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of Ontario



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Jeudi  
9 mars 2023

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Speaker: Honourable Ted Arnott  
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott  
Greffier : Todd Decker

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 9 March 2023

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 9 mars 2023

*The House met at 0900.*

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

*Prières / Prayers.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### CONCURRENCE IN SUPPLY

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** I move concurrence in supply for the Ministry of the Attorney General; the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs; the Ministry of Energy; the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry; the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks; the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs; the Ministry of Health; the Ministry of Colleges and Universities; the Ministry of Finance; the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade; the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development; the Office of the Premier; the Cabinet Office; the Treasury Board Secretariat; the Ministry of Transportation; the Ministry of Infrastructure; the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing; the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries; the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services; the Ministry of Francophone Affairs; the Ministry of the Solicitor General; the Ministry of Education; and the Ministry of Long-Term Care.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The government House leader has moved government orders numbers 4 through 26, inclusive.

I recognize the member for Durham.

**Mr. Todd J. McCarthy:** I am pleased to rise this morning to discuss the importance of the procedural process specific to concurrence in supply and how it relates to the government's estimates for the 2022-23 fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is useful for all members of this House and the public in general to appreciate what concurrence is and how the estimates process works. It is so very important because every dollar spent throughout the fiscal year comes out of the pockets of this province's hard-working taxpayers, those same citizens who are facing very challenging economic times and who have entrusted us to deliver on the priorities of the people of Ontario.

It is true that the economic climate right now is challenging. Interest rates are higher than they have been for years and inflation remains high presently. There are also geopolitical conflicts that are adding to the general feeling of unease and economic pressure. As well, Mr. Speaker,

supply chains have not yet had the time to be fully recovered from the global pandemic.

Now, when seen in this context, it is easy to understand the additional importance of the government's fiscal responsibility and transparency and the essential importance for all members and for the public to understand the full fiscal process. To explain and clarify this process is exactly what I will endeavour to do today.

On September 8, 2022, volume 1 of the 2022-23 expenditure estimates was tabled. A few months later, on December 5, 2022, volume 2 of the 2022-23 expenditure estimates was tabled. This second set detailed the spending plans of the legislative offices. Seen as a whole, the expenditure estimates provide details of the operating and capital spending needs of ministries and the legislative offices for the fiscal year. This constitutes the government's formal request to the Legislature to approve spending requirements.

Mr. Speaker, this is an annual process that every Ontario government must complete. This process constitutes the government's annual formal request to the Legislature to approve spending requirements. Should it pass, the estimates provide each ministry with the legal authority to spend their operating and capital budgets.

Once expenditure estimates were introduced, they were then referred to the relevant standing committee for review. The standing committees then select ministries to appear and answer specific questions as to their respective expenditure estimates. This was the first time that we used this new approach and it resulted in a comprehensive review of almost all ministry estimates. This general oversight is invaluable.

Should the Supply Act pass, it signifies the final approval by this House of expenditures proposed by the government in the expenditure estimates. It is important to note that our government is not proposing any new spending today, but rather the government is simply looking to approve the spending already outlined in the 2022-23 estimates.

As a brief reminder for all members of this House, the latest projection as per the quarter 3 finances is that overall program expenses in 2022-23 were projected to be \$188.6 billion. That is money that is going into building an Ontario that is prepared for the future, an Ontario that embraces innovation and prioritizes health and safety, an Ontario that is fiscally secure and ready to take the next step forward.

Mr. Speaker, in the face of hard economic times, the people of Ontario have proven their resilience and strength, and it is the government's duty as stewards of the

public purse to support the families, the workers and the businesses of this entire province. It is an awesome responsibility to be entrusted with their hard-earned tax dollars, the hard-earned tax dollars of the citizens of Ontario. It is not to be taken lightly.

**0910**

Our government made a promise to be responsible and to be transparent with the province's economic and fiscal realities. We have made a promise to the people of Ontario to deliver better jobs and bigger paycheques; to build highways, transit and hospitals; and to lower the cost of living for families. Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what we are doing.

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

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It's a pleasure to join the House this morning to talk about this particular motion before the House. It was interesting to hear the member talk about the process that the finance committee goes through with regard to estimates. He did leave out the part where we only got 20 minutes to review the Ministry of Finance expenditures. The entire estimates process this year was truncated. My colleague and myself, who sit on the finance committee, tried to make the case to the finance committee Chair and to my colleagues across the aisle that our due diligence as parliamentarians includes exposing and honouring those words that he just said, which primarily revolve around transparency. Unfortunately, receiving 20 minutes to review the Ministry of Finance numbers proved to be very challenging. This was a very public debate at finance committee.

