthony, we want to build homes. We're getting blocked by municipalities. We're getting blocked by conservation authorities. We're getting blocked by regulation and taxes and fees, and it's just terrible. Let us build homes." They're begging us, "Let us build homes."

So I'm asking the member from Waterloo to clarify her comments. When she said, "The private sector isn't even building homes for the middle class," was she blaming private home builders? Was that what she was doing?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I really miss the former member from Essex, I just want to tell you.

What I've said is that we need a strong public sector role to get done what the private sector won't and can't get done. The private sector is about making money. That is their core business, and that's fine, but they're not building affordable housing for low-income people because there's no money in it. There's no money in it. I'm sure that the former member from Essex, God love him—did I mention that I miss him? He fought hard for affordable housing because he understood that government has a role in building that housing in a sustainable way because it strengthens and supports the economy. I wish this member understood that.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further debate?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It's an honour to rise in this House today to participate in second reading debate of Bill 23. I think everyone in this House, and everyone across the

province, agrees that we are in a housing crisis. We have a whole generation of young people wondering if they'll ever be able to afford a home. We have many people across this province struggling to pay the rent and meet their bills.

So I've been eagerly awaiting this legislation, eagerly awaiting the provincial government actually taking aggressive action to meet the scale of the crisis, because every day they delay the crisis gets worse. That's exactly why, a year and a half ago, the Ontario Greens put out a housing affordability strategy that Canada's largest circulation newspaper called a master class plan in delivering the solutions we need to address the housing crisis, solutions that showed how we could build 1.5 million homes through gentle density and missing middle and mid-rise developments so that we don't have to pave over the farmland that feeds us and the wetlands that protect us, so that people can actually have an affordable home where they want to live, close to where they want to live, work and play.

We talked about how we could both spark private sector development and also non-profit co-ops and non-profit housing to address deeply affordable housing needs that especially the most vulnerable in our province need.

1000

Speaker, the government delivered some of those solutions in Bill 23. They started to move on getting rid of exclusionary zoning. They've come up with some ideas to speed up the approvals process. They've made things less expensive for non-profit and co-op housing providers—though I'd say they haven't provided the financial support that governments used to provide for those housing supporters.

But I want to say, to sum up this bill—the good things aside—it's underwhelming on supply, it's missing in action on affordability and it's dangerous on environmental protections. So I'm hoping the government will work with the opposition at committee to solve these problems with the bill, because the bill is creating a false choice between building housing supply and environmental protections.

Let's talk about supply. If we really want to get rid of exclusionary zoning in this province, we should not only go to triplexes, we should go to quadplexes. We should also allow for walk-up apartments in residential neighbourhoods. So let's take exclusionary zoning further. Some municipalities are actually doing that, and let's work with them to do that across the province. We need to have mid-rise development along the entire major transit corridors and major arterial roads in this province—not just around transit stations, but along the entire strips of those roads, to be able to build the supply we need along the entire transit or major arterial road corridor.

When it comes to affordability—and we're talking deep affordability, affordability that is 30% of people's income, not 80% of high market rates—we need the government to step up and support co-op and non-profit housing. We need to remove the caps in this bill for inclusionary zoning and expand exclusionary zoning across our communities.

We need to tackle speculation, especially the kinds of speculation that's buying up rentals for low-income people, tearing them down and then building luxury apartments that middle-class and working people can't afford.

Speaker, when it comes to environmental protections, this government has been systematically, over the last four years, dismantling environmental protections. They continue with that in this bill by weakening conservation authorities.

Let's remember: Why were conservation authorities strengthened? In 1954, Hurricane Hazel hit this province: 81 people died in the flooding; 2,000 homes were damaged or destroyed. And the province said, "Never again." We would learn from that mistake, and that's why we strengthened conservation authorities. That's why we said we were not going to build housing in places that it wasn't safe to build housing. Just ask the folks in Atlantic Canada right now what they're going through. Conservation authorities—by the way, brought in by a Conservative government—were brought in to protect people's property, to protect their livelihoods and their lives.

You know, it's ironic that on the day the Insurance Bureau of Canada issued a statement saying that we have to stop building homes in unsafe places in this country, because the cost of doing that is escalating, because the extreme weather events are escalating, this government put forward a housing bill that actually opens the door to building more housing in unsafe areas. It's unaffordable for people. It's unaffordable for government.

A report was just released. The cost of sprawl to municipal government: \$3,462 per home. The cost of gentle density: \$1,460 for homes. Let's—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): It's time now for questions and answers. Questions?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I was thrilled to hear the member's comments that he thinks that 1.5 million homes is not enough, and I'm glad to hear he wants to build more. Certainly we're not prohibiting people from building more, but we know that this is the minimum that we have to achieve in order to bring the cost of housing down.

I wanted to ask him in terms of—everyone is going to have different needs. I was talking to the finance minister earlier; we got census data that came out this past week saying that our landed immigrant population in 2021 is 23%, and that's going to go up to 34% by 2041. We have an aging senior population, and they're looking to downsize as well.

So we have a lot of this missing middle that we're trying to address in this bill: laneway suites—we talked about it—the gentle density. Why are we prohibiting people? If me and my husband want to build an addition to our home so that our family can live with us and take care of our kids, why not? Many families have grown up this way, and it allows affordability for everyone. Right now, it's prohibitive. There's extra fees. There's red tape. It takes years for seniors to move in their family members. So why are you preventing those seniors from living a great lifestyle with the rest of their family?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Speaker, 1.5 years ago I put forward a proposal to end exclusionary zoning in this province. I believe I was the first in this Legislature to do that, to say we can build fourplexes and laneway suites and secondary suites and granny suites in existing neighbourhoods in this province. So I'm all for ending exclusionary zoning, and I recognize—and I said this in my comments—that this bill goes part of the way to ending exclusionary zoning. But I think it could go further. Why not fourplexes? Why not walk-up apartments? That's what housing experts are asking for.

In communities like Mississauga, for example, if we would bring in the types of exclusionary zoning exemptions that I've been advocating for, we could build 435,000 additional homes within the existing urban boundary alone. That's the affordable, fiscally responsible and cost-effective way to build more homes.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you to the member for his comments. I was just curious to see what his opinion is of setting the target for affordable housing at 80% of the average cost of housing. What does that look like in Guelph and the region that he serves? Do you think that this will help in my neck of the woods?

It's 10 to 12 years before you can move into an affordable housing place. Does he see anything in the bill that will help the hundreds and thousands of families that are waiting for affordable housing?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Unfortunately, and again in my comments, I said that deep affordability is missing in action in this bill. Let's be honest about that.

We need market solutions, and there are market solutions in this bill, and I support many of those market solutions. But if we're truly going to address the deep affordability people need, we need to define affordability as 30% of income, not 80% of already sky-high market rates.

No person who works minimum wage in this province can afford to rent a one-bedroom apartment in any city in this province: in Guelph or Sudbury or Windsor or Toronto, Ottawa, Timmins—wherever you go. People need deeply affordable housing. Most of the deeply affordable housing built in this country was built in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, when governments provided support. Let's do that again.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): We have time for one more quick question and a quick response.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I'm glad the member is supportive of many things in this bill to get supply moving. As we all know, the more supply we get moving, the easier it's going to be for more people to move into homes to bring down the cost of living.

One thing I haven't heard him address is our young people, our young population, many of whom are living with their parents or in a secondary suite, thanks to the previous bill we introduced. These individuals who are young, who are trying to get into the housing market, they're relying on more supply to help them get into the

housing market. I want to ask the member opposite if he is going to prohibit them from such a dream, or—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Response?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: One of the reasons I put forward a plan 1.5 years ago to build more housing supply was so that the next generation can afford a home, including my daughters, who are wondering if they'll ever be able to afford a home.

So what I would ask the members opposite: Are you ready to work with the opposition at committee to amend this bill so we can actually build homes that young people can afford in places that aren't dangerous for their property to build those homes?

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I rise today on behalf of the people in London West to participate in the debate on Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act. I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this debate because it comes on the heels of a municipal election. I know many of us engaged with voters in the municipal election and we heard very, very clearly from people in our communities that housing is a number one priority—along with health care, of course, but housing is a huge issue for people in our communities.

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Homelessness is a huge issue for people in our communities. Certainly in the city of London the homelessness crisis has reached a point that we haven't seen before. The riding of London West is located in a suburban area of the city. It's one of the most affluent areas of the city and we are seeing encampments in parks in London West, in Jesse Davidson Park, that we haven't seen before. We have not seen a homelessness crisis of this kind of proportion that has spread out from the downtown core and has reached areas of the city like in my riding of London West.

This is a big concern for people. It is an affront to people's morality to see neighbours, to see human beings who have no place to live, who are forced to live in encampments because there are no other options.

Right now in this province we have a housing crisis that is caused by a number of factors. People can't afford to buy new homes and therefore they are staying in rental accommodation much longer than they were before. We have a shortage of purpose-built rentals. We have a shortage of rental housing options for people to live in, and people are being priced out of the rental market.

One of the decisions that this government made after they were elected in 2018 was to remove rent control on buildings that were built after November 2018. That has caused huge pressures in communities that finally were able to get some rental housing built after November 2018. The tenants who have moved into those units are hit unexpectedly with annual rent increases that are financially impossible for them to enable them to stay in their rental units.

It's a domino effect, Speaker, when we don't have the supply for people to buy who want to buy, when we don't have the supply for people to be able to afford to rent, and

when we don't have protections for tenants who are living in our rental accommodation.

Then, of course, we have the lack of supports for people who are struggling with mental health and addictions. We don't have protections in place for the most vulnerable people, who are living in inadequate group homes because there are no other options and they need some kind of living arrangement that enables them just to have a roof over their heads. And literally that is all they're getting—a roof. We saw a recent report in the *Toronto Star*, an undercover investigation that looked at those appalling, just unconscionable living conditions that many people—the most vulnerable people in this province—are forced to accept because they have no other options. They're living in these unregulated, substandard group homes—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): It is now 10:15, time for members' statements.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ILLUMI MISSISSAUGA

Mr. Deepak Anand: More than 20 million brilliant LEDs in a captivating outdoor walking journey on a 600,000-square-foot site: This is not a dream; it's actually a reality in my riding of Mississauga–Malton, with 14 magical universes at illumi—A Dazzling World of Lights, an immersive extraordinary light show, the first of its kind in Ontario, and one of the largest sound and multimedia shows in the world, where families can come together and marvel at the imaginative power lights can bring.

Founded by Normand Latourelle, one of the founders and artistic directors of Cirque du Soleil, in the first four weeks illumi attracted over 150,000 attendees, created 200-plus jobs in the community, bringing a common theme for parents, children, families and the broader community to enjoy: the theme of imagination, enabling community members to develop their passion and imagination.

My heartfelt thanks to the staff and management for making these visits memorable. Illumi has made a commitment to stay for a long time and will bring an opportunity to help other small businesses by giving them an outlet for outreach to the local community. To taste the experience of fun at illumi and for further details, please visit www.illumi.com and get dazzled.

Colleagues, simply put, let's go to illumi and build memories.

HOUSING

Mr. Guy Bourgoin: Everyone is struggling in the province, and for some, the housing crisis is inevitable.

In my riding, agencies for low-income housing have three-and-a-half-year wait-lists. We have low-income rentals that are abandoned and deemed unfit because agencies have no funds for repairs. Our private rental

companies/landlords have hundred of names on their wait-lists.

We have refugees and immigrants who want to start life here in our small communities, but we have no place for them to live. Inflation is so high that people cannot afford their rent and are looking for subsidized housing. They are left choosing between food or rent.

Our population is aging and our seniors have nowhere to go, as LTC homes are full and booked solid for years to come.

Businesses cannot attract new workers as they have no accommodations to offer them.

Long-term-care homes and hospitals cannot attract or retain doctors and nurses as they have no accommodations for them.

People with special needs who are seeking group homes are either waiting years for a spot or are being sent hundreds of kilometres away for a place to live, leaving them completely alone and apart from their families. The list goes on and on, and it's only the beginning.

Premier, the need to remedy this issue is now. Investment needs to happen now so that people and families of Mushkegowuk–James Bay won't end up on the streets.

DEBORAH FOSTER

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I rise today to pay tribute to Deborah Foster. Many of you may recall her in this Legislature as she did appear before us at the finance committee, where she advocated for so many small businesses throughout Barrie and Simcoe county. She touched the lives of so many people. She was passionate for life. She lifted up those around her. She helped folks like Sarah Taylor, who she acted as a mentor for, and so many small businesses. She had a passion for cooking and a zeal for life and, let's not forget, her passion for airplanes.

Many years ago, she opened up a businesses called OfficeInc!, and through that business she was able to help so many others that we know around our communities, like Jay's Sticky Buns, which operated out of a kitchen called the #Yum kitchen. They now have their own location in the community, and they're sold out every day. Through #Yum kitchen, she helped young and all-aged entrepreneurs really be able to export their love of cooking throughout their community.

She was a true entrepreneur. In fact, she received the Arch Brown entrepreneur award back in 2011 from the Barrie Chamber of Commerce and the city of Barrie. She was unstoppable, and she will be missed in our community. But when we reflect upon all the businesses and all the entrepreneurs she lifted up, we can take comfort in the memories of all the lives she touched.

I want to pay my condolences to the family of Deborah Foster. You will be missed in our community.

ARROWHEAD COFFEE COMPANY

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: It gives me great pleasure to recognize a Canadian veteran-owned and -operated small business today.

One week ago, I had the sincere privilege to tour Arrowhead Coffee Company in St. Catharines. It was a tremendous honour to visit this small business that has a simple goal: to create a supportive community determined to help veterans and first responders thrive, giving back to veteran charities aligned with their goals, while also roasting some great coffee.

1020

Arrowhead goes out of their way to employ veterans. They offer routine and a support system for returning servicemen and -women. They give back whenever and wherever. Everything they roast and produce happens right in St. Catharines. It is an Ontario product created by an Ontario company that employs Ontario veterans. Lane Bally, a former Canadian Forces member, bought the company two years ago. I want to recognize how his company is giving back to the community through their hiring and charitable efforts.

What has always been clear to me in this House and in this chamber is that we all share, no matter our political stripes, a tremendous dignity and respect for the sacrifices of our veterans. This is why I am honoured to recognize the Arrowhead Coffee Company here today, a small business in St. Catharines that supports veterans in a very big way.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Mr. Ric Bresee: I'm very happy to rise today to acknowledge the recent municipal election. As many of you know, there are 18 lower-tier municipalities in my riding of Hastings–Lennox and Addington. Of course, once again, the municipal clerks, acting as the returning officers for these elections, have done an outstanding job in ensuring that the elections operated with tremendous professionalism. I would like to publicly thank them for their role in this vital democratic institution.

As everyone in this House knows, elections are a challenging time and can be very difficult, especially in these days of social media attacks. I would like to show my appreciation for all those who stepped forward and offered their ideas, their time and their dedication to support their communities.

This election saw the return of many mayors in my riding, including Paul Jenkins in Bancroft, Tom Deline in Centre Hastings, Dennis Purcell in Faraday, Loyde Blackburn in Madoc township, Jan O'Neill in Marmora and Lake, Bob Mullin in Stirling Rawdon, Neil Ellis in Belleville and Henry Hogg in Addington Highlands.

It also brought us some new heads of council, with Randy Wallace in Carlow-Mayo, Tony Fitzgerald in Hasting Highlands, Kim Carson in Limerick, Dave Hederson in Tudor and Cashel, Don DeGenova in Tweed, Claire Kennelly in Tyendinaga, Michael Fuerth in Wollaston, Terry Richardson in Napanee, John Wise in Stone Mills. And in Loyalist township, my former deputy mayor is now mayor: Jim Hegadorn.

For those who are new to these positions, I welcome them to their new governance roles. And for those who are

returning, I thank you for continuing to show your dedication to your community and to your neighbours.

As these new councils begin to gather to learn the procedures and gain a fuller understanding of how their municipalities work, I look forward to working with them as partners to improve the permitting and planning processes to ensure that we can all work together to build homes in communities across the province. It takes all levels of government to do something that we've never done before: adding 1.5 million homes in this province. It's vitally necessary and we will get it done, making sure that the dream of home ownership is viable for the next generation.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Ms. Marit Stiles: Over the past month, I've been visiting communities across the province to support our local champions who are running in municipal elections. From North Bay to Nepean, from Fort Erie to Sault Ste. Marie I had some great conversations with people about what they care about, and, let me tell you, Speaker, one thing I'm hearing very clearly from everyone is concern about the state of our health care system. Hallway medicine is commonplace again, as are 12- to 20-hour wait times to see a doctor in emergency.

People are worried that this government's plans to sell off more of our health care system to for-profit companies looking to make a buck will be paid for by their loved ones or themselves. People are worried that the government's disrespect for nurses and other health care workers is creating a massive staffing crisis.

Chesley hospital emergency room is closing until December—December. Why? Because of a critical nursing shortage.

Every single dollar moved out of public health care into the pockets of corporations is a dollar less for working people, for local hospitals and for strained emergency rooms. It's time for this government to reverse course on its sell-off of public health care to respect and properly compensate the people who provide that care and to ensure that local care is there when people need it.

BILLY BISHOP MUSEUM CEREMONY

Mr. Rick Byers: Members, this morning, it is my pleasure to tell you about an event I attended last Sunday in Owen Sound put on by the Billy Bishop Museum honouring local veterans in our community.

As you know, Billy Bishop was a flying ace in the First World War. He was the top Canadian and British Empire ace of the war and received the Victoria Cross. Billy Bishop was born in Owen Sound, and his birthplace is now a national historic site and museum, and a popular local destination.

On October 23, the Billy Bishop Museum held its annual veterans' ceremony at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 6 in Owen Sound, complete with colour guard and bagpipes. It was a great show. The eight local veterans

honoured were Able Seaman Audrey Chester Coultis, Leading Aircraftman Elwood Moore, Private Harry George Tucker, James (Jim) Cohen, Aircraftwoman Joan Mavis Cracknell, Master Warrant Officer Kenneth Surridge, Chief Warrant Officer Lawrence Victor James Surridge and Master Warrant Officer Wayne Kennie.

It was a beautiful, meaningful, moving ceremony honouring these eight veterans which clearly told the story of their commitment and sacrifice to our country and to our community.

Thank you to all involved in putting on this excellent event, and of course, thank you to our eight extraordinary Grey-Bruce veterans.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It's an honour to rise today and give voice to the countless number of my constituents on social assistance who are reaching out to me to share just how desperate it is to live in legislated poverty.

I want to remind the members opposite that somebody on Ontario Works survives on \$731 a month. Somebody on Ontario disability support is forced to live on \$1,200 a month. I can't tell you how many of my constituents have reached out to say that even if they can find a place to live, trying to pay rent with such low amounts of money is becoming increasingly impossible. To put food on the table when inflation is more than 11% is impossible.

Tragically, I have constituents reaching out who are considering medical assistance in dying because their state of desperation is so great.

I believe Ontario is better than this. I know we're better than this. And, Speaker, I know that money doesn't grow on trees, but we can afford to double social assistance rates in this province to end legislated poverty. We know that poverty costs this province \$33 billion in additional health care costs and lost productivity. So let's spend the money up front to help people live lives of dignity.

HMCS OAKVILLE

Mr. Stephen Crawford: Founded in 1910, the Royal Canadian Navy has played an important role in the security of our nation. The Royal Canadian Navy has a long tradition of giving Canadian ships names with Canadian connections. During the Second World War, one of those ships, a Canadian-built Flower-class corvette, was named after the town of Oakville.

On November 5, 1941, HMCS Oakville was one of the few Canadian warships to be christened in their namesake town, and the ceremony was one of the largest ceremonies, if not the largest, of a warship in Canada. Thousands of people converged on the town of Oakville to see the corvette-class ship. The mayor adopted the crew and the ship as honorary citizens and stated proudly that the town would never forget the ship.

HMCS Oakville served during the Battle of the Atlantic, the longest continuous battle of the Second World War. On the evening of August 27, 1942, HMCS

Oakville was engaged and sank the German U-boat U-94 during an escort mission off the coast of Cuba.

Only a few decades after the war, memory of the town's famous warship was forgotten. In fact, if not for the efforts of Lieutenant Sean Livingston, a local reservist, author and naval historian, the story of HMCS Oakville would have certainly been lost.

