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Assembly
of Ontario



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Lundi
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Monday 14 November 2022

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 14 novembre 2022

The House met at 1015.

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

Prayers.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I want to acknowledge that we are meeting on lands traditionally inhabited by Indigenous peoples. We pay our respects to the many Indigenous nations who gathered here, and continue to gather here, including the Mississaugas of the Credit. Meegwetch.

This being the first sitting Monday of the month, I will ask now that everyone join in the singing of the Canadian national anthem, followed by the royal anthem.

Singing of the national anthem / Chant de l'hymne national.

Singing of the royal anthem / Chant de l'hymne royal.

1020

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I had the privilege of attending two services of remembrance in my riding of Niagara West last week, including ceremonies in Fonthill and Jordan.

I want to thank the local Legions in my riding, including Branches 127 in Grimsby, 612 in Beamsville and Jordan, 613 in Fonthill and 393 in Smithville, as well as the township of Wainfleet, for hosting meaningful tributes.

A little over 100 years ago, following the First World War, as Canadians gathered at war memorials—like the cenotaphs in Niagara West last Friday—many considered it unimaginable that the bloodshed of that great conflict would ever be repeated. It was called the war to end all wars. And yet, a short generation later, the world was once again plunged into a struggle against the hateful ideology of fascism in defence of the democratic values and human rights that we hold dear. Throughout the 20th century, time and time again, the call to arms was issued, and young men and women in uniform across Canada and Ontario, including members of First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities, died for freedom.

Perhaps many of us today consider it inconceivable that we would ever again enter into such terrifying conflicts. Yet, even today, our northern neighbour, the Russian Federation, is an aggressor state pursuing its illegal invasion of Ukraine against the pleading of civilians and the cries of humanity. Once again, war has returned to European soil, and we are again reminded of the need to ever stand on guard.

As a descendant of those who emigrated to this country because of the sacrifice and heroism of Canadian soldiers, including those who liberated the Netherlands, my family and I are personally grateful to those who fought and continue to fight for freedom and democracy.

Last Friday, as we should everyday, we remembered those who fought and died in battle. They are passing the torch to us so that the memory of their sacrifice will continue and the values they fought for will live on in all of us. May God rest their souls.

LABOUR LEGISLATION

Mr. Wayne Gates: I rise today to speak about something inspiring: Ontario's labour movement. Last week, we were all reminded who makes this province function, and that's workers. For a long time, this Conservative government dismissed that, but with the actions of CUPE education workers, along with the support from the entire Ontario labour movement, the government was made to pay attention. Bill 28 should never have been drafted, let alone introduced. It's a bill intended to break unions and attack workers.

At my office in Niagara Falls, we had nearly 1,000 people telling the government they were wrong. When they decided to use the "notwithstanding" clause to strip workers of their collective bargaining rights, they woke up a giant. They united the labour movement against them from coast to coast to coast.

I hope this government follows through on their promise to repeal Bill 28 immediately.

But we can't walk away from this experience without holding people accountable. The Minister of Labour sits in this chamber and tells us that he supports workers. He tells the labour movement that he's their friend. But when Bill 28 was introduced and voted on, he was the first member to stand and applaud its passing. He was happy to strip workers of their bargaining rights. He was happy to continue to attack workers, who are predominantly women, and also supported Bill 124. As Minister of Labour, his role is to support workers in this province, but instead he clapped for legislation that ripped basic rights away from them. For that alone, it's time for the minister to resign. He never supported the labour movement, and last week he proved it.

CAMBRIDGE CELEBRATES
WINTERFEST

Mr. Brian Riddell: Today, I want to share with you the story of an award-winning, month-long festival taking

place in my riding. Winterfest, formerly known as Christmas in Cambridge, kicks off on November 25 with Phil Kline's Unsilent Night. This event attracts thousands of residents, young and old, who enjoy a musical walking tour through historic downtown Cambridge. It is illuminated with various lights and art installations along the route. It is truly a memorable way to start your holiday season. The weeks leading up to Christmas will feature a visit from the CP Holiday Train; Winter Ice and Lights in Preston's Central Park; Music and Lights in the Village; the Cambridge Christmas Market at the David Durward Centre and the Cambridge Centre for the Arts.

I encourage everyone to go. This is one of the top 10 festivals named by Festivals and Events Ontario for the past three years. If you haven't been, I encourage you to go.

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Mr. Chris Glover: Another fall migration is just winding up. Over the past couple of months, millions of birds have been migrating across the Great Lakes to winter in Ontario. But windows that reflect the sky and the clouds can appear invisible to a moving bird, so they continue to fly at high speeds until they smack into the glass and fall to the ground. Some are rescued by compassionate people working with organizations like BirdSafe and FLAP Canada, but many do not survive the trauma.

The bird photographer Priya Ramsingh writes that if you walk around one of the city's large towers during the migratory season, "you'll find the bodies of dead birds, their feet curled up in the air." These are brilliantly coloured birds, including electric blue indigo buntings, "warblers with yellow, greens and blue wing markings, and scarlet tanagers with their regal, red feather plumage."

Some 25 million birds die from window collisions each year in Canada. This week, I am reintroducing a motion to adopt the Canadian Standards Association 2019 bird-friendly design standard into the Ontario building code for all new construction and retrofits in the province.

At a rally on the lawn of Queen's Park tomorrow at 11:30 a.m., we will be showing Ontario residents simple measures that they can take to make their windows bird-safe and to reduce the risk of collisions. I invite all members of the House and residents who want to make our built environment bird-safe to attend the rally. Come help us protect Ontario's biodiversity for years to come.

SE HEALTH

Mr. Matthew Rae: It is my pleasure to rise in this place to recognize the good work SE Health does in my riding and across Ontario. SE Health is a not-for-profit health care provider in Ontario. SE Health currently provides nearly 50% of all home care services in Ontario.

A couple of weeks ago, I had the pleasure of meeting with them and representatives locally and touring their location in Palmerston. I had the opportunity to meet Kelly, a community nurse in the town of Minto who works

for SE Health. She does important work to support our seniors and those recovering at home from major operations. She is also a community care nurse at Minto-Clifford Public School. I had the opportunity to join her at Minto-Clifford to meet some of her brave patients. No matter the need, Kelly ensures her students are living a healthy and rewarding life. We had a great discussion about how best we can work together to better serve those living in our communities.

I want to thank Kelly for everything she does for our rural communities and the children she helps every day. Our government is committed to helping our elderly remain in their homes longer and ensuring Ontarians receive the right care in the right place. I appreciate everything SE Health does and that all their employees do in my community and across Ontario.

NURSE PRACTITIONERS

M^{me} France Gélina: I rise today to speak about the important work that nurse practitioners do, serving patients in every corner of our province, and why we need this government to fund more nurse practitioner positions. At a time when many family physicians are retiring, patients across Ontario lose access to primary care, leaving them dependent on walk-in clinics and emergency departments. Meanwhile, Aboriginal health access centres, community health centres and nurse practitioner-led clinics all have nurse practitioners who want to be hired and who are available, but they have no money to hire them. These nurse practitioners can assess, they can treat, and they can advise patients with complex medical conditions who otherwise end up in our crowded emergency rooms.

Unfortunately, this government refuses to modernize their antiquated funding model so nurse practitioners can be hired to provide their excellent services to more patients.

1030

For example, an executive director in a nurse practitioner-led clinic has to be a nurse practitioner, but she still has to carry an 800-patient-load roster and her administrative duty in this clinic.

In fact, this funding model is so rigid that the government claims that they are still working on the paperwork to provide nurses working in these clinics with the retention bonus that was promised nine months ago.

If this government wants to improve access to health care services to thousands of people across Ontario, invest in nurse practitioner positions. It will pay off.

POLICE SERVICES

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Mr. Speaker, last Tuesday I was pleased to join the honourable Solicitor General at Peel Regional Police headquarters in Mississauga. Alongside Chief Nishan Duraiappah—who I commend for being recently appointed to the Order of Ontario—we kicked off Crime Prevention Week, an opportunity for all Ontarians

to recognize the important men and women in uniform who sacrifice so much to protect our communities.

Organizations present included the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, Safe City Mississauga, Empowering Against Exploitation, Vision Zero and Peel Crime Stoppers.

Additionally, on November 4, myself and many of our colleagues welcomed Deputy Chief Nick Milinovich and Sergeant Earl Scott here in Queen's Park to recognize them for a \$25-million drug seizure, one of the largest in Peel police history.

Mr. Speaker, one of the foremost priorities for people and businesses in Ontario is to feel safe and comfortable in their city. I want to recognize the important role that law enforcement officials play in keeping our province safe and protecting our most vulnerable. Crucial to this process is a strong relationship between law enforcement and local communities, working hand in hand to ensure a safe and prosperous society.

While Mississauga is one of the safest cities in Canada, we are nevertheless seeing a rise in car theft and pharmacy holdups. We will continue to work with Peel police to support them and allow them the resources to prevent crime. This partnership between police, community, and government is a relationship we cannot afford to forsake.

DR. BARRY ADAMS

Mr. John Fraser: I would like to say a few words in tribute to Dr. Barry Adams, a pediatrician from Ottawa who was my pediatrician and my children's pediatrician and, in fact, the pediatrician for thousands and thousands of families over his long career.

Barry was an incredible, gentle, warm, kind person. He was always available. He was a big proponent of our Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario. I wanted to spend all this time talking about his accolades, but his accolades are actually the thousands and thousands and thousands of families whose lives he touched and improved by his work.

I was thinking about what Barry would have had to say today, if he were alive, about what's happening at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario and with our children in this province.

Barry could be very kind and very gentle, but he could also be very stern. And what he would be asking us is, "Why is there this indifference to what's happening to our children? Why are we not masking? Why are we not making sure we're all vaccinated and our kids are vaccinated?"

You know, Barry was a physician who was old enough to know when measles outbreaks occurred, and he was always astonished at the efficacy of the vaccine, and how it was almost non-existent.

So, Speaker, I think we should learn from Dr. Barry Adams's example that our children are important and that right now there are some things that we need to do to protect our children. We should be doing them: masking,

vaccination, washing our hands and staying home when we're sick.

ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION

Mr. Brian Saunderson: It's a pleasure to rise in the House this morning.

Last week we spent time in our collective ridings honouring and remembering our veterans as we proudly wore our poppies and attended Remembrance Day services. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to pay tribute today in my comments about the Royal Canadian Legions that pepper our ridings and our communities across the province. In my riding of Simcoe-Grey, there are 12 Legions, and each branch has a proud history of supporting veterans and serving the communities. They act as community hubs. They host important civic events, from Veterans' Week events to political events, from community events to private celebrations. Alliston, Angus, Beeton, Collingwood, Creemore, Everett, Lisle, New Lowell, Stayner, Thornbury, Tottenham and Wasaga Beach all have thriving, active Legions that serve these communities.

On Saturday, November 5, I had the great opportunity to spend a night at the Collingwood Legion at a dinner in honour of our veterans in preparation for Remembrance Day. As I sat in the facility, I was reminded that during the pandemic, the Collingwood Legion served as the overflow facility for the Collingwood General and Marine Hospital—18 beds. It served a vital purpose as an overflow unit and, during a number of the waves, had many beds filled. That was one way that a Legion can help work with our communities and collaborate with our communities to support them.

Last Friday, on Remembrance Day, I had the privilege of going to the Alliston Legion and sitting with Albert, one of the last remaining World War II veterans. He's 98 and his hearing isn't great, but we had a wonderful conversation, and so it's wonderful to be able to rise and pay tribute to our veterans like Albert.

During the course of that meal, I was reminded by the speaker there that the Alliston Legion had received a vital grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation for much-needed capital improvements. These facilities serve our ridings, and I want to thank the executives and presidents of each of the Legions for their great work.

ORDER OF ONTARIO

Mr. Lorne Coe: Her Honour Elizabeth Dowdeswell, the Lieutenant Governor, will bestow the province's highest honour to the new Order of Ontario appointees on November 21, 2022. One of those appointees is Dr. Angela Brathwaite from Whitby. Over nearly five decades as a nurse, Dr. Brathwaite has launched initiatives to promote nursing education, improve women and children's health, and address racism in the nursing profession.

In announcing the appointees, Her Honour said this: "Their service to our province is a reminder to all of us

fortunate enough to call Ontario home, that the fabric of society is knit together by good deeds and the dedication of individuals. May their accomplishments be an inspiration and example for many to follow.”

Congratulations to Dr. Brathwaite. Your dedication, drive and lifetime of service is an inspiration to everyone in Whitby and other parts of the region of Durham who aspire to build better communities and a stronger Ontario.

REPORT, FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that the following document has been tabled: a report entitled Ministry of Education: Spending Plan Review, 2022, from the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We have with us in the Speaker’s gallery today His Excellency Urban Ahlin, the ambassador of Sweden to Canada. He’s joined by Lars Henriksson, the honorary consul general of Sweden in Toronto. Please join me in warmly welcoming our guests to the Legislature.

Mr. Chris Glover: I’d like to welcome to the Legislature Dora Mehany, Pixie George-Benjamin and Nathan Zhu, who are members of CUPE 4400, which was a union I was recently a member of at Central Tech when I was teaching woodworking.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Today’s page captain, Camilla Moscato, is from my riding of Niagara West, and I wish to welcome her to the Legislature, as well as her parents and her brother, who are here today: Melanie, Maddox and Chris Moscato. Welcome to Queen’s Park. It’s good to have you here.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank my incredibly talented assistant from my riding of Nickel Belt, Adele Fawcett, who is here to witness question period this morning. Welcome to Queen’s Park.

1040

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Today I am joined by my executive assistant, Suhas Vij. He’s here for the first time. Welcome to the Legislature.

MPP Jamie West: Today is my wife’s birthday. I can think of no better birthday present for my wife, Madame Pam, who is a kindergarten teacher, than to welcome Ema, as a page, and her father, Kevin MacAulay, to the Legislature today.

Hon. Jill Dunlop: I would like to introduce executives from the Ontario Institute for Regenerative Medicine: Duncan Stewart, the president and scientific director, and Sandra Donaldson, the vice-president and chief operating officer. Welcome to Queen’s Park.

Miss Monique Taylor: I’d like to welcome Michau van Speyk here today, from the Ontario Autism Coalition. Thank you so much. Nice to see you.

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: Mr. Speaker, she’s not here yet, but I would like to welcome my niece, Zahara Israr, who will be here this morning as part of the West Glen Junior School tour. Thank you.

Mr. Michael Mantha: At the very young age of 54 years old, my brother had to reinvent himself. His name is Gordon Mantha. I want to congratulate him. He has just graduated and become a fully licensed RPN.

MPP Jamie West: Sitting with our colleagues from CUPE, I’d like to also welcome Janice Folk-Dawson and Patty Coates from the OFL here.

INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

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

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Yes, I am seeking the unanimous consent of the House that, notwithstanding standing order 40(e), five minutes be allotted to the independents as a group to respond to the ministerial statement by the Minister of Finance on the fall economic statement.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa–Vanier is seeking the unanimous consent of the House that, notwithstanding standing order 40(e), five minutes be allotted to the independents as a group to respond to the ministerial statement by the Minister of Finance on the fall economic statement. Agreed? Agreed.

It is now time for oral questions.

QUESTION PERIOD

LABOUR LEGISLATION

Ms. Marit Stiles: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. To the Premier: On this side of the House, we know there’s power in a union. Last week the government belatedly learned that too when they were forced to make a major retreat on the use of the “notwithstanding” clause in a bill that not only banned strikes but outrageously imposed a contract on our very lowest-paid education workers.

My question this morning is very simple: Will the Premier vow today to never again use the “notwithstanding” clause in a labour dispute?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To respond, the Minister of Education.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. All along, we have advocated for children to be in stable classrooms. We know that the threat of strikes and pandemics have a great deal of impact on children’s mental, physical, social and emotional health, and their academic success, Speaker. That’s why we are at the table today, and we will remain at the table—designed to get a deal that is fair for our workers, that preserves the in-person learning experience that our children deserve.

The plan to catch up, as announced, was premised on a belief that kids have to be in school. Six hundred and fifty million more dollars are allocated this year, compared to

last year. Nearly 7,000 more staff were hired since we came to power, almost a thousand more front-line teachers, a 420% increase in mental health—all of this is because we are committed to publicly funded schools. We're committed to getting a deal and keeping these kids in school.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's very rich, coming from a minister whose threats have led to some of the greatest disruptions I think we've seen in decades. The use of the "notwithstanding" clause—and I'm going to go back to the Premier on this—was an unprecedented failure of your government. This was completely avoidable, but it seems like you were getting some pretty bad advice, Premier.

A few weeks ago, the Premier's campaign manager, Kory Teneycke, said this about possible future labour disruptions at our schools. He said: "You're going to get legislated back, including the use of the 'notwithstanding' clause," and "You can take that to the bank because it's going to happen."

After last week's debacle, I think we all hope that this Premier has learned a thing or two. I ask again: Will the Premier stand here today and vow never again to use the "notwithstanding" clause to shut down the charter rights of Ontario workers?

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

To reply for the government, the Minister of Education.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: We're going to stay at the table to get a deal that keeps kids in the classroom. That is our commitment. It's what we're guided by. It's what the people of Ontario sent us here to do.

We are committed to ensuring stability for children. I would urge the members opposite to consider the very real impacts of union-driven strikes on children. They are real. They have learning loss and mental and physical health impacts that we can quantify. These are not abstractions; these are the children of our province. They have an obligation to them.

We have an obligation to them, which is why we are increasing funding in publicly funded schools; increasing staffing, with over \$3 billion more than when the Liberals were in power in 2017-18; 7,000 more staff when you compare it to when we started; and 1,000 more front-line teachers. We are committed to our children and we're committed to keeping kids in school.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: I can tell you, we're not going to take advice from a government whose actions shut down our schools.

Speaker, the Premier's use of the "notwithstanding" clause to take away bargaining rights did not just target CUPE education workers, it put the bargaining rights of all workers at risk. Whether you are a union member in a school, in a factory or on a construction site, the Premier's

actions sent a clear message: Your rights end when he no longer feels like recognizing them.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Labour this time: What did he do to stand up for the rights of workers that he claims to work for? And will he, at least, commit to never voting for this again?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To respond, the Minister of Education.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: We are standing up for the rights of children to be in school, so they can stay in a stable classroom where they belong. We know these kids deserve to be in the classroom, with more funding and more staffing and more opportunities for them to get ahead.

It has been an extraordinary time in this province. This is not a normative period. Kids have—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Member for Davenport, come to order.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: A global pandemic caused learning loss in every region of the Western world. To the member from Davenport, who seems to believe we are an island unto ourselves: We are part of a global challenge.

But we have a plan in this province designed to help these kids get back on track: 650 million more dollars; a specific tutoring program, the first and only of its kind in the country; and \$175 million helping 100,000 kids today get ahead. That's how we help support them and get them back on track, but it all starts with keeping them in the classroom in the first place.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Peter Tabuns: To the Premier: For months, health care professionals have raised concerns about hospitals' capacity to respond to the early respiratory illness season that we are seeing this year. Despite the alarm bells, this government sat on their hands and did nothing. Today, ER wait times at children's hospitals are unseasonably high, pediatric ICUs are over capacity and children are being transferred to adult hospitals. Why has the government ignored the growing crisis in Ontario's children's hospitals?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: With the greatest of respect, we haven't been ignoring it. In fact, our government has made unprecedented investments to ensure that our hospital partners have the resources they need to make sure that they can deal with what is undoubtedly a bit of a triple threat of RSV, influenza and COVID-19. In particular, with emergency departments, we have invested \$90 million in EDs to pay for result programs that provide funding incentives for 74 high-volume emergency departments to make improvements in areas such as length of stay. We've implemented 49 models of care for select 911 patients where patients can receive timely and appropriate care in a setting outside of an emergency department.

We've funded Ornge's virtual medical doctor trial for northern hospitals at risk of closure. The emergency

department locum program and the COVID-19 temporary summer locum program's expansion have provided supports for eligible hospitals in rural and northern Ontario to maintain—

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Back to the Premier: Even with repeated warnings, it seems like the government somehow didn't see this coming. Children's surgeries are now being cancelled so that staff can be redeployed. Over the weekend, SickKids's pediatric ICU was at 132%. McMaster Children's Hospital was at 140% capacity. One pediatric ER doctor described the situation right now as "scary" and "unsafe."

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We all have a role to play in protecting children from severe illness, especially the government. Why hasn't this government responded effectively to the acute pressures on our children's hospitals and increasing demand for pediatric ICU beds?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: So again, I would say, respectfully, we have responded and we are responding with our partners. COVID-19, influenza and RSV are triple threats that our hospitals and our pediatric patients in particular are dealing with. The most vulnerable, the most senior and the youngest in our populations are definitely at risk, which is why, earlier today, Dr. Moore, as the Chief Medical Officer of Health, did strongly recommend Ontarians in all areas add a layer of protection when appropriate. That includes a strong recommendation to mask when indoors, when interacting with our most vulnerable and certainly with our youngest, four and under, who cannot mask, and making sure that if and when you have the opportunity, and you are in a time and place that is appropriate for your timing, that you get your flu shot, which is free of charge and available across Ontario in pharmacies and at primary care. And, of course, keep all of your vaccines up to date. We need to make sure that all of the tools—

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

The final supplementary.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: The government has been completely ineffective. At SickKids, children going to the hospital are very sick. More than half the kids in their ICU are on ventilators. Over the weekend, the CEO of SickKids said, "So far none have died, thank God."

Speaker, I have a really hard time understanding how this government allowed the situation to get so bad that the CEO of this province's premier children's hospital is thanking God that no kid has died. To the Premier: Why didn't the government act sooner and effectively to avert the crisis?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: You know, Speaker, last week I was in Vancouver for the FTP. At the federal, provincial and territorial meetings, every Minister of Health from across Canada shared with the group what they are doing to protect their citizens. They talked about vaccine rollouts. They talked about how they were protecting the

most vulnerable. They talked about how they were training additional health human resources staff.

As the group went around the table and shared all of the initiatives, I turned to my officials and said, "What are we not doing in Ontario that others are doing and that we could emulate?" And the answer, sir, was "nothing," because Ontario has already implemented those. We have trained new HHRs. We are training new nurses. We are giving individuals who want to practise nursing in the province of Ontario a process that is expedited through the College of Nurses of Ontario, and it is working. We have more historically now getting through the licensing process with the College of Nurses and the CPSO, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, in a faster way, because we understand that people who want to practise in health—

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

The next question.

LAND USE PLANNING

Mr. John Vanthof: My question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Ontario is losing 320 acres a day, every day, of farmland to development—320 acres of the best farmland in the world, every day, under the minister's watch; farmland that we will need to feed our cities. You think food is expensive now? Wait, if we keep going at this rate.

Now the government has announced that it also wants to pave over 7,000 acres of farmland in our greenbelt, including at Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve—another 7,000 acres gone forever. Why is the minister so eager to pave over our food security?

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

Hon. Doug Ford: I just want to thank the opposition for their question. Mr. Speaker, we have a housing crisis. We have a housing crisis that the majority of our kids can't afford to buy a home. They can't afford to live in Toronto or the GTA because the previous government didn't have the backbone to make the changes.