We did, however, get the opportunity to question the Minister of Finance, which is always an opportunity that I value, I would say, and I appreciate the Minister of Finance coming to that committee. He and I had a disagreement in that committee, I think it would be fair to say, in that I raised the issue around Bill 124. Now, for those of you who are watching at home—which is probably just Peter Tabuns's mother and my mom and dad—Bill 124 has had a humiliating and devastating impact on our health care human resources.

I asked the minister straight up: "What is your resistance to removing this piece of legislation, which now for three years has demoralized the health care workers in Ontario, has pushed them out of the province of Ontario, has compromised the health and well-being of the people who we're all elected to serve?"

In fact, we usually say a prayer saying that we are going to bring the best of ourselves to this place and that we are going to work to the benefit of the people of this province, for the greater good. Bill 124 is a piece of legislation which is compromising, ironically, even the goals of the government. The government has put forward a plan around health care; you are actually working against yourself and the interests of the people of this province by keeping this piece of legislation on the books.

In fact, it's worth noting that this piece of legislation has already been deemed unconstitutional in the courts—that it violates the charter rights of Ontarians—and yet, having lost that case on Bill 124, you maintain, in the most

stubborn and callous manner, this piece of legislation, and you're wasting more tax dollars fighting and appealing that decision in the courts of Ontario.

I do want to be fair to the Minister of Finance. Maybe we'll get into this a little bit later on, but during that committee meeting I said, "How is it fiscally responsible to undermine the health care workers who are currently working in our hospitals by having Bill 124 still on the books and then forcing hospitals—including the entire caring sector, including long-term care—to have to go to outside agencies, which are private companies, and pay those agency nurses sometimes two, three or four times as much?" In fact, we heard in Kenora that this has an incredibly demoralizing impact on the work environment, and let's remember, the work environment is the health care environment, where the well-being of patients is supposed to come first.

In that exchange with the finance minister, I said, "Why are you willing to pay so much money for an agency nurse?" And then the private company also skims off the top of that somewhere between \$200 and \$400 per hour—and then not honour the nurse who is working alongside that agency nurse, coming to work every day, who went to work during the pandemic, who showed up for the people of Ontario. You called them health care heroes.

I do want to say, the finance minister said, "You and Bill 124"—yes, Bill 124 is what we will fight day in and day out in Ontario.

The fiscal irresponsibility of it is at the core of this, really. The government received a devastating report from the Financial Accountability Officer yesterday. You have a plan for health care—yes, it is a plan, but it is a plan to fail the people of Ontario. The shortfall is \$21.3 billion. You will not meet your own targets. The important piece with the Financial Accountability Officer is that they are measuring you against your plan, your budget targets, and to find this large a discrepancy is—even I was surprised, and you have surprised me a few times; I will admit to that.

The process by which the budget this year, the estimates this year—it has been incredibly truncated. I've always said, for the last 10 years that I've been in this House, that when you have a flawed process, you will have a flawed product, and that has certainly been true of multiple pieces of legislation that have come before this House.

The high-level piece on health care—and of course we're going to talk about health care for a fair amount of time today, because it is very topical to the people of this province, particularly to the 107,000 people who are called "long waiters," who are waiting for surgery.

We know that the surgical ORs in the province of Ontario are underutilized. We know that on Thursday at 3 o'clock when the money runs out, the hospital is not allowed to run a deficit, so that OR closes. Instead of funding that OR, instead of funding the nurses and the doctors who are required to open that OR more fully, to its full capacity—in our 100 public hospitals—the government is proposing a little sideline on the surgical units. I think that our health critic, later on, is going to be exposing some of those sidelines and how devastating and how

damaging they can be to the entire fabric of our universal health care system.

I will say that out of the 107,000 people who are long waiters—just to be clear, these are people who have been waiting so long that the original surgery they were booked for—they are past that point of optimal health care outcomes. This number has never been this high—107,000 people. I have asked the FAO to pull out some of the demographics on that, because we also know that there are 12,000 children waiting for surgery in Ontario. The Children's Health Coalition has asked this government for \$371 million to close that gap.