1030

On November 5 of this year, the Oakville Museum will celebrate the history of the warship in an exhibition at the Queen Elizabeth Park Community and Cultural Centre. The display is aptly named Oakville's Flower and will feature artifacts, displays, historical accounts and photographs of the HMCS Oakville. As we approach Remembrance Day, I encourage everyone to learn more about the history of our ship and remember all the great veterans from the Second World War.

AJAX PUMPKINVILLE

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

Over the break, I had the privilege of attending Pumpkinville, put on by the town of Ajax and TD. The town continues to grow and build a strong community. It was hosted at the picturesque Greenwood Conservation Area for a variety of activities, including live shows from the Great Canadian Lumberjacks, Friendly Fables and Jessica Towler's performance of Disney hits. In addition to the live stage, there were also children's games and activities, interactive experiences, community displays and exhibitors, a sensory zone, a wonderful haunted house. And Steve and Amanda's No Frills provided pumpkins to all who attended.

The Pumpkinville event was tailored for families and children but saw more than 12,000 people of all ages come out. During these times of economic uncertainty, the event was able to be free. These events offer more entertainment toward our community, as a chance to socialize and break out of the norms, which has a huge benefit for mental health.

Community events like these are some of the main reasons the Ajax community is so strong. Under the Premier's leadership, we hope this government will continue to encourage and find opportunities to support events that are playing an integral role in the recovery of our communities

REPORT, FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnett): I beg to inform the House that the following document has been tabled: a report entitled Economic and Budget Outlook: Ongoing Budget Surpluses Expected for Ontario, Fall 2022, from the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We have in the Speaker's gallery a special guest, a former member of the Legislative Assembly who served in the 35th Parliament as the member for Perth: Karen Haslam. Welcome back.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to introduce Angela Preocanin, who is first vice-president of the Ontario Nurses' Association, as well as Erica Woods, who is government relations for the Ontario Nurses' Association. Welcome to Queen's Park, ladies.

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: This October 29 marks the 99th anniversary of the proclamation of the Republic of Turkey. This morning, we will be doing a flag-raising ceremony on the front lawn, so please join us.

I would like to welcome Consul General Sinem Mingan, Can Mingan, Mebsure Taskin, Can Burc Gursoz, Sinan Erdemir and Babi Taufiq to Queen's Park. Welcome.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I'd like to introduce the members of OPSEU conservation officers, who hosted a fabulous breakfast this morning: Drew Pegrum, Ben Sumner, Colin Cotnam, Mark Bailie, Victoria Edwards, Todd Steinberg, Julie Lawrence, Rob Ciraco, Mike Campese, Alex Smith, Micah Plourde, Stefan Desantis, Graham Dunville, Brendan Cote, Tyler Grant, Jennifer Cox, Matt McVittie, Derek Hebner, Sean Cronsberry, Christopher Bierman, JP Hornick, Laurie Nancekivell and Heather Douglas. Thank you, meegwetch, merci—great breakfast this morning.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: I'd like to welcome Robert Ciraco to the Ontario Legislature. He's an Ontario conservation officer and also a constituent from Richmond in the great riding of Carleton. Welcome to Queen's Park.

MPP Jamie West: I also want to welcome the OPSEU conservation officers. I had a great meeting this morning with Micah Plourde and Stefan Desantis, and I know that my colleagues across the aisle and across all parties will be meeting with conservation officers today. Welcome to Queen's Park, you guys.

Ms. Laura Smith: I would like to present to you Daniela Tabachnik, my amazing executive assistant. It's not her first time in the House but it's her first time here as a member of the team. Thank you very much, Daniela, for being here.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I too want to welcome the conservation officers to Queen's Park today, and give a special shout-out to Sean Cronsberry, who is detached out of Guelph. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Graydon Smith: I just want to take this opportunity, as well, to welcome conservation officers to Queen's Park today. They're doing an amazing job in Ontario, specifically Tyler Grant, Todd Steinberg and Matt McVittie from my riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Kevin Holland: I just want to give a shout-out to Graham Dunville, a conservation officer here from Thunder Bay.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I too would like to welcome all of the fine conservation officers here this morning, particularly Derek Hebner from my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. We've had a long working relationship. It's good to see you. I think it's your first visit to Queen's Park. Have a great day.

Mr. Mike Harris: I figured I couldn't leave our amazing conservation officers out, so welcome to Queen's Park. We're going to get a chance to chat later. I've actually had a chance to get out and about with them in Timmins, Thunder Bay and also in North Bay. They do fantastic work protecting our fish and wildlife in our community, so thank you for being here today.

QUESTION PERIOD

PUBLIC ORDER EMERGENCY COMMISSION

Mr. Peter Tabuns: To the Premier: The Public Order Emergency Commission's lawyers have been very clear that if the Premier and Minister Jones don't testify, there will be "important gaps" in its record. For an instant last week, it seemed like just maybe the government recognized the value of testifying, only declining the commission's invitation "for a moment."

According to the Premier, the buck stops with him, but apparently not when he will be forced to answer hard questions about the impact of his decisions. What changed the Premier's mind between last week and this Monday?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: I thank the member for the question. As he knows, this was, of course, a policing matter.

The Prime Minister had made the decision to invoke the federal Emergencies Act for the first time. By the terms of that legislation, a federal inquiry into the federal government's use of that act has to take place. Obviously, it's happening right now.

We are assisting the inquiry by ensuring that any key cabinet documents that might help inform the commission in doing its work are made available to the commission. At the same time, the Deputy Minister of Transportation and the Deputy Solicitor General have also been made available to the commission as they continue their work into the federal inquiry into the federal use of the act.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I had no idea that the Premier's state of mind was of a police matter, but I will move on.

On October 17, the Premier told reporters that he had not been asked to appear before the commission in Ottawa, but lawyers for the commission revealed that both the Premier and Minister Jones had been asked multiple times to appear voluntarily, with government lawyers being told

as early as October 11 that there was the possibility of a summons.

So this government knew that the Premier and Minister Jones might be compelled to testify before the Premier said he had never been asked by the commission to appear—very curious, Mr. Speaker.

Can the Premier explain why he said he wasn't asked?

Hon. Paul Calandra: In fact, Mr. Speaker, we have been working with the commission and assisting them in doing the work that is required by the terms of the legislation when the federal government decided to invoke the federal Emergencies Act.

As you know, Speaker, it was a policing matter. The government of Ontario certainly doesn't direct the police, and I'm hoping that the Leader of the Opposition isn't suggesting that the government of Ontario should be directing police.

1040

But, at the same time, it is important to assist the federal inquiry as it researches and investigates the federal government's decision to use the federal Emergencies Act. That is why we are providing cabinet documents to assist the inquiry, and that is why we are providing top officials at the Solicitor General's ministry and the Ministry of Transportation to assist the inquiry as it investigates the federal government's use of the federal Emergencies Act.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Again I'll note that to say this is a police matter, when I asked what the Premier was thinking when he said what he said, is not exactly being open and straightforward.

If the Premier keeps hiding from the inquiry, we'll ask just two of the many questions the commission has for him—we'll ask him right here and save him the bother and expense of having to go all the way to Ottawa. He can answer them here.

First, why did the government wait two weeks to invoke provincial emergency powers? That's not a police question. And why did the Premier decline to participate in at least two of three tripartite meetings between the city of Ottawa and the federal government?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Interesting question, Mr. Speaker, because the member is right. On two occasions we, of course, had a state of emergency in the province of Ontario, and by the terms of the provincial state of emergency and the reopening Ontario act, we created a select committee to review the reopening Ontario act.

At the conclusion of both of those states of emergency, a report was presented to the House outlining why the government of Ontario went with a state of emergency. On both of those occasions, a four-hour debate then ensued on the government's use of a state of emergency in the province of Ontario. Now, the debate never lasted four hours because, after one or two speakers, the opposition decided to sit down and not continue the debate on that.

That is why I continue to say to the member opposite: This is not a political issue; this is a policing matter that happened in Ottawa, that happened in Windsor, and that is

why we are assisting the federal inquiry of the federal government's use of the federal Emergencies Act. That is why the Deputy Solicitor General has been put forward. That is why the commissioner of the OPP has been put forward, and that is why we are assisting by providing cabinet-level documents that are important to the commission's work at that time.

PUBLIC ORDER EMERGENCY COMMISSION

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Last week we learned from the commission hearings in Ottawa that while the Premier was busy hiding from his political responsibilities, the occupation of our city forced kids with cancer to miss chemo and radiation treatments at CHEO. Families of sick children were also forced to pay out of pocket for hotel rooms to ensure they weren't late for surgery.

This was a crisis, and the commission wants to ask the Premier what solutions he had in mind to address it. Ottawa residents want to know too. Is the Premier fighting the summons so he doesn't have to admit he had no plan?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Just the opposite, as I've said on a number of occasions, of course: We are assisting the commission. We are assisting the commission after the federal government and the Prime Minister decided to invoke the federal Emergencies Act. Now, of course, no government has ever utilized the federal Emergencies Act. But, by the terms of the act which was brought in, a federal commission of inquiry has to be invoked so that they can ascertain whether the use of the Emergencies Act by the federal government was appropriate at the time.

Now, in doing so, it is important to note that we've ensured that the commissioner of the OPP and OPP officials are present to assist the commission in doing its work because, ultimately, this was a policing matter.

The member should know that the Ontario government does not direct its police in how to undertake its activities. That is why the commission is investigating. That is why they brought forward the commissioner of the OPP. That is why we are providing the Deputy Solicitor General, that is why we are providing the Deputy Minister of Transportation and that is why we are assisting by proactively sending important cabinet documents to the commission so that it can help in doing its work.

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

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Kids missing chemo treatments isn't just a police matter, it's a crisis, and it's a crisis that the Premier had no plan to address.

Workers in Ottawa lost thousands of dollars in income because the occupation shut their workplaces down for 28 days. They used up all their savings, struggled to pay rent, had cellphones cut off and defaulted on student loan payments.

One of the questions the commission wants to ask the Premier is why he wouldn't attend tripartite meetings on

the situation—and guess what, Speaker, Ottawa residents want to know that too. Why does the Premier think he doesn't owe Ottawa workers any answers?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, as I reiterate to the member, actually, Ontario was in a state of emergency at that time, and there was a select committee which was formed with all members of the House, which also included the independent members in that select committee. I appeared before that select committee while the situation was unfolding in Ottawa.

At the conclusion of the state of emergency in the province of Ontario, of course, a report was presented to this House, and a four-hour debate was convened to investigate the Ontario government's use of the state of emergency at that time. Of course, debate on that collapsed when the opposition felt that it no longer needed to review the government's decision to have a state of emergency.

Having said that, we want to assist the commission in its work on the federal government's first-ever use of the Emergencies Act. That is why we're proactively sending cabinet-level documents, frankly, to assist the commission in doing its work as it reviews the decision of the federal government on the policing actions during that time.

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

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Kids missing chemo, workers without income—and the Premier doesn't think he needs to offer any answers.

The occupiers harassed schoolchildren and their parents and threatened to drive circles around local elementary schools. They trapped people with disabilities in their homes, preventing Para Transpo from getting downtown. They took food from a homeless shelter.

The commission wants to know why the Premier waited until February 11 to declare a provincial emergency—stop me if you've heard this one before, Speaker—but Ottawa residents want to know that too.

So will the Premier quit hiding, come to Ottawa and testify and give Ottawa residents the answers we deserve?

Hon. Paul Calandra: In fact, we came to this Legislature at the conclusion of the state of emergency in the province of Ontario. We submitted a report on the Ontario government's use of the state of emergency. We allowed for a four-hour debate in this House on the state of emergency. That debate collapsed soon after it began, ostensibly because the opposition did not believe that it warranted any further debate. In essence, they were in agreement on the invocation of the state of emergency in the province of Ontario.

Having said that, the federal government has a different process. The federal government invoked the Emergencies Act, and by the terms of invoking the Emergencies Act for the first time, their process is that there has to be an inquiry into the Prime Minister's invocation of the act. That is why we are providing cabinet documents to assist, that is why the commissioner of the OPP is there, and that is why top officials from transportation and the Deputy Solicitor General are appearing before the commission.

PUBLIC ORDER EMERGENCY COMMISSION

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is for the Premier, and the people of Windsor would appreciate it if the Premier would actually stand up and answer it.

Speaker, while protesters shut down the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor, the Premier chose to sit on his hands and do nothing, much like he is now. The city of Windsor, along with the Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association and the Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers' Association, had to file an injunction in an attempt to end the blockade. This was after the mayor and chief of police wrote to the Premier and Minister Jones requesting additional supports. Again, this government chose not to act.

My question is in two parts. Why won't the Premier and Minister Jones appear before the Emergencies Act inquiry committee and explain why they refused to help the people of Windsor? And the commission wants to know, why did this government, the provincial government, delay using provincial emergency orders?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: The member opposite will remember that during that time I appeared in front of the select committee that this House struck with respect to the state of emergency that was invoked by the Premier. She will know that she asked many similar questions and that answers were provided in an extensive appearance in front of the select committee that this House struck, because that is the process here in the province of Ontario. It is a process that we proactively put in place—

Mr. Joel Harden: Two weeks later.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I hear the member from Ottawa say, "Two weeks later." Actually, no, it was a year ahead of time, because we wanted to ensure that when the state of emergency under the reopening Ontario act was in place that this Parliament had the right to overview and to assess what was happening. That is why we then brought a report to this House, not on one occasion but on two occasions, and allowed four hours of debate, which they, on both occasions, allowed to collapse after mere hours. We did what we had to do to keep the people of Ontario safe.

1050

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

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: We know that every hour of the Ambassador Bridge blockade caused a catastrophic impact to our local economy with ripple effects on both sides of the border, yet the Premier took days to intervene. When it comes to Ottawa, he was at the cottage on a snowmobile for part of it.

Premier Ford and Minister Jones skipped out on several intergovernmental meetings while the blockade in Windsor and the occupation in Ottawa raged on. This Premier claims to be the most accessible and transparent Premier ever in history, so why did the Premier and

Minister Jones continue to hide instead of coming clean about their delays and inaction?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I think now we're getting to the crux of it, colleagues; I think we're getting to the crux of it. What you're hearing from the NDP is that, should they ever get the right to form government—which we have already confirmed will never happen in the province of Ontario—they want to have the ability to direct the police. They want to have the ability to order the police on how to do their jobs.

Now, the people of the province of Ontario remember full well what happened when they had the authority to do anything. They bankrupted the province of Ontario. Now, can you imagine the NDP, now standing in this House and suggesting that the government of Ontario should direct the police on how to do their jobs. The conservation officers that are here would be trembling in their boots at the thought that this crew might be ordering them how to do their jobs.

How about we allow the police to decide how to police the province of Ontario in a safe fashion?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The House will come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The official opposition will come to order.

Please start the clock. Next question.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I have a very important question for the Minister of Long-Term Care. From 2011 to 2018, the Liberal government actually produced only 611 long-term-care beds—that's all that was added to our system. And you know what, for many years, the Liberal government, propped up by the NDP, overlooked the realities of Ontario's aging population and were indifferent to their needs.

As the needs of our aging population become more prominent, the failure of past governments to plan ahead was not only neglectful but disrespectful to Ontario residents and our seniors who need care. Their inaction and failures have contributed to the gaps that are evident today.

What is this minister doing to address the growing needs for long-term-care beds in this province?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Member for Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston.

Mr. John Jordan: Thank you to the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore for the question. After years of neglect from successive governments, we have made a commitment to fix long-term care. Our government is investing \$6.4 billion to develop new beds, as well as redevelop existing beds to meet modern standards. Currently in the development pipeline, we have over

60,000 net new beds and upgraded beds, but this is only one component of our plan to fix long-term care.

We are also improving the quality of life and care for residents. We are doing this by hiring and retaining personal support workers, installing air conditioning in every resident's room and increasing care to a new standard of four hours per resident per day. This is up from just over two hours.

Our government is making historic investments to fix years of Liberal neglect and get it done for the seniors of Ontario.

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

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I want to thank the parliamentary assistant for his response.

Speaker, as Ontarians age, their health care needs grow, and these needs are felt throughout the community, through increased demand for hospitals, retirement homes and long-term-care and emergency services. The parliamentary assistant mentioned that the government is building approximately 60,000 new and upgraded long-term-care beds across this province, and I am pleased and very thankful that 256 new beds are coming to my riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

With many Ontarians nearing the age of retirement and with many others already requiring long-term care, it is important that these beds are built quickly and efficiently. Speaker, can the minister please provide an update on the status of these projects?

Mr. John Jordan: Thank you once again to the member for the question. As of September, 44 long-term-care projects are currently under construction or have already opened their doors. I have had the pleasure of visiting some of these beautiful new homes.

But building these beds is only one part of our government's plan to fix long-term care. We recognize that many Ontarians need additional support right now to stay in their homes, which is why we have invested in community paramedics. Through this service, paramedics conduct in-home visits and remotely monitor the health of Ontarians.

Just this morning there was a testimonial in the Northumberland News which said, "This program has helped keep my mom out of the hospital. Since we have been on the program, ... her anxiety is down, and she is doing much better." The Northumberland chief of paramedics said, "Working with our community partners, this is another opportunity to make health care services more easily accessible to vulnerable residents." This is exactly—

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

The next question.

SERVICES DE SANTÉ DANS LE NORD

NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

M. Guy Bourgouin: La crise de santé s'aggrave à tous les jours, et nous avons un gouvernement qui n'offre pas

de solution immédiate et qui n'appuie pas nos communautés et leurs propositions.

L'Hôpital Notre-Dame de Hearst, en collaboration avec Kapuskasing et Cochrane, a soumis une demande d'appui pour un programme d'anesthésiste et de praticien/praticienne pour alléger le fardeau sur le seul anesthésiste permanent dans la région et enlever la pression sur l'hôpital et les travailleurs de ce milieu.

Monsieur le Premier Ministre, votre ministre a dit à plusieurs reprises aux hôpitaux de partager leurs idées et de présenter des solutions pour améliorer le système. Cette demande a été déposée au mois de mars 2021. Alors, pourquoi est-ce que votre gouvernement n'a pas donné de réponse pour ce projet?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Eglinton–Lawrence.

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. Unlike previous governments in Ontario, which were supported by the opposition NDP, our government has taken many steps to improve the physician supply, including expanding medical education, Ontario's international medical graduate program, using other non-physician health care providers to provide team-based primary care, the northern and rural recruitment initiative and the northern Ontario physician retention initiative as well as locum programs.

I know you're speaking about your situation in your community in the north. We've expanded education for medical students, as I said, including at Lakeridge hospital, the Northern Ontario School of Medicine as well. And we have those northern initiatives, as I indicated, that help provide physicians in the north. We're certainly going to continue to work on improving the physician supply in northern communities and all other communities in Ontario.

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

M. Guy Bourgouin: Mon bureau a envoyé une lettre demandant à la ministre pour un service de suivi en septembre. De plus, je lui ai donné une copie personnellement en main. Nous avons encore demandé un suivi au début d'octobre et nous n'avons toujours pas eu de réponse—pas fort.

Monsieur le Premier Ministre, ce n'est pas tout. Qu'est-ce qu'il en est au sujet de la demande d'Ontario Health North East vis-à-vis le projet de loi 7 pour qu'elle prenne l'Hôpital Notre-Dame en considération spéciale pour une redésignation des lits NSD pour ne pas vider notre deuxième plancher et fermer les services de soins pour notre communauté? Est-ce que votre gouvernement va répondre aux demandes de nos hôpitaux afin qu'ils puissent desservir notre population adéquatement?

1100

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you again to the member opposite. I haven't seen the letter that you referred to, but our government is responding. As I was saying, the things we're doing in the north include the Northern and Rural Recruitment and Retention Initiative program, which began earlier but offers financial incentives to physicians

to establish practices in rural and northern Ontario, and they grant about \$80,000 to \$117,000, paid out over four years, while a physician establishes a practice there. They're available in any community defined as rural using the rurality index, and in all five of Ontario's northern urban rural reference centres: Timmins, North Bay, Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie and Thunder Bay.

We have also got the Northern Physician Retention Initiative, which provides eligible physicians in northern Ontario with a \$7,000 retention incentive paid at the end of the fiscal year if they continue to practise full-time in northern Ontario beyond an initial four years.

We are going to keep working on initiatives to make sure we have the physician supply we need in the north and elsewhere.