We're increasing the greenbelt more than 2,000 acres, unlike the previous government that changed the greenbelt 17 times—and you voted for it 17 times. You supported them changing the greenbelt to suit their buddies, to change it 17 times.

We're creating 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years. And I'd like to ask this chamber, where are we going to put the 1.5 million people who are going to show up just over the next five years right here in Ontario, and in Canada, 1.5 million people in the next three years? We need homes. We're going to build homes, affordable homes.

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

The supplementary question?

Mr. John Vanthof: I would like to thank the Premier for his answer, but in response, how are we going to feed those people?

The Premier's own task force stated that the land isn't the problem and we need to protect the greenbelt. So we know the land isn't the problem, but we also know the Premier made a promise to speculators a long time ago and then recanted—but obviously, this is a promise he intends to keep.

Now, why are you continuing to allow the best farmland, the farmland that we need to feed our people—the things that are important to our people are shelter, yes, but even more important, food. We have the best land in the province, and the Minister of Agriculture sits and watches it being paved over. Why?

Hon. Doug Ford: Mr. Speaker, last week, we had great friends come here from the Royal. When they came from the Royal, I went down there myself, spoke to endless farmers. They're extremely happy that we have their backs, we have the supports. We're going to make sure they're well taken care of.

But, Mr. Speaker, again, I'd like to ask the opposition, what are they going to do when 50% of the 500,000 people a year come to Canada and they arrive in Ontario? What are we going to do? Are we just going to stack them up into rooms? No, we're going to build them affordable housing; we're going to build them attainable housing, something that the opposition would never, ever do. We need to plan for the future, not only for the new Canadians that are coming but the next generation, so that they can afford—that's the reason we are building transit that extends into areas that we're building, and we're building right beside existing developments that are right there and on the other side of the street.

Mr. Speaker, under the Liberals, if you're a farmer, you won the lottery—\$40 million, \$50 million, \$100 million. But your next door neighbour, the exact same piece of property—guess what? He will be struggling for the next—

Interjections.

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

FISCAL AND ECONOMIC POLICY

Mr. Aris Babikian: My question is for the Minister of Finance. The ongoing global economic instability and worldwide supply chain disruptions continue to negatively impact the people of Ontario. In the face of this economic uncertainty, my constituents continue to struggle with rising costs driven by higher gas prices due to the federal carbon tax. Many of my constituents express concerns about their household budgets and the unexpected rising costs of their day-to-day necessities.

Speaker, with all these concerns, could the minister please tell the House how our government is working to keep Ontario on a sound economic footing and providing continued financial relief for my constituents?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you to the hard-working member from Scarborough–Agincourt for that question. We are in uncertain times, amid global economic

uncertainty, and with cost-of-living increases reaching levels not seen in decades. The road ahead will not be easy. **1100**

We know that the people of Ontario are under pressure. Governments will need to be agile with a responsible plan to respond to any challenges, while acknowledging the risks of inflation.

That is why we have a plan that maintains flexibility and continues to invest in building the critical infrastructure and services that the people of Ontario rely on, and works to restore our manufacturing capacity while keeping costs down for people and businesses.

Mr. Speaker, we have a strong plan for Ontario and, by being flexible and demonstrating restraint, we can overcome any challenge that comes our way.

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

Mr. Aris Babikian: Speaker, rising expenses and continued economic uncertainty are impacting all Ontarians, including the people of my riding.

We have seen news reports about people across Canada saying they are spending less on food due to escalating prices. In the recent fall economic statement, Canada's federal Minister of Finance, Chrystia Freeland, said, "Canada cannot avoid the global slowdown." Just recently, the governor of the Bank of Canada also warned Canadians that we should expect more interest-rate hikes and that a mild recession is possible.

Speaker, what is our government doing to ensure that Ontario remains a jurisdiction that is viewed as economically sound and financially robust as we navigate these times of uncertainty?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you again to the member from Scarborough–Agincourt.

Mr. Speaker, over the last couple of years, Ontario and the rest of the world faced a once-in-a-generation challenge unlike any in all of our lifetimes. The COVID-19 pandemic tested our resolve, but we stood together to get through those tough times.

Today we are navigating another challenge. Mr. Speaker, Ontario, like the rest of the world, is facing challenging economic times. But I am confident in our province. I am confident in the resilience of the people of Ontario, and I am confident in our plan to build Ontario.

That is why I am proud to be introducing our government's 2022 fall economic statement this afternoon. We have a strong plan to build infrastructure, train workers and restore our manufacturing capacity while keeping costs down for the people and businesses of Ontario. Together, let's build Ontario.

HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Last week CHEO's pediatric ICU hit 280% capacity. In-patient medicine is at 171%. The emergency department, which was built to handle 150 kids, is seeing, on average, 229 kids a day. Surgeries are being cancelled, and children are being transferred to hospitals hours away.

The government can't blame seniors waiting for long-term care for causing this situation. When will the Premier get serious about the crisis in health care, make the necessary investments and repeal Bill 124 so our children get the health care they deserve?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: I appreciate the question from the honourable member.

The member will know, as the Minister of Health has just outlined, the incredible work the government is doing to ensure that health human resources are ever-present and ever-increasing in the province of Ontario. That's why the Minister of Colleges and Universities has undertaken, really, a nationwide-leading and successful program to encourage more people to get into nursing. It is why, through the Ministry of Long-Term Care, we are adding nurse practitioners. Not only are we adding nurse practitioners, Mr. Speaker, but we are also paying for those nurse practitioners, in addition to 27,000 additional PSWs across the long-term-care sector alone. And it goes on the back of the nationwide-leading investments that we've been making with respect to health care across the province of Ontario in all parts.

We have increased budgets for our small and medium-sized hospitals. We're building hospitals in Brampton. We're increasing capacity in Mississauga and all parts of the province, Mr. Speaker. We're doubling down to make sure that the people of the province of Ontario are protected.

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

Mme France Gélinas: I'm hoping, Speaker, that the Minister of Health can answer.

Everyone but members of this government agree that we are witnessing an undeniable and unprecedented health human resources crisis. Ontario hospitals are falling further behind. Nurse vacancies in Ontario have increased by 300% since March of 2020. The government says that they've brought thousands of new nurses, but where are they? We are currently at a 14.5% turnover rate among hospital nurses. It's clear that the government's plan, their so-called retention bonuses, have done very little to keep workers in the field.

Will the minister repeal Bill 124 and show some respect to our burnt-out health care workers?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Jill Dunlop: Thank you to the member for that question. Let me give a couple of numbers: 11,700, 25,000, over 12,000. Now, what do those numbers represent? That's 11,700 new health care professionals since March of 2020; 25,000 applications for nursing programs at Ontario's colleges and universities, world-class education right here in Ontario; 12,000 nurses, the number that—the CNO registered more nurses this year than within the record-breaking number, and there's still months to go.

People are flocking to the nursing profession because of the investments that this government has been making in health care and long-term care, and we'll continue to see

those investments made and the opportunities for students in this province.

HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: My question is to the Minister of Transportation, who is getting people moving and saving them precious time. Experts and so many community members have told us, time and time again, that the rapid growth in Simcoe county and York region means we need to build roads, highways and bridges today for the transportation that people need tomorrow, to save them precious time so that they can spend it with their family and friends and get goods to market.

But unfortunately, places like in Bradford and Simcoe county have seen a stalemate of the Bradford Bypass for far too long, when the Liberals have time and time again shot it down, eliminating the potential for more people to spend time with their families, save them time to get to work and get our agricultural products to market.

So I want to ask the Minister of Transportation—she talks to many people in our community—why is it so important to get shovels in the ground and to finally bring the Bradford Bypass?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Thank you to the member for Barrie–Innisfil for the question.

Speaker, as the MPP for York–Simcoe and as Minister of Transportation, I've heard resounding calls from business owners, from farmers and from residents about the need to get the Bradford Bypass done, and I couldn't be more pleased that under the leadership of this Premier, our government is finally answering the call. Last week, I joined the Premier and local mayors in Bradford to announce that our government has finally started construction on the Bradford Bypass. Unlike other governments that came before us, our government is actually delivering real progress on the project and fulfilling the commitment that we made to residents across York region and Simcoe county and beyond to get critical infrastructure built. We are getting it done.

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

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Thank you, Minister, for getting it done and really understanding the needs of our greater community. We need to build roads and bridges if we're going to build up this economy and save families time and also embrace our agricultural sector.

She, like myself, often talks to Jody Mott, the executive director of the Holland Marsh Growers' Association. She said, "This is an essential piece of infrastructure the farmers require to ship our produce that feeds 55% of Ontarians." So not only is it important to them, but we know that gridlock is worsening and we need real-time solutions to get it done.

I want to ask the minister if she could elaborate on the great benefits of the Bradford Bypass and what it means to surrounding communities.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Thank you again to the member for the question. The benefits of the Bradford

Bypass go far beyond just providing relief from congestion. In addition to helping our farmers get their goods to market faster, the project is also attracting new business and creating jobs across the growing communities in York region and Simcoe county.

Just a few weeks ago, I was pleased to be in Bradford to celebrate the groundbreaking of Toromont Industries' new remanufacturing facility. Once complete, the facility will create nearly 200 new skilled-trade jobs for members in the community, and this is only just the beginning. Our government is continuing to build Ontario to help boost our economy and create jobs for people in every corner of this province.

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MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: My question is to the Premier. Niagara is in a unique position because our city councils are still meeting. Your housing bill has been met with considerable concern. St. Catharines city council voted unanimously, stating that there is nothing in this bill that advances more homes to be built faster or more affordable.

There are some big questions around slashing development charges, like who is paying for them? It appears to be a transfer of profits to the development industries at the expense of the community.

Premier, have you read the report from St. Catharines? And will you guarantee that municipal taxpayers will not be left on the hook for downloaded costs when you slash municipal revenue like development charges?

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

The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to reply.

Hon. Steve Clark: When I listen to that question, it just again rings true, the desire by some municipalities to delay the reason for change. There's a generation in St. Catharines that don't realize the dream of home ownership. Delaying the decision is going to make things worse. We need to be sure that we get shovels in the ground faster.

It's quite interesting that the member talks about development charges when I see that the region of Niagara has \$206 million in their DC reserve fund. We know there's a severe problem. We know we have to build 1.5 million homes over the next years. In fact, as the Premier said this morning, with the amount of new Canadians we're going to be welcoming to Ontario, we need to step that up even more.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Member for St. Catharines, come to order.

Supplementary question? The member for Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question is to the Premier. Not only is the city of St. Catharines concerned with Bill 23, so is the Niagara regional council. Niagara regional council

sent the minister a letter outlining how problematic Bill 23 is. They say it will have significant financial impacts and will result in fewer affordable housing units. The government plans to pave over the greenbelt, as well as put municipalities under serious financial strain, just to help their developer friends make millions of dollars.

Under Bill 23, we will lose 7,000 acres of prime farmland. Some of it is the best in the world. We must protect our food security. My question is clear. To the Premier: Has the Premier consulted with the municipalities affected by this bill? And will you meaningfully address the concerns of Niagara?

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

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Steve Clark: I know that NIMBYism—not in my backyard—is really strong in Ontario. But I used a phrase after we tabled Bill 23, the fact that we've now transcended from NIMBYism to BANANA: build absolutely nothing anywhere near anyone.

We consulted mayors. The Premier and I had a meeting in January with big city mayors and regional chairs.

The NDP can deny this all they want, but clearly there are factual studies that show that municipal fees add an average of \$116,900 to the cost of a home in the greater Golden Horseshoe. If the NDP want to stand up for high fees and high housing costs, they can do it. They can do it all they want. We're going to stand up for building more supply and providing affordable opportunities. We want to make sure that that young family can realize the dream of home ownership.

LANDLORD AND TENANT BOARD

COMMISSION DE LA LOCATION IMMOBILIÈRE

M^{me} Lucille Collard: My question is for the Attorney General. The number of people who face urgent housing situations in my riding has reached new peaks. I have both landlords and tenants reaching out for help to resolve their issues. However, the only help I am able to provide is to refer these constituents to the Landlord and Tenant Board. The problem is that these housing disputes are, by nature, urgent and pressing, which makes the long delays at the board a crisis for families in Ottawa-Vanier. People have to wait months for a hearing, and when they do get one, it is a short, summary affair with little time to find a just outcome. It is clear that the experiment of completely virtual hearings is not working for landlords, and it's not working for tenants either.

My question is, will the Attorney General commit to reopening in-person hearing sites across the province so that we can have a hybrid system that provides landlords and tenants with access to justice in a timely manner?

Hon. Doug Downey: I'm pleased to address some of the investments we've made in the Landlord and Tenant Board. I can tell you, after no investments by the previous government, after no effort, we are picking up the pieces.

They were supported by the NDP before that, and they did nothing but watch the system crumble.

But our government has invested. We have invested \$28 million in a state-of-the-art system that is up and running and receiving applications in the tens of thousands. I am proud to stand on the fact that we've appointed more adjudicators than in the history of the board. We put \$4.5 million into speeding up the process.

It's unfortunate that what they left to go fallow has resulted in us having to pick up the pieces, but we will do it. We will get the job done.

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

M^{me} Lucille Collard: There's clearly not enough resources allocated to address the backlog, because the crisis is still very much there.

Monsieur le Président, une propriétaire m'a récemment contactée pour me dire qu'elle n'avait pas reçu de loyer pendant six mois de la part des locataires, qui avaient barricadé la porte et refusé de quitter la propriété. À cause de ce non-paiement, la propriétaire n'a pas pu payer son loyer de sa propre maison, et elle et sa fille handicapée sont en train de se faire expulser. L'angoisse vécue par cette mère et sa fille et tant d'autres est due à la façon défailante dont la Commission de la location immobilière planifie les audiences.

Le Centre ontarien de défense des droits des locataires et d'autres parties prenantes souhaitent un retour à la tenue d'audiences par région. Le procureur général a-t-il un plan pour mieux organiser les audiences afin de réduire les retards de la commission?

Hon. Doug Downey: One of the most important pieces about the Landlord and Tenant Board is that it's independent and that it does fair and effective hearings. That is happening. We have more adjudicators than in the history of the board hearing matters, moving them along, making sure that they're fair and independent and that both sides get heard.

We're also putting resources into making sure that the system helps people navigate. There's a new navigation tool that is being accessed in the tens of thousands. The online system that we adopted and changed for Ontario's use was created by the NDP government of BC. We are working collaboratively with all partners to make sure that we're getting the hearings done, that they're independent, and that fair and just results are the outcome.

IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: My question is for the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development. Ontario is at a critical juncture. We must welcome more immigrants into our province to meet our ongoing and future economic needs. We have seen reports from all sectors of the economy warning about the low number of immigrants welcomed into Ontario and its adverse impact on our economy. For example, nearly 75% of businesses in the farming industry say they are suffering because of the current labour shortage.

With the release of the federal government's fall economic statement, can the minister please tell us what effect this will have on how Ontario addresses our immigration and skilled trades deficit?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Thank you to the member for Markham–Thornhill for this very important question. Welcoming more immigrants is critical to Ontario and Canada's economic success, and we need the federal government to make a real commitment to working with us. For our province and for our country to succeed, Ottawa must dramatically increase the number of skilled newcomers who come to Ontario, and give us more of a say.

Our government is leading the way in Canada in recognizing foreign credentials and breaking down other barriers that newcomers face. We need the federal government to join us at the table today.

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

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you, Minister, for that answer.

Mr. Speaker, the number of job vacancies in our province continues to increase monthly. Many view Ontario as a favourable jurisdiction because of our untold economic opportunity and potential. As Ontario and Canada face economic challenges driven by global uncertainty, all governments must work together to address this issue.

I understand that in Ontario, we can process immigration nominee applications in as little as 90 days, while the federal government requires up to 46 months for the approval process. Because of this unnecessary extended time frame, Ontario and Canada continue to lose billions in economic productivity.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain what action our government is taking to address this important issue?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I want to thank the member again for that question.

Speaker, Ontario continues to urge the federal government to work with its provincial partners to expand programs that help fill labour gaps through immigration. I speak regularly with Minister Sean Fraser, Canada's Minister of Immigration, and I'm hopeful we'll be able to find common ground and make tangible progress on these issues. At minimum, we expect the federal government to double the number of immigrants Ontario can select, and we are ready to offer them our processing capacity.

It is critical that Ottawa address the ongoing application backlogs and approve applications more quickly so workers who want to come to Ontario can arrive and enter the labour market without unnecessary delays. My message to the federal government is simple: Let's work together and build a stronger Ontario and a stronger Canada.

NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Michael Mantha: The physician shortage in northern Ontario small town hospitals is facing a crisis. With three of six physician positions soon to be vacant in

Wawa, the hospital there is desperate for assistance from this government to help to prevent closures and staff burn-out.

We've already seen ERs and primary care affected across the region in the north. What is this government doing to ensure that small northern hospitals will not have to close their doors to patients?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I have to ask, because the member opposite has been in this chamber for many, many years: Where were you when the Auditor General talked about the fact that northern Ontario was facing a physician shortage in their Auditor General's report when the Liberal Party was in power? Where were you?

Are you willing to stand and agree that increasing the number of physician positions available in northern Ontario in rural and remote communities across Canada is the appropriate thing for us to do?

Where were you when the Liberal government was cutting those spots in northern Ontario?

We have made the investments. We will continue to make the investments. We have a northern medical school that is expanding the number of residency positions. We are expanding—

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

The supplementary question.

Mr. Michael Mantha: The Wawa hospital has been getting by on agreements with this government to ensure locum coverage, but on August 31 the funding for that agreement was cut unilaterally with no notice to the hospital.

When concerns about keeping the doors open were expressed to the Ministry of Health officials, the ministry suggested, "Well, why don't you just divert your primary care support to your emergency support?"

Speaker, this is a recipe for disaster. Without primary care, you're setting up the system for failure. Will this government work with northern health care providers to recruit and retain doctors in the north?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: A recipe for disaster is when the Auditor General, 10-plus years ago, highlighted the need for additional doctors in the north and across Ontario, and it was ignored.

We are making those investments now. We will continue to make those investments. We are doing it with investments in peer-to-peer programs. We are making it with investments in Ornge air ambulance to ensure that northern and remote hospitals make sure that they have coverage in their emergency department.

We will continue to make those changes. We will continue to work with our hospital corporations, and we will make sure that, in the future, we do not deal with health human resources that were as a result of governments ignoring a pending surge in population and a need to make those investments.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: My question, Mr. Speaker, is for the Minister of Energy. Under our government's watch, we have seen a return of the manufacturing sector and an overall improvement in our economic productivity. But this success has led to questions about the strength of Ontario's energy grid and the ability to produce the electricity we will require for the future.

Our government recently announced plans to continue the operation of the Pickering nuclear generation station through September 2026. My constituents in Durham know that the Pickering plant serves a significant function in Ontario's energy grid.

Speaker, could the minister, therefore, elaborate on the Pickering nuclear plant's role in supporting Ontario's energy operations?

Hon. Todd Smith: Thanks to the member for Durham for the great question this morning. I want to start off by recognizing the amazing job that Ontario's nuclear workers are doing every day to keep the lights on in Pickering, at Darlington and also at Bruce Power. Pickering provides Ontario with a source of low-cost and reliable zero-emissions electricity every day to meet the province's baseload energy needs, not like the intermittent wind and solar projects that were brought on—33,000 of them—by the previous government.

Our nuclear fleet, our world-class facilities—they're providing power that's available when we need it every day of the week. And at the same time, by supporting the safe continued operation of the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station, we are standing shoulder to shoulder with those workers in the Durham region—those good-paying jobs, those hard-working people that are providing the clean power that Ontario needs for the future.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: Mr. Speaker, I also share our government's appreciation for the dedication and diligence of the workers of the Pickering nuclear plant. Maintaining the Pickering nuclear generation station will protect good-paying jobs for thousands of workers in Durham region and across Ontario.

About 7,500 jobs across Ontario are related to the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station. These jobs represent skilled workers who are the backbone of our economy, and they help to provide the clean, reliable and safe power that Ontarians rely upon. Unfortunately, not everyone in this Legislature shares that view about the workers in my riding and the benefits their labour and sacrifice provide for this province.

Mr. Speaker, could the minister please reaffirm his support for the workers of the Pickering nuclear station?

Hon. Todd Smith: It's a great follow-up question from the member from Durham. I don't know why anyone in this Legislature would oppose this move that is clearly a win, not only for electricity generation in the province and future growth in our province, but it's also a win for the environment.

Earlier this morning, in estimates, we heard from the member from Kingston, who seems to be opposed to

nuclear energy, Mr. Speaker. We heard from the member opposite who is now the leader of the NDP, who seems to be opposed to nuclear energy. That source of electricity provides 60% of our electricity every day. It's a zero-emission source of electricity, one that is the only pathway to get us to net zero in our province. The leader of the NDP in this House, Mr. Speaker, on dozens of occasions has spoken about the lack of support for nuclear in our province.

We're standing firmly with the people of Pickering, the people in Darlington, the people in Bruce, who are providing low-cost, reliable and affordable electricity—

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

The next question.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is for the Premier. McMaster Children's Hospital in Hamilton has reached a crisis point where occupancy has reached over 140%. I'm not confident that the Premier or his minister understand the severity of this situation. Children are critically ill. Parents are terrified. Health care professionals are calling for action. McMaster is ringing the alarm bells.

1130

What is the Premier going to do to ensure hospitals have the resources and the capacities to provide hospital care to our children?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I will reiterate what Dr. Kieran Moore mentioned earlier today, which was that our most vulnerable—our youngest population, people with underlying health conditions—need to be protected. Which is why, earlier today, Dr. Kieran Moore made the recommendation strongly to mask while in public indoor settings. We are taking these actions because we understand there is a percentage of the population who cannot have a vaccine.

Having said that, we have done incredibly well in the province of Ontario to have access and make sure that people who have the ability to have that vaccine get their flu shot, keep up to date on their vaccines and their boosters, because we know that it does make a difference. We know that it keeps our youngest and most vulnerable out of our emergency departments. We know that, by doing the right thing—testing, staying home when we're sick—we can make a difference and we can take the pressure off those most vulnerable people in our population. I would hope that the member—

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

The supplementary question.

Miss Monique Taylor: Speaker, what the minister is talking about is what the community needs to do to support the hospital. I'm asking what the government is going to do to support the hospital. Empty words and gestures are not good enough. The Premier has offered no aid to McMaster, even though wait times have spiked to 12-plus hours just over this past weekend. His government is

sitting on \$2.1 billion of budget surplus dollars and they're not spending it.

Will the Premier commit today to spending surplus dollars to support McMaster's hospital and our pediatric care crisis?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: The member's words do not match our actions. We have invested \$90 million in emergency department Pay-for-Results Programs, which provide funding incentives for 74 emergency departments in high-volume EDs to make improvements, including length of stay. We've implemented 49 models of care to make sure that people who call 911, if they so desire and have the ability to do so, can get their care in other places in the community. We funded Ornge's virtual care medical doctor trial for northern Ontario at risk of closure, and, yes, we have assisted McMaster and all of the other children's hospitals across Ontario, because we know that they are experiencing some incredibly challenging times with influenza, with RSV and with COVID-19.