When the chamber of commerce was here on Monday—it has been a very full week, a really good week. One of their concerns is health care, because they, as a chamber—as their members from across this province have said, “When health outcomes are compromised, that impacts our work environments, and it impacts the economy.”

So those parents whose children are still waiting, those 12,000 children and their parents—you can imagine that when parents go to work and they've been waiting one or two years for spinal surgery, they're not working at their optimal. We heard this story from our leader last week. When your child is sick, you are well past distracted; it is hard to focus.

I don't think that this government fully comprehends the impact of not honouring that \$371 million.

**0920**

Now, the plan that the government has also put forward on health care will leave a shortfall of 30,000 nurses. The Ontario Nurses' Association yesterday responded in a very strong manner to the FAO report, as you would imagine. They've experienced the brunt, really, of Bill 124, as have personal support workers.

At the end of the day, the plan that you have put forward for people in this province is already failing. We know that. We know that because there are 107,000 people—long waiters—waiting for surgery. There are 12,000 children who are left in the lurch for surgery. Unless you have a serious course correction—which hopefully happens on March 23. Listen, I'm looking forward to coming back to this House for budget week. I'm looking forward to seeing how this government acknowledges the pain of the people of this province on housing, on health care and on home care.

I just want to really talk quickly about home care because the member talked about transparency. Thank goodness we do have an independent budget officer in the province of Ontario who has an expenditure monitor, who tracks what the government said they were going to spend and what they actually did, in the end, spend. The discrepancies tell a story. They tell a very powerful story. We see the press releases, we see the announcements, we see the re-announcements on the same funding allocations, but you know what we're not seeing? The money get out the door and invested into the communities.

Home care is really one of the pillars that actually would support and alleviate the pressures on the health

care system, particularly on the hospital system, but also on long-term care.

So on home care, you'll remember that there were several announcements made about a \$1-billion investment. We welcomed that investment. The agencies across the province, home care and the helping agencies, like Meals on Wheels, for instance, and Independent Living Centre, welcomed it. They've never seen a number like that. And it's an impressive number: \$1 billion is nothing to ignore. But at the end of the day—and this just came out in February: “Almost a year after the Ontario government announced a historic \$1-billion investment in home care and \$100 million in community support services, just a fraction of that funding has been paid out, leaving the faltering system that provides care to people in their homes and in the community teetering on the brink of collapse, officials say.”

This is coming from Steve Perry, who is an Ottawa-based home care owner, Carefor, and he said, “‘We are going to run the risk of collapse, or at a minimum of service rationalization,’ if the province doesn't quickly put enough money into home and community care to stabilize the system.... His is among the home and community care agencies and organizations pleading with the province to fast-track funding.”

Now, one could ask the question, why is the money not getting out there? It's not like these not-for-profit and community agencies haven't proven their worth. If you've ever gone on a visit or a tour with Meals on Wheels and you've gone from house to house to house, that agency, Meals on Wheels, has a strong volunteer base, but obviously really good leadership. They have eyes on seniors. They have eyes on vulnerable people who are isolated, who are lonely. And loneliness kills. We know that from the pandemic.

Meals on Wheels, and we heard this at budget committee at every stop, are looking at a reduction of services by 30%—30%. Who cuts home care? Especially when we know that these upstream investments actually save the health care system money down the line, so a senior doesn't find themselves dehydrated or undernourished and then in an emergency room.

God willing they can get into an emergency room, because 145 emergency rooms were closed last year. Never in the history of the province have we seen so many—they're called unplanned emergency rooms. That means they didn't have the staff—I see I'm losing my audience here—they didn't have the resources to stay open.

Does anybody remember when the Premier himself said, “You know what? We're going to get rid of those Liberals and hallway medicine?” There are people in the province who would be happy to have a hallway to go to right now; they don't even have an emergency room. For the love of humanity, when you make a promise to invest in a community, have the decency to follow through, or at least look into why the money is not getting out into the community, because this is a definite lack of transparency.

Just to continue on with the money that hasn't got out there, this is, again, Steve Perry: "At the end of the day, these are people we're talking about. These are people who need care and services not getting care and services.... It is really big deal that we get this right."