HOUSING

Mrs. Daisy Wai: My question is to the Associate Minister of Housing. Recently, a report from the Union Bank of Switzerland stated that Toronto and the GTA have one of the riskiest housing markets in the world. According to the study, the report says that home prices have increased by 17% in Toronto and the GTA compared to a year ago. The study also highlights low levels of housing under construction and that local housing prices are rising rapidly due to high demand of speculation.

The price of housing is becoming more and more unaffordable for people who want to move into Richmond Hill. Speaker, can the minister please share what our government is doing to help build more homes and provide housing opportunities for my constituents in Richmond Hill?

Hon. Michael Parsa: I want to thank my hard-working colleague from Richmond Hill for that wonderful question and certainly for her tireless work in our community.

We know housing prices have skyrocketed. We have seen report after report saying the same thing, which is why we have committed to introducing a housing action plan every year to address the crisis that we are currently in.

Our most recent bill, More Homes Built Faster Act, which was introduced just earlier this week expanded on our agreement to work with municipalities by introducing as-of-right policies. These new measures allow up to three units to be added on a residential property without needing a bylaw amendment or having to pay development charges. This means basement apartments, main residence, the garden house can be converted into a home without any barriers. It will immediately increase supply and provide some relief for local residents like those in Richmond Hill.

Speaker, this is just one of the many ways our government under the leadership of Premier Ford is getting it done for Ontarians to build 1.5 million homes in the next 10 years.

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

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Speaker, thank you to the Associate Minister of Housing for the answer.

My constituents in Richmond Hill are concerned about their economic future and the ability to own a home. They are worried about rising interest rates and the lack of houses being built. They are concerned about what kind of housing options will be available for them, and if they will be able to live in the communities they grew up in.

We are at a critical juncture to address this problem for future generations. That is why we need our government to take urgent action today and ensure that houses are being built. Speaker, once again to the associate minister: What is the government doing to help build homes and build the homes faster?

Hon. Michael Parsa: Thank you to my colleague for the follow-up question.

Speaker, we will be building more homes and building them faster by reducing unnecessary costs and expenses that are passed down directly to the consumer.

We're making it easier and more predictable for builders to determine project costs and timelines so more homes can be built on budget and on time. We're also setting local municipal housing targets in 29 of the largest municipalities to encourage home construction and development.

For example, right here in the city of Toronto, we're asking the city to build 285,000 more homes in 10 years, and in my riding—which I am proudly sharing with my colleague from Richmond Hill—we're asking the same, for the city to build more than 27,000 new homes in that same time period.

Mr. Speaker, we are taking the necessary, bold steps that are needed to get more homes built faster. Our most recent bill adds to the foundation that is required to build 1.5 million homes. We are laser-focused on making sure Ontarians have a house to go to every single night—one that is loving and safe for them—and we will not waver from that commitment.

INDIGENOUS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: My question is to the Premier. Devon Freeman, a young man from Georgina Island First Nation, was 16 when he disappeared from the group home he was in and died by suicide. His body was found six months later. At the inquest into Devon's death, Mimi Singh, a lawyer for Ontario, said that this government could only endorse "the spirit" of the provincial recommendations.

Speaker, is it the position of this government that recommendations designed to prevent the deaths of Indigenous children misconceives democracy?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you very much for the opportunity to reply.

The death of a child is a tragedy, and first and foremost, I want to offer our government's and my thoughts to Devon Freeman's family and loved ones.

Our government wants every child and youth to have a safe and loving and stable home, and for families to be strengthened and communities to be strengthened and supported through preventive services and early intervention. That's why we've embarked on the child welfare redesign, and we will continue that work.

Knowing the importance of these recommendations, our government is taking the time to review and properly consider them so that we can offer the right solutions that make the lives of children and youth better.

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

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Speaker, we know that the recommendations for these systemic issues that harm children have been presented over and over again. We have these recommendations from the inquests into the deaths of children, Jeffrey Baldwin and Katelynn Sampson, from 2014 and 2016. Now we have them from the inquest into Devon's death. It is unacceptable for this government to use jurisdiction and democracy as an excuse to withhold resources that could implement these recommendations.

Why is this government not properly supporting these recommendations from the inquest into the death of Devon Freeman?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: I want to be clear that our government is supportive of all of the recommendations, but we want to make sure that the coroner's jury had an opportunity to review and see them.

I also want to say that I am grateful and our government is grateful to the jury, to the participants who were involved in this very difficult inquest.

We are reviewing the recommendations, and we look forward to them informing our continued work in this child welfare redesign and in this case.

PUBLIC ORDER EMERGENCY COMMISSION

Mr. John Fraser: My question is for the Premier. Last February, the residents of Ottawa endured three weeks of lawlessness in their downtown core. People's personal safety and public safety were both under threat. People suffered. Women couldn't walk to work and feel safe. Families couldn't enjoy their neighbourhoods. They couldn't go to a park. Businesses were closed. And for two weeks, this Premier did nothing.

Families want some answers as to why the Premier did nothing for two weeks. They deserve answers and, quite frankly, they deserve an apology. They deserve the Premier saying, "I'm sorry that you had to endure that, and my inaction caused it to go longer."

Speaker, the question is simple: Will the Premier stop his court action, apologize to the citizens of Ottawa and give testimony in front of the inquiry?

1110

Hon. Doug Ford: It's really unreal what I'm hearing there, Mr. Speaker. The member from Ottawa knows it's a federal inquiry—he lives there—into the federal government's use of the federal Emergencies Act, not the

provincial emergency act. This is about the federal government.

As much as the member wants to play politics and pretend that it's a provincial situation, as much as the member wants me to direct the police—he knows I don't direct the police. I don't direct municipal police. I don't direct provincial police, and I do not direct the RCMP.

Top officials from the OPP that were running the operation in conjunction with the municipal police and the RCMP, in my opinion, did an incredible job. But again, to the member from Ottawa, he knows it's a federal issue. He knows it's a federal inquiry, and that's up to the federal government. It's not up to the provincial government; it's up to the federal government.

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

Mr. John Fraser: Therein lies the problem, exactly the same problem that happened last February: "It's someone else's problem. It's not my problem. I'm not going to worry about it."

The problem is, when it comes to public safety and people's security, it's all of our problem. Speaker, the Premier was not there for the residents of the city of Ottawa.

The Premier may win in court next week, but he's losing every single day in the court of public opinion. I can remember three Premiers in this province who, when they were called to testify before a committee or through court were there: Premier McGuinty, Premier Harris and Premier Wynne. What makes this Premier any different? They did this because it was the right thing to do. They didn't shirk their responsibility. They knew that that came with the office.

Speaker, through you, I will ask again, will the Premier simply drop his court action, apologize to the city of Ottawa and do the right thing: take his responsibility and testify before the inquiry in Ottawa?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: As the public saw, I was out there non-stop speaking to the people. As the member for Ottawa and his neighbours—he was hiding in his basement. Let me be very clear: This is a federal inquiry. And I love, Mr. Speaker—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Official opposition, come to order. Government side, come to order.

Hon. Doug Ford: I love that he uses previous Premiers at an inquiry. I've got to remind him, he was part of the most politically corrupt government this province has ever seen—

Interjections.

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

Will the Premier take his seat. The Premier must withdraw the unparliamentary comment.

Hon. Doug Ford: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Start the clock. You may conclude your answer. You have a few seconds left.

Interjection: I think he's done.

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

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. John Yakabuski: Under the previous government, the mining and critical minerals industries were not a priority, and Ontario's economy suffered as a result. That is why our government needs to take urgent action to strengthen Ontario's economy, meet our climate goals and secure good jobs for the people of Ontario by partnering with this sector.

Speaker, people all across Ontario know how crucial investments are to the mining industry and how vital it is to secure them. Could the Minister of Mines please provide an update on how our government has delivered for the people of Ontario as it relates to mining sector investments?

Hon. George Pirie: Thank you for the question from the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. I recently attended with the Premier the opening of Vale's Copper Cliff south mine. It was a tremendous event. Vale was extremely happy to see the Premier go underground to celebrate the reopening of this complex.

Vale spent over \$900 million to redevelop this mine, and they're going to spend another \$900 million with the Creighton mine to do the very same thing. Now they're going to spend \$1.8 billion to produce copper and nickel and cobalt, minerals that are essential to producing the batteries that are required to decarbonize Ontario's economy.

This is totally supported by this government and this Premier. We're very supportive of this. We're very ecstatic that this is happening in Ontario, under the leadership of this Premier.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: I want to thank the minister for his response.

In the past, projects in the mining industry have taken decades to plan, assess and put into production. We all know these timelines are simply not good enough, especially if we expect to meet our climate goals.

Ontario's mineral exploration and mining industry can be a global leader once again if our government steps up and delivers much-needed support.

Speaker, we have a significant opportunity to create thousands of jobs by opening new mines and expanding existing ones.

Could the Minister of Mines please provide concrete examples of how his ministry is cutting red tape and streamlining processes associated with mining projects, answering the call for urgent action?

Hon. George Pirie: Once again, thank you very much for the question from the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. Speaker, our message is simple: We cannot go green without mining, and Ontario is the best place in the world to mine. The time is now to eliminate unnecessary regulatory burdens, improve timelines, increase transparency and improve business certainty.

We built the Kidd Creek mine in three years, and perhaps that was a little too fast, but we've got to do better than 15 years to build mines now.

Right now, we're developing regulations that will help exploration companies find the critical mineral mines of the future and promote innovative, new strategies to recover critical minerals from old mine tailings.

There's much more to do, but we will never stop driving efficiencies into how the mines are developed, because we know how important it is to Ontario and the globe to mine these critical minerals, to support decarbonizing our economy in Ontario, and to secure the supply chain—again, all efforts that are led by the Premier here in Ontario.

PUBLIC ORDER EMERGENCY COMMISSION

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: To the Premier: The Public Order Emergency Commission's lawyers have been clear with this government that if the Premier and Minister Jones don't testify, there will be "important gaps" in their record. For an instant last week it seemed like just maybe the government recognized the value of testifying, only declining the commission's invitation "for a moment."

According to the Premier, the buck stops with him, but apparently not when he's being forced to answer very difficult questions about the impact of his decisions.

How did the Premier's mind change between last week and this Monday?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: In fact, Mr. Speaker—
Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I'm disappointed to see that the opposition is not happy to see me on my feet. I don't understand. I certainly value them.

Mr. Speaker, I've said on a number of occasions that we actually have been assisting the commission, right from the onset. Of course it's important to assist, as the federal government act requires that there be a commission of inquiry following the federal government's decision to enact the federal Emergencies Act. Of course, we're going to assist. That's why we've provided cabinet-level documents. We're assisting by ensuring that the commissioner of the OPP and other policing officials, who were there on the ground helping the Ottawa Police Service and who have important information, are testifying in front of the commission—because it was, after all, a policing matter, so one would expect that police officials would be there, colleagues. That is why the Deputy Solicitor General and officials from the Ministry of Transportation are also on the ground.

So we have been assisting the commission, and we will continue to do so as required.

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

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: My question is to the Premier and to the Premier only. I want an answer from the Premier. He is in the House.

On October 17, the Premier told reporters that he had not been asked to appear before the commission in Ottawa, but lawyers for the commission revealed that both the Premier and Minister Jones had been asked multiple times to appear voluntarily, with government lawyers being told as early as October 11 that there was the possibility of a summons. So this government knew that the Premier and the minister might be compelled to testify before the Premier said he had never been asked by the commission to appear—very curious.

Can the Premier explain why he said that he was not asked to appear?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, as I've said on a number of occasions, and I'll say it again—I'll help the members understand the action that took place. The federal Emergencies Act is, of course, as I've been saying, a federal Emergencies Act. It was a policing act that took place during the convoy protest, Mr. Speaker.

1120

Now the commission has asked for our assistance, and that is why we are proactively providing cabinet documents. That is why the commissioner of the OPP is testifying. That is why other policing officials who were on the ground making decisions are also providing assistance to the commission as it does its investigation into the Prime Minister's decision to use the federal Emergencies Act. We will continue to assist the commission, because that is what we should do.

At the same time, of course, we did similar proactive things here in this House with respect to our state of emergency. It is too bad that the opposition at the time never thought it was important to participate in those debates in this House. In fact, when we had the discussions and debates over what was happening there, they chose to sit on their hands and end debate.

PUBLIC SAFETY SÉCURITÉ PUBLIQUE

Mr. Vincent Ke: In the last few weeks, we have seen an increased number of crimes, especially ones involving firearms. In some of these incidents, criminals have deliberately attacked police. Just last week, police officers on duty in Scarborough had to escape near death from an active shooter. As well, with other recent tragedies involving attacks on our police, I know I speak for everyone in this House in conveying our heartfelt sympathy and support to the family members of slain police officers.

Speaker, my question is to the Solicitor General: What is our government doing to address the recent surge of violent crime?

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: I'm grateful to the member from Don Valley North for his important question.

Recent attacks against police officers are completely unacceptable. Especially at this time, we remember the sacrifice made by Constables Hong and Northrup and Russell. We can't thank our police officers enough for their heroic work that they do to keep Ontario safe.

Monsieur le Président, je suis fier de soutenir nos policiers, qui assurent la sécurité de l'Ontario tous les jours.

Our policing partners put their lives on the line every day, and we recognize that police officers deserve our support and respect. We will provide the police with the tools and resources they need to keep us safe. Most importantly, we will have their backs each and every day.

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

Mr. Vincent Ke: Thank you for the minister's response. Speaker, organized crime is a serious issue, especially in large cities like Toronto. People in my community are concerned about gang activity in their neighbourhoods. The people of my riding of Don Valley North don't deserve to live in fear because of the actions of criminals. The city of Toronto is home to a culturally diverse population, good neighbours and friendly people. It is not a home for gangs engaging in criminal activity.

Speaker, what is the Ministry of the Solicitor General's approach to dealing with gang crime?

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Once again, my thanks to the member from Don Valley North for his question.

Since our government came into office, we've invested over \$300 million in grants for policing in the city of Toronto alone. More than \$28 million of those monies were allocated through our anti-gun and gang strategy.

Retirer les armes à feu illégales est notre priorité absolue.

We're optimistic that the federal government will continue to invest in Ontario's anti-gun and gangs program and to take important action to stop the illegal firearms that are coming into our province at international borders. I urge our federal counterpart, Minister Mendicino, to go to the border, make an announcement and step up the inspections at the border so that Ontario can keep itself safe.

CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES

Mr. Michael Mantha: My question is to the Premier. Ontario prides itself on its natural resources, which are protected by conservation officers, who are trained and equipped to handle poachers, high-risk arrests, search and seizures, and much more. These officers often find themselves in remote areas alone with little to no backup readily available.

For decades they have been requesting reclassification and higher pay in line with comparable positions like OPP officers. Why has the government not taken steps to rectify the issue and ensure that Ontario has the resources it needs to protect and grow the province's natural resources?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Hon. Graydon Smith: I just want to say that conservation officers in Ontario play such an important role. They have done so for generations; they will continue to do so for generations. We thank them for that every single day. They have over 200,000 interactions a year with members of the public, making sure that they're educated, making sure that they are following the rules.

It's a big province, Mr. Speaker. When they needed more, this government provided more: 25 new conservation officers in Ontario, bringing the number to over 200.

This government supports our conservation officers. I look forward to meeting with them this afternoon and discussing their concerns. My door is always open to the great conservation officers here in Ontario.

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

Mr. Michael Mantha: Again, to the Premier: This ever-expanding wage gap has led to a shortage in conservation officers, leaving an insufficient number of officers to protect Ontario's natural resources. Recruiting 25 is a start; 124 is a barrier.

These officers play a vital role in the continued protection of Ontario's natural beauty and ensuring the safety of individuals who are enjoying Ontario's vast resources. Attracting and retaining the best qualified conservation officers is a challenge with the ongoing wage discrepancy.

Does the government have a plan to recruit and retain conservation officers?

Hon. Graydon Smith: As I said, my door will be open this afternoon and always open for further discussion. I'm aware that OPSEU and the employer are working on a classification review, and I understand that members from our enforcement branch are part of the committees to work on the review of this classification. They'll make sure that the work skills and the importance of conservation officers are specifically discussed as part of that review.

I'll just remind this House again: 25 new conservation officers doing incredible work throughout Ontario. We thank them every single day.

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. Every year in October, children's aid societies lead the Dress Purple Day campaign across the province to raise awareness about the role we must all play in supporting vulnerable children, youth and families in our province. Dress Purple Day is an opportunity to raise awareness for all of us, including among children and youth, about their right to safety and well-being in all spaces.

My question to the minister is this: How is the government helping to raise awareness for Dress Purple Day?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: I would like to thank the member from Essex for the question and for his good work.

Keeping children and youth safe is a responsibility that our government takes very seriously, and it's taken very

seriously by our partners in children's aid societies across Ontario. In fact, everyone across Ontario has a role to play in the well-being of children, youth and families.

Today, people across the province will wear purple to show support and remind Ontario's children and youth that the help and support they need is available. There are 50 children's aid societies in Ontario, including 13 Indigenous societies. Help and support is a phone call away, no matter where you live.

On Dress Purple Day, we celebrate communities and families and remind ourselves that every child and youth has the right to be safe and supported, and no one is alone.

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

Mr. Anthony Leardi: We can see all members on all sides of the House today are wearing purple, including myself, to show their support for vulnerable children, youth and families. While dressing in purple demonstrates our support for this important campaign and helps raise awareness of everyone's role in supporting children, there's more that we can do to address some of the challenges vulnerable children and youth are facing.

1130

Speaker, my question to the minister is this: What concrete actions is the government taking not only to protect vulnerable children but also to ensure that they feel supported?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: The member for Essex is absolutely right. We want every child and youth to have a safe and stable and loving home, and families and communities to be supported and strengthened through preventative measures and services and early intervention. And we want youth in care to feel supported and prepared for the future.

That's why we've embarked on the redesign of child welfare, through which our government is introducing new initiatives to improve the quality of care in licensed residential placements. These include developing a new framework for what residential care looks like; increasing and enhancing oversight and accountability of licensed residential settings; and adding 20 new positions across the province to support the management, inspection and oversight of the children's residential services system.

Every child and youth deserves a safe, loving and stable home, and our government will continue to work to deliver that.

GOVERNMENT INVESTMENTS

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Today the Financial Accountability Office released a very interesting report, their fall Economic and Budget Outlook. It details projected funding shortfalls of \$40 billion across all sectors over the next six years: a \$23-billion shortfall in health; \$6 billion in education; \$4 billion in children, community and social services—if you want to keep children safe, I would invest in them—\$2.6 billion in post-secondary; and a \$2.3-billion shortfall in

justice. Meanwhile, the government will be sitting on \$44 billion in unallocated contingency funds.

Will the government be transparent with the people of this province and allocate these contingencies to ensure that there are no painful program funding shortfalls? Answer to the people.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you, through you, Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite for that question. I thank her for acknowledging that we have a prudent plan for the people of Ontario.

But when I listen I think to myself: Did the members opposite across the floor make the historic and unprecedented investments in health care when they had the opportunity? Did they make the investments in long-term care and highways and public transit? Did they do that, Mr. Speaker? Did they make the investments to provide housing to the families and to the people that come to this great province that want a home and a roof over their head? Did they do that when they had the opportunity? No, Mr. Speaker.

The answer is very clear. This government has a plan to build Ontario to make the investments in infrastructure and support labour to get the job done.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: Speaker, I would never refer to a \$23-billion shortfall in health care as historic for the right reason. It's historic for the wrong reason.

The FAO report confirmed that Ontario has the funding to invest in this province. Ontario is projected to run \$25.3 billion in surpluses over the next six years. Despite this, the government thinks it's acceptable to cry poor and hold wage increases for our lowest-paid education workers at 1.25%, or continue to enforce their destructive Bill 124, all while food bank usage hits an all-time high for children and for seniors in Ontario. These policy choices are unconscionable. They are irresponsible.

Will the government commit today to paying education workers a fair wage, repeal Bill 124—you can do it; you can pay those people what they deserve—and double the ODSP rates? This is about choices. This government is making the wrong choices for the people of this province. Do your job.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll remind the members to make their comments through the Chair, not directly across the floor.