We will continue to work with our funding partners to make sure that they have the investments, but we also have a collective responsibility to make sure, individually, we do the right thing and keep our youngest people safe.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AND SKILLS TRAINING

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Investing in post-secondary students is critical to building a highly skilled workforce here in Ontario. For our economy to grow and become an economic leader once again, we must support our students in obtaining the relevant experience they need to get good jobs after graduation. When I talk to the good people in Etobicoke-Lakeshore, all those employers said, "We need people." With the tens of thousands of well-paying highly skilled jobs going unfilled in our province, we must act now to connect students and businesses to these new skills and opportunities for advancement.

Could the Minister of Colleges and Universities update this House on how our government supports students in practical work-integrated learning?

Hon. Jill Dunlop: Thank you to the member from Etobicoke-Lakeshore for that important and timely question. I say "timely" because, just last week, I was excited to announce that our government is providing over \$10 million to help Mitacs, an organization that builds research partnerships between post-secondary institutions and industry, to create 2,700 paid internships for post-secondary students. We are so pleased to be supporting post-secondary students and partners through experiential learning programs like Mitacs that prepare students with skills and training needed for jobs in an innovative economy. They will not only help prepare students for the workforce through on-the-job learning but will also help to remove the stress of worrying about financial compensation.

Even further, Speaker, these internships allow employers to connect with emerging leaders in their fields, nurture talent and develop their industry.

Investing in skills training opportunities for students and recent graduates is part of our government's plan to work for workers—supporting Ontario's economic growth for positioning students and businesses for success.

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

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I want to thank the minister for that update. I also want to thank the minister for taking an interest in our local college, Humber College, and visiting there with me early last year. Thank you for that.

While I'm encouraged to hear that our government is supporting our next generation of workers in this new economy, we need to be confident that all Ontario students will be able to participate. Many students require more selection in learning opportunities to accommodate their unique circumstances and needs.

Speaker, can the minister elaborate on what our government is doing to support these innovative partnerships and increase flexibility for student learning opportunities across Ontario's post-secondary landscape?

Hon. Jill Dunlop: Thank you to the member for that question. Since 2018, our government has been investing in our post-secondary sector to be more responsive, flexible and reflective of the changing nature of work. It is investments and innovative solutions that will allow the single mother in northern Ontario to attend short-term classes between her work schedule. It will allow the young learner with accessibility concerns to go to class online when they physically can't get to class.

We have made tremendous strides towards connecting students to work online or in person, part-time and full-time, across disciplines, across Ontario. In the last five years, Ontario has spent over \$57 million to support Mitacs to create over 14,000 research internships, and over the next 10 years, we will be investing \$500 million to support research opportunities across Ontario.

We will continue to invest in training our post-secondary students to prepare for the jobs of tomorrow, because when students succeed, Ontario succeeds.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, this Premier and government know that health care is in crisis. Can you imagine going into the emergency room and hearing the pleas of a patient in another emergency room, asking, "When am I going to see a doctor? The pain is so horrific. Please, can I see a doctor? When will someone be able to help me?" That's what we're hearing in emergency rooms.

In London, London Health Sciences Centre has reported a 20-hour wait time in emergency rooms. And now, reports are coming from across the province that there's a dire shortage of ambulances available.

Just last week, I heard from a constituent who had two incidents last month where they called for ambulance services and had to wait for hours for it to arrive to help his wife who had fallen and couldn't get up. They had to cancel one of the calls because repairmen arrived and were able to help.

My question is, what is this government doing to ensure that people have emergency care services when they need them?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: We are building capacity, and we will continue to build capacity. As the member opposite knows, ambulance and paramedic services are funded 50-50 between the municipality and the province of Ontario. Not once—not once—have we ever turned down a municipality who wants to expand their ambulance capacity.

We are offering and expanding the number of ambulance paramedics that are training in the province of Ontario through investments in colleges and universities. We are building a health human resources that will be second to none in Canada. We will do that. We are doing it through the College of Nurses and the College of Physicians and Surgeons. We are doing it through our health system, through retention pay. We are doing it through an expansion of our human resources training in colleges with the assistance of our partners. And we will continue to do that work, because we understand that as Ontario's population grows, we need to make sure that we have the jobs and the resources available for those people who need it when they need it.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: The Middlesex-London paramedics are sounding the sirens, and paramedics have already proposed a pilot program that would help triage ambulance demands to take the pressure off the system. The pilot has already been endorsed by Middlesex county council.

When will the Premier and the Minister of Health respond to the proposal and help fix the problem in London, and across the province, so people have access to ambulance services when they need them the most?

1140

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Speaker, I cannot reinforce how pleased I am to hear the member opposite talk about, and encouraging, innovation in our health care system. The number of innovative ideas that have come, particularly through the paramedic system include, of course, the 911 model of care, which allows individuals to get treated outside of an emergency department. That idea came from paramedics. It came from chiefs who understood we have trained health care professionals who can do more, and are willing to do more.

We'll continue to acknowledge, accept and review those innovative ideas, and approve them when appropriate. But again I cannot underline how pleased I am to hear the members opposite finally talking about embracing innovation in our health care system.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Ross Romano: Speaker, my question is for our great Minister for Seniors and Accessibility.

Ontario's older residents and people with disabilities deserve more inclusive opportunities to stay fit, active,

healthy and socially connected in their communities. I have heard from residents across all of northern Ontario about the accessibility issues they face when they are out and about. They face challenges that many of us have not ever considered.

Our government must continue demonstrating leadership by ensuring that Ontario is open and inclusive. Speaker, can the minister please tell us what our government is doing to ensure that people with disabilities in northern Ontario can fully participate in our great province?

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Thank you to the member for asking such an important question. The member from Sault Ste. Marie is doing a marvellous job representing northern Ontario.

It was my pleasure to announce \$32,500 in funding as part of our Inclusive Community Grants initiative at Blind River town council last week. The people of Blind River are top notch; they care and want to make their town as accessible as possible. I want to congratulate Mayor Sally Hagman and the entire council for their leadership in making the town a shining example of how any community across Ontario can become more inclusive.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Ross Romano: I know that the funding received by the people of Blind River was of particular importance to them as it aligns with their broader economic and social development strategy of a barrier-free community.

Northern and rural communities were neglected for far too long under the previous Liberal government when it came to addressing their infrastructure needs. Seniors and people with disabilities experienced this neglect first-hand.

Speaker, can the minister please explain to the House why the funding for Blind River and across all of northern Ontario is so critical to our government's overall mission of being open and accessible to everyone?

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Thank you again for the question. The town of Blind River is showing leadership in championing when it comes to accessibility with its Sit Anywhere That Makes You Smile program. They are ensuring everyone has access to everyday recreational use.

Our Inclusive Community Grants aren't only in Blind River but all across Ontario. We are investing to help ensure everyone has an equal opportunity to engage in their communities.

Again, congratulations to Mayor Hagman and all the council members of the town of Blind River.

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

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member from Mississauga–Malton has a point of order, I understand.

Mr. Deepak Anand: A point of order, Mr. Speaker: I just want to take a moment to recognize Ms. Romana Siddiqui, chair of the parent involvement committee, PDSB, and proud mother of page Yusuf. Welcome to Queen's Park.

DEFERRED VOTES

HEALTH CARE

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We now have a deferred vote on private member's notice of motion number 8.

Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1145 to 1150.

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

Ms. Khanjin has moved private member's notice of motion number 8. All those in favour will please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Gélinas, France	Pierre, Natalie
Andrew, Jill	Ghamari, Goldie	Pirie, George
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gill, Parm	Quinn, Nolan
Babikian, Aris	Glover, Chris	Rae, Matthew
Bailey, Robert	Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Rasheed, Kaleed
Barnes, Patrice	Hardeman, Ernie	Rickford, Greg
Begum, Doly	Harden, Joel	Riddell, Brian
Bell, Jessica	Harris, Mike	Romano, Ross
Bouma, Will	Hogarth, Christine	Sabawy, Sheref
Bourgouin, Guy	Hsu, Ted	Sandhu, Amarjot
Brady, Bobbi Ann	Hunter, Mitzie	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Bresee, Ric	Jones, Sylvia	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Byers, Rick	Jones, Trevor	Sattler, Peggy
Calandra, Paul	Jordan, John	Saunderson, Brian
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Kanapathi, Logan	Schreiner, Mike
Cho, Stan	Ke, Vincent	Shamji, Adil
Clark, Steve	Kernaghan, Terence	Skelly, Donna
Coe, Lorne	Kerzner, Michael S.	Smith, Dave
Collard, Lucille	Khanjin, Andrea	Smith, David
Crawford, Stephen	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Smith, Graydon
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Leardi, Anthony	Smith, Todd
Dixon, Jess	Lecce, Stephen	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Dowie, Andrew	MacLeod, Lisa	Stiles, Marit
Downey, Doug	Mamakwa, Sol	Surma, Kinga
Dunlop, Jill	Mantha, Michael	Tabuns, Peter
Fedeli, Victor	Martin, Robin	Taylor, Monique
Fife, Catherine	McCarthy, Todd J.	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Flack, Rob	McGregor, Graham	Thompson, Lisa M.
Ford, Doug	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Tibollo, Michael A.
Ford, Michael D.	McNaughton, Monte	Vanthof, John
Fraser, John	Mulroney, Caroline	Wai, Daisy
French, Jennifer K.	Oosterhoff, Sam	West, Jamie
Fullerton, Merrilee	Pang, Billy	Williams, Charmaine A.
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Parsa, Michael	Wong-Tam, Kristyn
Gates, Wayne	Pasma, Chandra	Yakubski, John

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): All those opposed will please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 105; the nays are 0.

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

Motion agreed to.

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 1153 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

MPP Jamie West: We're joined today by many trade union leaders. I want to recognize Laura Walton, president of OSBCU, and Fred Hahn, president of CUPE Ontario, as well as union leaders. Without naming all of them—because there are so many, I'm just going to name the unions and organizations: OFL, OPSEU, ONA, ETFO, OCUFA, Unifor, the society of professional engineers, OSSTF, the machinists, OECTA, the Toronto and York Region Labour Council, and other CUPE locals, including CUPE Local 7575. Welcome to Queen's Park.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: It's my honour to introduce Lawrence Chan, a 22-year-old newcomer and refugee from Hong Kong. He is now a member of the Toronto Centre riding association family.

Mr. Joel Harden: It's a great pleasure to introduce again Sharon Lee, an OLIP intern working with us and our team for the Ottawa Centre office.

Sharon, it's nice to see you. Thank you for all your help.

Ms. Doly Begum: I would like to introduce Munaiba, who has just joined our legislative office this week as a placement student.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: I want to welcome some of my colleagues from the ministry office. Thank you for being here. You provide great support to me and my staff.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Christopher Tyrell): Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill Pr2, An Act to revive 405456 Ontario Limited.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

Report adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF GOVERNMENT BILLS

KEEPING STUDENTS IN CLASS REPEAL ACT, 2022

LOI DE 2022 ABROGEANT LA LOI VISANT À GARDER LES ÉLÈVES EN CLASSE

Mr. Calandra moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 35, An Act to repeal the Keeping Students in Class Act, 2022 / Projet de loi 35, Loi abrogeant la Loi de 2022 visant à garder les élèves en classe.

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 minister care to briefly explain his bill?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Thank you, Speaker. It's self-explanatory. The bill allows us to continue working with our friends in education to ensure that our kids remain in school.

PROGRESS ON THE PLAN TO BUILD ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2022

LOI DE 2022 SUR LA PROGRESSION DU PLAN POUR BÂTIR (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Mr. Bethlenfalvy moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 36, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes / Projet de loi 36, Loi visant à mettre en œuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.

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 Minister of Finance want to briefly explain his bill?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: We'll have more to say during statements by the ministry.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK AND FISCAL REVIEW

PERSPECTIVES ÉCONOMIQUES ET REVUE FINANCIÈRE

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Last year, when I delivered the 2021 fall economic statement in the Legislature, it was the same day we paid tribute to a great leader and great Premier of the province of Ontario, the Honourable Bill Davis. Bill Davis is still with us in this Legislature, and he casts a very long shadow. From Ontario's college system, to health care expansion, to seeing the province through economic hardship, he believed in province-building and nation-building.

Just like Premier Davis before him, Premier Ford is building this great province with Ontario's Plan to Build.

Today, Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to stand before my colleagues, old and new, to provide an update on the progress we have made on our plan to build Ontario.

Aujourd'hui, j'ai le privilège, en présence de mes anciens et nouveaux collègues, de faire le point sur les progrès que nous avons faits dans l'exécution de notre plan pour bâtir l'Ontario.

And together we have come so far. Together, we've invested in Ontario's automotive and manufacturing capacity and supply chain to become a North American leader in building electric and hybrid vehicles and battery manufacturing.

Together, we're unlocking the economic potential of critical minerals and the Ring of Fire of the north and connecting them to our world-class manufacturing capabilities in southern Ontario.

We're building roads, we're building highways, we're building subways, and we're building bridges.

Together, we've trained thousands of workers through significant investments in skills training.

Together, we're keeping costs down for families, for workers and our seniors.

And, together, we're expanding our health care workforce with more doctors, more nurses and more personal support workers. And we're well under way on delivering on the largest expansion of long-term-care beds in this province's history.

Mr. Speaker, in our 2022 Ontario economic outlook and fiscal review, we are tabling the first-ever Building Ontario Progress Report.

Monsieur le Président, dans le document Perspectives économiques et revue financière de 2022, nous présentons le tout premier rapport d'étape, « Bâtir l'Ontario ».

To build Ontario's economy, we're making progress in attracting investments and good jobs.

Over the last two years, we have attracted more than \$16 billion, including \$12.5 billion in electric vehicles and EV manufacturing of batteries right here in the province—and \$2.5 billion in investments that will help make the province a world producer of clean steel.

Mr. Speaker, we released Ontario's first-ever Critical Minerals Strategy to support better supply chain connections in northern and southern Ontario. And we are progressing on the roads to the Ring of Fire by supporting ongoing environmental assessment led by Marten Falls First Nation and Webequie First Nation, for both the Marten Falls community access road and the Webequie supply road.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to call on the federal government to be a full partner in the Ring of Fire and match our investment.

1310

To build Ontario's workforce, we're making progress in training and educating students and workers to succeed today and tomorrow. The first two rounds of the Skills Development Fund delivered 388 training projects, helping more than 393,000 workers take the next step in their careers. And we've already added more than 11,700 health care workers to the system, including nurses and personal support workers. And after two years of pandemic disruptions, our government launched its Plan to Catch Up, so students are in classrooms learning, preparing for the jobs of the future.

To build infrastructure for Ontario, we're making progress by getting shovels in the ground on critical projects all across Ontario. As I stand here, preliminary

fieldwork is already under way for Highway 413, and early construction work has started on the Bradford Bypass. We have completed construction at the Union and Rutherford GO stations. And that's not all: We broke ground and announced the preferred proponent teams for two key contracts on the Ontario Line. We've also invested over \$950 million in nearly 190 broadband, cellular and satellite projects, bringing access to over 375,000 Ontario homes and businesses.

Mr. Speaker, to keep costs down, our government eliminated licence plate renewal fees as well as licence plate stickers, and refunded the past two years of fees for eligible vehicles. We continue to help make life more affordable for nearly eight million vehicle owners in Ontario. We've saved and continue to save money for Ontario households by temporarily cutting the gas tax and fuel tax, starting on July 1, 2022.

To secure our long-term prosperity, we must increase supply. That means building hospitals and housing, building highways and roads, and delivering manufacturing capacity in this province. And that is exactly what our government is doing. Each and every day, we're getting it done. We're continuing to say yes to building Ontario's economy, yes to building Ontario's workforce, yes to building Ontario's infrastructure, and yes to keeping costs down for Ontario families and businesses.

Mr. Speaker, these are uncertain economic times. In 2022, Ontario's consumer price inflation reached a near 40-year high.

La conjoncture économique est incertaine. En 2022, l'indice des prix à la consommation de l'Ontario a atteint un sommet inégalé depuis près de 40 ans.

We are suffering from high inflation because of the consequences of a worldwide pandemic and Russia's illegal war on the Ukraine, which has caused supply disruptions across various industries. While inflation eased somewhat in September, the Bank of Canada increased interest rates another 50 basis points, and the cost of groceries and other everyday goods continues to remain stubbornly high. Taken together, the year ahead is likely to be marked by ongoing economic turbulence and a slowdown in growth. Understandably, this is putting financial pressure on families, workers and seniors. This is why our government has a responsible fiscal plan which will help us navigate these uncertain times. This is why, no matter what lies ahead, I have confidence in the resilience of Ontario's economy, its workers and its people. And I have confidence in our plan.

Mr. Speaker, our fall economic statement also includes new targeted measures to advance our plan. After over 300,000 manufacturing jobs were lost under the previous government, our government is using the strength of our supply chains to support globally competitive, homegrown manufacturing.

Manufacturers are looking for ways to remove emissions from supply chains. That is why we're proposing to launch a voluntary clean energy credit registry that will boost competitiveness and attract jobs—and Mr. Speaker, I even got a smile under that mask, from Mike

Schreiner, across the way. This will also give businesses another tool to achieve their environmental and sustainability goals.

We're also refocusing our approach to cutting red tape to clear up supply chain delays as well as to support Ontario's agri-food system so we can get goods and services to customers faster and help create more jobs.

Mr. Speaker, our government knows that Main Street Ontario matters. That's why we're proposing to increase the number of small businesses that could benefit from the small business tax rate. This change will lower costs for small businesses, providing \$185 million in income tax relief over the next three years.

Our government recognizes the incredible potential of each and every person in this province. And people living with a disability shouldn't be punished for working. That's why we are proposing to increase the amount a person on the Ontario Disability Support Program, also known as ODSP, can earn, from \$200 to \$1,000 per month. This will not impact their other plentiful income tax supports that they deserve. This measure would encourage people with a disability who want to increase their work hours to do so and would promote more participation in the workforce—while not penalizing them for doing so. It would allow the approximately 25,000 individuals currently in the workforce to keep more of their earnings, and it could encourage as many as 25,000 more to participate in the workforce.

Our government also recognizes that there are many ODSP recipients who cannot work and that they need our continued support. That is why, in August, we announced a 5% increase to ODSP rates. Going forward, we plan to adjust ODSP rates to inflation, beginning in July 2023, so when the cost of living increases, income support would increase as well.

Nous entendons rajuster les prestations du Programme ontarien de soutien aux personnes handicapées en fonction de l'inflation, et ce, à compter de juillet 2023. Ainsi, quand le coût de la vie augmentera, le soutien du revenu augmentera aussi.

As we increase support for ODSP recipients, we also must look at reforms so we can improve access and make sure that those who need the support can get it faster.

We want everyone who is able and wants to pursue a job to know that their government is in their corner. That is why we are investing in skills training. Through our Skills Development Fund, we have supported groundbreaking programs that connect job seekers. Through our efforts in skills and training, we are ensuring that they have the skills they need to pursue new opportunities. And I'm pleased to announce today that we are investing an additional \$40 million for the latest round of this program. This brings our total funding to a record \$145 million.

The skilled trades present an opportunity for a successful career for thousands upon thousands of people, especially high school students. I'm pleased to share that our government is expanding the Dual Credit Program, creating direct pathways for high school students seeking

a career in the trades or in early childhood education. This gives students the opportunity to complete credits towards both an Ontario secondary school diploma and a college credential or a certificate of apprenticeship so that they can begin work earlier. Mr. Speaker, there is a future in Ontario for young people in the trades.

1320

As well, we know that these are challenging financial times for many in our province. This government understands that the last thing the people of Ontario need right now is a tax increase at the pumps. That is why we are proposing to extend the gas and fuel tax cuts until December 31, 2023. Extending these cuts would mean households of this province would save \$195, on average, between July 1, 2022, and December 31, 2023.

Mr. Speaker, seniors built this province, and we owe them all a debt of gratitude—so thank you. But for too many low-income seniors, covering day-to-day costs has become a source of anxiety. Our government is proposing to double payments for all senior recipients of the Ontario Guaranteed Annual Income System program for 2023. This will provide a maximum increase of almost \$1,000 per person for low-income seniors for the year.

Our government also recognizes that we are facing a difficult road ahead, and an economic slowdown in the near term is very real.

Monsieur le Président, notre gouvernement le sait bien : le chemin qui nous attend sera semé d'embûches, sans doute, et le spectre d'un ralentissement économique à brève échéance est bien réel.

When faced with this degree of uncertainty, we need to be flexible and forward-thinking, with a fiscal plan that is ready to support people and businesses when and if the time comes, while also laying a strong foundation for future generations. But for too long, previous governments have allowed our structural deficits to grow. Previous governments added almost \$200 billion to Ontario's debt, and what do they have to show for it? Enough highways?

Interjections: No.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Enough transit?

Interjections: No.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: More hospitals?

Interjections: No.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: More nurses and personal support workers?

Interjections: No.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Our government is taking a different path. We're taking a responsible and targeted approach, making record investments in the priorities that matter to the people of Ontario.

Ontario's projected deficit in 2022-23 is \$12.9 billion. This is an improvement of \$6.9 billion from the 2022 budget. Eliminating Ontario's deficit while delivering on Ontario's Plan to Build is a critical part of our government's long-term vision for this province. After unprecedented spending in response to the pandemic, now is the time for governments to show restraint, to act cautiously and responsibly. Irresponsible spending today

will only make inflation more painful and drag out the economic downturn.

The economic road ahead will not be easy, and Ontario is not an island, and we will not be immune to it. But there is nothing we cannot do together, no challenge that we cannot meet, no obstacle we cannot overcome. Whatever the economic uncertainty may bring, our government has a plan. Just like Bill Davis did so many years ago, under the leadership of Premier Ford we are building a stronger province. And no matter the obstacles we may face, we are steadfast—because one thing I am sure of is the strength and resilience of the people of this great province.

Together, let's get it done. Let's build Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Responses?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It is a pleasure to rise on behalf of His Majesty's official opposition to respond to the fall economic statement.

Budgeting is about priorities. The fall economic statement is a key opportunity to communicate with Ontarians. What the government is communicating today is that they don't share our priorities of health, of education or of cost-of-living relief for low-income families.

This government's economic update comes on the heels of a multi-billion dollar surplus. Instead of taking the opportunity to invest in our hospitals, they sit on billions. Amid a health care crisis, which is real, this government has not allocated a single new penny. We have seen cancelled surgeries across the province, ER closures, code reds in all of our communities, long waits. And now, for the first time in the history of the province, there is a shortage of pediatric ICU beds for children. Every single pediatric unit is full.

Just this morning, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health said the province's health system is facing extraordinary pressures.

Despite the crisis before us, the government is projected to spend \$6.2 billion less on health care than what is needed through to 2025.

I'm not sure if the members of the government in the House have seen the pictures of children and babies on ventilators, but I would urge you to pay attention to what is happening in our health care system.

As staffing shortages plague our hospitals, the Ford government touts that they have added 11,000 new health care workers since 2020, but informed reports say 47,000 new health care workers need to be hired per year for the next three years to maintain current service levels. And yet this government stubbornly holds on to Bill 124, which is wage-suppression legislation, which is driving health care workers out of this province. Health care workers are increasingly reporting exhaustion and burnout, and more and more health care workers are considering whole profession changes.