The promise was actually \$1 billion over three years to shore up the home and community care services. They talked about how significant this investment was. It was, as I said, welcomed by agencies, but, obviously, what happened during the pandemic—and making no excuses; if there was ever a time to invest in keeping people healthy, that's one of the big, I hope, lessons that we learned through the pandemic: that those investments are worthwhile. But the situation did worsen during this pandemic because home and community care workers are underpaid compared to their counterparts in hospitals and long-term care. I know that the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane actually understands this is as well.

"Since the province's announcement, less than \$130 million of the \$1 billion promised has flowed to home care agencies, according to those who receive it. Only \$32 million of the \$100 million for community support services has been distributed...."

"Agencies have received no word"—this is a real breach trust, I think—"on when more money is coming or how much, forcing most of them who planned to cut services in the upcoming fiscal year. Perry says that they have only been told that the province is continuing to examine how best to spend the money as part of its plan for health care transformation. The struggling home and community care systems can't wait, he said."

So you're holding on to the money, trying to decide who should get the money. These agencies have been in business in communities for years now. They have proven track records, and yet you don't trust them? It makes no sense whatsoever.

"Sixty-six per cent of the community support service agencies across Ontario are planning to reduce service volumes as part of their budget planning process with Ontario Health, and 22% say their wait lists for care will get longer. Planned cuts in service average about 27%, which officials say translates" to 874,000 hours.

"Carefor, meanwhile, has already had to cut services because of worsening staff shortages ... between health workers in the home and community care system...."

This is the biggest piece, this is the biggest lesson from this one example: that the government of the day does not value health care human resources—people. You talk a lot about funding beds. A bed does not take care of people. In fact, we heard through the budget delegations that if you're just talking about a bed and funding a bed then you're really funding furniture, not the services. This is a serious disconnect that this government has. At the end of the day, even when you make grandiose promises around services, we're seeing a huge disconnect between the words and press releases and the announcements, and the money that does not get out there.

"In a statement ... Home Care Ontario warned that the Ontario government's plan to modernize the health system

could be upended unless it first stabilizes home care staffing." Once again, this is the theme: You are actively working against yourself by not acknowledging how important it is to value the people who are in the health care and caring sector.

### 0930

I did want to also talk a little bit about education, because we are starting to track the education cuts across Ontario. We're hearing from our communities of people leaving, and we heard this at budget committee here in Toronto. OSSTF and ETFO all came to the committee and said, "Listen, we have a huge human resources issue. We can't keep the people working in the profession that they trained for. They're moving to other competitive fields and sectors primarily because of wages."

Also, we do know that in the child care and education sector—elementary—that there is a disproportionately higher level of women who work in the fields. They're leaving because they can't afford to do the work they were trained for. Educational assistants and all of the support staff that help make a school a real community are actually in crisis. And the government of the day has said, "Listen, we're putting in historic levels of funding." But that funding is actually not translating down into the classroom. And the classroom, in the funding model for education, should come first and then work up to the administration, and I think that's a key part of getting education right.

I have been in the education sector for a number of years, back in 2003 when I first was elected as a trustee, and then I became the president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association and worked with those 71 school boards from across the province, and then at the national level. As I was moving and learning as a trustee, I also had the opportunity to chair the province's mental health round table. And because of this, educators recognized that mental health was having a devastating impact on education outcomes. At the time, the government of the day, the Liberals, had also legislated student well-being as well and gave that to the boards. So mental health became central to some of the work we were doing as school boards. At the national level, it also was really encouraging because our interaction and exchanges with Indigenous communities also weighed in on that as well, and we became genuine allies through that process.

But I wanted to talk about the education dollars, because our critic from Ottawa has challenged the minister on several occasions. She said, "Listen, you say this, but what we're hearing from school boards, classrooms, classroom teachers and principals is a very different story." This is from a Mississauga newspaper that came out February 27, so this is like two and a half weeks ago. The title of it is, "The Kids Aren't All Right': Mental Health Supports Needed in More Than 90% of Ontario Schools, Report Finds." This was an annual survey done by People for Education, which is an excellent organization that I worked with for many years—Annie Kidder. And this is a survey of principals from across the province to get a sense on the culture. It's basically an environmental scan, if you will, of our education system.

It goes on to say, “The percentage of Ontario schools with no access to a psychologist has nearly doubled over the last decade. A symptom of a system ‘under severe stress,’ according to the report published Monday by People for Education.

“It comes as young Canadians report declining mental health, leaving overburdened education workers trapped in a ‘downward spiral’ as they confront COVID-19’s ripple effects, the report said.”