The Minister of Finance can respond.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll make my comments through you to the member opposite. I'm sure the member opposite took the time to read the 241 pages in the Plan to Build Ontario that this Premier took to the people of Ontario on June 2, and it was roundly endorsed. Take a look at the historic and unprecedented investments in health care, historic and unprecedented investments in education, historic and unprecedented investments in social services. I'm sure she has taken the time to look at how we're supporting families and workers and businesses in this province under the leadership of this

Premier, rebuilding the economy through the leadership of our Minister of Economic Development, bringing jobs—what a concept—back to Ontario, good-paying jobs, bigger paycheques. Take the time to read the budget.

AFFAIRES FRANCOPHONES

M. Andrew Dowie: Ma question s'adresse à la ministre des Affaires francophones.

Dans ma circonscription de Windsor–Tecumseh, je suis heureux de savoir qu'un projet a été retenu dans le cadre du Programme d'appui à la francophonie ontarienne, c'est-à-dire le projet, Une diversité qui nous unit, de l'organisme Épelle-Moi Canada.

Est-ce que la ministre peut en dire un peu plus sur les objectifs du programme, et comment ce programme appuie les entreprises francophones et stimule la relance économique?

L'hon. Caroline Mulroney: Je suis heureuse que les gens à Windsor peuvent bénéficier du Programme d'appui à la francophonie ontarienne.

Ce programme—dont notre gouvernement a doublé le budget, qui est maintenant de deux millions de dollars—sert justement à appuyer le dynamisme des communautés francophones au niveau local et au niveau régional.

Le Programme d'appui à la francophonie ontarienne est une initiative centrale de la Stratégie de développement économique francophone, dont un des objectifs vise à encourager et à stimuler la relance économique francophone par le biais d'actions visant spécifiquement les organismes et les entreprises francophones.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

M. Andrew Dowie: Merci, madame la Ministre, pour cette réponse. C'est formidable d'entendre parler de l'engagement continu de notre gouvernement envers les communautés francophones de l'Ontario, et particulièrement de ma circonscription.

La communauté francophone joue un rôle important dans le succès culturel et économique de notre province. Monsieur le Président, outre le Programme d'appui à la francophonie ontarienne, la ministre des Affaires francophones peut-elle nous en dire un peu plus sur la Stratégie de développement économique francophone?

L'hon. Caroline Mulroney: La semaine dernière, lors de mon passage au Toronto Global Forum, j'ai pu mettre la francophonie ontarienne en valeur en m'adressant à l'ensemble des participants. Nous savons que l'avenir de la langue française ici en Ontario est grandement lié à la prospérité des entreprises francophones. Et c'est pourquoi, monsieur le Président, nous avons mis sur pied cette Stratégie de développement économique francophone, pour la première fois dans l'histoire de la province de l'Ontario.

Cette stratégie vise à encourager et à soutenir l'entrepreneuriat francophone, à augmenter le nombre de travailleurs francophones et aussi bilingues en Ontario. Et, monsieur le Président, nous allons continuer à mettre en valeur la francophonie ontarienne comme atout

économique pour la première fois dans l'histoire de la province de l'Ontario.

CHILD CARE

Ms. Bhutila Karpoche: My question is to the Premier. Ontario has a child care workforce crisis. In the last month, child care centres in Sault Ste. Marie, Sarnia and on Manitoulin Island have closed because they couldn't find enough qualified child care staff. Ontario doesn't even have enough workers to operate the spaces we have now, let alone the 71,000 new spaces this government has promised.

Speaker, child care workers have been clear that they need higher wages, a salary scale and decent work standards to stabilize the workforce.

Will the government consult with child care workers and do what's needed to solve this crisis?

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

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I appreciate the question from the member opposite.

We do agree that we need more workers, which is why under the plan signed with the federal government—a better deal, with \$3 billion more on the table, because our government had the political wisdom to stand up to the Trudeau government to get the best deal for the students and parents we represent. And if we followed the advice of the New Democrats and Liberals specifically, we would have let a third of operators in the member's riding be precluded from participation, denying moms and dads in this province the right to affordable child care, after it rose by 400% under the former Liberal government.

We know, as Conservatives, we can do better. We can make life affordable. We can hire more workers and increase their wages, as we are doing every year over the course of this agreement—a minimum standard, \$1 increase every year—to make it more competitive to retain these workers and finally increase the access and the affordability for the people we represent.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 36(a), the member for Ottawa South has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Premier concerning the Emergencies Act inquiry. This matter will be debated Tuesday, following private members' public business.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Just to outline the order of business for next week, in accordance with standing order number 59:

On Monday afternoon, we will be debating a bill that will be introduced later this afternoon.

On Tuesday, we will continue debate on the bill that will be introduced later this afternoon. On Tuesday afternoon, we will be debating opposition day motion number 1, followed by the private member's motion standing in the name of the member for Ajax.

On Wednesday afternoon, we will continue debate on a bill that will be introduced later today. Currently, we have the bill from the member for Kitchener Centre, but I think we will be delaying that and working with the opposition. Currently it's on the order paper, but we will be working together on that one.

Then, on Thursday morning and afternoon, we will be debating the bill again that is being introduced later today and the private member's motion standing in the name of the great member for Barrie–Innisfil.

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

The House recessed from 1142 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We have with us in the Speaker's gallery this afternoon Mr. Henry Mangal, who is the Consul General of Saint Lucia in Toronto. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

Mr. Deepak Anand: I have the opportunity to introduce today my sister, who has given me love more than a sister, Navdeep Gill; Prabsarup Gill, her husband; Pawanjit "Monty" Malhi; their friend Varinder Malhi; and Kirandeep Brar. Thank you for coming to Queen's Park.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE POLICY

Mr. Lorne Coe: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Justice Policy, on the estimates selected by the standing committee for consideration.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Wai Lam (William) Wong): Mr. Coe, from the Standing Committee on Justice Policy, presents the committee's report as follows:

Pursuant to standing order 63, your committee has selected the 2022-23 estimates of the following ministries for consideration: Ministry of the Attorney General, Ministry of Indigenous Affairs, Ministry of Government and Consumer Services, Ministry of Francophone Affairs, Ministry of the Solicitor General.

Report presented.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received a report on intended appointments dated October 27, 2022, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 110(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF GOVERNMENT BILLS

STRENGTHENING POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS AND STUDENTS ACT, 2022

LOI DE 2022 SUR LE RENFORCEMENT DES ÉTABLISSEMENTS POSTSECONDAIRES ET LES ÉTUDIANTS

Ms. Dunlop moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 26, An Act to amend various Acts in respect of post-secondary education / Projet de loi 26, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'éducation postsecondaire.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll invite the minister to briefly explain her bill.

Hon. Jill Dunlop: Speaker, it is an honour to rise in the House today to introduce two important sets of legislative amendments relating to post-secondary education. First, I am pleased to introduce legislative amendments that would require publicly assisted colleges and universities and private career colleges to have specific processes in place that address, and increase transparency of, faculty and staff sexual misconduct on post-secondary campuses. The strengthened policies would allow institutions to deem the sexual abuse of a student as just cause for dismissal; prevent the use of non-disclosure agreements to address cases where an employee leaves an institution to be employed at another institution and their prior wrongdoing remains a secret; and require institutions to have sexual misconduct policies in place that provide rules for behaviour between faculty, staff and students, as well as disciplinary measures for faculty and staff who break these rules.

Additionally, I am delighted to announce that our government is introducing legislative amendments so Ryerson University can legally change its name to Toronto Metropolitan University. The proposed change in name supports our government's efforts to ensure Ontario has a post-secondary system that embraces diversity, inclusivity and promotes success for all learners—including Indigenous learners—so they can find rewarding careers.

These legislative amendments will help Toronto Metropolitan University begin a new chapter in its history that better reflects the current values and aspirations of the institution.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

PROTECTING AGRICULTURAL LAND ACT, 2022 LOI DE 2022 SUR LA PROTECTION DES TERRES AGRICOLES

Mr. Vanthof moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 27, An Act to amend the Planning Act to protect agricultural land / *Projet de loi 27, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire afin de protéger les terres agricoles.*

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: The bill amends the Planning Act with respect to land that is zoned for prescribed agricultural uses. The bill provides that the land cannot be rezoned and the uses permitted on the land cannot be changed unless an agricultural impact assessment has been carried out. The restriction applies to a municipality passing a zoning bylaw and to the minister making a minister's zoning order.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Today is Dress Purple Day, and it's an opportunity to take a moment to remember that we all play an important role in supporting the well-being of children, youth and families.

Today, people across the province will wear purple to show support and remind Ontario's children and youth that the help and support they need is available. Every child and youth has the right to be safe and supported. This is the core message of Dress Purple Day.

We know the kinds of challenges that families can face are wide-ranging. Children, youth and families may be going through a season that could make them vulnerable, such as housing insecurity, addiction and mental health issues, and intimate partner violence. Our message to them on Dress Purple Day is: Know that you are not alone. Help and support is a phone call away, no matter where you live.

There are 50 children's aid societies in Ontario, including 37 non-Indigenous societies and 13 Indigenous societies. They help connect children, youth and families to the local programs or social services they need to

overcome the challenges they are facing. These could include family or individual counselling, housing assistance or parenting programs.

We all have a responsibility for the welfare of children and youth in this province. A key component of the Child, Youth and Family Services Act is that Ontarians must report suspected cases of abuse and neglect. Simply put, if you believe that a child or youth is or may be in need of protection, or if your family needs support, please contact your local children's aid society. Children's aid societies investigate all reports of child abuse or neglect and deliver child protection services, if needed, and support families to give them the tools they need where appropriate.

Children's aid societies are our partners in child welfare delivery, not only on Dress Purple Day but every day. A key service they provide families is supplying information and community supports and prevention and treatment services.

When necessary, they form a holistic plan that helps make sure the family is supported and stable. A plan could include assistance from extended family, neighbours, friends or members of a faith community. If a child is First Nations, Inuit or Métis, members of the community could be brought in to help as part of the plan.

As you can see, we want families and communities to be strengthened and supported through approaches that stress prevention and early assistance.

1310

As part of our Child Welfare Redesign Strategy, we know there is more work to do. And we are making changes. We've been engaging with societies who have this front-line knowledge to inform the changes. With the input of children's aid societies and others, including representatives from diverse community groups across Ontario and youth with lived experience, we are modernizing child and family services to better focus on prevention and early intervention.

Redesigning the child welfare system includes creating safe, culturally appropriate and responsive services for children, youth and families in need. Our redesign work features investments in areas critical to making the child welfare system more culturally appropriate and responsive, such as:

- a \$5-million annual investment for enhanced prevention-focused customary care for First Nations, Inuit and Métis, to help more children and youth to be closer to their homes, families and communities;

- almost \$3 million to help kinship service and customary caregivers, those adoptive parents and caregivers who have obtained legal custody of a child who was in extended care at a children's aid society;

- another \$1.5 million annually to enhance community-based prevention and well-being initiatives for Black children, youth, and families;

- \$800,000 in annual funding to support One Vision One Voice, a community-led program focusing on culturally appropriate services and anti-Black racism; and

- \$800,000 for projects to improve outcomes for LGBT+ children, youth and families in the child welfare system.

We are also working on changing the system to make it more responsive, so that youth in care of a children's aid society are better set up for success as they transition into adulthood.

I want to say a heartfelt thank you to children's aid societies across the province for their contributions to this redesign and for their work every day to help vulnerable children be safe, grow up and succeed.

Together with the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, individual children's aid societies, and local and provincial partners, we are strengthening families and communities across this province.

I encourage you to help raise awareness about Dress Purple Day in support of children and youth across Ontario, because Ontario's future depends on the well-being of our children and youth, not just today but every day.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Responses?

MPP Jill Andrew: It's an honour to stand to address the Legislature today on Dress Purple Day.

The minister did say one thing that was correct: Yes, all children and youth should matter in Ontario. But what we do know is, certain children and youth do not matter as much as they should in Ontario, namely, Black youth and Indigenous youth and youth of colour, who we know are disproportionately represented in systems of care, currently, in Ontario.

I want to start first by reminding the public who may be watching that this is the Conservative government that cut a billion dollars in resources from the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services just a few years ago. And we learned again today, through the Financial Accountability Office's Economic and Budget Outlook, that we are seeing \$44 billion in contingency from this government that's directly impacting the very sectors that can help us ensure that children and youth are safe and healthy and have well-being in their communities, such as a \$23-billion shortfall in health, a \$6-billion shortfall in education, a \$4-billion shortfall in the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services—

Interjection.

MPP Jill Andrew: She should stay and listen, but I guess she has other priorities—\$2.6 billion in post-secondary funding, and \$2.3 billion in justice.

I want to also take some time to thank one particular group of folks who are instrumental to the safety and well-being of children and youth in our province, and that is education workers.

Speaker, I want to make it clear: Paying \$39,000 a year to education workers doesn't even begin to scratch the surface of the way in which they support the social, academic and of course, most importantly, the mental health of our children. Whether they're driving them to school on the school buses, whether they're working with them in classrooms, with our kids who have disabilities, we have to pay—and respect—education workers what they deserve. Currently, this government's decision to pay education workers at a rate that's lower than inflation,

when many of them are going to food banks, when many of them don't know where their ability to pay for rent comes from, does not create a social climate where education workers can thrive. And I can assure you that if education workers aren't thriving, they cannot support our children and youth thriving either. So that is something I want us to really think about in this space today.

I want to give a special shout-out to one of our local organizations in St. Paul's, For Youth Initiative. FYI is their acronym. They're in our Oakwood Village community, and they really do a lot to support Black, Indigenous, racialized students and youth who live in the Oakwood Village area and otherwise. It's all about employability. It's all about ensuring that students have a sense of pride and that they receive culturally relevant services in our community.

I want to encourage the government to continue to invest in community-based services, because at the end of the day, we have a government that will spend billions of dollars to build a highway to mansions that folks cannot afford in Ontario, yet the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services stands there and proudly talks about investments of \$800,000 to address anti-Black racism or \$800,000 to address 2SLGBTQI+ communities. You can't buy one house in St. Paul's for that price. So that's really difficult to hear, when we know that there are billions of dollars being cut by this government or withheld by this government from education, from community social services, from the things that actually matter.

Of course, I will run out of time before I get to mention many of the pieces of legislation that, for instance, our member from Hamilton Mountain has put forth. And the member from Kitchener Centre, myself and the member from Thunder Bay-Superior North are consistently putting forth pieces of legislation that we hope this government will look at and create laws based on—but actually are about protecting children and youth in this province of Ontario.

PETITIONS

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

MPP Jill Andrew: I'd like to start by thanking Sally Palmer, who organized wonderfully to get this petition into our hands. The petition is called "To Raise Social Assistance Rates.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's social assistance rates are well below Canada's official Market Basket Measure poverty line and far from adequate to cover the rising costs of food and rent: \$733 for individuals on OW and soon" 1,227 whopping dollars "for ODSP;

"Whereas an open letter to the Premier and two cabinet ministers, signed by over 230 organizations, recommends that social assistance rates be doubled for both Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP);

“Whereas the recent small budget increase of 5% for ODSP still leaves these citizens well below the poverty line, both they and those receiving the frozen OW rates are struggling to live in this time of alarming inflation;

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

“We, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly to double social assistance rates for OW and ODSP.”

1320

I could sign this a million times, Speaker, and I will until it happens. And I’m tabling it with Malini.

INJURED WORKERS

Mr. Michael Mantha: This petition is entitled, “For an Official Statement of Apology on Behalf of the Government of Ontario to the McIntyre Powder Project Miners.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas over 25,000 Ontario mine workers were subjected by their employers to mandatory, non-consensual inhalation of finely ground aluminum dust known as ‘McIntyre Powder’ between 1943 and 1979, as a scientifically unproven industrial medical treatment for the lung disease silicosis; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario supported and sanctioned the McIntyre Powder aluminum prophylaxis program despite the availability of safe and proven alternatives to effective silicosis prevention measures such as improved dust control and ventilation, and also despite expert evidence from the international scientific and medical community as early as 1946 that recommended against the use of McIntyre Powder treatments; and

“Whereas the miners who were forced to inhale McIntyre Powder experienced distress, immediate and long-term health effects from their experiences and exposures associated with aluminum inhalation treatments, as documented through their participation in the McIntyre Powder Project;

“We, the undersigned, petition the government of Ontario to provide an official statement of apology to the McIntyre Powder Project miners.”

I agree with this petition, affix my name, and will present it to page Gabi to bring it down to the Clerks’ table.

TENANT PROTECTION

MPP Jill Andrew: This petition is on behalf of my community in St. Paul’s. It’s called “Protect Ontario Tenants: Pass the Rent Stabilization Act Now.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas average rent has increased by over 50% in the past 10 years;

“Whereas average monthly rent in Ontario is now over \$2,000;

“Whereas nearly half of Ontarians pay unaffordable rental housing costs because they spend more than a third of their income on rent;

“Whereas the rent affordability crisis risks all other tenant rights to a safe and stable home as tenants are fearful of unlawful evictions of affordable and/or rent-controlled units if they were to exercise them;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the government of Ontario to implement the Rent Stabilization Act to establish:

“—rent control that operates during and between tenancies so a new tenant pays the same rent as a former tenant, with allowable annual rent increases calculated by the government of Ontario and based on annual inflation;

“—a public rent registry so tenants can find out what a former tenant paid in rent;

“—access to legal aid for tenants that want to contest an illegal rent hike; and” lastly

“—stronger enforcement and tougher penalties for landlords who do not properly maintain a renter’s home.”

I absolutely support this petition, shout out our community on Vaughan Road, and I will hand it to Rachel for tabling at the front.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Michael Mantha: This petition is entitled, “To Raise Social Assistance Rates.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

I support this petition, affix my name to it and present it to page Sahana to bring it down the Clerks’ table.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I have a petition entitled “Petition to Raise ODSP and OW Shelter and Basic Needs Allowances Now.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas most people in Ontario who receive social assistance are being forced to survive on as little as \$650 a month;

“Whereas affordable, subsidized rent-gear-to-income housing is inaccessible to most people, with wait-lists of many years;

“Whereas clients need to eat, as well as pay their rent, and since clients would still have to dip into their basic needs allowance to cover rent because even doubling the shelter allowances still won't cover all of the rent at today's prices;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to call on the Premier of Ontario to double the Ontario Disability Support Program and Ontario Works rates.”

I'd like to thank the member from Toronto—St. Paul's and all of those who have signed this petition. I'm going to affix my name to it and give it to Amy to take to the table.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

MPP Jill Andrew: I rise again on behalf of our folks in St. Paul's: “Petition to Raise ODSP and OW Shelter and Basic Needs Allowances Now.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas most people in Ontario who receive social assistance are being forced to survive on as little as \$650 a month;

“Whereas affordable, subsidized rent-gear-to-income housing is inaccessible to most people, with wait-lists of many years;

“Whereas clients need to eat, as well as pay their rent, and since clients would still have to dip into their basic needs allowance to cover rent because even doubling the shelter allowances still won't cover all of the rent at today's prices;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to call on the Premier of Ontario to double the Ontario Disability Support Program and Ontario Works rates” now.

I absolutely support and will hand these petitions over to Karma for the Clerks.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

MPP Jill Andrew: This petition, again, is on behalf of our community in St. Paul's, Crawford Street:

“Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas data shows there are an estimated 131,000 vacant homes in Toronto as of 2021, representing an increase of 32% in the past five years;

“Whereas one in four homes across Ontario are purchased for the sake of investment as the cost of housing for working Ontarians is further and further out of reach;

“Whereas average rent prices in Toronto have increased by 20% over the last year, with 60% of renters reporting they have to cut back on food to afford rent;

“Whereas the housing crisis is as much about increasing affordable supply as it is limiting demand from housing profiteers and speculators;

“Whereas failing to make housing affordable risks Ontario's economic recovery as working Ontarians will be

driven out of the province or made unhoused, to rely on far more expensive budget items such as shelters, hospitals and prisons;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to fix the housing affordability crisis in Ontario through proven-effective policies including, but not limited to, implementing speculation taxes, rent and vacancy control, improving demoviction and renoviction protections, addressing the ‘missing middle’ of housing supply and increasing social, supportive, and transitional housing investments.”

Again, thank you very much to my community and communities across Toronto, actually, that signed this petition, and I'm handing it over to Mitchell for the Clerks.

HEALTH CARE

MPP Jill Andrew: Again, I rise on behalf of my community in Toronto—St. Paul's. This petition is one that impacts all of us across Ontario: “Repeal Bill 124 to Save our Public Health Care.

“Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

1330

“Whereas the nursing shortage across Ontario has pushed our public health care system to collapse;

“Whereas the vacancy rate for registered nurse positions in Ontario is 12.63%, nearly double the vacancy rate of 2017;

“Whereas Bill 124 has capped the wages of public sector workers, including nurses, to a 1% increase per year, which once adjusted to the current inflation rate of ... 8% in 2022, represents a pay cut of 7%;

“Whereas any increase in hospital beds across the province is inconsequential without the staff to provide the care;

“Whereas public health care is a human right that must be available to all Ontarians when they need it;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately repeal the wage-suppressing Bill 124 as part of the solution to recruit and retain nurses and front-line health care workers in the sector.”

Again, thank you for the job of all of our front-line health care workers. I couldn't support this more.

Thank you, Molly.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Petitions? Petitions?

Orders of the day?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MORE HOMES BUILT FASTER ACT, 2022

LOI DE 2022 VISANT
À ACCÉLÉRER LA CONSTRUCTION
DE PLUS DE LOGEMENTS

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 27, 2022, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 23, An Act to amend various statutes, to revoke various regulations and to enact the Supporting Growth and Housing in York and Durham Regions Act, 2022 / Projet de loi 23, Loi modifiant diverses lois, abrogeant divers règlements et édictant la Loi de 2022 visant à soutenir la croissance et la construction de logements dans les régions de York et de Durham.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I believe that when we left off debate, the member for London West was speaking.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: As I was saying this morning, I really appreciate this opportunity to join the debate on Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act. As every MPP in this chamber is hearing from their constituents, we are in a dire housing crisis in this province.

I just want to set the stage a little bit in terms of what's going on in my community in London. London recently achieved a number of firsts, and they are not firsts that we are proud of. Rentals.ca just reported earlier this week that London experienced the biggest average rent increase in Canada, a 33% increase in average rents over the last year. Tenants in London are being hit hard by having to deal with a 33% rent increase, and the reality is that many may be financially evicted from their units because they can no longer afford the rent.

That's especially the case for tenants who are living in buildings that were built after November 2018, because one of the earliest things this government did on the housing file was to remove rent control off of new builds, or post-November-2018 construction. That is causing huge pressures in our housing market, when tenants are facing that kind of rent increase and struggling to try to afford that in the face of all of the other affordability questions or pressures that Ontarians are experiencing.

Two other firsts: The latest census data that was released earlier this fall showed that London is the fastest-growing city in Canada. There was a 10% increase in population over the last decade, and that, of course, exacerbates the pressure that we are experiencing in our housing stock. And London is a destination that embraces newcomers, that has really put a focus on welcoming newcomers to locate in our city, and so that is another issue that is putting pressure on the housing stock, combined with our post-secondary institutions and the need to ensure that there is housing available for all of the students who come to study in our city.

The third first that we recently became aware of—again, from Statistics Canada—is that London's homeownership rate is dead last among major Ontario cities. So actually, that is not a first; that's the opposite of a first. We have the fewest percentage of homeowners in our city compared to other cities in Ontario. The Ontario average is 68.4%. In London, we're four points below that: Only 62.6% of our population own homes.

As we all know—I have young adults in their twenties; many of us are in that same demographic. It is particularly challenging, disheartening and frustrating for these young adults to ever imagine a future where they will be able to afford a home. We hear that a lot about Toronto, but it's

the same reality in communities like London. That was corroborated in the data that show that in London, only 50% of young adults aged 30 to 34 in London own a home. That's down from 56.3% in the previous census, and there was a four percentage point decline for young adults aged 35 to 39. So the housing crisis is real. The housing crisis is affecting both tenants and people who want to own a home, particularly young people who are looking to get into the housing market, and we collectively have a responsibility to do something to address this crisis.

The bill that is before us today attempts to do that, and that is important. We need to see more homes built faster, as in the title of the bill. But we also need a whole swath of other strong measures and bold actions to be taken.

The intensification provisions that are in this bill, the changes to the Planning Act, will take some baby steps to increasing that stock that we know we need to achieve. The government's task force before the election had shown that Ontario will need 1.5 million new homes built over the next decade. It was sad to hear that the government's own background papers estimate that the intensification provisions in this legislation will add about 50,000 new units over the next decade. That is far, far short of the 1.5 million homes that are necessary to meet the needs of our growing population. In terms of supply, we need purpose-built rentals. We need non-market options. We need co-op housing. We need supportive housing. We need so much more than what this bill is going to deliver.

And when we have a population that is so reliant on rental housing, we need to strengthen protections for tenants. What does this bill do? We see in schedules 1 and 4 that this bill weakens protections for tenants. It allows the minister to impose limits and conditions on rental replacement bylaws that require that any affordable units that are demolished or converted during redevelopment are replaced. This bill eliminates those rental replacement provisions that are in place through municipal bylaws in Toronto and Mississauga, but it also prohibits any municipality from having those kinds of provisions.

Former Toronto city planner Jennifer Keesmaat said this is going to this is going to make it open season on low-income tenants who are living in purpose-built rentals that, like many of the purpose-built rentals in our province, are deteriorating in condition and are demolished. Those units will be gone. Municipalities will no longer be able to require that tenants can move back into a new building that is constructed at the same rent. Once again, it is going to displace thousands of vulnerable tenants across this province and increase the pressure on other communities that perhaps have lower average rents versus Toronto and Mississauga, where those bylaws are in place.

1340

We need to ensure that there is a strong public role in new housing investments to make sure that those new builds that are constructed actually are affordable. This legislation defines affordable as 80% of market rent, but when market rent is over \$2,000, 80% of that is far from affordable for many, many, many people in this province. We need to increase the supply of deeply affordable

housing as well as those supportive homes that are so, so lacking in supply in our province.

We also need to take stronger regulatory measures, like a speculation tax, a vacancy tax. We heard earlier this week that the government is increasing the non-resident speculation tax, but there is so much more that can be done on the regulatory side to really spur the construction of those 1.5 million homes we need.

This bill is a step forward in some senses. As the government has estimated, it will increase our supply by 50,000 units over 10 years, and the difference between the 50,000 units that will be spurred by this bill and the \$1.5-million target that we know we have to meet—the difference, this government has decided, will be made up by municipalities. So the legislation requires municipalities to have a housing pledge with a specific target that they are supposed to meet in terms of new home construction. But as the *Globe and Mail* has pointed out and as various commentators have pointed out, a housing pledge without any kind of penalty for municipalities that don't meet that pledge is not going to produce those units that are necessary.

Before I reach the end of my time, I want to raise some very significant concerns about other measures that are proposed in this bill, in schedule 2 and schedule 9. Those relate to the Conservation Authorities Act and, in schedule 9, the Planning Act. Specifically, I'm referring to the changes that the government is proposing to the role of conservation authorities in planning matters. The changes that are set out in these two schedules of the bill limit or, as some would say, gut the oversight role of conservation authorities in the planning process.

In schedule 2, the role of conservation authorities in reviewing and commenting on planning and development matters within their jurisdiction will be strictly limited to matters falling under their core mandate, so that would be flooding, erosion or drought. The bill would prohibit conservation authorities from reviewing or commenting on specific proposals under a prescribed act. Conservation authorities will no longer be allowed to prohibit certain activities relating to the use or modification of water courses, wetlands, erosion and other matters. This is of grave concern to many people in this province, not just environmentalists, but of course environmentalists have sounded the alarm. We are in a climate crisis. We just saw the impact of Hurricane Fiona. These are not just 100-year severe weather events; these are 500-year severe weather events that we are experiencing on this planet. There was just a recent report showing that we're going to be nowhere close to meeting that UN target of reducing global warming in the amount of time that we have to unless we take stronger measures. Undermining the role of conservation authorities, limiting the role of conservation authorities is exactly counter to what we should be doing.

Interestingly, the federal parliamentary budget office had recognized the work that Ontario's conservation authorities had been doing to keep losses associated with flooding in Ontario lower than losses seen in other Canadian provinces. The last thing we want to do is to

limit and undermine the role of conservation authorities in sound and sustainable development planning.

I just want to close by saying that this government has given us no confidence that it is committed to housing. We just saw in this year's estimate a \$100-million cut to the provincial government's housing program. They have to do a lot better than what's in this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Questions?

Mr. Andrew Dowie: Thank you to the member from London West for her remarks. I will say I'm disappointed that the status quo is better than what's in Bill 23, from what I'm understanding from that statement.

We've said many times that due to the severity of the housing crisis, there is no single silver-bullet solution. That's why our government has put forward many pieces of legislation to tackle that crisis. In fact, the members opposite have long advocated for many of the policies that this government has implemented. In the NDP housing plan released in 2021, the opposition put forward proposals to expand on protections for renters and homebuyers, then we put in new protections for tenants through Bill 184—and the opposition voted no. The opposition proposed to encourage basement apartments and granny flats. That was addressed in the housing supply action plan. They voted no.

Will the members opposite stop saying no just for the sake of saying no and finally join us in delivering the critically needed solutions they themselves have called for?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I appreciate the comments from the member for Windsor–Tecumseh. You know what I would like to see? I would like to see the government say yes to the proposals that the NDP has put forward to really meet this crisis that we are facing, to meet the challenge head-on to actually achieve the 1.5 million homes target that we must meet if we are to serve the needs of the people of this province.

As I said, yes, we need intensification, but we also need much stronger protections for tenants. Why is there no rent control on post-November 2018 builds? Those tenants deserve protections, and the tenants who will be affected by the removal of the rent replacement provisions that is set out in this legislation will be deeply affected by the lack of protection—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Questions?

Mr. Wayne Gates: This bill is very interesting to me, because it's going to affect municipalities probably the most, and I know there are some people who have been councillors. Do you know what didn't happen in this bill? There was little to no consultation with AMO and with the mayors in the province of Ontario who it's going to affect the most. There was some, a select few, but in my riding there was little to no consultation—little to no consultation. I wanted to get that out.

1350

We would say yes, it was in the betterment of the province of Ontario, but you've got to talk to the people who are going to be affected. We just had elections. Why

do we have elections if you're not going to talk to them? It makes no sense to me.

So my question is, through you: What is in this bill that will protect renters from unjust evictions and rent increases?

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Response.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Thank you to my colleague the member for Niagara Falls for pointing out the complete absence of consultation with municipalities and AMO, the organization that represents municipalities.

There's no question that what this government is doing is downloading the cost of trying to meet that 1.5-million target onto municipalities. Any time that you are increasing density by allowing the construction of granny flats and other units—which is a good thing; that is a good thing, but it means that there is going to be more pressure on municipal services. The removal or the limits on development charges that are proposed in this legislation will mean that there will be even less of a tax base to provide that infrastructure.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Questions?

Mr. Rick Byers: I thank the member opposite for her remarks and interest in this important legislation today. You mentioned briefly the federal government in this, and I just want to expand on that a little. On this side of the House, we continue to advocate for Ontario's fair share of federal funding. Of all the Canadian households in the core housing need, 44% are in Ontario—the highest percentage in the country. However, our allocation of federal funding under the National Housing Strategy is 38%, below that allocation and underfunded by about \$480 million over a 10-year term.

I'm asking members opposite if you'll join us in calling for the federal government to expand Ontario's share of housing under the NHS, and support us all.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Response.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Thank you to the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound for his question.

Look, there is absolutely no question that we need the federal government, the provincial government and municipal governments at the table to address this crisis, given the proportion of the crisis that we're facing. But the history of this government has been that whenever federal housing dollars are provided to Ontario, what does Ontario do? They reduce their share of the housing budget.

Speaker, as I had concluded with, when we see this government cutting the housing program by \$100 million, we're not going to be advocating for the province to continue to pull back its budget.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question? I recognize the member for Ottawa West–Nepean.

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Thank you, Speaker. Well done. Thank you to the member for London West for your comments on this bill. You've certainly given us a lot of important reflections.

Over the past few months, I've been speaking with a lot of people in Ontario living on social assistance. The rates for a single individual are \$733 a month. Even after the government's historic increase to ODSP, people are only

getting \$1,228 a month. That's not enough to afford rent in Ontario right now. And now we have a bill that's redefining affordability based on market rent, rather than what incomes people actually have. I'm wondering if you can expand on the challenge that this represents for people living on social assistance in Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Response.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Thank you to my colleague the member for Ottawa West–Nepean. She is absolutely right. This bill will do absolutely nothing to help the people in this province who are living with disability or are struggling to get by on meager social assistance benefits. This bill will do nothing to ease the affordability crisis that the lowest-income people in Ontario are especially hard hit by. That is why, as the NDP has proposed, we need a strong public role in dealing with this housing crisis. We need a public role in ensuring that new builds are deeply affordable and ensuring that supportive housing is part of our housing mix in the province.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Questions?

Mr. Stephen Crawford: I listened intently to the member opposite. I think it's quite good that we all agree that we're in a housing crisis. I think that's one thing we can all agree on. Maybe we disagree on how we solve the problem.

We know Ontario is growing at a phenomenal pace. Under the previous Liberal government, we had 300,000 manufacturing jobs leave the province. We're now getting manufacturing jobs back in the province. We are short 400,000 workers in this province right now.

We know over the next decade the population of Ontario is going to expand by at least two million, a lot of those people in the GTA, so we're going to need homes for those people. We're going to need homes, whether they're immigrants, newcomers, young people that want to get in the housing market.

I think Bill 23 is making a major effort to enhance housing affordability in this province. So my question to the member is, would you agree with the member from Toronto–St. Paul's, who said, "More houses is not necessarily the answer"—that's in Hansard, here in the House. Do you agree with that quote?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Well, I can say this to the member for Oakville: What I do not agree with is that Bill 23 will deal with the affordability challenges that people are facing.

There is nothing in this bill to ensure that even those 50,000 units that are estimated to be constructed—that even those units will be affordable. And we have seen in Toronto, which has already gone with laneway houses and granny suites and secondary units—but those are typically not set at rental rates that low-income people can afford.

We need to do much more to ensure that the housing that is available in Ontario is actually housing that people can afford and is located where people want to live.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further debate?

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: It is a pleasure to rise in the House this afternoon and join the debate on Bill 23, the

More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022, and to speak to the importance and the urgency of moving forward to pass our government's proposed legislation so that we can swiftly move to implement Ontario's Plan to Build.

Speaker, this bill confirms this government's commitment that was made to all Ontarians, a commitment to build 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years, and in the process help millions of Ontarians—new first-time buyers, those Ontarians wishing to upsize or downsize or rent—to achieve the dream of affordable home ownership.

Within this historic assembly, I offer a story from Ontario's history in the post-World War II era. It is a story that can guide us as we address the current housing crisis. As Sir Winston Churchill once remarked, "A society that forgets its past has no future." We can learn from history, even from historic anecdotes, when we seek to exercise our good judgment on the future.

On September 12, 1956, Frank and Susan Camisso achieved their dream of home ownership when they purchased a small suburban bungalow in the Sheppard and Victoria Park Avenue area of Toronto for just \$16,500. While the priority for the Camissos in purchasing their property was focused on moving up to a new home from where they were, in a rental accommodation, and to accommodate their dream of being near schools and parks for their daughters, Irene and Alice, the greater significance of this purchase was that the Camisso family had purchased the millionth home built in Canada since the Second World War. Members of the provincial government at that time, then-Metro chairman Fred Gardiner, Scarborough reeve Gus Harris and many other dignitaries gathered to congratulate the young family at Lot 121 Beacham Crescent in the new Wishing Well Acres subdivision.

This milestone of one million homes built in the 10 years following World War II should guide us as we debate this plan to build 1.5 million new homes by 2032.

1400

Now, while the population in 1956 for Canada was just 16 million, and 5.4 million in the province of Ontario, the post-war housing boom in Ontario was leading all of Canada because the Progressive Conservative Premier of Ontario at that time, Premier Leslie Frost, and his government made attainable housing a priority for all Ontarians at that time.

When we fast-forward in history to the early 2000s, where under the previous Liberal government housing supply in Ontario fell to crisis levels due to higher construction costs, developmental charges, burdensome regulation and red tape and, of course, reduced transfers to municipalities, government policy made a difference for the worse as a result of those policies.

The former Liberal government, propped up for one of its terms by the NDP, forgot a fundamental economic principle: When you reduce the supply of a good or commodity, you drive up the cost and the demand for that good or commodity. That is what we saw with housing in Ontario under the Liberals, aided and abetted by the NDP. Does that sound familiar? It probably does because, sadly,

we are seeing history repeat itself at the federal level in terms of the NDP propping up a Liberal government, who themselves speak about affordable housing for all Canadians but fail to act.

We received an overwhelming mandate from the people of Ontario to act, and our government is taking bold action to get shovels and the ground and solve Ontario's housing supply in the immediate and the long term. This government is committed to exploring measures that can be taken to increase supply and to make housing more attainable for Ontarians. Immigration to our province is on the rise, and people are choosing to work and live in Ontario, because our economic plan is producing an environment conducive to long-term economic growth and stability.

With that in mind, Speaker, new and existing Ontarians need houses to live in, and they need certainty. Over the past four years, this government has introduced several new initiatives under our first two housing supply action plans: More Homes, More Choice in 2019 and More Homes for Everyone in 2022. These have helped to substantially increase housing starts in recent years, but we know we need to do more to meet the 1.5-million-home target over the next 10 years by 2032. As well, this government is working on creating a new attainable home ownership program to drive development of attainable housing on surplus provincial government land, so whatever their budget, Ontarians can find a place to call their own.

Speaker, in Durham region alone, where my riding of Durham is located, we have had many residents coming from elsewhere in the GTA and southern Ontario and settling in north Oshawa, Courtice and Bowmanville. Thousands of new homes are presently being built in these new neighbourhoods, and these are the kinds of communities that people are looking to our government to lead on. In Durham region alone, there has been a 119% year-over-year increase in new housing starts, and that number is only going to rise should this House agree to the passage of this bill.

But words are not enough, Speaker; action must be taken. I had the opportunity to host a housing affordability round table recently in my riding, where I was joined by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the honourable member for Whitby. It was a very informative experience for all of us. We got a chance to listen and meet with Durham's youth. We heard their concerns, their frustration, their anxiety associated with moving forward with their first housing purchase. Governments who have taken little to no action in comparison to what we have done so far were referenced by our young attendees. That round table definitely helped shape aspects of this bill.

I want to highlight one of our Durham youths who attended the round table. Kirsten Martinolich is a 23-year-old nurse, who, like thousands of her colleagues, answered the call to duty during the pandemic. She expressed her concerns and her frustration because she wants to be able to move out of her parents' home. She tells us that even with a well- and fair-paying job as a nurse, she is unable

to make that move at this time. We want to act for young Kirsten.

Speaking of nurses, I would be remiss, Speaker, if I didn't mention the recent passing of my mother-in-law, Maureen Harrington Azzopardi. She herself was a 1957 graduate of the St. Michael's Hospital School of Nursing here in Toronto.

We need to act for Kirsten and other young people. Bobby MacDonald of Port Perry, a newlywed, tells us of the nightmare of development charges associated with the development and building of a new home that he's trying to bring about with his new bride. Will Hume, a third-year law student, wonders if he will be able to move from his brother's apartment when he graduates from law school in 2023.

These are the concerns of young people in different situations. They have expressed it to us, and clearly the status quo, which some support, is no longer an acceptable option. We must take decisive action. Transformative change is never easy, but our government stands ready to make the necessary decisions that will improve Ontario's housing sector and benefit all Ontarians in the short and long term.

Ontario is expected to grow by over two million people over the next 10 years, with 70% of those new residents settling in the greater Golden Horseshoe region. With previous governments not taking action on building homes, we not only have to play catch-up, but we also have to keep up with the expected population growth.

Within this bill, our government is proposing processes to encourage gentle intensification. This is going to be accomplished, we propose, by giving property owners the right to build additional units without lengthy planning approvals and without the unnecessary and excessive development charges.

Now, I want to expand on that last point, Speaker, as this issue is consistently raised in my riding among so many: the overregulation and red tape associated with housing. Let's start with the development charges and fees. We know there is a growing consensus that rising fees and lengthy delays all over the province are driving up the cost of housing. In many cases, these fees have increased by as much as 36% over the past two years, and then the charges or the costs associated with these fees are obviously passed down to homebuyers and even renters, making it impossible for homebuyers or renters to plan and budget or to keep up.