On the education front, over the last few weeks we saw the government lowballing CUPE education workers and imposing a collective agreement on them with meagre increases, well below inflation. The fall economic statement continues this trend of underspending. Comparing

the document before us to the non-partisan Financial Accountability Officer's report from October, the government will be short \$1 billion in education through 2024-25. What does that mean for our kids? And what does that say about a government that doesn't respect education workers and that doesn't understand the damage that was done to our students and to our system throughout the pandemic?

The cost of living: Instead of addressing the housing affordability crisis, this government has downgraded its projection for housing starts in the coming years and has refused to fully reverse the \$100-million cut to the housing program. The government has failed to accelerate public funding for affordable and non-market housing to ensure an adequate supply of new homes. We should not have people in Ontario living in tents. There has to be an investment in truly affordable housing.

There were some encouraging parts, I do want to say. We were absolutely relieved that there were improvements to ODSP, where future increases will be tied to inflation—and increasing the allowable earnings from \$200 a month to \$1,000 a month. That is a good move and something that we have tried to get the government to pay attention to. But Ontario's ODSP rates have not kept pace with inflation. An inflationary increase is welcome, but it's not enough to combat the skyrocketing costs of rent, of heating and of groceries—and the gas tax will not help these folks.

A troubling trend that we have observed in the last two budget cycles, and this is something that I think everyone should be paying attention to in Ontario, is that this government is underestimating revenue—you just heard it—and it overestimates the deficit. This has been observed by public accounts, by the FAO, by the Auditor General—and the government's own summer budget. For 2022-23, the government is projecting a deficit of \$12.9 billion, \$7 billion lower than the outlook published in the summer budget, but in the same period, our Financial Accountability Officer has predicted a \$100-million surplus. Where is the transparency? Where is the trust on the dollars?

Mr. Speaker, this fall economic statement is disappointing because it does not recognize the current state of affairs that the people of this province are experiencing. It is a missed opportunity to invest in the people of this province.

1330

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: I rise today to comment on Ontario's economic outlook and fiscal review. While this occasion was a chance to meaningfully enhance the programs that Ontarians rely on, like health care and education, once again this government is showing their reluctance to spend and leaving our public health care system in crisis, and they are at risk of doing the same to public education.

On a positive note, the fall economic statement does have some increased funding in GAINS to help low-income seniors—which the Liberal caucus called for—about \$40 million. And it does provide the opportunity for

those on ODSP who can work to earn more before ODSP is clawed back. Those are measures that will help some Ontarians.

What we do not see here is a meaningful effort to fix the health care crisis and reverse decisions like Bill 124, which contributed to nurses leaving the profession at the highest rate ever.

What we do not see reflected here is the decision to not pay our public sector workers what they are worth, creating instability in the education sector and instability for families.

What we do not see here is meaningful help for low-income families who are struggling to put food on the table.

What we do not see here is an effort to protect the land that we grow our food on instead of paving over it, so that Ontarians have actual food security instead of just a food security strategy.

Increasing the Ontario child tax benefit is one of our recommendations for how this government could have provided that relief. Instead, they have decided to do nothing to help those families.

Mr. Speaker, this government talks about attracting jobs to the province. That is a good thing, but in this era of climate crisis—which this government continues to ignore—the government overlooked a very important criteria that companies use to make their decisions about location: access to green energy. With their decision to cancel green energy contracts put in place by the previous Liberal government and their decision to add carbon-emitting gas plants to our energy grid, this government is jeopardizing Ontario's ability to attract companies to Ontario.

The government's history of underestimating its overall financial results and not being transparent with Ontarians about our financial situation continues. This updated economic outlook still reflects a \$3.5-billion contingency fund for this year alone and provides no details at all about the amount of contingency funds in future years—what the FAO and the Auditor General note as historically high.

While prudence and fiscal responsibility are admirable features of a budget and outlook, underspending and underfunding on priorities like health care and protecting our kids, our seniors and our most vulnerable are not.

The government continues to forecast a deficit for 2022-23, when just a few months ago they reported a \$2.1-billion surplus. The FAO forecast a \$100-million surplus in 2022-23, while this government continues to forecast a deficit of \$12.9 billion.

Just today, the FAO released a report that shows in this year alone the government is underfunding our public education system by \$400 million. Mr. Speaker, that hurts kids, parents and our economy.

In difficult times like these, people look out for each other, and that makes all the difference. But some difficulties are too big for family, friends or neighbours to handle. That's when the government needs to step up to make sure Ontarians have more than just the ability to survive—but to ensure they have the opportunity to thrive.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I rise to respond to the fall economic statement. With all due respect to the Minister of Finance, I believe this statement fails to meet the moment. You would not know that Ontario is in an affordability crisis, reading this statement—especially the most vulnerable.

While I support the increase in the income allowance for ODSP recipients, the bottom line is, for those who cannot work, this statement will mean they remain living in legislated poverty.

Speaker, nothing in this statement talked about food affordability, the excess profits of food retailers, the need to protect our farmland, the need to bring in a grocery code of conduct, or the need to house people—the growing number of homeless we're experiencing in our communities—and the need to invest in permanent supportive housing.

Quite frankly, when the government talks about a building progress report, the report needs to talk about whether we are building to be climate-ready. When we build on the farmland that feeds us, the greenbelt that protects us, the wetlands that support us, we are not building to be climate-ready. That is not how Bill Davis built. He built a province that laid the foundation for the greenbelt—not paving over it.

MOTIONS

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. Paul Calandra: I am seeking unanimous consent that, notwithstanding any standing order or special order of the House, the order for second reading of Bill 35, An Act to repeal the Keeping Students in Class Act, 2022, may be called today; and

That when that order is called, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading; and

That the order for third reading of Bill 35 shall then immediately be called and the question shall immediately be put on the motion for third reading of the bill without debate or amendment; and

That no deferral of the second or third reading votes on the bill shall be permitted; and

That if there is a recorded vote, it will be limited to a five-minute bell.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Calandra is seeking the unanimous consent of the House that, notwithstanding any standing order or special order of the House, the order for second reading of Bill 35, An Act to repeal the Keeping Students in Class Act, 2022, may be called today; and

That when that order is called, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading; and

That the order for third reading of Bill 35 shall then immediately be called and the question shall immediately be put on the motion for third reading of the bill without debate or amendment; and

That no deferral of the second or third reading votes on the bill shall be permitted; and

That if there is a recorded vote, it will be limited to a five-minute bell.

Agreed? Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

KEEPING STUDENTS IN CLASS REPEAL ACT, 2022

LOI DE 2022 ABROGEANT LA LOI VISANT À GARDER LES ÉLÈVES EN CLASSE

Mr. Calandra moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 35, An Act to repeal the Keeping Students in Class Act, 2022 / Projet de loi 35, Loi abrogeant la Loi de 2022 visant à garder les élèves en classe.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to the order of the House adopted earlier today, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Calandra has moved second reading of Bill 35, An Act to repeal the Keeping Students in Class Act, 2022. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

KEEPING STUDENTS IN CLASS REPEAL ACT, 2022

LOI DE 2022 ABROGEANT LA LOI VISANT À GARDER LES ÉLÈVES EN CLASSE

Mr. Calandra moved third reading of the following bill:
Bill 35, An Act to repeal the Keeping Students in Class Act, 2022 / Projet de loi 35, Loi abrogeant la Loi de 2022 visant à garder les élèves en classe.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to the order of the House adopted earlier today, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Calandra has moved third reading of Bill 35, An Act to repeal the Keeping Students in Class Act, 2022. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

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

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1340 to 1345.

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

Mr. Calandra has moved third reading of Bill 35, An Act to repeal the Keeping Students in Class Act, 2022.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Gélinas, France	Pirie, George
Andrew, Jill	Ghamari, Goldie	Quinn, Nolan
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Glover, Chris	Rae, Matthew
Babikian, Aris	Gretzky, Lisa	Riddell, Brian
Bailey, Robert	Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Romano, Ross
Barnes, Patrice	Hardeman, Ernie	Sabawy, Sheref
Begum, Doly	Harden, Joel	Sandhu, Amarjot
Bell, Jessica	Harris, Mike	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Hogarth, Christine	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Bouma, Will	Hsu, Ted	Sattler, Peggy
Bourgouin, Guy	Hunter, Mitzie	Saunderson, Brian
Bowman, Stephanie	Jones, Sylvia	Schreiner, Mike
Brady, Bobbi Ann	Jones, Trevor	Scott, Laurie
Breese, Ric	Jordan, John	Shamji, Adil
Byers, Rick	Kanapathi, Logan	Skelly, Donna
Calandra, Paul	Ke, Vincent	Smith, Dave
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Kernaghan, Terence	Smith, David
Clark, Steve	Khanjin, Andrea	Smith, Graydon
Coe, Lorne	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Smith, Laura
Collard, Lucille	Leardi, Anthony	Smith, Todd
Crawford, Stephen	Lumsden, Neil	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Cuzzetto, Rudy	MacLeod, Lisa	Surma, Kinga
Dixon, Jess	Mamakwa, Sol	Tabuns, Peter
Dowie, Andrew	Mantha, Michael	Tangri, Nina
Downey, Doug	Martin, Robin	Taylor, Monique
Dunlop, Jill	McCarthy, Todd J.	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Fife, Catherine	McGregor, Graham	Tibollo, Michael A.
Flack, Rob	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Vanhof, John
Ford, Doug	McNaughton, Monte	West, Jamie
Fraser, John	Mulroney, Caroline	Williams, Charmaine A.
French, Jennifer K.	Oosterhoff, Sam	Wong-Tam, Kristyn
Fullerton, Merrilee	Pang, Billy	Yakubski, John
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Pasma, Chandra	
Gates, Wayne	Pierre, Natalie	

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 100; the nays are 0.

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

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

STRENGTHENING POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS AND STUDENTS ACT, 2022

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

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 3, 2022, on the motion for second 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 Arnett): Further debate?

Mr. Graham McGregor: It is an honour to stand here today and speak to just how important the well-being of our students is to our province and to our government. Led by the Minister of Colleges and Universities, our government is committed to ensuring students have access to a secure and safe learning environment. We're taking necessary action to protect our future.

1350

As the Minister of Colleges and Universities stated, campuses across the province—from the GTA to rural and northern Ontario—are not only places of learning; they are centres of employment and economic growth for the communities, cities and regions they call home. Our colleges, universities, Indigenous institutes and private career colleges are key drivers of economic growth, prosperity and competitiveness. Post-secondary institutions are pillars of their local communities and leaders in preparing the people of Ontario for the jobs of today and for the jobs of tomorrow.

Speaker, I consider myself incredibly fortunate to not only represent the riding I grew up in but to represent a riding built on diversity. There is nothing the people of Brampton cannot do, and that is in large part due to those who decided to move to Brampton and make it their home. Often, what attracts them is our post-secondary education system. Our system is in great standing on the global stage. Not only has it done an incredible job at attracting international talent, but these institutions constantly produce skilled talent that keeps our province competitive on the national and international stage. Brampton is home to Sheridan College and Algoma University, and it will soon be home to the Toronto Metropolitan University school of medicine and a number of other post-secondary institutions.

Attracting Ontarians to the region from around the province, and many from around the world, it is our responsibility to ensure that our colleges and our universities are set up to protect those same students. Some of these young students are coming from countries on the other half of the world. They say goodbye to their friends, brothers, sisters and parents. In some cases, they're saying goodbye to their partners and their children as well. They make an enormous sacrifice. Not only do the students make this sacrifice—but also the families of these students, who put their trust in our province to protect them and ensure they have every opportunity to succeed.

Speaker, we have taken recent steps to strengthen supports for post-secondary students reporting sexual violence or harassment. Our government understands we have to also specifically address sexual misconduct by faculty and staff towards students. That's why we're proposing legislative amendments that would require publicly assisted post-secondary institutions and private career colleges to have specific processes in place that address and increase transparency of faculty and staff sexual misconduct. If passed, these changes would better

protect students who fall victim to faculty and staff sexual violence. This will be accomplished by strengthening the tools available to institutions in order to address instances of misconduct against students; for example, deeming sexual abuse of a student to be just cause for dismissal.

Speaker, let me be clear: No student should ever have to see the face of someone who commits sexual misconduct walking around the campus. If this horrendous act is ever committed, the guilty have no business near any school or near any campus. Schools need to create a welcoming environment for students, and Bill 26 will help us do that. Students are not dedicating hours upon hours of their days and weeks to fail. They want to succeed. Providing them with a safe environment and as few distractions as possible will not only help each individual student, but it will strengthen our province. Successful students are successful leaders of tomorrow's workforce.

I've said this before in this House: Ontario thrives off its diversity. Ontario is a place where it doesn't matter where you come from, who you love or how you choose to worship God; everybody deserves the same opportunity to succeed. We have attracted the world's most amazing people, who have helped to build this identity in this province. However, we need to continue to work to maintain the dignity of our system.

We have a shortage right now of nearly 400,000 in the skilled trades labour workforce—good-paying, life-changing jobs that we need to fill.

I was fortunate enough to recently join the Residential Construction Council of Ontario's third annual Addressing Racism in Construction webinar, where I delivered a keynote address. I mentioned that if we're going to meet our goal of building 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years, we need 100,000 additional construction workers alone. A lot of these roles are being filled internationally. People are bringing their families to Ontario to start a life anew. This is great for Ontario, as we also combat the labour shortage, but the shortage is going to get worse before it gets better.

Our government understands the importance of attracting international talent. However, it's important to ensure Ontario is a welcoming place for these individuals who in many cases go on to become new Canadians. We need to let them know that their children are in good hands. If we're going to be a welcoming society for people, we need to create a home that makes people feel welcome when they get here. We need to assure parents that their children will be safe in middle school, safe in high school, and safe in their post-secondary endeavours. Attracting this talent includes building the infrastructure to support a sustainable lifestyle, making them feel safe here and giving them every opportunity to succeed.

I'm proud of our Minister of Health's recent announcement that Ontario's nursing college can now start allowing internationally educated nurses to practise while they work towards full registration. This should mean thousands of more nurses to support our health care system, while giving those who are ready to support an opportunity to do so. That's just one change introduced by

our government that could potentially help nearly 6,000 active international applicants in Ontario.

Bill 26 will also introduce legislation preventing the use of non-disclosure agreements to address instances where an employee leaves an institution to be employed at another institution and their prior wrongdoing remains a secret. This is a change that is long, long overdue. There's absolutely no reason that any case of misconduct or harassment should go hidden. There should be zero tolerance. That's exactly what our government is fighting for. We are fighting to keep our students safe.

Students deserve to be taught by good people and separated as far as possible from crooks. There should be no opportunity for anyone to reoffend. That is out of the question.

Speaker, the thought of a creep lurking around job to job, given their history, is something that sends shivers down my spine.

Another key component of Bill 26 is a requirement for institutions to have codes of conduct regarding faculty and staff sexual misconduct. Setting this out in writing should leave no doubt or question on the expectations of faculty and of staff.

Speaker, our government has a plan to protect our students so that they can make the most out of their post-secondary careers. No student should have to worry about sexual misconduct from staff and faculty. That has no place in our schools and, frankly, no place anywhere in our province. All post-secondary institutions have a responsibility to provide a safe and supportive learning environment and are expected to do everything possible to address issues of sexual violence on campuses.

The Minister of Colleges and Universities is committed to supporting our students. The ministry held extensive consultations with over 100 stakeholders with the knowledge and background to ensure we can implement the necessary changes and do so successfully. These stakeholders included representatives from post-secondary institutions, representatives from labour and student groups, private career colleges, faculty associations and community organizations. They are the ones on the front lines with our students.

Our government's actions to date include strengthening the policies that protect post-secondary students who report incidents of sexual violence or harassment on campus. The next step is for a separate process for faculty and staff misconduct towards students. These changes will not only help protect students in cases of faculty and staff sexual misconduct but will also allow the institutions to better address complaints when they arise.

The changes also build on the new regulatory amendments that our government introduced last fall to protect students from inappropriate questioning or disciplinary action when they report acts of sexual violence. Going through some of the horrid instances some students have experienced is enough. The questions they face need to respect them as they go through the after-effects of the crime that was committed on them. These are some of the hardest times for a victim, and it is important for them to

be treated in a respectful manner—in the way that they deserve—throughout the investigation.

With these legislative amendments, we'll ensure that all post-secondary students in Ontario can feel safe not only on campus but all around.

1400

Speaker, I'd like to tell a story, and unfortunately, it's not a unique one. It's a story that breaks my heart, but it's one that is important that we share. I won't be naming the specific institution because calling out actors isn't what's important here. Doing the right thing is what's important. A professor at a school in the Niagara region was accused of sexually assaulting one of their students.

Students who become victims aren't just students; these victims are somebody's sibling; they are somebody's child; they're our friends or colleagues; they're people who just wanted to learn and don't deserve what happens to them.

In this specific instance, the university's internal investigation was able to confirm the allegations against this professor were indeed true. Before he committed his crime, he tried to give alcohol to the student. It was found that this professor made unwanted sexual comments and sexual advances.

Speaker, students have the right to feel safe when they approach their professor in school. They have the right to ask questions, participate, and if they still don't understand something or need some extra help, they deserve to be able to go to the professor's office hours and have that extra time. A student should not need to bat an eye when going to their professor for help. A professor's job is to teach. But if tools like non-disclosure agreements can hide predatory histories of staff and faculty when they move to a new school, how can a student trust that they will be safe?

Speaker, in the specific story I referenced, after nearly three years away from teaching, the professor was welcomed back to teach again at the school. The school announced—again, nearly three years later, after finding he was guilty—that he had the right to return to his teaching position at the university under the faculty's collective agreement and a recent legal arbitration decision. I'll note that after public outcry this school in question eventually did the right thing, but it makes you wonder about the cases that don't receive the same kind of public attention and the same kind of public backlash.

Bill 26 would have ended this before it got worse, and it will end the cases that don't receive the same attention. That's why this is such an important piece of legislation that we're debating here today.

Introducing guidelines and hoping staff and faculty don't reoffend isn't fair to our students. It's not fair that they're put in a situation where their learning isn't their number one priority; instead, they ask themselves, "Why is my professor such a creep? What if something happens to me? Am I safe where I am today?" I know that is not what we want our education system to be. Just the idea of allowing a predator back to teach classes resulted in protest and severe discomfort for students. At any point when the priority isn't learning, something is not right.

Bill 26 will ensure students are able to focus on what matters most: their education.

I'm proud to speak on behalf of our students on a bill that will bring so much good to Ontario. Again, I commend our Minister of Colleges and Universities as well as the Minister of Education for their amazing and important work to ensure that our students, no matter what age, are put first.

Speaker, there's another element to this legislation, on a bit of a different note but still with a very significant impact, particularly for residents in my riding, in Brampton. Our government is committed to working with Toronto Metropolitan University, for the first time ever giving Brampton students an opportunity to become Brampton medical students and eventually become Brampton doctors. Statistically, a significant percentage of students choose to stay in the city where they studied and practise. For a city like Brampton, which has been growing so quickly and, like so many other parts of the province, has been experiencing a health care crisis, a medical school is exactly what the doctor ordered. I hear it from my constituents all the time:

Brampton needs more doctors and better health care infrastructure. That's why I'm so excited that under the leadership of our Premier, our government is getting it done for Brampton. We're getting it done with the Toronto Metropolitan University. We're getting it done by delivering the Peel Memorial Hospital. I've been working closely with the Ministry of Colleges and Universities as well as the team at TMU to move things along sooner rather than later.

It has been decades since the GTA saw a medical school, and it is our government that is making it happen.

The Brampton medical school is a huge win for the city. The economic impact will be extraordinary. A new school means students and faculty. This means more economic activity in the surrounding region. In Brampton, the growth around Sheridan College, for example, saw nearby businesses see massive growth. We see it with the recent changes to Algoma, the growth at Algoma—where they've grown to 3,000 students who are learning in the heart of downtown Brampton. We're seeing that from many of the small business owners who had a tough time throughout COVID—that this experience of having the campus nearby, of having young people spending money, going to their businesses, going to their shops, very much kept them afloat. And the economic impact of having so many bright, talented young people in our city cannot be overstated.

With the influx of students that we've seen in Brampton, we have been booming, and that is exactly what we need to do as we build our economy—creating more jobs. And creating more jobs, we know, will create a stronger province. It's crucial that we get things moving quickly.

This starts with the strong efforts of the Toronto Metropolitan University to begin a new chapter with their recent name change. Our government introduced legislative amendments so the university can legally change its name

to Toronto Metropolitan University. This is an important step to allow the school to move forward and to allow people in our province to heal. The change in name supports our government's efforts to ensure that Ontario has a post-secondary system that embraces accessibility and inclusivity, and that promotes success for all learners, including Indigenous ones, so they can find rewarding careers.

We're also introducing amendments that would allow Toronto Metropolitan University to change the composition and increase the size of its senate to reflect the addition of two new faculties, one of them being the Lincoln Alexander School of Law, the other being the soon-to-be-established school of medicine in Brampton, Ontario. This will ensure the senate has representatives from all faculties at the university.

From hearing from the team at Toronto Metropolitan University, I can say these changes are big. Everyone involved is excited to be another step closer to opening the doors to medical students in Brampton. Brampton is ready.

For far too long, as Brampton has continued to grow at an exponential rate, the infrastructure support has remained stagnant. But thanks to our Premier, our government is ensuring Brampton is getting the recognition it deserves so that my constituents, so that new Canadians who want to make Brampton their home, so that families and our students can all live in a city where they don't have to worry about long waits for health care, where they don't have to worry about endless congestion on the roads, and where they don't have to worry about their kids not going to school.

Our government has made it clear since day one that we will always put our students first.

And I would remind my colleagues in this chamber that one of the first things I said in my inaugural speech is that outside of this chamber, there's not a Progressive Conservative Ontario and a New Democrat Ontario and a Liberal Ontario; it's just Ontario.

Folks in downtown Toronto are concerned about getting good-paying jobs in a booming manufacturing sector.

Folks in my riding are pretty worried about the climate and their local environment.

We all have a duty, as legislators, to put our constituents first and support good pieces of legislation.

I think what we have here, from the tremendous leadership of our Minister of Colleges and Universities, is a good bill. This is a great piece of legislation that will protect students, establish accountability—so that some of our heinous perpetrators of terrible, terrible crimes will receive the accountability that they should. It will also move forward the legal name change for Toronto Metropolitan University, which is a crucial step for the success of the university, certainly in my city, in Brampton—in Toronto, as well—but also a crucial step for so many as they continue to heal from the wounds of the past.

I would end my comments by congratulating the Minister of Colleges and Universities on putting forward

an excellent piece of legislation. I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill.

1410

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member from St. Catharines.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Through you, I would thank the member from Brampton North for introducing some valid points about Bill 26. However, within this bill, it addresses sexual assault—but in my community, the biggest gap in supporting survivors is not in the rules, but in their ability to get sexual assault evidence kits to receive their justice.

Can the government elaborate on whether or not they think hospital response programs like the ones in Niagara will get extra support to ensure all survivors are supported?