This bill further proposes to eliminate unnecessary approvals and rules such as waiving site plan control for smaller developments, limiting third-party appeals and removing numerous unnecessary hurdles in the planning process. Our proposed plan also builds on the recently enacted Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act, which empowers the mayors of Toronto and Ottawa to move quickly on shared provincial priorities, with construction of more housing at the top of the list.

We know the construction of more housing is critical if all Ontarians are to have a chance at attainable home ownership, and we trust that our municipal partners will

work collaboratively with us to accomplish this goal. We want to help cities, towns and rural communities grow with a mix of home ownership and rental housing units. These must meet the needs of all Ontarians. It is not a one-size-fits-all option. We need to build more homes near transit hubs, update infrastructure and unlock innovative approaches to getting shovels in the ground faster.

There is a strong consensus that increasing fees are driving up the cost of housing without considering the impact fee increases have on tenants and future homeowners. We cannot stand idly by. Without action, housing prices will rise and affordability will worsen. These proposals, if passed, would reduce the cost of residential development by freezing and reducing future municipal development-related charges. Specific reductions in these charges for certain types of development, such as non-profit developments, and for particular types of units, such as affordable, attainable and rental housing, would increase the much-needed supply of these units in the province. The proposals would also improve cost certainty for home builders and provide greater transparency on the use of municipal development-related charges to the public.

At this time, when many Ontarians are struggling with the rising cost of living, we believe it is reasonable to consider how we can lower costs and make life more affordable for tenants and homeowners. Speaker, I know the opposition would like to make this a partisan issue, but I can assure you this is not. Every member of this House has thousands of constituents communicating to them their frustration with not being able to achieve the dream of home ownership or even rental because of factors beyond their control. With so many Ontarians struggling with the rising cost of living, our government believes this bill takes reasonable and necessary steps to lower the cost of home ownership and make life more affordable for all.

1410

I urge all members of this House to say yes to cutting red tape, yes to cutting bureaucracy and needless delays by voting to pass the bill so that we can get shovels in the ground and get houses built so that more Ontarians can have a place to call home.

As I said, this is not a one-size-fits-all option. The bill proposes a plan for building homes attainable for all because there will be more choice and variety associated with the homes that can and will be built if this bill becomes law.

Ontarians made a decision on June 2, when they voted to re-elect our government. We were clear that a re-elected PC government, under the leadership of Premier Doug Ford, would introduce a housing supply plan every year for the next four years. We also made the bold commitment to build 1.5 million homes over the next decade. These changes being considered in this House with this bill will create, if passed, a solid foundation to address Ontario's housing supply crisis over the long term, and it will be supplemented by continued action into the future.

This is a lengthy bill. It affects many other currently existing laws. I urge those who are inclined at this moment

to oppose passage of the bill to read it very, very carefully. If they do read it, Speaker, they will know, for example, that the now 16-year-old City of Toronto Act, passed in 2006, would be amended, if this bill is passed, to establish the authority for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to make regulations imposing limits and conditions on the power of the city of Toronto to prohibit and regulate the demolition and conversion of residential rental properties.

If the members opposite who oppose or are inclined to oppose this bill read it carefully, they will no doubt become aware that the proposed legislation will amend the now 25-year-old Development Charges Act, and in doing so there will be exemptions for additional residential units. There will be exemptions for affordable and attainable housing. There will also be, if passed, amendments to the Municipal Act, 2001, now over 20 years old. These proposed changes would allow the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing—a minister responsible to this House—to make regulations imposing limits and conditions on the powers of any municipality to prohibit and regulate the demolition and conversion of residential rental properties. That measure extends the amendments of the City of Toronto Act to every municipality in the province, if passed. And that minister's ability to do so is consistent with the fact that he sits in this House among us and is responsible to this House, and that is consistent with responsible government.

The members opposite will no doubt know, if they read this bill—and I encourage them to do it—that the New Home Construction Licensing Act, passed by the previous Liberal government, would be amended by this bill. It would give the minister a new power to make a regulation requiring the regulatory authority to establish, maintain and comply with a policy to govern payments to persons who have been adversely affected by contraventions from the funds the regulatory authority collects as fines and administrative penalties. We happen to believe that's fair. I encourage members opposite inclined to vote against this bill to support that change.

You will find that the Ontario Heritage Act would be impacted by this act in this manner: There would be a new subsection that would provide for a process for the identification of properties in the heritage standards and guidelines. The existing provisions permit a ministry or prescribed public body to determine whether a property has cultural heritage value or interest. The process instead would permit the minister to review and confirm or revise the determination or any part of it—and, in the process, be accountable to this elected House.

They will find, Speaker, if they read the act, that even the recently enacted Ontario Land Tribunal Act would be impacted. Two important changes proposed to that act would be expanded powers under section 19 to provide that the OLT could dismiss a proceeding without a hearing if the tribunal is of the opinion that the party who brought the proceeding has contributed to undue delay of the proceeding. This is the kind of roadblock that cannot be tolerated. And importantly, following the example of cost

consequences in the court system, the tribunal would, if this bill is passed, be able to make an order for costs that an unsuccessful party pay to a successful party—a very important deterrent to avoid a vexatious approach to matters before the tribunal, just as cost consequences in the courts provide for an incentive against vexatious or non-meritorious litigation.

You will find that the 10-year-old Ontario Underground Infrastructure Notification System Act of 2012 would also be amended with proposed changes set out in the act that regulations and ministers' orders prevail in the event of a conflict with the memorandum of understanding or the corporation's bylaws and resolutions, again moving the ability to deal with such an issue to a minister accountable to this House.

The Planning Act obviously would be amended as well, and I encourage the members to read the detailed amendments, which would include changes removing planning responsibilities in upper-tier municipalities in Simcoe, Halton, Peel, York, Durham, Niagara and Waterloo.

The proposed changes, finally, would limit conservation authority appeals of land use planning decisions and ensure that conservation authorities are acting in accordance with the mandate given to them many decades ago so they fulfill the purpose they were created for. Those are my submissions on this bill, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Time for questions.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I want to thank the MPP for York Centre for starting with a quotation from Winston Churchill. I have one of my own, and that is, "The truth is incontrovertible. Malice may attack it. Ignorance may deride it. But in the end, there it is."

The truth is that your government was in opposition for 15 years, including under the leadership of MPP Fedeli, who is currently a minister. So pointing fingers and blaming is not going to get this problem solved.

I would also like to say that I don't need your encouragement to tell me how to do my job as an MPP. I certainly have read this bill, and what I would like to say—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Through the Speaker.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you, Madam Speaker. What I'd like to say is that while you encourage us to support and read the bill, I encourage you to listen to us, the opposition, who are suggesting that there are many holes in this bill that are going to make life very difficult for the people of Ontario.

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Point of order. I recognize the member for York Centre.

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Madam Speaker, the member just referred in her opening remarks to the speaker from York Centre. I am the member from York Centre. I did not rise to speak prior.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): The member can continue.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I actually apologize—but I could do you the next time, if you like. I do apologize.

My question, absolutely, is, one of the big holes in this is that you have not in any way identified how this relief from development charges for developers is going to impact local taxpayers—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Response.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: How are these costs going to be borne by local taxpayers in your community—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Response.

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: Thank you, Speaker. Through you to the member opposite: As the member for Durham who delivered the 20-minute address just now, we are listening, and when we listen to you, we hear that we share a concern in common, on a non-partisan basis: We need more housing supply. I heard the member opposite say that yesterday. We agree with you, and we are taking bold action. Now, you may not agree with every aspect of how we're taking action, but I'd ask that you consider it carefully. It's not impossible for this House to have non-partisan solutions to an identified non-partisan crisis. I urge the members opposite to support this bill as a practical and fair and reasonable and balanced approach to the amendment of several pieces of legislation. It will make a difference. And remember that—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question.

Mr. Rob Flack: I very much enjoyed the member for Durham's remarks. I think we would all agree that the dream of home ownership in this country is one of the great Canadian values that we all share. That being said, I hear in my riding—I know many of you do, and again, in a non-partisan way—that that dream of home ownership has become virtually impossible for young Canadians, young people of this province, to realize.

1420

That being said, Speaker, I would ask the member again: Could you emphasize the points and clarify where you think the opportunity lies for this bill to help enact the dream of home ownership in Canada?

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: Thank you to the member for Elgin–Middlesex–London. I have just one word in the name of my riding, but my colleague has three. I think I pronounced it right; I hope I did, Madam Speaker.

My colleague talks of the dream of home ownership. He, like me, listens—his question suggests that he listens very carefully—to his fellow citizens in his community. His question suggests that he will be supporting this bill, and I thank him for that. I completely endorse his endorsement of doing this. He knows, as I do, that this is not just about first-time homebuyers; it's also about those who want to downsize or go to a home in another community, to upsize, and for renters. That's the important thing, and I know my honourable colleague recognizes that, as I do.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

Mr. Wayne Gates: To my colleague from Durham: In your riding that you're representing, four years ago the price of a two-bedroom home was \$1,299. Today, it is \$2,400. It's gone up a thousand dollars. So that means

anybody on ODSP or OW cannot afford to live in your riding. With the 5% that you increased, they'll still not be able to live in Durham. I just wanted to get that out so you understand what young people are facing in your riding.

But here's the one that I don't understand from your government, because it is important to make sure that everybody who lives in the province of Ontario should have a place to live. We shouldn't have homelessness in one of the richest provinces in the country. There was little to no consultation with the mayors in the province of Ontario and in my riding of Niagara Falls as well. So my question to you: Why?

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: Thank you to the member for Niagara Falls for his question. I have visited Niagara Falls with my family many times over the past several years and decades, and I hope the member opposite would consider visiting Durham. It's geographically quite a large riding that includes north Oshawa, Bowmanville, Courtice, Blackstock, Port Perry and the Mississaugas of Scugog Island.

Interjection.

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: Yes, and we also have the Clarington Eagles.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Response?

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: The answer is, we have a mixed variety of housing, owned and rented. I can proudly say that I've consulted with all three mayors, two of whom have been re-elected and one who's new, and I'm in regular conversation with them about the plan. It's very, very positive—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you, my colleague for Durham, for passionately talking about this policy and this plan. You passionately talked about how first-time homebuyers can attain home ownership and also how the next generation of Canadians can have a claim to have a roof over their heads.

Madam Speaker, one of the most common things I hear from concerned constituents in my riding, especially young people—I have three children—is to have a house in their own city, their own village. They don't want to leave their town, but because of the housing prices, they can't afford to live in their town.

I'm asking the member: Besides working to build more homes, what else is planned for first-time homebuyers? You talk about the first-time homebuyers and new Canadians. Please elaborate on this plan to help first-time homebuyers.

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: Thank you to the member for Markham–Thornhill. We have the housing attainability program, which is part of this package of proposals and amendments to other acts. The honourable member opposite, being from York region, shares a border with my riding of Durham region, and one of the parts that I neglected to mention was the Supporting Growth and Housing in York and Durham Regions Act. This is going to be one piece of new legislation that will be part of this plan. I say that because the member opposite is within

York region neighbouring Durham region, the region that my riding is situated in. So I thank the member opposite.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): We have time for one further question.

Mr. Chris Glover: This bill proposes to cut development charges for companies that provide what's called affordable housing, which means 80% of the regular cost. Instead of giving money to developers in the hope that they will provide affordable housing, why doesn't this government just build affordable housing?

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: The late Premier Davis, who was honoured in this House just the other day this week, used to speak of respectful disagreements with the former leader of the member opposite's party, Stephen Lewis, and that he would teasingly say "philosophically misguided." I have great respect for the member opposite. He is the MPP for my daughter. She lives in the riding and still has to have a roommate in order to rent there, because she wouldn't be able to do it on her own as she's a young lawyer. But I think there is a philosophical difference between the parties—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): That is all of our time for questions and answers.

We now continue with further debate.

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Thank you for the opportunity to speak on this bill today. Right now in Ontario, we're living in a housing crisis that's only getting worse. Average rent in Ottawa increased 14% this year compared to last. We have people across Ottawa West–Nepean who are paying half their income on often poor-quality, insecure and unsafe housing. People on ODSP and OW, if they're lucky, can manage to pay rent on only \$733 or \$1,228 a month.

We have a desperate need to see more non-profit housing built in order to accommodate the vast waiting list. There's currently an eight-year wait-list for access to social housing in Ottawa. We have 500 families who are currently living in hotels, many of them with kids, many of them for multiple years. I know I'm not the only parent in the House right now, Speaker, and, like many parents, I've spent nights in hotels with kids, and I'm sure you can appreciate how difficult it is for kids to sleep in that environment. These are families that are in these conditions, day in and day out, for years. It's not exactly setting these children up for success.

I've also spoken to many people over the past year who are homeowners but are unsure if their kids ever will be. They still have their kids living at home, unsure when they'll ever be able to move out. I've spoken with parents and grandparents who are disappointed that their kids had to move far away from home just in order to be able to afford housing and that they don't get to see their kids or grandkids very often.

When we're talking about legislation, it's always important to remember that we're not just discussing numbers on a page or theoretical ideas about policy; we're talking about real people, real families who are being impacted by this crisis, real families that have to choose between eating and heating because of exploitative

landlords and absurd housing costs. So as I begin, I want to share some of these stories to remind us of the human side of the issue and the impact on real people.

1430

A constituent in my riding, who wishes to remain anonymous for his own safety, was recently informed that the building he has lived in for over two decades has been sold. The new owners of 2929 Carling Avenue are planning a complete renovation of the building, and are taking action to evict their current tenants. Many of the tenants of this building, including my constituent, are living on social assistance and cannot afford to enter a new rental agreement because of the high cost of rent in Ottawa.

Renovictions like this are forcing out people with disabilities, people on Ontario Works and ODSP, single moms and their children, just so that landlords can increase their profits by doubling the rent. This constituent is now struggling with the stress of losing his home during a housing affordability crisis, and is pleading for this government to fight for tenants' rights and end these renovictions so that the people of this province can have a roof over their heads.

Another constituent in my riding of Ottawa West–Nepean, Laura, has been struggling to find affordable housing in Ottawa. Laura has described what she and her family have been through in Ottawa's housing market as one of the most painful, defeating and humiliating experiences of her life. Her husband has found a well-paying job in Ottawa and makes around \$90,000 per year. They have both worked extremely hard to climb their way out of poverty. They have positive rental references, positive personal references, positive private financial references, and even have parents co-signing behind them, but to the absolute dread of every landlord in the market right now, they have poor credit scores.

Laura and her husband have been pushed by property managers to up their bid for a better chance to get a house, but have been told that without good credit, they will not be accepted. This has put her family in a vulnerable position. All they have been able to find is a short-term room rental for her husband. Laura and her 10-month-old have been forced to move back in with her parents, four hours outside of Ottawa, because they have been continuously denied access to affordable housing. This has left their new family split apart for over four months now, and they have been seeking housing for literally the entirety of their daughter's life.

Housing is a human right, and renters need protection, but what is this government doing to protect tenants? Rental prices in Ottawa are increasing to alarming amounts between tenants, and many are being forced further from their workplaces just to find anything remotely affordable. It's also allowing landlords to ask for more and more unreasonable demands from tenants.

Another woman, Tracy, reached out to me on Twitter. She is on ODSP and was searching for housing. She found an available unit, but the landlord told her she would not be able to apply for the housing, because the landlord

wanted an income of at least \$40,000 a year. People living on ODSP make only \$14,000 a year, Speaker. They are never going to be able to afford housing unless we actually increase the rates and take steps to ensure that housing is truly affordable.

Many of the people living on social assistance who I have spoken to over the past months have highlighted this issue. They aren't receiving enough income to pay for rent, and then they face discrimination in the housing market, with landlords refusing to return their calls as soon as they learn they are on social assistance. It's not right, Speaker. We've got people living in tents, in boxes, on our streets because they just can't find an affordable place to live. Until we take that crisis seriously, we're going to see more people in that situation. What does that say about our society, and what does that say about this government if they're prepared to allow that to happen?

Which leads us to Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act. There are elements of this bill that are potentially positive steps forward. We are living in a housing crisis, and expanding the housing supply is necessary. We undoubtedly need to build more compact, mixed-use communities across the province. It's also good to see that there will be policy changes regarding infill housing. Allowing for secondary and tertiary suites within existing homes is a welcome change, and something I note the NDP has long called for. I'm glad the government has listened to the opposition on this.

Let's go through some of the elements of the bill, starting with changes to the Development Charges Act. The bill will exempt development charges for the development of affordable housing. However, it defines an affordable residential unit as being a rental unit where the rent is no greater than 80% of average market rent, or a non-rental unit where the home was sold at no more than 80% of the average purchase price. The problem with this definition is that the average market rent for a studio apartment, so the bottom of the housing market in Ottawa, is \$1,700 currently. That means the definition of an affordable rental unit in Ottawa for an affordable studio would be \$1,360. That's still not affordable for my constituents. It's not affordable housing for seniors on a low fixed income. It's not affordable for young families struggling under the weight of the cost-of-living crisis, desperate to try to get on the housing ladder but with no help in sight. It's not affordable for all of the people I've spoken to on ODSP and OW whose payments wouldn't even cover rent at \$1,360. So let's be absolutely clear: This is not affordable housing.

I would like to welcome, though, the section in the bill that supports non-profit housing developments, including co-ops that are mandated under inclusionary zoning bylaws, and exempts them from development charges. Co-ops are such a great form of affordable housing that provides residents with a real say over how their homes are managed and shared. I wish there was more in this bill regarding non-profit housing, as it's not just lack of supply that is causing housing costs to soar but the lack of non-profit housing to drive down prices from wealthy development speculators.

Additionally, while the bill will exempt development charges for at least 25 years, 25 years is not long enough for many people who will still be living in poverty 25 years from now or on a fixed income, because you simply don't get over a disability or being a senior in the space of 25 years.

At the end of the day, we also need to be honest that no amount of building new homes for profit is going to get people on social assistance into safe housing when they are only getting \$733 a month.

We also support the need to build homes that are more affordable and to address the missing middle in our housing market—duplexes, triplexes and townhomes in particular.

We support densification and utilizing existing neighbourhoods to address the housing crisis, but we also need to maintain and protect existing affordable rental and community housing supply.

While it is clear that the bill makes strides to address the housing crisis by increasing the supply of for-profit homes, it is also clear that there are provisions in this bill that will have negative implications for renters in particular.

As the critic for poverty and homelessness, I want to spend some time outlining the issues that I see with this bill in relation to its impact on renters and people experiencing poverty.

We need to be building market and non-market affordable homes. It's important that we are ensuring that the homes we are constructing can be afforded by Ontarians of all income levels. It does not make sense to construct millions of homes that are out of the price range of those who are most in need of housing while not constructing any that people at the low end of the spectrum can afford.

It also makes no sense to change regulations and overrule local decision-making in a way that has negative impacts on renters and people experiencing poverty.

Schedule 1 and schedule 4 contain provisions that will impose limits and conditions on rental replacement bylaws. This will reduce protections for renters and undermine local decision-making by municipalities. Rental replacement bylaws are important for when existing apartment buildings are demolished or converted into condominiums. These bylaws ensure that the new building contains sufficient rental units to replace the ones being demolished and that the renters who were living in the units that were replaced are given the opportunity to move back into the newly created or refurbished building at the same rental rate as they had previously. This is an important protection for renters, and particularly for renters who have been living in the same unit for decades—units that are affordable. It means that seniors, people living with disabilities, and families are not unjustly forced into an extremely competitive rental market simply because their building has undergone a demolition or repurposing. Without rental replacement bylaws, we risk driving more renters into the market, driving up demand for existing units and therefore also

driving up prices. This is a recipe for trouble and could very well lead to a net loss of affordable units in Ontario. Ever-increasing rental prices could be stopped by enacting rent control to ensure that tenants pay the same rent that previous tenants paid. Our election platform called for this, and it is a call that is supported by many of the tenant advocates I spoke with.

I do not see this sort of protection in this bill. In fact, the current government ended rent control for new buildings in 2018. The end of rent control in conjunction with this new attack on rental replacement bylaws demonstrates that this government is just not interested in protecting renters. It's part of a pattern of actions taken by this government which have made it harder and harder to rent in Ontario. It is imperative that Ontario's housing strategy take into consideration the needs of renters. We need to ensure that we are building purpose-built rental units that are family-friendly and are protected by rent control. Without these purpose-built rentals, rent control and rental replacement bylaws, this bill is only going to exacerbate the challenging situation that many renters in Ontario are facing.