Mr. Graham McGregor: I thank my colleague for the question. It's an important question.

I think we all agree here in the chamber that supporting survivors of sexual violence and sexual harassment should be the number one priority of us as legislators here.

I'm very happy to highlight some of the other good things that are happening in this bill. For instance, if passed, these changes would strengthen the tools available to institutions in order to address instances of faculty or staff sexual misconduct against students, i.e. deeming sexual abuse of a student to be just cause for dismissal, and preventing the use of a non-disclosure agreement to address instances where an employee leaves an institution to be employed at another institution and their prior wrongdoing remains a secret.

There's a lot of very good material in this bill. I will certainly be voting for it myself, and I urge my colleague to do the same.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member from Mississauga—Erin Mills.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I would like to thank the member from Brampton North for the great debate about the bill, Bill 26.

Formerly, from my past life as an IT professor who taught at colleges and different institutions, I understand the importance of protecting students. I understand the importance of a feel-safe environment where students can learn and feel safe to approach their professors and faculty—to make sure that they are protected by different regulations.

I would like to pose a question for the colleague from Brampton North: How do you see those changes impacting the safety of the students against sexual harassment?

Mr. Graham McGregor: Thank you to the member from Mississauga—Erin Mills for that question.

The kinds of changes that we're putting forward in this bill—it makes you wonder how these weren't in place already. The idea that you could have somebody sign a non-disclosure agreement when they're an abuser, on the faculty or the staff, and you have some of these vile individuals being able to hide in plain sight so that students don't know the history of the people who are teaching

them—I think it was a massive oversight that I'm proud our government is taking steps to correct.

We hear all the time that young people are vital to the success of our province. We need to be giving our young people every tool in the tool kit to allow them to succeed, and a safe place to learn is the bare minimum to do so.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Question?

Mr. Joel Harden: I listened to the remarks by the member from Brampton North with interest, and I agree with a lot of what he said.

What I'm about to ask is a serious question; it's not a gotcha question, it's not a "playing politics in the chamber" question. We've been following the research about gender-based violence really closely in our city, and I like the fact that you're talking about emphasizing support for survivors. But I also want to ask: What is the plan for perpetrators? People don't learn to objectify other people and dehumanize other people genetically. These behaviours are somehow taught and reinforced. What is the plan, with this bill, to reach people, particularly men, who take a position of power and abuse that position of power? How do we reach them beyond consequences, no NDAs, threats—what's the plan for education, particularly now on campus, when so many men are drawn into behaviours that are threatening to women?

Mr. Graham McGregor: I thank the member for Ottawa Centre for that question; it's an important one.

We need to make sure that we're building an inclusive society where nobody feels entitled through their position of power or authority to treat anybody any differently, and especially to engage in some of the heinous types of sexual harassment and sexual violence that we've been seeing.

An important piece of this bill that I think my colleague would agree with is around the accountability measures, so that you can no longer allow a non-disclosure agreement to be signed that protects somebody who committed one of these acts at another institution. They can't just sign up and work at another institution. I think that's an important piece. Another big piece of it, frankly, is to allow it to be just cause for dismissal.

I hope that these changes impact the safety of our students.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Question?

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I thank you very much for the debate today.

I want to also thank the minister for bringing this really important bill forward.

To anybody, all across the board—it doesn't matter what political stripe you are—sexual harassment, sexual violence has no place in our society.

As leaders in our community and as parents, we must talk to our children, making sure that they know that no is no and that consent is important; we all have a responsibility, as legislators.

We also have a responsibility, as parents or aunts or uncles or grandparents, to make sure our young people grow up to be good citizens in society.

Thank you for bringing this bill forward, Minister.

And thank you for the debate today.

We know that Bill 26 has a strong focus on faculty and students. Can you talk a little bit about how it's not just good for students but it's good for the faculty and staff as well?

Mr. Graham McGregor: It's a great question from my colleague from Etobicoke–Lakeshore. I appreciate the question.

I think having a safe place where people feel secure is fundamental for everybody's success, whether you're part of faculty, whether you're on the staff, or whether you're a student. When people can have trust in an institution that not only the authority figures but also their colleagues are being held to a standard, I think that creates a healthier work environment for everybody involved.

The instance that I pointed out in my remarks, where a faculty member at a school in Niagara region was found guilty and was able to work there three years later—not only would that make the students feel unsafe, but I imagine that would make the other faculty and staff feel unsafe as well.

I think more transparency and more accountability is better for everybody.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Question?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I want to follow up on the question that was just asked of the member for Brampton North. I appreciate his concern to ensure a safe environment for faculty and staff in addition to students. But I am curious to know why this legislation specifies that non-disclosure agreements are only prohibited when the act of sexual abuse involves a student of the institution and why it doesn't apply to staff.

We know that many employees at post-secondary institutions and at workplaces across this province are subject to sexual abuse and are often pressured to sign non-disclosure agreements when they don't feel comfortable doing so. Why does this bill not prohibit those NDAs when there is sexual abuse of staff as well?

Mr. Graham McGregor: I really appreciate my colleague's feedback on that note.

This is the first time that I have been able to do a question-and-answer when speaking to a bill, and I want to thank the opposition for being very thoughtful in their questions, and the colleagues on our side of the House for being thoughtful in their questions as well.

This is an important bill. It's going to make our campuses safer. It's going to help protect students. It's going to make a better environment for faculty and for staff. I really do hope that everybody in this House votes for this bill. It is a very good piece of legislation; I'll be voting in favour.

1420

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further debate?

Mr. Joel Harden: It's an honour to rise to talk about this subject in this House.

I think you're going to find when it comes to issues of gender-based violence and intimate partner violence, there's a lot of agreement in this House. Where we need to focus the mind, I think, is on strategies about what we do.

The good news is that there has been a lot of research published lately on gender-based violence. Where I'm from in Ontario, the Renfrew county inquest that just happened into a serial murderer who wreaked havoc in that community, funded by this government—\$150,000, by the way, from this government to support that work, an important investment, and what it has yielded is a significant amount of recommendations for us, to think about how we get in front of this.

It pains me to say this, but when I was a faculty member at Nipissing University in 2005 and I saw the way—particularly men—in a seminar class I taught, that third-year undergraduate students at Nipissing University were treating women in small group activities, and when I saw things in the hallway between staff and students, it disturbed me at a deep level. And I asked myself that question one asks: What is the choice one makes when one is a bystander to these sorts of things? I guess because I come from a position of education and trying to understand how behaviours develop, I always ask the question—I would pull someone aside privately, to give them that respect, and say, “What motivated you to say that to her in that small group conversation—to not just disagree with the point but to belittle the person? What was that about?” Eventually, what I was able to unearth through interactions like that is animosity and anger—I'm not a therapist, but I'm married to one—and when I was able to see that, I was able to try to reach that person and say, “You've got a lot of anger, and I'm not sure why it's manifesting against women colleagues here in this class, but that's not going to help you succeed in this course. I really encourage you to seek out some of the supports we have here on this campus that are paid for by the public so you can figure out how you get ahead of this, because this is going to become a problem for you in your studies at this university if this pattern repeats itself. That student put up with that in that small group, and she didn't need to. She had every right to call you out and stand up to you. And if it doesn't change, I'm going to be approaching her and you so you resolve this matter.”

That's how I dealt with just one interaction—and we're talking about low-level, lateral violence, relatively speaking.

But what the government is talking about with this legislation are, in some cases, lethal acts of gender-based violence. And that's what I want to talk about today in the time I have to speak to this bill.

I want to talk about the first place I went to do post-secondary education. I'm the first person in my family to go to post-secondary education. I went down the 401 and went to Queen's University in Kingston. I didn't really know what I was going to study. I just decided I was going to pick the courses and choose my own adventure, figure out where I was going to go. I ended up doing a lot of politics—shock—and a lot of sociology.

Two years before I got there, there was an incident that shaped me even then, as a high school student, known in Ontario history as the Gordon House incident. I think it's important that I talk about this incident because, certainly,

it has informed my approach to gender-based violence and how we help not only survivors but perpetrators.

In 1989, in October, Queen's University ran something—it's very common; I think I just heard the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore talk about it—a “no means no” campaign. It was meant to just put it to students—as the member for Toronto Centre said several times, with legislation that they're bringing forward—a consent-based culture for intimacy on campus. The reaction at Gordon House, which is one of the residences at Queen's University, from some folks, particularly men in that dorm room, was to hang banners outside the window reading things—I'm just going to pause for a second for people watching this, listening to this. If you've had experiences of violence in your life or a friend—I'm just going to give you a warning: Some of this stuff is difficult to hear, but I think it needs to be said.

For the campus's “no means no” campaign, there were some people at Gordon House who hung banners outside their windows that read, “No means tie her up,” “No means more beer,” “No means harder.”

I'm embarrassed to tell you, Speaker, that I was a grade 11 student when these things were happening, and I remember thinking at the time, “Well, there's going to be an investigation. Something has got to happen. There has got to be a conversation about this.” There was nothing of the kind.

The president of Gordon House went on to say that the incident wasn't terribly important because, really, what happened was that the incident upset a small minority of feminists and that it shouldn't be a crime to offend people. That's what one person said.

The university itself did not convene any restorative justice process to try to understand why people felt the need to hang these banners—what was in their minds, what they were reacting to, how to have a conversation about this. Nothing happened whatsoever.

I showed up there in 1991, as an undergraduate student, and I talked to some of the people who lived through that. I asked them, “What did you do to get the university's attention?”

Well, my goodness, 50 people—largely women students—did a sit-in at the principal's office, at David Smith's office. They demanded funding for a consent-based culture on campus, beyond just some kind of ad-and-pamphlet campaign, so students could understand what a consent-based university culture would look like, what it would mean. They had to get into the local media. They had to speak their piece. There was an acronym for this group of 50 students. I'm not allowed to say one of the words of the acronym, because it's not parliamentary language, but I think people can figure it out. The group was called ROFF, Radical Obnoxious—F—Feminists. They were people who were fed up with the lack of activity on campus. And what did they demand? They demanded not just consequences for people hanging those banners, because rather like we just heard in the debate, one can have consequences for unacceptable behaviour, and that's fine, but if there's no investment in preventive

measures—education to help bring along, particularly, men who believe you can objectify someone and you can control someone, and that you can therefore humiliate them with that perceived power you may have—penalties are pointless. You're always going to be dealing with the outcomes of bad decisions. So those folks at ROFF sat down, and they got the university's attention.

It was one of the reasons I wanted to go to Queen's, because I thought, “There's a community of students who aren't just going to wait for politics to happen. If they see something that's not right, they're going to take politics into their own hands and they're going to say, ‘This is unacceptable. You've got to change it.’”

Something I'm embarrassed to say, as well—embarrassed, disgraced, upset; there are a bunch of words I could use. I talked about the Gordon House incident in October 1989. What is the incident that we are going to be commemorating across this country, as we do every year, on December 6, 1989? The École Polytechnique massacre. And what is the origin of the École Polytechnique massacre? It is a man who believed that his future had been compromised because of a feminist agenda that discriminated against his ability to go into engineering, and the way he was going to resolve it, in his one maniacal moment, was to walk onto a campus with a weapon and murder people.

I would submit to you, Speaker, as we think about this issue of why we need not just a consent-based culture on campus but a consent-based culture in Ontario, and what we do to create it, that these are the bookends of the spectrum. You have flashpoints, when you see an incident where someone felt motivated or inspired to put out hateful speech, threatening, essentially, rape culture on a campus, with zero response until the students at that university rose up and demanded better. And then, on December 6, 1989, you had the lethal incident where somebody took it upon himself to do something that one would want to believe no human being would ever want to do. I want to submit to you that these things are related.

I want to fast-forward to 2021, because my alma mater, Queen's University, has said since the Gordon House days that they want to resolve this issue, but it's not resolved. I think that for the administrators at Queen's—where I used to work at Nipissing University in North Bay and where I also worked at Carleton University—this continues to be a work in progress. Queen's has run a campaign on its Instagram page called @consentatqueens. You can check it out yourself. What they have found in the course of that work is that more and more students are coming forward to talk about what is happening to them on campus—that things are being put into their drinks; that suggestions are being made to them live in class, in front of everybody else, not even hidden. It was in 2021 that Queen's authorized, with student participation, this online campaign.

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We have a daughter and a son in our home. I have no doubt that our daughter is going to go on to do incredible things. In our place, we joke about her being 14 going on 40; she's ready already.

But I think about the environment, as the member for Brampton North mentioned, that people are walking into right now. Turning on any one of our devices, as we have to do in this job at any given time, will expose you immediately to issues of objectification of women and implied behaviour about how men are supposed to behave, dominance culture. And there are things we can do to fix that.

I want to suggest there's a link between this bill, Bill 26, and a private member's piece of legislation my friend from Orléans put forward in the last session—and I understand he's putting it forward again. MPP Stephen Blais, the member for Orléans, has asked this government to consider the ability for municipalities to remove city councillors, sitting elected office-holders, when they are independently investigated and proven to be engaged in acts of sexual misconduct that fall short of the Criminal Code. This is what has happened in our city. It's one of the reasons why the issue of gender-based violence has seized our community.

Former councillor Rick Chiarelli was investigated not once but twice—twice—with 35 women coming forward and detailing some of the most egregious, ridiculous, creepy forms of behaviour you can imagine a political adviser doing in an office. From the time those women consented to go through that process of forming their complaints, do you know what they had to deal with? They had to deal with a mental health crisis themselves, job loss. They paid the economic price for Mr. Chiarelli's behaviour. They had to deal with the anguish of the hate piling on them on social media for having the courage—the three of them who were public—to speak out publicly. For the 32 others who weren't speaking out publicly, they carried the weight of that question of “What is going to happen to this gentleman?”

What our whole city saw is that Councillor Chiarelli was able to maintain his seat. The most the city of Ottawa could do, under the Municipal Act, was to deduct his pay.

Folks may have seen it; you may have missed it—at the last sitting of city council for Ottawa, which just happened, the last act of that city council was former councillor Rick Chiarelli standing up to give his farewell speech on Zoom and the entire council meeting that was present in the chamber getting up and walking out. Some people who had served multiple terms as councillors chose that decision; it was better for them to get up and walk out than to give their farewell speech to their residents in the city of Ottawa. That's how fed up we are back home with Councillor Chiarelli—independently investigated twice, involving at least 35 people, probably more.

MPP Blais is asking the government for its help to work on a reform to the Municipal Act that would say that in independently investigated cases of sexual misconduct, a decision can be made to remove a sitting office-holder, that is subject to judicial review. The person can get the decision judicially reviewed, and if it's overturned, they get their position back. I would suggest to the member for Brampton North and others promoting this bill that if what you want is a sense of serious consequence, that is exactly,

I would think, in keeping with what you're talking about right now. I would love to see, in this session of this Parliament, this legislation come to pass across all party lines.

We're talking about campus environments here with this bill—very important. We all know, and I know personally from being a professor, that there is absolutely a power imbalance between the person who gives you your grades, which have a big impact on what you do with the future of your life, on what you actually end up doing in the work world—there's a lot of power in that person. So the question I have is, what do we then say to that office-holder if we allow for further impunity? If what this bill is intending to do is remove that impunity from people or challenge it, I would encourage the government—because, as I understand it, they haven't done that yet; the member for Toronto Centre can correct me if I'm wrong—to seek out conversations with people representing faculty and staff in the university and college sector, because those organizations also want to build a consent-based culture in this province. We don't want to rush a product to fruition that might end up not achieving the objectives you're trying to see.

Let me end with an anecdote from a leader back home, on gender-based violence. Another sad story that is manifesting itself, I think, in a positive way—Mr. Rafael Ready worked with the diplomatic corps, helping embassies set up all over the world. He lives in the member for Ottawa South's community, just south of us in Ottawa Centre. In the summer, sadly, you may have heard, it was his family that had the heinous double-murder attempt that involved his wife and one of his two daughters. This was a situation of an offender who had been marked, who had a history of violence, and there wasn't requisite support to make sure that this family was safe. So what is Mr. Ready committed to do? Well, I happen to know Mr. Ready, because both of the family members he lost are members of the same karate dojo that my son trains at. I knew the two women he lost—wonderful folk. Mr. Ready has decided to take his grief, take his loss and mobilize it in a way to make sure that femicide is actually a part of our Criminal Code and that education about violence and violent behaviours, particularly among young men, is something we deal with immediately.

There's a program the Ottawa Police Service runs back home called MANifest Change, and it tries to find ambassadors in communities across our city to really encourage positive behaviours. When they see these kinds of controlling, misogynist behaviours, they don't say, “Okay, you're a perp, you're a creep, you're terrible.” They ask the questions I tried to ask, as a professor, that I began with in my comments this afternoon—“What motivated you to say something like that? What's going on? Why do you perceive that person to be lesser than you? Would you like your mom or your sister or your aunt or your niece to be treated that way?”—to get through to that person.

Mr. Ready is someone who has strength that I can't comprehend, because at this moment of intense grief—he

was out of the country when this incident happened, setting up yet another one of our diplomatic presences in Latin America. It took him seven days to get back home—seven days—but when he finally got back home and dealt with what he had to deal with, surrounded by the love in that community on Anoka Street, his next calls were to MPP Fraser and to me. He said to both of us, “What have we got to do to reach people, particularly young men? What are we going to do with the mental health crisis in our communities? I don’t want this to happen to any other families.”

So we return to Bill 26 and we return to Gordon House, and I guess we realize, as a chamber, that we really—despite good intent—haven’t moved far enough. We still aren’t funding programs to support survivors. We still aren’t thinking through how we reach perpetrators who are drawn in, however it may happen—violent behaviours towards others, particularly women. We still are thinking, I think, that just having severe consequences is enough. I think it’s important, but I want to submit to you—and I hope I’ve made the case this afternoon—that I don’t think it’s enough.

I think, inside every person, is the potential to change, for the most part. The amount of sociopaths we have in our society—the Paul Bernardos of our society—are a tiny fraction. Most people have the capacity to change; however they’ve been taught to dehumanize other people, they have the capacity to change. We fail ourselves, as a society, I believe, on campus and elsewhere, if we don’t mobilize the resources of this province to help them. The organizations that MPP Andrew knows very well—doing the consultation work that you’ve done, my friend—that are scraping pennies together to support survivors—or whether it’s what MPP Stevens was talking about, with the survival kits. These organizations need to have robust funding. They need to have support because what they can do is prevent Gordon House incidents, prevent École Polytechnique incidents, prevent Councillor Chiarelli-like incidents.

We can build an Ontario, as the member for Brampton North said, where everybody feels safe and everybody feels heard.

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The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Questions?

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I was very interested in listening to your story. I didn’t realize you were a former professor—so very close to your heart, some of the things we’re discussing today.

We need to talk about the survivors who have come forward, but for every survivor, there are many people who have not come forward; they just don’t have that comfort level. And my heart goes out to them for what they’re dealing with every day, day in and day out, because they’ve probably kept that a secret from their families and their professors, their college friends or their university friends.

As a former professor, my question to you is—I wasn’t sure if you’re in support of this bill or not, but my

understanding is that this is another tool in the tool box for survivors, for professors, for institutions, for people to come forward. We want more people to come forward. Do you not think this is another tool to help institutions better address faculty and staff serial misconduct? And do you believe this will help students come forward?

Mr. Joel Harden: I was listening and conferring a little bit with our subject matter expert on your bill too. I think the bill can be improved. The member for Toronto Centre is right here, poised to help you to talk to the stakeholder groups that can help you improve the bill.

What we need in this bill is dedicated funding to survivor groups. If somebody makes that bold step you were talking about, to put their claim forward, to challenge the alleged harasser, and lacks income as a consequence of that, we’ve got to support that person. We’ve got to make sure they have the resources to be successful.

And then on the use of NDAs, as you’ve mentioned—I think the member for Toronto Centre has a lot of ideas as to people you can talk to to make this bill better.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Question?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you for your comments, your observations, and also for sharing what I think are some very difficult experiences in your life, and in your professional life as well.

I’m very interested because, in speaking about the NDA aspect of this bill—it’s written in a manner that only precludes NDAs after a court or arbitrator has found wrongdoing. So it doesn’t eliminate NDAs altogether; it still allows NDAs. As it’s drafted, it allows an employer or an employee to sign an NDA any time until a decision is made. My question is, why would anyone even want to sign an NDA after such a decision?

Mr. Joel Harden: I have to confess, it’s hard to imagine. I know when someone is dragged through a court process, it can be brutal, and people want to hit the escape hatch pretty quick after re-traumatizing themselves several times through a court proceeding.

So if the bar the member is suggesting is that high, this is something—to the friends in government here—you can fix in this bill. If the goal is promoting safety, consequences are important, but resources to make sure people actually can be resilient, as a survivor, are also important.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): 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 Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Question?

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Again, to the member from Ottawa Centre: You talked about the case of the councillor in Ottawa. It sounds like you’re not going to support this bill, which will give more tools to help people who have been sexually harassed at universities and colleges. But when you mentioned about the history of people

committing sexual violence being allowed to remain in their role, protected by NDAs—or should they be dismissed, as the member for Ottawa Centre suggested with city councillors? You suggested they should be dismissed in one—but should they be dismissed in the other?

Mr. Joel Harden: It's a fair question.

What I'd say to the member, through you, Speaker, is, if the goal is to establish clear consequences—what I'm hearing the member for Toronto Centre saying is that non-disclosure agreements are still allowed with this legislation, short of a conclusive judicial process. That can be an absolutely agonizing wait for people.

None of us on this side of the House are opposed to consequences for people who have been independently investigated and shown to be engaged in sexual misconduct. You will not find a single person here disagreeing with that. But if we don't have the requisite support for people who had the courage to come forward as survivors, the whole process falls apart. That's where we actually do want to work with you to make this better.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Question?

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: To my colleague from Ottawa Centre: You mentioned at the beginning of your comments what came out this summer in Renfrew county. The inquest made 86 recommendations for Ontario to prevent intimate partner violence, in that file. There were a lot of great recommendations from the report. However, the government did not act on them. Some might say that the government dusted these recommendations under the rug.

Also, last year I brought forward legislation that would give women more tools to avoid intimate violence—legislation resembling Clare's Law—which the Ford government voted down.

To my colleague from Ottawa Centre: What do you think can be done to strengthen Bill 26 to help survivors who could fall or might possibly be falling through the cracks?

Mr. Joel Harden: I'm really glad the member brought up the Renfrew county inquest report. My neighbour the MPP from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke told me that the government gave \$150,000 so that inquest report would come up with fulsome recommendations—and we have 78 of them.

It's time for us to move into action mode. We've done the research, and now we need to work with the community experts. MPP Wong-Tam, MPP Andrew, MPP Stevens, myself and others know exactly—and I'm sure you do too—who we can get the money to to make the change happen. We've got to bring the money from a governmental level—from this House level—right down to the community so people have the resources and the strength and the support they need. That's the goal.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Question?

Mr. Andrew Dowie: Thank you for the comments.

Prior to being here, I followed the circumstances in Ottawa very closely, and what came out was very

disturbing. I also followed, back home—the University of Windsor had a case with the NDAs back in 2019.

To me, it is vital that we go down this step. Just from your comments, it sounds like you're not going to be supporting the bill, and I wonder whether the status quo is preferable to passing this bill and further improving it later on.

Mr. Joel Harden: A number of my friends in government are telling me how I'm going to vote on this bill before I cast my vote.

What I'm telling you seriously—through you, Speaker—is that we want this bill to work. No one in this Legislature is supportive of a continuation of violence on campus or anywhere else—I am making that assumption—but we will disagree on how we allocate the province's resources to make it happen. There's a consequences-led approach—that's one part of the puzzle—but there's also a solutions approach at a community level. On campus and in our communities, these violence-against-women, gender-based-violence organizations are absolutely starving for funds. They are the other side to this that can help situations like at the University of Windsor or at Ottawa city hall.

We have to have a fulsome approach. I may vote for this, but it has to be a bill that accomplishes a serious approach to gender-based violence—and I want to believe in this House that there is a will to do that.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member from Hamilton Mountain.

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you to the member for Ottawa Centre for such a great portion of debate. I, like you, did not hear you say that you were not voting for the bill, nor have we said anything of the sort.

But there were some things that I noticed and also heard that were missing from this bill. The scenario of graduate students who were both employees and students at the same time, who could be discharged from employment and not from the school portion—what are your thoughts on that?

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Mr. Joel Harden: It points out how we really need to have good, strong process at a campus level.

I will say what people behind the most recent Queen's University campaign I cited said recently, when they noted some of the complaints that came through the Instagram campaign. Some university officials said that it was too difficult to track down individuals, and that maybe they should consider drinking less at campus events—and the year is 2021 when these comments are being made, not 1991.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further debate?

Mr. Deepak Anand: It's always a pleasure to rise in this House and give my two cents, my remarks, on the important legislation.

What we're debating today is Bill 26. As a father of two children—a daughter who is in grade 12 and is applying to post-secondary school, as well as a son who is actually

enrolled in an Ontario post-secondary program, in university—this topic hits very close to home.

I had the opportunity to attend the 2022 university fair, and that was a reminder that the path in further education for our young Ontarians, our leaders of today, remains bright. At the same time, like any other parent, I'm always concerned—and this, I believe, requires oversight nonetheless. When I was at the university fair, I actually saw first-hand students with ambition, drive, bursting with excitement, getting ready for the next chapter of their life. That is why it is extremely important for us as legislators, as the family, as the parents, as Ontarians, to come together and make sure these leaders of today and tomorrow have the support they need.

That is why Bill 26, Strengthening Post-secondary Institutions and Students Act, 2022, aims to provide students with a safer environment which is inclusive and helps promote personal and academic growth.

Madam Speaker, we were having a conversation, and we talked about soccer moms, hockey moms—I was talking to my wife, and she brought up another term, “snowplow parents.” I asked, “What is a snowplow parent?” She said, “Well, if you think about winter—what does a snowplow do? It clears the snow so that when we're driving, we do not slip; we do not skid; we have a safer path to move forward.”

I think that's exactly what we're doing here—we're going to give our children a safer path so that they can concentrate on what they want to do best to succeed in their life. This is what Bill 26 is doing.

What we're doing in this bill—the Ministry of Colleges and Universities is proposing legislative amendments to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005, that would enhance institutional sexual violence policies at publicly assisted colleges and universities and private career colleges, particularly with respect to faculty and staff sexual misconduct towards students. And how are we going to do that? Well, we're making sure the amendments are in line with the government's commitment to ensure students have access to a safer learning environment.

I absolutely believe that every student deserves the chance to attend post-secondary education without impediments.

I want to share with fellow Ontarians and our youth that your government is making sure we are putting steps in the direction—so that you have a bright future. When we talk about investments—we're making sure we have 30,000 long-term-care beds; we have four hours of home care. We have 86,000 child care spaces we want to build. We want to build over 1.5 million homes. We want to make sure we are building subways. We are making sure we are getting investments in electrical vehicle manufacturing. We are making sure that we are investing in the construction of highways. We are expanding broadband and natural gas so that more and more opportunities can come. In order for us to do this, we want to make sure that our youth are ready to proceed and succeed in their life. We want to make sure the \$158 billion the government is going to be investing in

the next 10 years—we are making sure that the future of our youth is strong. That is why we are making sure we are bringing these bills—so that they have a better career and a better education.

I want to share some data with you. According to Maclean's, a survey conducted by the Student Voices on Sexual Violence committee, completed in 2018, reported that 23% of Ontario university students experienced non-consensual sexual contact. Furthermore, in Ontario's 2018 Student Voices on Sexual Violence survey, more than 70% of Western University students reported sexual harassment. There should be no room in post-secondary education for sexual harassment or violence of any kind—not only at Ontario universities; in fact, anywhere in this world.

When we're talking about the bill, when we're talking about Ontario, I want to echo the Honourable Minister of Colleges and Universities, when she said this bill would strengthen universities' ability to address sexual violence and misconduct towards students. I want to echo the words of Charlene Senn, the Canada research chair in sexual violence at the University of Windsor: “Every day—on our campuses and off—women are still being confronted by men attempting to sexually assault them. I believe the” bill “will allow our government to strengthen Ontario universities to address the real-life problems Ontario students face daily.”

By preventing the use of non-disclosure agreements, universities will be better equipped to address instances where faculty leave an institution to be employed at another institution and their prior wrongdoings remain a secret. We want to make sure there are proactive measures, such as requiring institutions to have codes of conduct regarding faculty and staff sexual misconduct. It's a step in the right direction to addressing such issues.

Madam Speaker, research conducted by Statistics Canada says that one in 10—about 11% of students who identify as women at Canadian post-secondary schools were sexually assaulted in a post-secondary setting in 2019, compared to 4% of students who identify as men. The majority, 71% of students, witnessed or experienced unwanted sexual behaviours either on or off campus, or in an online situation that involved students or other people associated with the school.

By supporting this bill, it is clear that this side of the government, the caucus members on this side, are taking such concerns with the utmost seriousness and will continue to work for our children, for our students.

Our government believes in acknowledging the past and making sure we take corrective action for the present and for the future. I endorse the proposed amendments in the Strengthening Post-secondary Institutions and Students Act, 2022, to formally change what was formerly known as Ryerson University to Toronto Metropolitan University, and the changes to TMU's senate composition, by making room for representation for its new law school and medical school. The Ministry of Colleges and Universities collaborated with the council for equality of opportunity, which provided key identifiers to help

Ontario's minorities acquire and excel in post-secondary programs. Both proposed changes are crucial to establishing a course that Ontario, its students and its universities can feel proud of, and we can be the envy of the world.

Universities and colleges are an important place in providing personnel for the labour market—and I was talking about all the investments we are doing. We are in a situation and a stage where we actually have close to 400,000 jobs going unfilled. Those are the paycheques which are not being collected—and it is the utmost requirement for us to make sure that students have the time and the availability to focus on what they have to do to succeed in their lives. That's why we are making sure that this bill helps and supports those students.

1500

As parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, I want to talk about some of the things that we're doing with the Ministry of Colleges and Universities. Through programs such as the Ontario Postsecondary Access and Inclusion Program, introduced in 2018, to address non-financial barriers in post-secondary education—we have continued to achieve and thrive and make sure we're helping these students. The Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario conducted a scan of similar access programs across North America and explored available data related to access and student outcomes in Ontario. We found that through this program, we are able to help students from historically under-represented fields, through important interventions and different approaches—for example, Bursary for Students with Disabilities provides funding on a provincial scale with students who have permanent disabilities. This guarantees that in Ontario all students can attend university and receive grants up to \$2,000 per year, to ensure that they have the financial means not only to remain in their program of choice but also to excel.

The government remains committed to ensuring equitable access to education across the board.

At Ontario Tech University, the Silicon Valley company Verkada highlighted how impressive Ontario students were—especially Reese Daniel, an intern from the school, where she actually had the opportunity and has shown leadership in the field.

Madam Speaker, in order for us to do what we're doing through this bill—recent media reports have highlighted incidents of faculty sexual misconduct towards students. For example, in August 2021, the ministry consulted with stakeholders to obtain a better understanding of the instances of faculty and staff sexual violence on campus and to determine a policy response. Ensuring that all students feel safe on campus is a key priority for this government and all caucus members. That is why the government is introducing policies that will enhance institutional sexual violence policies at publicly assisted colleges and universities and private career colleges. The ministry has consulted with over 100 stakeholders, including representatives from post-secondary educational institutions, labour groups, student groups, private career colleges, faculty associations and community organizations. This policy will apply to all publicly assisted

colleges and universities and private career colleges—and the ministry has taken a similar approach as it has with the previous sexual violence provincial policies.

By having this bill, if passed, institutions would be required to have their employee sexual misconduct policies in place by July 1, 2023. On the same date, the new legal consequences for employee sexual misconduct would come into force.

To conclude: The proposed bill is a step in the right direction for the current generation of Ontario scholars. The bill, again, implies—an inclusive space ensuring and taking discrimination of any form will not be tolerated. Our government wants to provide every Ontarian with equal access, protection and inclusion to post-secondary education. The proposed amendments continue that trend, and I'm proud to say that I endorse all these changes.

I urge all members of this chamber: Let's come together, work together and build a better Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Question?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you to the member across for his comments.

Contained in this bill, Bill 26, the NDA language is very clear that it only is precluded after a court or arbitrator has found wrongdoing. So the bill still allows an employer, a union or an employee to sign an NDA at any time until a court arbitrator decision is issued. My question is, why is your government allowing this massive loophole to exist? Why are you not banning all NDAs?

Mr. Deepak Anand: Thanks to the member opposite for asking this important question.

I want to say this again, Madam Speaker: This bill intends to make sure that our children can succeed in their lives. Preventing the use of non-disclosure agreements will help to limit instances where an employee leaves an institution to be employed at another institution and by doing this their prior wrongdoing remains a secret.

Through this bill, we will make sure that there is greater transparency with respect to faculty and staff who are found to have committed sexual abuse of a student. We will plug that hole.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Questions?

Mr. Lorne Coe: I want to thank my colleague for his excellent presentation.

He will know that last fall we made policy changes to strengthen supports for post-secondary students reporting sexual violence or harassment. These amendments ensure that students can safely bring forward complaints without fear of disciplinary action.

I'd like the member to speak specifically about how Bill 26 augments that particular set of regulatory amendments and goes beyond to strengthen the protection for students at our universities, community colleges and career colleges.

Mr. Deepak Anand: I want to acknowledge and thank the member from Whitby, who is doing an incredible job for his constituents.

Madam Speaker, again, talking about this bill, and when we were talking about what we did last March—last

March, our government imposed regulations designed around empowering students who are survivors of or have knowledge of an instance of sexual violence. One of the most important changes we put in place was that if someone comes forward with information about an act of sexual violence, they're granted certain exceptions. This was the biggest challenge—and that's what we're doing through this bill. Bill 26 would continue to build on these regulations and further our schools' ability to protect our students.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Question?

MPP Jill Andrew: My question is to the government with regard to their bill, Strengthening Post-secondary Institutions and Students Act.

This government says they care for survivors and want to create conditions to make it easier for survivors to come forward and to get justice. So I'd like to know why the government is sitting on billions of surplus dollars, including \$2.6 billion that they could be using to support post-secondary schools as we speak, right now, to hire those caring folks who support survivors, who support people who are trying to navigate the system to get the justice.

I'm wondering why the government is sitting on \$23 billion in shortfalls to health. Whether it's the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre, whether it's any organization that's helping survivors—that is part of our health care. Helping survivors is part of our health care; it's part of education; it's part of children, community and social services. Why is the government claiming to care about those who have survived sexual assault but they're cutting the very sectors that are there to help survivors?

Mr. Deepak Anand: I thank the member opposite for asking an important question.

When we talk about the policy, what we're doing, how the ministry is going to address the survivor-centric model—that's something which you're asking—the ministry has a responsibility to ensure that it is taking the appropriate steps to ensure that students are safe at publicly assisted colleges and universities and private career colleges.

Through this bill, if passed, institutions will be in a better position in responding to the allegations of faculty and staff sexual misconduct towards students, something which is required for our leaders of today and tomorrow to grow and succeed. That is what we are doing in this, Madam Speaker, and I'm looking forward to all the members supporting this bill.

1510

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Question?

Mr. Brian Saunderson: I want to thank the member from Mississauga–Malton for his comments.

My question to him is that—this is clearly a piece of legislation that is putting the students first. It's putting forward protecting our students, a critical resource for us in our future. My question for the member is: Consultation is an important process, and I'm wondering if the member could tell us what kind of consultation we went through

with our student population in the preparation of this legislation.

Mr. Deepak Anand: I just want to acknowledge and thank the member for Simcoe–Grey, somebody who was the mayor of Collingwood. I had the privilege of many, many memories of Cranberry Resort in Collingwood.

Madam Speaker, this bill is an extremely important bill in the right direction. As we heard from the minister, she outlined in her remarks that this legislation did not just come overnight. It was based on hours and hours of consultation with faculty staff, presidents, students and several written submissions to the ministry.

What was telling about these consultations is that while the ministry went looking for a general conversation on how to address sexual violence on campus, almost all of these conversations were steered by participants towards faculty or student sexual violence. That is why, Madam Speaker, what we're doing in Bill 26 is we're addressing that issue so that the leaders of today and tomorrow can succeed.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Question?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I appreciated the member's reference to some of the data that has been collected in the student surveys, and in particular, the very disturbing data from Western University about the prevalence of students' experiences of sexual violence. Western University has been taking exemplary measures to deal with that data and other issues at the institution. That includes university-wide mandatory training. That is the kind of holistic investment in prevention and education that would really make a difference for students in our institutions in this province.

I'd like to ask the member, why did the government not include measures like campus-wide education and training for all students, staff and faculty?

Mr. Deepak Anand: Madam Speaker, the member from London West talked about how the university has taken steps. You know, in thinking about answering this question, I thought I should share some of the supportive quotes which I could not get to in time to do at the time of my presentation.

For example, Steve Orsini, the president and CEO of the Council of Ontario Universities, said, "Ontario's universities are committed to ensure student, faculty and staff safety and strongly condemn all forms of sexual violence or harassment. Building on today's announcement, all of our universities have developed and continue to regularly review their institutional sexual violence policies and processes to ensure that they maintain a survivor-centric approach."

This is the kind of help and support that we've got for the bill, which is a step in the right direction.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Quick question and quick response.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you to the member for Mississauga–Malton for his great dissertation there. I listened intently to all of it.

I know we don't have a lot of time, Speaker. Maybe the member could talk about a number of actions that this

government is taking to keep students safe in the last couple of years.

Mr. Deepak Anand: I know there's not enough time, but the biggest thing that we're doing is we are proposing Bill 26. And that's what we're doing, Madam Speaker. We're making sure we are strengthening the post-secondary institutions and students act, 2022, to make sure that our leaders of today and tomorrow can succeed. So I urge everyone: Let's come together to support our students.

ROYAL ASSENT
SANCTION ROYALE

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): I beg to inform the House that in the name of His Majesty the King, the Administrator has been pleased to assent to a certain bill in Her Honour's office.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Christopher Tyrell): The following is the title of the bill to which Her Honour did assent:

An Act to repeal the Keeping Students in Class Act, 2022 / Loi abrogeant la Loi de 2022 visant à garder les élèves en classe.

STRENGTHENING POST-SECONDARY
INSTITUTIONS AND STUDENTS
ACT, 2022

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

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further debate?

MPP Jill Andrew: It's a pleasure to always rise on behalf of our wonderful community in St. Paul's. Today, I'm adding my words on Bill 26, Strengthening Post-secondary Institutions and Students Act.

I would first like to give a shout-out to the wonderful folks at Counterpoint Counselling and Educational Cooperative Inc. They run a men's program. The core of their work provides psycho-educational counselling for men who have been abusive to their partners and have been mandated to participate in PAR by the criminal justice system. Services are provided in English, Spanish and Tagalog. That's just a little bit of information about a wonderful organization that works with survivors and also perpetrators. They recognize that perpetrators have to be part of the solution. It is not only resting on the shoulders—it should never rest on the shoulders of survivors to fix the system. We have to have perpetrators also taking accountability for their action, but we also have to provide them with the space and the opportunity and the community-based resources so that they can shift and become, hopefully, positive, contributing members of their society.

Speaker, every year, an estimated 636,000 cases of sexual assault are self-reported across Canada, including

41% reported by students at post-secondary education. In 2021, 34,242 cases of sexual assault were reported to the police. That is 18% higher than 2020 and the highest number since 1996. This cannot be okay.

This Conservative Ontario has the lowest per-student funding in Canada. This means that, here in Ontario, some of the highest tuition costs, the highest loan repayments, are sitting on the shoulders of students while they try to navigate the academic, social, emotional and physical realities of post-secondary education. All the while, the government is sitting on billions of surplus dollars that over the next several years—could be useful now while we're trying to fix our post-secondary institutions, our education sectors, our health care sectors. I could go on.

But anyway, I wanted to say, in our riding of St. Paul's, we are home to the George Brown Casa Loma Campus situated within our Tarragon Village community. Many post-secondary students in St. Paul's attend GBC, where students have access to a variety of academic centres and schools, from the School of Apprenticeship and Skilled Trades and School of Mechanical Engineering Technologies to the Centre for Arts, Design and Information Technology, where post-secondary students can thrive; the School of Computer Technology; School of Fashion and Jewellery, etc., etc., etc.—thriving today and building what they hope will be careers tomorrow.

Outside of GBC, of course, St. Paul's students are all across our country, and while they're across our country, while they're anywhere they are in post-secondary education, we're hoping that they are trying on leadership roles, building healthy relationships, and that they're building a network that, frankly, they will have a lifetime. What students do not go to school to experience is sexual assault. They shouldn't have to experience sexual assault. That should never be part of the experience at schools.

For any students watching who may have experienced violence on campus, I want to remind you that it is never your fault. You did not deserve this, and whatever feelings you are feeling right now are incredibly valid.

George Brown College's sexual violence response adviser can be reached at 416-415-5000, extension 3450. They're always there to answer the call.

For many post-secondary students, going off to college or university, whether living on or off campus, truly is the first time that you're away from home, that you're away from some of those familial connections that you need to feel safe. Post-secondary may also be the space where prior conversations on consent, safe and healthy relationships become centre stage as students are being exposed to school communities much larger than their high schools, for instance, and in some cases much larger than their home communities even.

1520

It is because of this, among many other reasons, why it's crucial that institutions of higher learning are safe spaces so students, regardless of age, can feel safe and supported. If anything, this bill needs to help create safe spaces for students, but it cannot only look at student or

employer-to-student sexual violence; it should also include student-to-student—grad students as well.

I want to mention, on the piece around schedule 1, subsection 1(6), which was even difficult for me to fully weed through, let alone someone who may never have seen a government bill before, it needs to be clear that the NDAs should be banned. The fact that they are allowed until the end of the judicial process could essentially silence someone for two years, two and a half years, three years—however long that process takes. And we know that NDAs are harmful in cases of sexual assault. They work to protect the perpetrator, to prop up their power and privilege while handing perpetrators a licence to repeat their violence, quite frankly, over and over again, untouched, all while sexual assault survivors are muzzled from speaking their truth.

They also have the impact of preventing sexual assault survivors from seeking the counselling or reaching out to their friends and family about their experience for support in fear of breaking the agreement. Students need to have access to the resources of their choice to talk their trauma through. This is fundamental to a survivor's recovery. So it needs to be clear what this NDA ban does, or what an NDA ban would and would not do. That needs to be clear in your legislation.

The bill also seeks to ban the reemployment of employees within public and private institutions who have been discharged because they have sexually assaulted a student. The bill also defines sexual abuse in relation to a student of a public institution. It seeks to ensure that students are free from a reprisal or threat of reprisal for the rejection of sexual solicitation or advances.

Again, these are pieces that the bill suggests, and I think it needs to be very, very clear how the bill is helping survivors, how the bill is helping build communities, school communities, and, I would even argue, just community-based resources period, because of course, students may be part of their school community but they're of course part of their larger community as well, too.

I urge this government to look closer at the realities of student life, to expand this bill's first two schedules, which remain limited, as I said earlier, to employee-student misconduct. Sadly, sexual assault and rape culture on campus is much more pervasive. And as I said earlier, it also includes student-to-student dynamics.

A 2021 article from Maclean's magazine reported that 23% of Ontario university students have experienced non-consensual sexual contact. Meanwhile, 63% have experienced sexual harassment; 5% of women and 2% of men have said that the perpetrator was a professor or an instructor. So I cannot highlight enough that it cannot simply be only about students and employers. We need to also look at student-to-student ratios.

Another report from Statistics Canada, published in 2020, showed that nearly three quarters of university students in Canada "witnessed or experienced unwanted sexualized behaviour in a post-secondary setting in 2019—either on campus, or in an off-campus situation that involved students or other people associated with the school."

And I have to say, when I read words like "misconduct" and "unwanted sexual behaviour" and "negative sexual encounters," I do think that part of addressing the problem is naming the problem. I think we should be using correct language. Rape is rape. Sexual assault is sexual assault. Abuse is abuse. Efforts at "respectable language" does nothing but erase the significance of the violence against sexual assault survivors who, I cannot underscore enough, are disproportionately women.

I want to also take some time to mention the words of the member for Kitchener Centre, who has done fantastic outreach as the critic for colleges and universities: "A lot of the sexual violence happens between students and students—so the other missing piece is grad students. They are both an employee of the institution and a student.... So what happens if they are the perpetrator and they are fired ... but they're still a student? Does that mean the survivor has to be in that program (with them)?"

Our member from Kitchener Centre has also warned that without minimum standards—the member from Toronto Centre has also raised this—for how these investigations happen or by whom, the government's tinkering will not get us to our goal. I echo her questions about what implementation of this bill will look like, and whether or not the government is ready to invest actual finances into post-secondary education to end gender-based violence in post-secondary education.

This work requires long-term, stable funding to ensure financial security, but it also involves culturally relevant supports, supports that are in all languages, supports that are ready to reach survivors where they are, along the continuum of healing as well as the continuum of justice.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Question?

Mr. Ross Romano: Thank you to the member for her comments. I listened to this last portion; I listened to all your comments. This last portion—actually, let me start off by saying that it sounds like, in general, there's an agreement that obviously more needs to be done. It's a challenging area. I think all people would say—certainly myself and everyone on this side of the government—that any one incident of sexual violence is one too many. So we want to get to zero.

When you reference, though, that more needs to be done and, you know, "Where's the investments?"—you made the comment about investments that would get us to no incidents. What types of investments would you suggest would actually create zero incidents in the post-secondary education sector?

MPP Jill Andrew: Thank you to the member for that question. Quite frankly, as many investments as are needed to create a safe climate, a safe condition for students to thrive in school without having to fear violence, without having to fear bodily harm, without having to fear psychological harm at the hands of perpetrators.

Specifically, as I said earlier, this government is sitting on \$44 billion. That's a pretty big shortfall that includes billions of dollars that should be going to post-secondary education, to our education sector, to our health care sector, to children, community and social services. All of

these, as far as I'm aware, are impacted or are somehow related to supporting victims of violence. Whether you're supporting the children, supporting the parents, supporting the students, you don't support them by cutting billions of dollars to the very sectors that will support survivors of violence.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Member from Ottawa Centre.