1440

Let's go back to a section of the bill I touched on earlier, schedule 3. This portion of the bill redefines affordability in a way that does not reflect the lived reality of many Ontarians. According to this schedule, a unit can be classified as affordable if the rent or purchase price is no greater than 80% of market value. This is a problem, because it links the definition of affordability to the market instead of to what Ontarians can actually afford. To put this into perspective, let's say an individual on ODSP has been evicted from their unit. Currently, the average rental rate in Ottawa for all apartments is \$1,800 a month. Under the definition set out in this bill, a unit would be deemed affordable so long as the rental rate was \$1,440, or 80% of the average rental rate. Keep in mind, as the government is well aware, an individual on ODSP receives only \$1,228 per month. That means this individual is already \$200 behind without even accounting for food costs, Internet, utilities and other expenses. The affordable unit costs more than their entire support payment. That's just not right.

I would be remiss if I didn't use this opportunity to say the government needs to double social assistance rates. We need to ensure that everyone can live a life of dignity, responding to their basic needs. The government is not taking seriously the lived reality of people on Ontario Works and ODSP, and this bill demonstrates that. By playing games with the definition of affordability and refusing to take real action to address legislated poverty, it is clear that yet again this government is not concerned about putting people onto the streets. People living on social assistance cannot afford to rent in this province as it is. It would be a huge mistake to redefine affordability in a way that attaches it to market value rather than to what individuals can actually afford.

I also want to speak to the gutting of conservation authorities in this bill, Speaker. In Ottawa West–Nepean,

we've had two once-in-a-century floods in the past three years. It has been devastating for many residents of Ottawa West–Nepean who have had to evacuate their homes, who have had to take measures to protect their homes, who have had to replace damage done to their homes. There is a reason why we need to have environmental protections, both to limit the damage of climate change so that we don't continue to have these once-in-a-century storms every three years, and also so that we're not building homes of any kind, whether it's for low-income people or wealthy residents, on wetlands that are most vulnerable to this kind of flooding when these kinds of storms and measures happen. We need to take conservation, we need to take climate change seriously so that we are actually protecting people's homes and making sure that they can live safely, regardless of what happens.

Finally, I want to conclude by mentioning the need for consultation. We've already heard this afternoon about how limited the consultation has been on this bill. The government did not speak to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario before tabling this bill. They have not spoken to many stakeholders about this bill. We've seen from this government a repeated pattern of unwillingness to speak to the people who are most affected by their legislation. We've seen an unwillingness on the part of this government to speak to people who most need to be consulted on the impacts of legislation. I am concerned that this will happen again. I've already heard from ACORN Ottawa that they have serious concerns about the gutting of tenant protections and the definition of affordability. It is absolutely essential that when legislation affects such a fundamental human right as housing, the government is actually speaking to the people who are affected, is listening to their concerns, is integrating their concerns into the legislation so that at the end of the day, we have a strategy that actually respects the human rights of everyone in our province, and actually takes seriously the need to provide dignified and affordable housing to everyone in Ontario, regardless of their income level.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Questions?

Mr. Rick Byers: I thank the member opposite for her remarks. In particular, I thank you for identifying the elements of the bill that you support, because I think, as was stated earlier, on a significant level, we all agree on the nature of the problem: We need more housing. At some level, we all agree that this is a substantial step forward from where we've been. I guess I want to first acknowledge that because certainly, on our side of the House, we agree with that problem too, and we think this bill is a very important and substantial step forward.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

Mr. Rick Byers: I guess real quickly—and I heard you—what would be your top few areas of priority for changes? Acknowledging that we agree on the problem, and we agree on a good chunk of the bill, where would you suggest changes?

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Thanks to the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound for the question. I'm not sure we do fundamentally agree on the problem because the

problem is not just a lack of housing; it's a lack of housing for people across the income spectrum.

If we are not taking into account the needs of people living on social assistance, if we are not taking into account the needs of seniors living on fixed incomes, if we are not taking into account the needs of people living on minimum wage who are being squeezed by the cost-of-living crisis, then we could be building homes that normal Ontarians still can't afford.

We need to be building homes that are not-for-profit, that aren't just putting money into the pockets of developers. We need to be building more supportive housing. We need to be building more community and supportive housing. We need to be building more co-operative housing. We need to be building more affordable housing of all kinds, and I hope the government would take the opportunity to integrate that into this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I want to thank my colleague and member for Ottawa West–Nepean for her remarks and for reminding us of the reality, that the most vulnerable people in this province are living with on a daily basis, those struggling to get by on social assistance, especially ODSP.

Now, the member will know that one of the commitments that the NDP had brought forward during that recent election campaign was to create a new public agency called "Housing Ontario" that would lead investment in order to get to that 1.5-million-unit target that we need to reach.

I wonder if the member could comment on why it's so important to have a public agency involved in dealing with this housing crisis.

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Thanks to the member for London West for that important question. It is absolutely imperative when we have a crisis of this scale that we have all hands on deck, and that means the government using all the tools it has at its disposal as well.

We've already seen over the past 20 years that when the development of housing is left solely up to developers, we're just not going to see developments of the kind of low-income, affordable, not-for-profit and community housing that we need in this province. That's why it's so important that the government step in and take an active role in helping to develop that kind of housing.

That's why I think the NDP's proposal for a public agency was such a crucial part of our platform to ensure that we are actually investing in the development of that kind of housing. That could ensure that the lowest—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

Mr. John Jordan: The real impact of this bill is simple economics. If we increase supply, we'll drive down the cost of housing—all types of housing. An example is the fast-tracking of the missing middle development, allowing two- and three-bedroom units, townhouses, laneway housing. As people move into these homes, they free up other homes and supply increases across Ontario. So will the NDP support our plan and vote to build more homes faster, increasing supply and driving down costs for everybody—all homes—across Ontario?

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Thank you to the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston for the question. I've never been a supporter of the theory of trickle-down economics, but I think even the member would have to agree that we would have to build an enormous supply of McMansions in order for people living on social assistance to eventually be able to afford one of them.

1450

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

Mr. Chris Glover: Thank you for the comments this afternoon. At the bottom end of this—and this is what you've talked about—the government is not addressing actual affordability with this. They've redefined the problem. They continuously talk about how this is a supply problem, but it's not just a supply problem; it's a speculation problem, it's a lack of supportive housing for people with mental illness and disabilities, and it's a lack of affordable housing for people on minimum wage or OW or ODSP.

How would the NDP respond to this? How would the NDP actually provide homes so that everybody has a home they can afford?

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Thanks to the member for Spadina–Fort York for that great question.

It is absolutely true that this is a problem that is multi-faceted. In addition to the issues you listed, I would also add that it's an income problem, and that the failure to address social assistance rates and the level of minimum wage means that a significant number of people in Ontario can't afford housing. This is why we need a multi-faceted response. That's why I was so proud to run on the NDP's housing plan, which actually did address the need to build housing across the spectrum, to make it more affordable for people to buy homes, to make it more affordable for people to rent homes—investing in co-ops, not-for-profit and community and supportive housing, but also addressing the income supply of the problem, cracking down on speculation so that people weren't getting filthy rich—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

Mr. Stephen Crawford: Thank you to the member opposite for your speech. I would beg to differ on the fact—when you mentioned that the government has not encouraged investments in affordable housing and incentives. We've put through delayed development charges, for example, in the past and encouraged rental building, which we haven't seen in the province for decades. I believe last year had the largest increase in rental developments. We need homes. We need large homes, we need affordable homes and we need rentals. It's really across the spectrum. Having said that, I would beg to differ with you on that point.

My question to you is on the fact that there are so many delays in a lot of the processes with municipal governments. Those delays cost money in the end. Whether it's the red tape or a lack of decisions made by municipal councils—we do need to speed that up, because I've seen condo buildings that have been vacant land for seven, eight years. Imagine holding that land for seven, eight

years. When you actually build it, who are those costs going to be borne by in that situation? And do you support that reduction in red tape so we can build faster?

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Thanks to the member for Oakville for the question.

What I can say is that the outcomes of the government's efforts speak for themselves. Average rent rose 14% over the past year in Ottawa. The vacancy rate for affordable housing is zero. We've got a wait-list of people waiting for community housing that is eight years long. We have 500 families with kids living in hotel rooms for multiple years. I think those efforts speak for themselves.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

Mr. Michael Mantha: I want to thank the speaker for bringing her offerings to the floor.

I want to go to schedule 7 for her, the Ontario Land Tribunal Act. I mentioned this yesterday: I see many red flags here, especially when you're using words like "expand the tribunal's powers to dismiss a proceeding without a hearing," "to give the tribunal the power to dismiss a proceeding entirely," "to give the tribunal the power to order an unsuccessful party to pay a successful party's costs." I see that as gutting. I see that as hurting a process. I see that as empowering a tribunal that already has many of the processes that it needs in order to make those decisions.

What do you see when you see language like this?

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Thank you to the member for Algoma-Manitoulin for the question.

I absolutely see red flags. As someone who is keeping an eye on other tribunals, I would say that this is part of a pattern of concerning red flags with how the Conservative government approaches tribunals. So this is a part of the bill that definitely deserves very close scrutiny.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): We have no further time for questions.

Further debate?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: When I first heard of this bill, I was excited. We all know full well that we are in a housing crisis. I was glad to see that the government wanted to acknowledge this and take action to address it.

Ontarians want safe, healthy, affordable and comfortable places to call home. This includes all types of homes: townhouses, co-operative housing, laneway and garden suites, duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, affordable housing, multi-residential and missing middle—not just single-family detached homes with white picket fences.

We need to be building walkable, sustainable communities where people can work and play where they live. We need to be adding gentle density across our neighbourhoods, building up instead of out. I truly hope this government will address these issues as they work through this bill, and I am happy to work on positive amendments with them.

It's not about whether we grow or whether we build; it's about how we grow and how we build. Building homes is a vital part of addressing our housing crisis. We all know that. This development, however, cannot simply be a free-

for-all, but rather implemented thoughtfully and sustainably. It must be done with proper consultation for the safety of all Ontarians. Aimless construction will ultimately only cost the government and the people of Ontario more in the long run. It will not be affordable nor safe without careful, logical and forward-thinking planning.

Around the world we are seeing the effects of climate change: the horrible extreme heat in Europe, out-of-control forest fires in British Columbia, devastating flooding in Pakistan, and Hurricane Fiona heartlessly demolishing the east coast. We have already experienced the risks right here in Ontario and, sadly, it is only the beginning. We must have climate adaptation top of mind when we put shovels in the ground.

One of the largest growing risks and expenses of climate change for Ontarians is flooding. The Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation at the University of Waterloo found that in the GTA it costs an average of \$40,000 per homeowner to restore flooded basements—\$40,000, per homeowner. For most this cost is unthinkable. Unfortunately, these disasters will only become more and more common.

Madam Speaker, you may be wondering what flooding has to do with the More Homes Built Faster Act. This bill is proposing to remove the need for the expertise of the conservation authorities for building development. This legislation will repeal 36 specific regulations that allow conservation authorities to directly oversee the development process. They would also be compelled to identify and give up any land they hold that would be suitable for housing. One of the main reasons these regulations are in place is to protect Ontarians from flooding by preventing building on flood plains.

I want to reiterate a tragic story from Ontario's past that the member from Guelph spoke about this morning. Hurricane Hazel hit Ontario in 1954, destroying or seriously damaging over 1,000 homes that had been built on flood plains and killing 81 Ontarians. The province quickly expanded the duties of the conservation authorities to prevent a tragedy like this from ever happening again. I cannot sit back and let us put our beautiful province and lovely residents at risk for a disaster like this to occur again without us having learned lessons from the past and having fully prepared ourselves for future events.

I know that this government prides itself on being fiscally responsible. To that end, they should aim to be proactive in protecting Ontarians from future disasters to save money on hardships. We need to focus on emergency preparedness and climate adaptation and do everything in our power to ensure we are ready when these extreme events come, because we all know they are coming, more rapidly than we ever anticipated.

Let me share a case you may not be aware of: *Banfi v. Town of Oakville*. In 2020, a nearly \$1-billion class action claim was made by Oakville property owners, which alleged that overdevelopment in the town has led to increased flood risk, making their homes more prone to water damage, and less valuable. The claim alleged that rampant urbanization and the loss of thousands of acres of

once pristine green space upstream from this area has led to increased storm water runoff and flood risk in the downstream watersheds. That doesn't sound like affordable housing to me, and we shouldn't be allowing it to happen again. Building on flood plains affects the value of homes and costs homeowners their money and sometimes their safety.

This bill will gut wetland protection in southern Ontario, making each individual wetland have to qualify as significant on its own. That's almost impossible for most wetlands. Wetlands protect us from flooding, drought and climate change. They protect wildlife and clean the water we enjoy.

Biodiversity loss is also at an all-time high. Southern Ontario alone has lost more than 70% of its wetland habitats, 98% of its grasslands and 80% of its forests. Over 200 plant and animal species are now classified as at risk of becoming extinct in Ontario. We need to tirelessly work hard to preserve what we do have left, not pave paradise.

1500

On Tuesday, the Insurance Bureau of Canada called on governments and the housing industry to be transparent about climate risk, lest "catastrophic loss to homes and communities will continue to increase in severity and cost, year after year." Let's make the suitable amendments to this act and protect the important work of the conservation authorities so we can save Ontarians money, hardship, relocation and, in severe cases, their lives.

Each of us in this House has residents in our ridings who are looking for homes to buy, lease or rent. The people living in my riding of beautiful Beaches—East York consistently share their stress around the housing crisis and also their basement flooding with me. During my time as Toronto city councillor, I championed housing in our riding, approving many affordable housing applications, working with developers on well-designed mid-rise buildings, and spearheading the game-changing laneway suites housing policy—mentioned many times by this government today—with the goal to have garden suites as the second phase. I pride myself in getting things done and having the track record to prove it.

TransformTO, the city's first-ever climate adaptation and mitigation plan, was an immense amount of work, but I'm proud of obtaining a unanimous vote at Toronto city council for this vital and ambitious strategy to reduce community-wide greenhouse gas emissions in Toronto to net zero by 2040. This ambitious goal relies heavily on the requirements of the Toronto Green Standard being met by new private and city-owned developments. Unfortunately, these requirements will be deemed obsolete if the More Homes Built Faster Act is made law as it currently is written.

Section 41(4), 2(d), was a clause under the Planning Act regarding plans and drawings that could be reviewed to ensure they are aligned with the Toronto Green Standard, and this act will repeal it. The legislation would remove site plan control and abolish all green standards for building in Ontario. Think about that for a moment. The world is in a climate emergency, horrible disasters are

devastating communities around the world, and the need to properly prepare and protect ourselves well in advance has never been more clear. So why on earth would we wish to remove our green standards, especially when they allow residents to live more comfortably in their homes and to save money in the long run while living sustainably?

Madam Speaker, I'll be calling on the government to approve an amendment that would allow municipalities with established green standards to continue their current practices and approvals and to replicate those standards right across Ontario to ensure everyone is safe and protected. We cannot let a decade's worth of work be squashed. Cutting these standards will not lead to more affordable housing. Quite the opposite, Madam Speaker: The cost of inaction is high. Building environmentally efficient homes ends up being a win-win for all involved.

I am also curious about the development charges. The loss of this revenue for municipalities all across Ontario will be catastrophic. Has the government completed or planned to do a financial impact study on the municipalities for this bill?

Madam Speaker, I am happy to work with the government to get more homes built and ensure this act would lead to more homes being built. But again, it's not about whether we build or whether we grow; it's about how we build and how we grow—and affordably done and sustainably done in the right places. In the meantime, I am looking forward to working with communities, organizations, stakeholders and residents on this issue to ensure their voices are heard and valued. As well, I'll be preparing amendments to ensure our green spaces are protected and we are building with climate adaptation at top of mind.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Questions?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I want to thank the member for her comments and her speech. She has a lot of municipal experience, and she did talk about garden suites. Oftentimes, depending on your municipality, there are different names for garden suites, and oftentimes people talk about the fact or they raise the element of tiny homes. But as a result, there are a lot of people who want to be the yes-bys, and then you have the NIMBYs. The yes-bys want to build these garden suites, or these tiny homes, on their property, but then they're surrounded by these NIMBYs who do not want them to build this. This is going to obviously increase our affordable living supply.

I just wanted to ask, given her experience at the city of Toronto level, how she was able to get the yes-bys to agree to the garden suites, as opposed to the NIMBYs who disagree with them.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you for that question. Yes, my first planning application when I became city councillor in 2010 was a proposal for a six-storey condominium on Queen Street, where a famous burger joint you may know—you may have eaten at Lick's hamburger joint, a landmark place. It was proposed there. There were many people opposed to that building which I strongly stood up for. We need gentle density, we need homes for people and we need our residents, especially seniors who were over-housed in their big beach homes,

to be able to change their living accommodation and age in place in the community they volunteered in and raised their kids in. So I have much experience with NIMBYS and YIMBYS.

But with laneway suites in particular, we brought everyone into the—we did very creative, outward-thinking community engagement all across the city. We did walks and talks and town halls and all kinds of things—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Sorry. Excuse me.

Pursuant to standing order 50(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there have been six and a half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader directs the debate to continue.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Please continue.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): We will continue with the member for Spadina–Fort York.

Mr. Chris Glover: I want to thank the member from Beaches–East York for her comments today.

One of the most shocking things that I found online recently was the population growth in different ridings in Toronto between 2016 and 2021. All of the growth is concentrated in Etobicoke–Lakeshore, in my riding of Spadina–Fort York and downtown along the Yonge corridor all the way up to the north end. But what really surprised me is that most ridings in Toronto had declining population between 2016 and 2021. This bill is proposing some measures towards inclusionary zoning, which is something that the NDP has been asking for for some time, but how do we address declining population in the ridings inside Toronto?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Well, that's a fair and valid point. With building housing in general, we need to look at different options for different people. The definition of “family” comes with many explanations, and so, for example, in the Beach, we do have a lot of seniors who are living in large homes and their families have moved out and moved on, so they're in homes with four or five empty bedrooms. There's a program called HomeShare and different home sharing styles in Toronto.

But we also need to deal with vacant properties, which is an issue. I don't know; it doesn't seem this government is proactively working on that. We have many empty homes in Toronto that we need to—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

M^{me} Lucille Collard: I want to thank my colleague for her very thoughtful comments on this huge bill. Evidently, she took the time to go through it and come up even already with some ideas for some amendments. She cleverly said that it's a question of building up instead of building out; it's not whether we build but how we do it.

She talked extensively about conservation authorities and green standards. She already thought about some amendments, and I know she doesn't have the details of it, but I'd like to give her the opportunity to maybe talk a little bit more about the kind of amendments she would like to

see the committee consider, when it goes to the committee, hopefully.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): There's time for a 30-second response.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: We know that for every dollar invested in climate adaptation it's \$3 to \$8 in cost avoidance for the damage that does not occur. I know, as I mentioned, this government is fiscally responsible—prides itself on that—so we want to be proactive in investing in climate adaptation and emergency preparedness in the first place. We do not want to roll back all the progress we've made on the green standards and on trying to achieve net zero by 2040 in Toronto. Also, there are other great—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): We now have time for further debate. Further debate?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I'm thrilled as the representative for Barrie–Innisfil—I want to thank my constituents for their confidence in me to re-elect me again and allow me to stand today, humbly, to represent them all as I speak on their behalf in support of the More Homes Built Faster Act, Bill 23.

1510

Something I heard about resoundingly during the election, and even before the election, from many constituents around Barrie and Innisfil is that we're a growing population, and they were really impressed with the vision of this government. This came up time and time again in the last election—and the vision of just always focusing on affordability, as a government, but also on the very important topic of home ownership.

What we're debating today really builds on our bold vision for the province, and that's what is required in leadership—and a government that is stable and has someone like Premier Ford at the helm, with the bold vision he has, and that is, when we talk about affordable housing and we talk about building more supply and we talk about the next generation and filling all different demographics that need housing, there have to be policies and actions that match it. We've done that since day one. We committed to the people of Ontario that every single year our government is going to introduce an affordable building bill. Why? Because times are going to change and the information and the demographics are changing. Most recently, we got new census data, which means our policies have to be updated with the real-time data that we have in front of us, and if they're not then most likely we're not addressing everyone who needs the support and the help.