Mr. Joel Harden: As the member for Toronto–St. Paul's said so eloquently, the community organizations that are really the pioneers on shoestring budgets—you talked about it at the outset, someone engaged in specific efforts at male counselling, I was wondering if you could just elaborate on that, because I'm aware, with the Portapique massacre in Nova Scotia, that the inquiry into that has brought Nova Scotian therapists out in new and creative ways to try to reach perpetrators, to reach men to actually enrol in these programs, and they've had a high success rate. But I'm wondering if you could talk about that community organization that you know in Toronto–St. Paul's and what they need from the government.

MPP Jill Andrew: Thank you very much to the member for that question. I'll repeat the name of the organization: Counterpoint Counselling and Educational Cooperative. What I have heard consistently is the need for funding. That's what it comes down to, the need for funding to be able to put forth more programs, frankly, to help not only survivors but perpetrators. Because the bottom line is, if we are not supporting, if we're not helping both parties here—they both reside in society, so the idea needs to be an educational approach. There's a judicial approach; there's a trauma-centred recovery approach as well. But the work that they do is instrumental, and when an organization like this that's supporting survivors of violence is consistently asking for more funding or simply asking for a response to an email from the government, that leaves me concerned that sexual assault may not be the priority that the government—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Thank you. Question?

1530

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: To the member from Toronto–St. Paul's, thank you very much for your sage comments and observations about Bill 26. I'm just very curious: What we've heard from the Honourable Minister of Colleges and Universities in previous debates is that this is just one piece of many pieces of legislation that may or may not be coming to address gender-based violence on campuses and perhaps in civil society. Would the province of Ontario benefit from having a comprehensive strategy to address gender-based violence? Would the province have the benefit of creating a new round table to address this particular issue?

MPP Jill Andrew: That is an excellent question. I do believe the province would benefit by having a round table. As we know, one of the first things the Conservative government did was slash a round table that was particularly created and co-chaired by two phenomenal human beings, Pamela Cross and Farrah Khan, literally

created to help address the issue of violence against women. The government slashed that round table, along with slashing funding to rape crisis centres across this province.

I would also say as well, as the member from Toronto Centre has raised previously, where is the support around participatory work-integrated learning opportunities like co-op placements, internships? Are those employers, if they happen to be perpetrators, also included in this bill?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Question?

Mr. Brian Saunderson: I understand in the last Parliament, 12 members from the opposition introduced petitions around the need to improve Ontario's efforts towards sexual assault. This bill is doing just that in the education system, where there's a power imbalance between faculty and students. This is specifically addressing faculty and student issues. We're being accused, I understand from the member opposite, of tinkering where there needs to be monumental change. So I would ask the member opposite, what are the monumental changes that she thinks—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): I'll ask the member to not use inflammatory language.

The member for Toronto–St. Paul's.

MPP Jill Andrew: Thank you for that. I didn't quite hear, but I heard from the government member that I was being accused, or that I was accusing the government of doing something wrong. Well, quite frankly, I certainly have called out the government for doing many things wrong. One of them includes not funding post-secondary education the way it should, not funding rape crisis centres the way they should be funded, not funding our health care system so that survivors of violence in the Niagara region, who our member over here for St. Catharines has written to the Minister of Health with regard to survivors, who have to travel hours into different cities to get access to sexual assault evidence kits. We wrote a letter to the Premier's government, to the Conservative government on September 29, 2022, and we have not gotten a response. So how much does the government care about sexual assault when your government allows survivors to have to live in the same clothing that they've been assaulted in, overnight, because there is a shortage—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Thank you. Further questions?

Miss Monique Taylor: I would like to thank the member from Toronto–St. Paul's. She has definitely been speaking in her community and listening in her community to all of the struggles that are faced within our survivor community, in our colleges and universities. We definitely see good things that are happening in this bill and moving the benchmark further. But as even the member across the aisle stated, we've been asking for this stuff for quite some time. This bill doesn't go far enough, and that gives the government the ability to crow about the things that they have done but it leaves so many blanks for what is not done. Could the member tell us the danger that happens when the government moves an inch when they need to move a mile?

MPP Jill Andrew: Thank you for that question. At the end of the day, what happens is that survivors fall through the cracks. That's exactly what happens. As you all know, the official opposition made addressing sexual assault a priority. In our recent platform, we would have added \$18 million over three years to properly fund on-campus supports for survivors of sexual violence, with an additional \$30 million dedicated to on-campus mental health support for post-secondary students and staff.

But what we could do right now is to pass the piece of legislation that the member from Toronto Centre had put forth calling for a consent awareness week, right here in the Legislature. The member from Toronto Centre put forth this call repeatedly so that we could have had this legislation passed before the end of the summer sitting, and this government said no. If you're going to help survivors of sexual assault, there's a tool for your tool box, a piece of legislation put forth by Toronto Centre. Pass that legislation. Let's have that consent awareness week so the courageous conversations and the actions that have to happen on campus and in the school communities are taking place.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further debate?

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: It's my great honour to rise today to support Bill 26, Strengthening Post-secondary Institutions and Students Act. I want to thank the Minister of Colleges and Universities for proposing this legislation, as a strong advocate for protecting our students, our young people—especially young women—so they can flourish academically and socially.

That is why I'm proud to stand up today in support of Bill 26, the Strengthening Post-secondary Institutions and Students Act, which will create a safe, inclusive environment within our colleges and universities across Ontario.

Ontario is proud to have some of the largest, greatest colleges and universities in Canada, bringing the brightest students from across the country and across the world into our communities. My riding of Scarborough–Rouge Park is home to great institutions, such as Centennial College and the University of Toronto Scarborough. Furthermore, I'm excited that our government is building the first-ever medical school right in Scarborough, training over 1,500 health care professionals right in our community. I'm proud to represent the many students across my riding who either commute to school or live in residence.

We are building academic infrastructure and creating a new generation of professionals to support our economy, and we need both women and men to be trained in the jobs of the future. Madam Speaker, these students are the future. We have an obligation to support them and ensure it is a safe and inclusive environment.

I have heard about the terrible experiences that many young people have faced in and around campus. I'm truly disheartened to hear that the Student Voices on Sexual Violence survey reports that 63% of university respondents and 50% of college respondents have reported an experience of sexual harassment, while 23% and 17%,

respectively, said that they had a non-consensual sexual experience/assault.

This is not a reality that we can continue to let happen within our post-secondary institutions. It especially cannot come from faculty and staff, who have an obligation to teach and encourage our young people. We've made it clear that our government has zero tolerance for sexual assault and we are committed to protecting our students. That is why in 2019 our government required each publicly assisted college and university in Ontario to establish a sexual violence prevention task force. Last fall we introduced regulatory amendments to protect students from inappropriate questioning or disciplinary action when they report acts of violence.

Today we are building on our commitment to protecting all students in post-secondary environments. There is a power structure between faculty and students and we must never allow that to be abused. This legislation, Bill 26, is going to help institutions to better address sexual misconduct against students. We need to set the highest standards in Ontario, ensuring that the relationship between faculty, staff and students is consistently professional.

1540

The strengthened policies would give institutions the tools to deem the sexual abuse of a student as just cause for dismissal, and this bill will prevent the rehiring of employees found to have committed sexual abuse of a student. These measures would prevent the use of non-disclosure agreements to address such cases where an employee leaves an institution to be employed at another institution and their prior wrongdoing remains secret. They would also 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.

As I said earlier, these amendments are not just a stand-alone policy; these are to add on to existing policies laid out by colleges and universities across the province. This bill is the next step in protecting students, and I'm proud that our government has held consultations with over 100 stakeholders, including representatives from post-secondary education institutions, labour groups, student groups, private career colleges, faculty associations and community organizations.

Understanding and addressing sexual violence experienced by our students is a priority for Ontario's colleges and universities, and we remain committed to creating a safe environment and a safe working environment free from sexual violence. I know that these changes are important to the young people in my community of Scarborough–Rouge Park. I know that for members from this chamber, across this province, these remain important priorities for their communities.

Madam Speaker, I know the long and extensive process which members at Toronto Metropolitan University went through, a lot of whom are residents in my riding, in finding a new name for the university that they go to or the

university that they've been to. Toronto Metropolitan University is going through a name change to represent this modern university. If this bill passes, the legislation will respect that decision to recognize the process of Ryerson University to formally become Toronto Metropolitan University. These are big steps in the future of TMU, which will better align the university with its current values. I look forward to seeing what's next in the future of this great academic institution.

Madam Speaker, this is not just an important time for students academically, but also socially as well. This is a time to find their personality, meet lifelong friends and, of course, their future colleagues. So ensuring that young people, especially young women, are able to go through their education feeling safe, comfortable and confident is important. It's important in creating a strong future for themselves and our community at large. That is exactly what this bill does, taking a zero-tolerance stance against sexual assault.

That is why we need to pass these amendments that would require publicly assisted post-secondary institutions and private colleges to have specific processes in place that address and increase transparency of faculty and staff sexual misconduct towards students. This includes deeming the sexual abuse of a student as just cause for dismissal. This bill prevents non-disclosure agreements to hide their misconduct when they move on to a different institution. When they move on to a different institution to continue to teach, this bill will prevent the nondisclosure. This will prevent the secrecy that they want to remain. I welcome this because this particular piece of legislation brings transparency.

Also, the third aspect of this bill provides guidelines of what professional academic relationships must look like. The government stands with students across Ontario, as well as assuring victims that we will not put up with this anymore.

I urge members from all sides of this chamber to support this bill, to make sure that we not only stand with our students, but we also create an environment where our future leaders are protected and learn in a safe environment.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Questions?

Mr. Chris Glover: Thank you to the member from Scarborough–Rouge Park for your comments today on this bill. I think we're all in agreement that our students at colleges and universities need to be safe from sexual assault. We can also, I think, judging by the statistics you recited, agree that there's a crisis on our campuses.

The question that I have for you is—this bill doesn't go far enough. If we're going to address sexual assault on campus, we need education. We need processes and repercussions for assailants, and we also need support for survivors. My colleague from Toronto Centre has brought forward a bill called the Consent Awareness Week Act. It's Bill 18. Would you support adding this bill, the Consent Awareness Week Act, to the current legislation when it gets to committee?

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: I'd like to thank the member for Spadina–Fort York for that question. As I said in my remarks, Madam Speaker, the Ministry of Colleges and Universities went through comprehensive consultations with over 100 stakeholders, including student groups, labour unions, labour groups, faculty associations and community organizations. They came up with these aspects to make sure that we have action items to prevent non-disclosure agreements, so there is transparency; to make sure that sexual abuse from faculty and staff towards students is just cause for dismissal; and for institutions to create a framework, a policy, to have proper academic staff and faculty professional relationships towards students.

I think this has action items. It's a good bill moving forward. I hope all members support this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member for Mississauga–Erin Mills.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: It has been just over a year since the terrible allegations of sexual violence at Western University were reported in the media. The minister has been very vocal about her zero-tolerance policy for sexual violence, and sent a very clear message to schools after the report came out to reaffirm that zero-tolerance policy.

Bill 26, of course, gives schools more tools to deal with incidents of sexual violence on campus, but it also will be up to each institution to choose what to do in regard to those incidents. Can the member tell us how these policies, outlined in Bill 26, will further empower institutions to be even stronger against incidents?

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Thanks to my colleague from Mississauga–Erin Mills for that question and for his advocacy.

Madam Speaker, it is often in the toughest times that we find opportunities for change, and I feel this bill is such that, after the allegation at Western, President Shepard and his team took a very focused approach to combating sexual violence on campus. It started with supporting students, making sure that those impacted by the events of last September were supported. It evolved into creating further resources on campus for students, and strengthening the sexual violence policy to provide stronger resources for the institution and better protections for students.

1550

I'm proud to say that Western is one of Ontario's leaders in combating sexual violence and will continue to work towards that. Our government has a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual misconduct, and I think this bill is a good piece that we can all vote in favour of.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member from Sudbury.

MPP Jamie West: Thank you, Speaker, and thank you as well to the member for Scarborough–Rouge Park. Just because the time is brief, I want to read this from OCUFA: "OCUFA strongly supports measures to address sexual assault on campus. However, this act offers a narrow and punitive vision for addressing the serious problem of assault and harassment. OCUFA recommends a holistic approach to enforcing policies around sexual violence on campus focused on prevention, education, and support."

I think we're all aligned that this sort of thing shouldn't be happening and people should be held accountable, but I'm just wondering—as the Conservative government has been saying that this is just one step in the process—if the member opposite could share what will be coming forward that will focus on prevention, education and support to prevent these things from happening in the first place?

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Thanks to the member. Our government believes that no one should have to worry about sexual violence or sexual misconduct, on or off campus. As I said, in over 100 stakeholder consultations that the minister and his PA and the team went through, one of the quotes that we got from the president and CEO of the Council of Ontario Universities, Steve Orsini, was, "Ontario's universities are committed to ensuring student, faculty and staff safety and strongly condemn all forms of sexual violence or harassment. Building on today's announcement, all of our universities have developed and continue to regularly review their institutional sexual violence policies and processes to ensure that they maintain a survivor-centric approach."

Madam Speaker, we have consulted the stakeholders, and as a ministry, as a government, we will do so in further opportunities to make sure we are—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Thank you.

The member from Niagara West.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: My thanks to the member from Scarborough for speaking to this particular piece of legislation and recognizing the importance of fighting sexual violence and assault on campus. It's very, very important, and I'm very appreciative of the ministry's efforts.

I'm wondering if he could speak a little bit to schedule 1, subsection 3, which is the "no re-employment" clause. I think that's a very important piece of this legislation, which states, "If an employee of an institution commits an act of sexual abuse of a student of an institution and the institution discharges the employee for that act or the employee resigns from their employment, the institution shall not subsequently re-employ the employee."

I think it's very important to also ensure that students who have been victimized and traumatized through assault don't ever have to experience that trauma of seeing their perpetrator in person, perhaps on campus in a chance encounter or perhaps in a different setting, and I think that's an important clause. I'm wondering if the member could speak a little bit more about the importance of that and ensuring that we're taking this heinous crime very seriously.

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Thanks to the member from Niagara West for that question. It's a great question. If this bill passes, there are aspects of changes that are coming into place, especially changes where faculty or staff commit sexual misconduct towards students and are using the non-disclosure agreement to suppress that voice, to make sure they move to a different institution or different employment and start a new approach, a new career without having any punishment or any cautioning or any

trial towards the misconduct. So this bill is actually bringing transparency to all the misconduct because this bill will provide the nondisclosure to address, where employees leave an institution—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Thank you. Question?

Mr. Chris Glover: I appreciate the question from the former member from Scarborough—Rouge Park—or the former question from the member from Scarborough—Rouge Park.

Anyways, I just want to talk about—you said this means that the victims will not have to face their perpetrators, because there's no re-employment. But there's a flaw in the bill, and the flaw is that a lot of graduate students are also teachers when they're on the campus. So what happens if a person who's also a teacher as well as a graduate student sexually abuses a student? Does that person stay on the campus? They may not be re-employed, but do they stay on the campus as a grad student? Does the victim have to face them?

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Thank you for that important question. At this time, the government's approach is to focus on strengthening the institutional sexual violence policies at these colleges and universities, and the focus is on—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Thank you. Further debate?

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak today on Bill 26, the Strengthening Post-secondary Institutions and Students Act. This legislation covers topics that are very personal to me, having spent the last few weeks working with my community, my colleagues and hospitals in Niagara to ensure we have better practices for sexual violence and harassment, not only on campuses but for anyone who is seeking support.

I do want to acknowledge, before going too deep into the theme of the bill, that Bill 26 does provide post-secondary institutions and private career colleges with the clear rights to fire employees when they are found to have sexually abused a student, stops them from being re-hired and bans the use of non-disclosure agreements.

It is important to create safe spaces. It is not a surprise that students who had experienced unwanted sexual behaviours reported that it affected their mental health; simply, it affected their life, both academically and their post-academic life. It is traumatizing.

Madam Speaker, I would be doing a disservice to my own community if I did not bring up an incredibly important point on the matter of sexual assault and this legislation: Transparency is important; however, so is the experience of the survivor once they have endured the trauma of a sexual assault.

In Niagara last month, we saw the cost of a health care and hospital system that has been ill-supported by this government in terms of maintaining staffing levels to ensure that a survivor, whether from academia or anywhere else, was able to receive adequate support, namely a sexual assault evidence kit.

Unfortunately, our local hospital in Niagara desperately needs support from this province. It is forced to send away survivors of sexual assault to see nurse examiners in other regions. In the case of being sent to Burlington from Niagara, a victim is being asked to get in a cab with a complete stranger and travel for over an hour to another hospital.

Survivors—ensuring they get access to sexual assault evidence kits in a timely manner and local manner. This is because we can all agree even a single survivor being turned away and a single survivor losing their justice is an issue we need to find a solution to immediately.

Speaker, sexual assault survivors need real, tangible support alongside protections like these. They need to know that we have priorities in this province, across all hospitals, that put survivors first.

In fact, during the same time survivors in Niagara were being turned away because we did not have the staff to give them the support they required, the same thing happened in New Brunswick. The difference between Ontario and New Brunswick has been crushing. Over the last few weeks, New Brunswick has offered sweeping changes to how survivors receive support and education, and guarantees that they get the support they need.

1600

In Ontario, we see legislation like this but no mention of actual, tangible supports for survivors who are being turned away not only in Niagara, but, I'm expecting, across Ontario. Simply, we need to see minimum standards for campuses when it comes to sexual and gender-based violence. My colleagues have raised this issue. We cannot treat this matter as a token of half measure. We must make a full and comprehensive review of the gaps for survivors and close them, as urgently as possible.

Madam Speaker, there is a lot more work to be done to support survivors, and it is dangerous if this support is done in a way that ignores the problem we have at hand.

It is my hope that this legislation is not the government just checking a box, but that they will begin to see awful gaps across communities and help hospitals with funding to ensure no survivor is turned away, whether they are a student or otherwise. In Niagara, our hospital response program is still left with silence from this government on that support. This is a problem that makes it seem that this issue is not being taken seriously enough. That makes me very worried. I would like to see legislation that tackles sexual violence and gender-based violence include support for survivors and hospitals. In this legislation, specifically, I would like to see clear supports for students who are survivors, ensuring they get access to sexual assault evidence kits in a timely and local way.

I want to take some time out during the debate on Bill 26 to highlight that sexual assault and protecting survivors is not a partisan issue; it is not a platitude either. It requires, in a meaningful way, understanding the matter fully. Sexual assault shatters people's lives, and the impact of this violence must never be minimized.

The rates of post-traumatic stress disorder for survivors of sexual assault are incredibly high. The road to trauma

recovery is long, confusing, often volatile and immensely difficult. It is with this in mind and heart that we, as leaders, must work together to ease this path for survivors and remove each and every barrier we can along the way.

Through you, Speaker, I urge the government to include in any bill, especially one that relates to sexual assault, urgent next steps—that must include the immediate repeal of Bill 124 so we can recruit, retain and return nurses to this sector, which will help keep hospitals and community care centres operating at their full capacity, ensuring necessary care can continue uninterrupted. That's the issue we have seen in Niagara region—survivors being turned away. Limiting what we can do to compensate nurses has led to survivors being turned away, and these survivors could be students or anyone in the public; we will all agree that it is unacceptable.

Supporting members of our community who have been sexually assaulted must include a holistic approach, it must include wraparound services, and it must utilize the great work that is already being done by our local experts—in Niagara's case, these are performed by staff at the Niagara Sexual Assault Centre.

It is also imperative that this government restore funding to sexual assault crisis centres as well as provide the 30% increase called for by the sector. Sexual assault recovery often requires a comprehensive approach involving both treatment and crisis centre services, both of which are stretched thin, province-wide.

Madam Speaker, before I relinquish my time speaking to this bill, I have one more note to make, which should be tied to this bill: There should be a broader view of all sexual assault funding across the province. As a very local example, Niagara Health has requested \$183,000 in additional funding to enhance staffing resources and ensure survivors of sexual assault are fully supported. Their plea for help has not received a response from the Minister of Health as of yet. It is discouraging to know they are still left with silence, despite the conversation about sexual assault support through this bill that is actively being discussed right here today. This money would have incalculable value to ensure that survivors of sexual assault are supported in the aftermath of an assault and are given the tools to ensure justice can be pursued.

Since Niagara Health has not received a response from your ministry, they are forced to fill this urgent funding gap with their own resources, which have already been stretched way too thin. That's not the right approach we should be having. This is not the conversation we should be talking about. We should not create protections in schools but leave the actual follow-up and justice hanging in the air. There is no justice in that. I think we all can understand that.

Thank you, Speaker, for the time.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):
Questions?

Ms. Natalie Pierre: If passed, these changes in Bill 26 would better protect students who experienced faculty and staff sexual violence on campus and off-campus. Our government has been clear: We have zero tolerance for

sexual assault, harassment or any other forms of violence in our communities, and we will continue working with post-secondary institutions to facilitate safe and supportive learning environments.

Does the member across believe that non-disclosure agreements should be banned in post-secondary education for the purposes of protecting sexual abusers and silencing students?

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I think this bill is not going far enough. As I mentioned, survivors need to ensure that they're getting access to evidence kits—which they're not getting. If you're a student or you've been sexually assaulted within your community, it is so imperative that that victim needs to get to a hospital and get a sexual assault evidence kit, in a timely way, and that they're not sent to another hospital an hour and a half away with a complete stranger. It's for their mental health, for their wellness and for them to be able to support survivors.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Questions?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm glad to be able to ask questions of the member, who spoke well on this important issue.

As we see in the bill, there are some obviously positive aspects, one of which is that survivors won't be forced to sign non-disclosure agreements anymore. Things like that are positive, but if we're looking at it from a survivor's standpoint, it really does fall short.

This is a government whose first step was an attack on clubs and organizations on campus, back in the day, through that so-called opt-out mechanism which defunded social service programs, some of which were survivor-focused.

If this government were actually interested in supporting survivors, what more could they have in this bill, or what more could we see from this government in this Legislature?

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: That's a great question, and I thank my colleague for that.

Last year—I believe it was last year, or a year and a half ago—I stood in this House and I brought forward inter-partner violence disclosure and Clare's Law, and this government turned it down; they didn't vote for it. That was one more tool that we could have put in the tool box for women who were being sexually assaulted in Ontario, so they could contact the police and find out if their partner or whoever they were with had some kind of charges against them of a sexual nature or an abusive nature.

I think that this government should put more funds in, spend their money where it should be and look back on this legislation—and, like I said, repeal Bill 124, so that nurses can definitely be retained and replenished.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Question?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Speaker, as the MPP for Ajax, you will know that in the region of Durham we have two universities: Ontario Tech University and Trent Durham—and Durham College.

1610

Underpinning this legislation was a broad consultative process. We've had many universities come back to us

with their input about the effect of this proposed legislation. I'll read one paragraph for you: "Ontario Tech University welcomes the province's strong support for the post-secondary community's commitment to eradicating sexual violence and maintaining healthy and safe learning, living, social and working environments for its students, staff and faculty members with this bill."

Taken together, it's providing the framework to ensure student safety. Furthermore, it is dealing with the issue of staff and staff involvement in non-disclosure.

Would the member from St. Catharines—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Response?

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I also have a university in St. Catharines: Brock University. We have Niagara College in Niagara as well. We come from a university/college town.

However, when I write the minister and I don't get a response—my colleague from Toronto—St. Paul's as well as myself jointly wrote a letter asking if this government was—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): I'm sorry; we're out of time.

Further debate?

Ms. Laurie Scott: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to rise before the House and speak about Bill 26, the Strengthening Post-secondary Institutions and Students Act, 2022.

The bill addresses the name change of Ryerson University to Toronto Metropolitan University—TMU—as well as strengthening this government's commitment to the safety and well-being of students attending Ontario's world-class colleges and universities.

As the member for Durham mentioned last week in his speech about Bill 26—it gives me the opportunity to also celebrate the legacy of the late Honourable William G. Davis, the 18th Premier of Ontario. He was known as the "education Premier." The tributes that we did in the House weren't that long ago, crediting him with our community college system, which provides world-class education.

Each and every Ontario community college provides thousands of students across our great province with a springboard to realize their dreams.

I attended college myself—Loyalist College in Belleville—and graduated as a registered nurse in my early twenties.

I'm always grateful I had the opportunity to know Mr. Davis personally. He was such a great individual.

I know Fleming College in Lindsay—Peterborough and Haliburton are the other campuses—was created as a result of the colleges being formed in 1965, so that's great. Two of those campuses are in my riding.

It's important, in legislation, to recognize what has gone on in the past—but also to experience the freedom of higher learning in safe, secure and equitable environments, so we're making sure that vision continues.

The legislation also amends the Ryerson University Act of 1977 and the University Foundations Act of 1992. It's kind of technical, but I want to let the audience at home—

who, I know, are listening intently—know what the contents of the bill are. It will change the name of Ryerson University to Toronto Metropolitan University—TMU—and it will change the size and composition of TMU's senate, as we look forward to creating a fair and more equitable education system for all students. Changing the name of the university to TMU is going to better align the university with its students and their shared values.

I want to give another shout-out: I know it's a bit of history to start with in my opportunity to speak today, but I'm pleased that TMU is renaming its law school the Lincoln Alexander School of Law. The Honourable Lincoln M. Alexander was the first Black Canadian member of Parliament and Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, from 1985 to 1991.

It seems fitting—we're just coming back from our Remembrance Day constituency week and attending so many services. In my riding, I have a lot of cenotaphs and Legions which I try to attend throughout the year, if we can't get to them on Remembrance Day.

Lincoln Alexander also served in the Royal Canadian Air Force during the Second World War, and then he came back to law school.

In 1968, he was Canada's first Black MP, as I mentioned.

I actually had the opportunity to know Lincoln Alexander. He was a friend of my dad, who was a member of Parliament. Way back when, he would play Santa Claus to me on the phone.

Interjections.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I know, back in those days.

As Lieutenant Governor, he even came up and opened the Kinmount Fair—of course, I'm from the great town of Kinmount. He also served as chancellor of the University of Guelph—so quite a distinguished career. I think it's so wonderful that his name is going to be associated with the law school.

Similarly, we need to do everything we can to ensure a safe learning environment for our young adults, and especially our young women. The proposed bill shows that this is something our government remains focused on. Our children, young children, vulnerable, going to these post-secondary institutions—we expect that they're going to be safe and protected while pursuing their education away from home. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. I know that we speak a lot of international students and those increasing numbers who come over and their vulnerability, also, coming into our post-secondary institutions.

I have spoken many times about gender-based sexual violence in our communities.

In 2018, a survey showed that Canadian women experienced disproportionate rates of sexual and physical violence. Around 30% of women aged 15 to 24 report being physically or sexually assaulted by someone other than their intimate partner. And in recent years, 92% of victims of sexual offences have been women, and virtually all of the attackers, 99%, were men. It's also important to

understand that almost 90% of sexual assaults are not reported to the police.

Studies already show that one in three Canadian women will experience sexual assault in their lifetime. It's a horrible statistic, but it's clear that the issue is much larger than the current statistics report. In an era when we have social movements and we've raised global awareness of the sexual harassment, assault and rape of women, it is remarkable that today some offenders are still not being held accountable for their actions.

This legislation also introduces changes necessary to clarify our government's zero-tolerance position on sexual harassment, assault, and every other form of violence. That is why this legislation will also amend the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005, to help protect students in instances of faculty and/or staff sexual misconduct and harassment.

The changes being proposed include:

- strengthening tools available to institutions in order to address instances of faculty or staff sexual misconduct against students;

- preventing the use of non-disclosure agreements to address instances where an employee leaves an institution to be employed at another institution; and

- requiring institutions to have employee sexual misconduct policies that, at a minimum, include the institution's rules with respect to sexual behaviour and examples of disciplinary measures that may be imposed on those employees who contravene such policies.

These measures will help address instances where faculty members overstep teacher-student relationships with inappropriate behaviour, such as an instance in 2016 when an independent review found that a professor at an Ontario institution of higher learning lured a female student with alcohol for the purposes of making sexual advances towards her.

I know my colleagues will agree that any form of sexual misconduct or harassment is wrong, and that is why I support government action that addresses and condemns all forms of sexual violence and misconduct on or off Ontario campuses. It is our students who will continue to drive this province forward, and we know that a healthy campus environment is crucial to every student's success.

1620

I would like to share with this House a strong and succinct statement from Linda Franklin, the president and CEO of Colleges Ontario. Ms. Franklin remarked that “ensuring every student has a safe and positive learning environment is a top priority.” Ms. Franklin added that “the comprehensive policies and protocols in place at every college are enhanced on an ongoing basis, and we're committed to working with the government and students on the further measures announced in this legislation.”

I know that Linda Franklin is retiring, after 15 years, next year, so I want to wish her all the best. She has been a wonderful advocate for the colleges of Ontario.

Madam Speaker, it is clear that across our institutions, these changes are welcomed and appreciated for going

further than ever before to combat sexual harassment and violence on our campuses of higher learning.

Ari Laskin, CEO of Career Colleges Ontario, said that his organization is “pleased to see the government is taking action on sexual assault and sexual violence in the post-secondary educational sector.” Mr. Laskin also said that he is pleased to see the government formalize this process and knows that “Ontario’s career colleges will continue to put student safety and well-being at the forefront of their operations.”

We all have a role to play to make sure our learning environments are welcoming, protected and safe, where students know that they will always have support. With these amendments, our government is showing the commitment to ending sexual harassment and assault in all learning environments, as well as our dedication to creating a better learning atmosphere for all students.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank all of my colleagues for their support of Bill 26 and, in particular, the Minister of Colleges and Universities and the member from Simcoe North for all her work on this piece of legislation and legislation that has been brought forward by her in different ministries before.

I hope everyone in the House supports Bill 26.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member from Oshawa.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I have a question for the member opposite, who—it’s getting to be a couple of years ago now—I was pleased to work with a bit and learn from, as we were all learning about human trafficking and her work at that time. In the spirit of that time, I want to talk about the importance of education when we’re here discussing sexual assault and the punitive side of things, which has its place and is important—but also, what about the prevention side?

To the member opposite, I would say: We all know that sexual assault of any kind causes lifelong trauma and significant impact. So why, in this bill, do we not see a shout-out to Consent Awareness Week, and why aren’t we seeing a focus on prevention, and where is the place for that with this government, in this House?

Ms. Laurie Scott: I thank the member from Oshawa and the members opposite. We’ve worked together a lot on the human trafficking file and raising that awareness in our own communities, as well as provincially. It’s something that needs to keep going, and there’s never too much awareness.

I want to shout out to the Minister of Education, who changed the actual curriculum in the elementary schools so that there is more awareness at a very young age about learning, about the Internet, about the appropriateness of relationships. That is only one piece that our government has brought forward. We say, “No tolerance”—and we realize that education is absolutely key. The member from Oshawa is absolutely right—education at all levels. I salute the Ministry of Education for changing that curriculum. And this is an ongoing situation in which we will continue the education.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member from Sarnia–Lambton.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I want to commend the member from Haliburton-Kawartha. I sat and listened very intently to her remarks. I also had the pleasure of working with her a number of years ago on her bill, the Saving the Girl Next Door Act—a great bill, and a great advocate for that.

I’d like to know a little bit about—I don’t know whether anyone has touched on this too much this afternoon—the amount of consultation that went into this bill to get it as far as it did. I’m sure there’s always room for more, but could you outline a little bit the consultation that went into it?

Ms. Laurie Scott: I thank my colleague sitting right beside me. He has been an incredible friend and advocate. I remember being in his community as we went around the communities in Ontario, getting groups involved and educating them about human trafficking, that it’s going on in all our communities and is very much over 95% gender-based violence against women.

You’re right. The Minister of Colleges and Universities was also the Associate Minister of Women’s Issues, and she did a great deal of work on human trafficking there and getting that education out and getting supports out. She has now brought in a piece of legislation which has been consulted for months with stakeholders. Everybody wants to do this. It’s a matter of it getting out there. Where are the vulnerabilities to tighten up? The Minister of Colleges and Universities has seen that on the faculty and the student side, that there has to be legislation brought in. So the minister has done the consultations. We see a tightening up with people in a position of power being staff and vulnerable people being students, and how we close that loophole. Thank you very much for the opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Question?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I appreciated the member’s strong comments about the need to take decisive action to protect students on post-secondary campuses from sexual assault. There certainly is no countenance for that within this Legislature. But I am concerned, because we know from the data that, overwhelmingly, unwanted sexualized behaviours on campus that are experienced by students are from other students. So there’s an opportunity within this bill to implement training mandates on campuses, for example—training of all staff, students and faculty about what constitutes consent and how to respond. I’m just wondering why the government didn’t incorporate any of those kinds of prevention and education measures in this bill.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Thank you to the member across. Again, we worked for many years on gender-based violence and human trafficking issues in the Legislature. I can’t remember what committee it was before that Colleges Ontario—I remember distinctively absorbing the statistics that showed the amount of sexual harassment and violence that occurs on campuses and immediately wanting to make those changes.

As we all know, education components evolve with professions. So although I can't answer the question directly on what is happening in the colleges right now, I know in many professions there are ongoing education modules that I encourage everyone to take, and there are certain mandates. I believe probably some of that is going on as we speak, in those professions. Raising the awareness like this legislation also empowers those—we're talking colleges and universities right now—to increase that education and awareness.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Question?

Ms. Christine Hogarth: First of all, I'd like to thank the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock for all of her work protecting our survivors—our victims of human trafficking and those survivors. She deserves a round of applause for all the work she has done to move this topic forward. This is a non-partisan issue, and this is so important that we even started talking about it, but we have to continue that dialogue.

I remember when the member came to the city of Toronto council when I worked there, to talk to the mayor about the Saving the Girl Next Door Act and the important proposal that tried to get everybody to just have that conversation moving forward. So I'm really glad that you were able to speak today from your experience and all the consultation you have done personally and all the work you have done around sexual abuse and sexual harassment, and sharing your comments with the people here in the House today.

I'm just wondering, for those who are just tuning in right now, if the member can just talk a little bit about this bill and measures specifically of how they are supporting students and survivors of sexual violence. How is this bill helping those people?

Ms. Laurie Scott: Thank you to the member for remembering that visit to the city of Toronto. I'll just clarify that Saving the Girl Next Door Act was the name of a private member's bill I did quite a while ago, but the title was just for, "Why does the girl next door need to be saved?" And it was to raise the awareness, in this case of human trafficking, but, again, of the bigger issue: gender-based violence and violence against women. So thank you for that memory and for listening back then.

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For sure, I think Bill 26, if passed, would put an end to the secrecy around faculty-student sexual violence. We've seen, in medical reports in recent years, uses of non-disclosure agreements to prevent students from seeking legal recourse against the offender, and the ability for faculty and staff to move from one school to another without facing any punishment or outright dismissal. It's far too common in post-secondary education, as the statistics that we do have show.

In many cases, collective agreements allow offenders to receive greater protections and rights than survivors of sexual violence. If passed, this would give institutions a greater power to discipline and dismiss offenders and empower students to come forward with evidence of sexual violence.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Point of order?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I just have some news for folks. Pursuant to standing order 7(e), I wanted to inform the House that today's night sitting is cancelled.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The night sitting is cancelled.

The member for Toronto Centre.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you, Madam Speaker; I appreciate that. And thank you to the member from across the House for her comments.

I'm just curious, because it has been raised before, what's in the bill and what you're actually saying—and what many members on the government House side are saying—doesn't quite align. So on the one hand I'm hearing, "No more NDAs," yet there's a loophole in the bill that specifically allows NDAs. I'm hearing that you want to address violence on campus, but you're focusing specifically on faculty. What about alumni, visitors, people who are working under contract, graduate students who happen to also be teachers? There's nothing in the bill that actually addresses that.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I don't have much time, but this is one tool, bringing forward—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Thank you. Further debate?

Mr. Chris Glover: It's an honour to speak on this Bill 26 today. I think everybody in the House is in agreement with the goals. We need students to be safe on college and university campuses. In order to do that, to prevent and to stop sexual assaults on campuses, we need education, we need processes for reporting and repercussions, and we need supports for survivors.

This bill takes some measures on repercussions, but that's it. It doesn't have the education component; it doesn't have the supports component. Bill 26 is about increasing repercussions for staff who sexually abuse a student. Bill 26 provides post-secondary institutions and private career colleges with clearer rights to fire employees when they are found to have sexually abused a student, to stop them from being rehired, and bans the use of non-disclosure agreements.

I think we can also agree that there is a crisis of sexual assault on campuses. We saw it blow up about a decade ago, and the Liberal government brought in a few supports and they brought cameras to campuses. Let's see; in September 2021, at Western University during orientation week, the reports from social media suggested that 30 or more students were drugged and assaulted on the campus. In the same week, four women came forward to police about three incidents of sexual assault. There was a school-wide walkout with 9,000 students protesting what they called the "culture of misogyny" on campus. They called for Western to review policies and procedures for handling these situations, and they want more than this bill has to offer. We know there's a crisis, and it blew up a year ago.

This government conducted consultations, but the only thing they came back with was this legislation that

increases the repercussions for staff who sexually abuse a student. It doesn't deal with student-on-student sexual assault. It doesn't deal with so many other aspects. It doesn't deal with the education or the supports that are needed.

We know that this is a crisis because post-secondary students experience a disproportionate number of sexual and gender-based assaults compared to the rest of the population. Forty-one per cent of sexual assault cases are reported by students of post-secondary institutions in Canada. Three out of four students have witnessed or experienced unwanted sexual behaviours while attending a post-secondary institution. One in five women will experience rape, and one in 10 young men will perpetrate rape by the time they graduate.

Men are disproportionately the instigators and perpetrators of sexual assault and violence, and most often against women. Most sexual and gender-based violence is committed by students towards other students and occurs in high-risk times and spaces on and off campus. This is why Bill 26 needs to be amended to address student-on-student violence as well as staff-on-student violence.

We need education, processes and repercussions, both preventative and punitive measures—stronger punitive measures that consider graduate students who are also employees of post-secondary institutions. This is one of the gaps in this legislation, because it talks about staff, and so if a staff member is found to be guilty of sexually abusing a student, they can be fired, there can be no non-disclosure agreement, and they cannot be rehired. But what if the perpetrator is a graduate student, so they're both a staff member and a student? Do they continue as a student on the campus? And if they do, what does that mean for the victim? Does the victim have to face their perpetrator on the campus? So this is one of the gaps in the legislation that I hope the government will address when it goes to committee.

When I was teaching at York University, before I became an MPP, the Liberals created the sexual violence campus safety program. It added cameras on campus, and this was thought to be the necessary solution to addressing sexual and gender-based violence at colleges and universities, but it wasn't. This was almost a decade ago.

What has happened—because the Liberals did not take adequate measures at that time—is that sexual assault on campus has continued to the point where, at Western University, 9,000 students walked out in protest because of this culture that's happening on our campuses.

So I want to talk about solutions. I want to talk about three things that we'll be asking the government to do. First of all, we've got to have prevention. We have to have repercussions, and then we have to have supports for survivors.

On the prevention side, my colleague—who's sitting right beside me here—from Toronto Centre and the members from Davenport, St. Paul's and Kitchener Centre brought forward in September Bill 18, the Consent Awareness Week Act. The point of this bill is to proclaim the week beginning on the third Monday in September in

each year as Consent Awareness Week. The goal of Consent Awareness Week is to create space one week every year for Ontarians to have meaningful, positive, intersectional and age-appropriate conversations around consent, what it means and what it looks like, because sexual assault of any kind causes lifelong trauma and impacts relationships for the rest of the survivor's life.

This bill, currently, was carried past first reading, but it's sitting in committee. So I would ask the members of the government to consider incorporating that bill, the consent awareness bill, into this bill when this bill gets to committee.

Process and penalties—I actually talked about this. The grad students who are both employees and students at the university—that needs to be changed. We need to make sure that, if somebody is accused and found guilty of sexually abusing a student, then whether the abuser is a student, a graduate student or just an undergraduate student, that the victim never has to face that person, their perpetrator, on the campus again. That's an amendment that needs to be made to this legislation.

The final thing I want to talk about is supports for survivors. After the protest last year at Western University, they launched the action committee on gender-based and sexual violence with an independent review to identify policy gaps or procedural failures related to the events. Most of the recommendations they came back with were around prevention, and these are actions that Western, to their credit, has taken for the most part, so far as I know.

They have appointed a special adviser to address campus culture and safety. They require all incoming students to complete a gender-based and sexual violence prevention education and awareness training. They are hiring an additional gender-based-and-sexual-violence-support case manager and education coordinator. They are creating a training program for Western special constables and other security personnel. They are providing more support to student organizations like fraternities and sororities, to address issues around gender-based and sexual violence, and applying for funding from the Canada Research Chairs Program and the Canada First Research Excellence Fund to support new academic position focused on gender-based and sexual-violence-related research.

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So all of these prevention measures—Western University went through that crisis a year ago. They had their own task force. They came back with these prevention recommendations. Why doesn't the government incorporate these recommendations, these prevention measures, into this legislation? We should be taking a bill like this very seriously and doing everything we can to support survivors, and the bill doesn't do everything we can. It seems to do the bare minimum.

My colleague from St. Paul's says, "Students go to post-secondary education to study, experience life and have fun, not to be subjected to unwanted pain and violence." Students deserve to feel safe at university. They

pay exorbitant tuition fees. They must have good grades to attend, and will be burdened with years of student debt and interest on that debt tied to—they're paying so much money. We have an obligation, a responsibility, to make sure that they're safe in that space. They should not be traumatized by sexual assault because preventative training and supports have not been put in place.

I'm asking this government, when we get to committee with this legislation, to please consider amending it and broadening the scope so that student-on-student sexual assault is taken into account, so that education is part of this package and supports for survivors are also part of this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Laurie Scott): Questions and comments?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you to the member from Spadina–Fort York for his comments. I want to ask a question with respect to NDAs, because we've heard the government members talk about how the NDAs are now going to be curtailed or they're going to be banned in this bill, but that's not the case. NDAs still exist under this legislation.

In Prince Edward county, one of the first provinces in Canada to do so, they've actually enacted legislation to stop non-disclosure agreements from being used to protect perpetrators of sexual violence. What is stopping this government from actually closing that loophole? Because they haven't gone far enough, clearly. But why is it that they won't go far enough? Do you know the answer to that?

Mr. Chris Glover: I don't know why this government is leaving this loophole around the non-disclosure agreements. The way it's phrased right now, with this legislation, somebody could be asked or coerced to sign a non-disclosure agreement before the legal process is complete. That's a huge gap. That's a loophole in this legislation that I hope the government will address in committee.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Laurie Scott): The member from Whitby.

Mr. Lorne Coe: To the member from Spadina–Fort York: He'll recall that last fall we made policy changes to strengthen post-secondary students reporting sexual violence and harassment—several regulations and amendments that addressed some part of what you spoke of going forward. Remember that?

Notwithstanding, my question to the member from Spadina–Fort York is: Does the member opposite feel that faculty or staff who have a history of committing sexual violence be allowed to remain in their role protected by non-disclosure agreements? Or should they be dismissed?

Mr. Chris Glover: I think the response to that is obviously in my comments. No, the victims of sexual assault should never have to face their abuser on the campus again. What we're asking is for you to strengthen the bill so that there are no non-disclosure agreements—because there's a gap in that—and so that it's not just staff members who sexually abuse a student, but other students who sexually abuse a student who would also be kicked off the campus.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Laurie Scott): The member from Sudbury.

MPP Jamie West: Thank you to the member for Spadina–Fort York. One of the things you said that really caught my ear was “a culture of misogyny,” when you talked about the importance of prevention. I would just ask the member from Spadina–Fort York if he can talk about why prevention is so important in breaking apart a culture of misogyny.

Mr. Chris Glover: You know, it's one of these things where we need to have the courageous conversations to actually expose what's going on, because if one in five women on campuses is experiencing sexual assault, and one in 10 men is perpetrating it—which is what the statistics indicate—then there is a culture that is allowing this to happen, and we've got to change the culture.

That's why I'm very supportive of my colleague's consent awareness bill to declare a consent awareness week so that we have an ongoing educational program on campuses and across this province to raise awareness about sexual assault so that we can try to curtail it through education.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Laurie Scott): The member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Listening to the comments today, I'm reading some quotes from some of our presidents of universities like Laurier: “Laurier is committed to ensuring a safe, welcoming and inclusive ... environment for all students across our campuses. We support measures that will allow universities to build upon existing policies to ensure that students remain free from harassment both inside and outside of the classroom.”

And then I hear the remarks today. Throughout the various debates we've had, we've had the members from the opposition—through you, Madam Speaker—talking about sexual assault as costly and calling for non-partisan solutions to get where we need to go. Well, Speaker, Bill 26 proposes non-partisan solutions that will make a huge impact for students across the province. So, my question is: Will the opposition support Bill 26?

Mr. Chris Glover: Thank you for the question, to the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

The question about this bill is that it doesn't go far enough. The measures that are there are fine, but they're not actually going to stop sexual assault on campus, which has got to be the goal—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Laurie Scott): Thank you. I'm afraid that's the end of our question time.

Further debate? Further debate? Further debate?

Ms. Dunlop has moved second reading of Bill 26, An Act to amend various acts in respect of post-secondary education. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I believe it's carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Laurie Scott): Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I'd like to refer the bill to the Standing Committee on Social Policy, please.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Laurie Scott): The bill is now referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Point of order, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Laurie Scott): Point of order.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I just wanted to stand on a point of order and offer my apologies. I misspoke earlier when I referenced that Prince Edward county was a province; I meant to say that PEI was the province which passed Bill 118, which was the first province in Canada to

actually create province-wide non-disclosure agreements and to ban them from being used to protect perpetrators of violence.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Laurie Scott): It's always in order to correct the record. I appreciate that. Thank you so much.

Orders of the day? The deputy government House leader.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: No further business.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Laurie Scott): There being no further business, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock.

The House adjourned at 1650.

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