In 2019, we introduced More Homes, More Choice, and we embarked on a bold vision to bring more housing online to this province. We worked with all levels of government, worked with our municipal partners, and as a result, we've already seen the fruits of our labour. Because of that single bill for housing that we started when we hit the ground running in 2019, the province saw supply increase—over 100,000 housing starts in 2021 alone, the highest since 1987, a very formidable year for myself. I think that 1987 was a good year; I wouldn't be here

without that year, the year I was born. To put it into perspective, in 1987 a dozen eggs cost a dollar, and eggs today cost \$3.59. That's an increase of almost 359%. In 1987, milk cost 75 cents per litre. Milk today is \$3.29, which is an increase of 339%. So when we talk about the need to build more homes and the fact that now, because of this government's first bill on housing, we've seen the most amount of housing starts since 1987—we're doing something about it. And that is before inflation took its record high and has hit all of our communities and people we represent and we hear from a lot in terms of what the cost of living is doing to all of our communities. Thankfully, this government had a vision back in 2019, and we got ahead of it in the sense of, "Let's hit the ground running to tackle the issue of affordability and building homes," which we did—and that's just home ownership, a dream that many people have, that many immigrants who come to this country have.

We had the Minister of Finance talk about his proud Hungarian roots. All his family lived under one roof, and they had the proud dream of home ownership, which is no different from any family's—including myself. We came as refugees from the former Soviet Union, and we were renters. When you come to Canada, depending on your immigration status, you don't have much besides your name. You have no equity. You don't have a line of credit. You've got nothing. So you're really just trying to save up for the next thing you're trying to do, whether it's funding education for your kids or for putting a roof over your head or for the proud achievement of home ownership. I was lucky. Our family all lived together, and we went from being renters on Penetang Street in Barrie to becoming homeowners on Wallwins Way in Barrie. That was a new subdivision. We joined many first-time homeowners who proudly walked into a new-build home and were able to unlock the door to the dream of home ownership.

On the other side, in terms of home ownership and building homes, is rentals. When we came to Barrie, Ontario, with my family and my grandparents in the early 1990s, rent was a little more affordable. But now, in terms of the community I represent, the city of Barrie and Innisfil—in Barrie, we're the sixth-largest rental housing market in all of Canada. This is the reason that we need more rental supply, and this is why we need more housing supply.

Again, going back to this government's vision that we had from the very beginning, in 2018, with More Homes, More Choice: We saw the fruits of our labour, with more than 13,000 rental starts. They came to be in 2021, the highest since 1991—again, a formidable year because my family came in the early 1990s. This was all made possible because of the vision this government had very early on.

Now, today, we're building on that vision. We understand that we need to build more homes and we need to keep up with the population and the new census data. In fact, just this last week, we had census data come out that said that in 2021, our landed immigrants alone was a 23% increase. By 2041, that's going to be a 30% increase.

To put it into perspective, in 2021, when I said there was a 23% increase in landed immigrants—that's the

largest since Confederation. So what did we do back in the Confederation and post-World War periods? Well, we built a lot of homes. Many people said that here. And that post-Industrial Revolution resulted in a lot of different zoning policies. In fact, prior to the Industrial Revolution, we had very few zoning policies because we didn't have the Industrial Revolution. As a result of that, we now have things like residential zoning and industrial zoning, because we learned from London, England and the United Kingdom that no one wants to live beside factories. There were a lot of issues with smokestacks etc. As a result, we had the development of zoning policy.

And here we are today. We could be in a very different spot today. For example, if we look at the history of zoning in Germany in the 19th and 20th centuries, they were more progressive, I would say, with their zoning policies. For example, instead of having a different array of different zoning areas, they really just had residential, mixed use and industrial, and one special sub-class, and that was it. And they allowed for, if you wanted mixed use, if you had a home and you wanted to put a business in it, no problem. As long as you followed the building codes, you could build it. But we have strayed far away from that. They had things like small-scale residential and exclusivity residential housing, which allowed you to build duplexes and allowed you to have small shops and small industry amongst houses. It allowed you to have hotels in civic buildings. And in exclusivity residential zoning in Germany, you were able to have density of all kinds.

What did that result in? It's something that I hear the opposition talk about very often. It resulted in very inclusive communities, walkable communities where you could go to the corner store, where you could have everything. It was a very simplistic type of zoning.

But then we over-complicated it, over years and years, time and time again, and the result of over-complicating zoning and land-use planning and planning policies—it not only resulted in time; it resulted in costs. To put it into perspective in terms of costs, something that I hear about quite often from builders is, if you look at just a simple home that might be \$428,000 or whatnot, you're adding an extreme amount of cost to that home because of the needed permits, the needed zoning, and all the hoops you have to jump through.

That's why we're here today, and that's what I wanted to start getting into. We need to build more homes. We need to make the process much easier for everyone involved. We have to address the missing middle. And, most excitingly, we need to build by transit stations so people can have amenities around them and they can have walkability or be near transit.

In the community I represent, for example, Innisfil, over 80% of our residents commute to get to work—80%. So when we're talking about building near transit, it's going to help a lot of people who can't get that job locally. Of course, that's another part of the solution that our government is working on when it comes to employment lands. Again, that's the vision of this government.

But when it comes to building more near transit, the whole point there is not only to bring affordability to

people and have that high density, but to allow people like the folks who live in Innisfil—instead of spending money on a vehicle, they're already living above transit. That reduces their cost of living, especially when gas prices are going up. Of course, our government was elected on reducing gas prices, which helped a lot of people, but some people don't have the luxury of buying a vehicle. So when you're building transit-oriented communities, that not only helps them because now they're able to find an affordable home, but you've got to reduce the red tape burden. If someone is living near a transit-oriented community, why do they need a lot of parking spots below that building? You're only adding to the cost of that unit, which is going to actually trickle down to the individual who needs the affordable housing.

This bill does call on building more around transit. And it's not just our government that's saying that it's going to be beneficial. If you have a look at the research—I was reading a paper by Ontario 360. It's a policy think tank from the Munk school. It was a paper where they were talking about research by David Gordon at Queen's University, who showed that two thirds of Canadians live in car-oriented suburbs, where the automobile is the primary mode of transportation.

1520

The reason I mention this, Speaker, is because we have to build for all Canadians. We have to build communities where they're going to need car transportation and those who need transit communities. That's going to create a nice diversity in your community because you have the ability for people to use transit, which reduces the gridlock on our highways, and then those who need the highway to get to work, it allows for a smoother ride because now you're diversifying in terms of where the population is going. And what does that add, Speaker? It adds to a better quality of life for people, increases the time they can spend with their family—something that no one can buy, Speaker, and that is time.

Certainly we respect all Ontarians, and our government will do everything we can to give them that great thing that is time, to lessen their commute, whether it's our transformational transportation policies—and again, what we're doing here today, which is building more homes and building them near transit routes so that people can get to their homes, get to work, and they're surrounded by a community hub where they can get their local products very easily.

In Innisfil—I'm very excited—we have a transit-oriented development project called the Orbit, which is going to be doing just that. Of course, our newly elected mayor, Mayor Dollin—congratulations on your re-election. This is something that she is very excited about and has talked about quite a lot in many different media outlets, but she talks about how this project is not only just going to involve a lot of walkability, a centre where you can have child care, amenities, commercial spaces for people to start up their businesses, but again it has an added benefit of protecting farmland throughout Innisfil

because we're able to put our density into one part of the town of Innisfil. So it's a win-win solution there.

I wanted to acknowledge again the vision of Innisfil and of course the new council that's going to be executing this vision, but I wanted to quote the mayor of Innisfil on this particular transit-oriented development project. She said, "The idea behind the Orbit is to have a cutting-edge, future-ready city within our rural and small town atmosphere so we'll be bringing benefits of" rural "living within our current community." Innisfil Mayor Dollin said this on CTV's Your Morning Show when she was interviewed on the project.

Again, this is a bold vision, but it wouldn't be possible without this government's leadership of these bold visions of creating different types of housing, the right mix, fixing the middle-middle and the vision of having transit-oriented communities. That's one part of this bill. We talk about supply, but it's not just supply, Speaker. It's where you're putting the supply, and I want to emphasize that: why the transit-oriented communities are important.

Going back to the need for growth, we talk about the bold vision of this government in this bill, which is to build 1.5 million homes. Why is that, though? It's population growth, Speaker. Nearly 80% of the population growth for 2031 is going to be concentrated in 29 large municipalities, and that's going to require all of them to grow. In the city of Barrie alone, the city I represent, their 2031 housing target would be approximately 23,000, and that is to meet the needs to have more attainable housing.

Of course, when we talk about supporting the needed tools that are in this legislation to expedite more growth and to grow to 1.5 million homes, I would say that this isn't to replace our municipal plans, but it's to make sure that we have the right action to work together and to accelerate our plans head-on, to work with municipalities to solve the overall housing issue. In addition to building the homes, having it in the right location by transit, we have to think about fees and taxes. I was mentioning earlier how fees, taxes and processes end up costing more to the price of a home.

Now, I was chatting with Sandy Tuckey, who is the executive director of the Simcoe County Home Builders' Association. She summarized it quite well, and I wanted to mention some of her comments. On October 25, 2022—not that long ago—the Simcoe County Home Builders' Association and the Ontario Home Builders' Association supported the introduction of this bill. Why? Because, on average, Speaker, 25% of the cost of new homes is composed of government fees, taxes and charges. And who ends up paying these taxes, fees and charges? It's the person who wants that dream of home ownership. This can add as much as \$250,000 to the price of a typical single-family home. Again, if you're in the market to buy a home and you're thinking you're going to get one price for your home, and then all of a sudden all these fees are put on top of it, it makes it unattainable. It's like going to the grocery store: You're going to the checkout and you know you're going to get PST or HST, depending on the products you're buying or the services you're obtaining. But can

you imagine if you received your bill—“Congratulations, you’ve been approved for a mortgage,” thankfully—and now there are all these hidden costs you have to pay? All these fees, all these extra surcharges, all these extra taxes.

If people saw the amount of extra fees, taxes and processes that are attached to their home, they would likely walk away from it. This is exactly what Sandy Tuckey was talking about when she talked about the importance of bringing this bill forward.

Paul Markle, the executive director of the Barrie chamber, is also very supportive of this bill, because it also addresses the folks who live in Barrie. He said, “With the soaring prices of rent and housing in Barrie, living and working in Barrie has become unattainable for many. This has a ripple effect on local businesses as they are unable to attract talent when potential employees cannot afford to pay rent where they are working. I have heard a lot about the struggles that local organizations and individuals have had with building in Barrie, and I’m sure in many places in the province. I am fully supportive of the More Homes Built Faster Act and I’m looking forward to seeing more houses built in this community.”

It’s not just Paul Markle who recognizes the impact this bill is going to have on local businesses being able to attract that talent. It’s also James Cheetham, the VP of operations for Linear Transfer Automation, as we’re trying to, of course, again, embrace the manufacturing might that is Ontario, and we have much of that in Barrie. He recognizes this, and I want to quote what he was saying to me: “One of our struggles is hiring young talent as our current housing market is difficult, if not impossible, for young people starting their careers. If we could increase the available housing in our area, this would help alleviate the high housing costs we are currently facing.”

So employers in our region recognize that the solution is things like this bill and previous housing bills that we have introduced in the past.

Even Ashley Polischuk, who I recently met with at a round table at the Barrie and District Association of Realtors—and this lady, I tell you, sits on every single board imaginable to bring more housing supply to Barrie. She is the chair of the Barrie not-for-profit housing group, a member of the Barrie and District Association of Realtors, a secretary for Habitat for Humanity, and a former member of the Barrie Affordable Housing Task Force. This lady is involved in everything, and I want to thank her for her constant feedback.

What she says about this bill is that “changes related to the housing supply crisis coming from Queen’s Park are positive and welcomed. Allowing laneway and garden suites, secondary and basement apartments on single-family lots, with a reduced parking requirement per unit, will assist in increasing the housing supply in the most economically efficient way possible. Homeowners can now add to the supply of housing, while increasing their own earnings through rental incomes to fight ever-increasing mortgage rates.

“The reduction in development charges for purpose-built rental projects, with a further reduction for family-

sized, three-bedroom suites, will bring more builders to the table as developments will become more financially feasible, reducing soft costs in markets where the cost to build is continuously increasing.

“These changes, combined with the limit on third-party appeals at the tribunal, reductions in public meeting requirements at a municipal level and reducing the involvement on the conservation authorities in the planning process should help cut through the red tape barriers many builders, developers and municipalities are facing when aiming to get shovels in the ground and projects over the finish line.”

Speaker, this lady sits on every potential board imaginable to help with attainable housing in Barrie, and that is a quote from her. She sees the writing on the wall and sees this bold vision that our government is achieving. Whether you’re a new Canadian, whether you’re a student graduating from post-secondary education, whether you’re a senior looking to downsize, we want them to afford the next level of housing. We want them to be able to not only enter the rental market, but be a homeowner. That requires streamlining processes to reduce fees and taxes on people, coming up with interesting financial models like rent-to-own, and coming up with innovative housing like land leases. We’re doing it all in this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): It is now time for questions.

1530

Mr. Wayne Gates: I’m going to tell you a quick story about a place called Houston. Has anybody ever heard of it? The Houston Astros? Houston? Well, they did the same thing that your government is thinking of doing: building on our wetlands. And do you know what happened in Houston? They destroyed all the wetlands and they built on the wetlands, and then they had the worst flood in their history because the water had nowhere to go. Where did the water go? Help me out, Conservatives. You guys are pretty smart. Where do you think it went? It went up, and they had floods.

So my question is, why are you trying to weaken the conservation authorities and build on our wetlands with the number of floods we’ve had in Windsor, Fort Erie, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ottawa? What are we doing?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I’ll tell you what’s in this bill. This bill is fixing the fact that we have a deplorable record in all of the G7. The average price for a home in Ontario is now approximately \$1 million. And in Toronto—it’s the city with the largest amount of, again, housing increases. In fact, a recent Scotiabank economist survey came out with the fact that the fewest homes built per capita in all the G7 are those in Canada—and within that, the provinces that are at the worst of the pile are Ontario and Alberta. So when we talk about getting more homes online—this is what’s in the bill to help that happen.

We’re not ignoring things like natural heritage. In fact, we’re considering programs to offset development pressures on wetlands, that would require a net-positive impact on wetlands to help preserve them for decades to come.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Questions?

Mr. Deepak Anand: Madam Speaker, it's no secret that in Ontario we have a housing crisis. I'm pleased to see that this government continues to take the housing supply crisis seriously. That is why the government's third housing supply action plan builds upon the success of the first two: More Homes, More Choice and the More Homes for Everyone Act.

My residents often say, "Oh, you're already living in a house," and I do remind them, "Yes, I do have a house for me, but I have two children. They're growing up, and they will leave the house." Along with that, I remember when I came to Canada for the first time, as a first-time buyer. And there are about 401,000 people who came to this country last year.

What I want to talk about right now to the member from Barrie–Innisfil, who is doing an incredible job, is that we know that adding more supply is the key to bringing costs down. This will help first-time buyers as well as seniors looking to downsize. So my question is—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Response?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I want to thank the member for the question.

I think it's really important to talk about the things that are in this bill—and we're really recognizing all the different mixes of housing we're going to need.

Something I didn't get to talk about, in our bill, is the fact—to embrace innovation; not only land leases, which I have in my community, but modular construction. Through the Social Services Relief Fund, we were able to actually announce more affordable units on Tiffin Street in Barrie, which is a modular build. There's so much red tape in modular building, which makes it prohibitive to have availability of more attainable housing. So this is something that we have in our bill to, again, address some of the red tape when it comes to modular builds.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I'm glad that the member from Barrie–Innisfil brought up the massive housing development, Orbit, in her community. Essentially, schedule 10 of this bill will force the taxpayers of Durham and York to pay for the construction of a Lake Ontario sewage solutions project: the former Upper York Sewage Solutions. I'm really curious to know how the region of Durham and the region of Ajax feel about having to pay for this infrastructure, on the backs of municipal taxpayers. I can't imagine a scenario in which a province forces a municipality to build and pay for infrastructure that they may not necessarily need or want. So if this is truly a provincial bill that you're proud of, then why doesn't the province take responsibility and pay for it instead of dumping the cost on local taxpayers of the regions of Durham and Ajax?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: It's interesting to hear the opposition talk about affordable housing, something that's led by municipalities.

The town of Innisfil is leading this project. In fact, they're having a consultation on the Orbit project tonight,

as well. This builds on the consultations they've been having with the entire community, including the Indigenous community.

Speaker, when it comes to supporting more rentals and protecting renters, we put in Bill 184. What did the opposition do? They said no to the bill. We asked for more housing supply and we introduced more housing bills. What did this opposition do? They said no. We're trying to build more transit-oriented development to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. What did this opposition do? They said no.

Speaker, this government will get affordable housing built today.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Questions?

Mr. Rick Byers: I thank the speaker for her always-great comments, and again today. When we talk about the housing shortage, it's usually a focus in the major cities, and of course this excellent bill has a number of targets for the major urban areas. But in the fantastic riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound and in rural Ontario, there is also a need for additional housing, and Barrie–Innisfil maybe fits somewhere in between. I'm curious to ask the member what this bill does to encourage housing development in the rural parts of Ontario, as outlined in question 7.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Thank you to the member for that question. I think this is what's so important when we talk about this bill: It addresses all aspects of our province. Every makeup of our province is very different. We have, of course, rural Ontario, part of which I represent and the member represents, and we have high-density areas.

That's why when we talk about the missing middle, for some people it might make more sense for them to build garden suites, because they have housing. It might make more sense for them to have secondary units. In fact, in Barrie, Ontario, alone, when we introduced the secondary suites policy in one of our previous housing supply bills, it actually led to more rental units brought online.

A colleague of mine who I know, Andrew Valler, who is going to be starting in the skilled trades come January to study electric engineering, was looking to move out of living with his parents, and now, as a result of the secondary suites policy, he is going to be able to live in his own apartment.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Questions?

Mr. Michael Mantha: I'd like to ask the member from Barrie–Innisfil: Do you not see a strong public role in the delivery of new affordable houses in this legislation, or to address the need for affordable homes, something that would include new public investment in a new public home builder? Because the builders that we have now are not interested in building where there are no profits to be made. So do you not see an opportunity for the public sector to come in and say, "We need to build affordable homes, we need to build geared-to-income homes, we need to build homes for those who cannot afford homes"?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I think that's a great question. I have a community where we have a lot of good examples of building a lot of affordable and supportive homes, during COVID and even before that. If you look at the

investments our government has put into, for example, the social relief fund, I think it was over a billion dollars that we put into this fund to build supportive housing.

I was able to announce supportive housing like Lucy's Place in Barrie, where we converted a motel to be able to bring people off the streets, to be able to have a roof over their head, have the dignity of their first home and be able to transition them into their next housing. And then, we were able to use the innovation of modular homebuilding to actually add to the second part of that phase of that project, to add more increased affordable housing.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): A quick question.

Mr. Graham McGregor: I guess I'd preposition this with how my riding of Brampton North used to be a place people would move to find more affordable homes than

they could find in Toronto, and in recent history Innisfil was actually a place where people from Brampton moved to find more affordable homes. But now, even homes in Innisfil are unaffordable and out of reach for many Ontarians. So I guess I would ask the member: What steps do you think we need to take, and what parts of this bill do you think will help make homeownership more attainable for those in Innisfil and those in Brampton?

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): We have time for a 20-second response.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I think by reducing fees and all the extra taxes that are as a result of—even when you talk about one detached home, the fact is that we're reducing those fees and we're saving the homeowner from that sticker shock of owning their first home.

Report continues in volume B.

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Hsu, Ted (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
Jones, Trevor (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	
Jordan, John (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	
Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	
Leardi, Anthony (PC)	Essex	
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean	
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
McCarthy, Todd J. (PC)	Durham	
McGregor, Graham (PC)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Associate Minister of Housing / Ministre associé du Logement
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
Pierre, Natalie (PC)	Burlington	
Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)	Timmins	Minister of Mines / Ministre des Mines
Quinn, Nolan (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Hon. / L'hon. Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Northern Development / Ministre du Développement du Nord
Riddell, Brian (PC)	Cambridge	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Saunderson, Brian (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shamji, Adil (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-présidente et présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, David (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Smith, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Tangri, Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	
Vaugeois, Lise (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity / Ministre associée des Perspectives sociales et économiques pour les femmes
Wong-Tam, Kristyn (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Vacant	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	