This is something that we have said to the government: We have to plan to address what happened during the pandemic. We just can’t say, “Okay, you know what? It’s over. Everybody resume as you were.” because there was some real damage that happened during that pandemic. There were learning gaps. There was learning loss. There were social skills that were compromised. Our youngest learners who learn visually by watching people’s faces looked at people wearing a mask for two-plus years. So you have to acknowledge, and you need a long-term strategy to build back stronger and to address the vulnerabilities that exist in the system. And I will say that system was already strained prior to the pandemic.

This is a quote: “‘What principals are saying—and what so many are saying—is that the kids aren’t all right.’” We need the government to hear this. It’s a genuine call to engage in an authentic conversation on what is happening in our education system.

“The survey of principals at more than a thousand elementary and secondary institutions across the province found 91% of the schools were in need of mental health supports from psychologists, social workers and other specialists.” Child and youth workers are a key part of that as well.

Some of you know that my husband does teach in a rural secondary school, and those child and youth workers are sometimes the main connection that a student has within the community. They pull those students in, they make them feel connected to the community, and we’re losing those child and youth workers. They’re moving to other jurisdictions because they are also stuck under Bill 124, which is the theme of the day.

This is a stat that I found very sobering: “In 2011, just 14% of elementary schools reported having no access to a psychologist. But by 2022, the report notes, that figure jumped to 28%.” It doubled. So over a quarter of our schools in Ontario have no access to a publicly funded resources around helping children navigate through a mental health crisis or duress.

The research and the evidence are so clear: It absolutely impacts academic outcomes and student well-being, Madam Speaker. All of us, every MPP, all 124 of us have experienced having to attend a funeral for someone who has died by suicide. In the 10 years I have been an MPP, I have attended three of these funerals. The emotional labour of doing that is one thing, but having known that with early intervention and the appropriate resources—when people have the courage to actually ask for help, that help should be there.

“Meanwhile, just 9% of Ontario schools have regular access to other kinds of mental health specialists. Some 46% of schools reported having no access at all.”

This is what a teacher has said from the Halton District School Board. She sees a system “teetering on the verge of collapse.” That’s a direct quote from her. Her name is Nicolle Kuiper. She says, “You can’t teach kids algebra when they feel their whole world is crumbling.”

We know this, and we know where the mental health supports need to be. They need to be where the students are, because navigating the mental health system in the province of Ontario—it’s almost like it was designed never to be easily navigated. If you don’t have cash, you don’t have benefits, you don’t have resources and you don’t have a natural advocate in your family, it’s a very challenging system.

That is definitely not a knock against the community agencies who have stretched those dollars as far as they can. When I meet with the Kitchener Downtown Community Health Centre or, really, any health care professional, they are literally making those dollars stretch as far as possible.

So we’re really hoping, all of us on this side of the House, that on March 23, the finance minister recognizes that by not investing in accessible mental health resources, this is a lost opportunity for a whole generation. The stakes are high on this one. One could argue that they are also life and death.

This teacher goes on to say that “the most support she’s seen in her workplace is a child and youth counsellor split between two schools—a resource that ‘barely scratches the surface.’” In fact, she just made my point. These resources are stretched as far as they possibly can.

One other stat says, “Some 82% of schools surveyed in the report said they needed more support staff like educational assistants, administrators and,” yes, “custodians.” Custodians play an important part in the education system.

You can see there is such an obvious disconnect between the words that we hear from the Minister of Education and from the Minister of Finance and the reality that’s playing itself out in our schools.

The supply motion covers a number of ministries. As I mentioned, we didn’t really get to ask too many questions on this because it was a very truncated process. I believe it was about 20 minutes that we got to ask the government questions on what you’re planning to spend. But we do have, as I said, a good benchmark for where the funding is going and where it’s not.

**0940**

Really, the theme that I’ve become more and more engaged in is this so-called transparency that the government says that they’re all about. When you do follow the money, you actually learn a lot, and the numbers certainly tell a different story. The province started off the 2022-23 fiscal year with \$4.6 billion in contingency funds. The reason why the contingency fund component is very interesting—this is separate from the surplus, and you’ll remember inflationary costs, the costs of services and costs of goods, have gone up so much that the government cleared their deficit three quarters ago because so much tax revenue came into the province of Ontario.

So the government benefited from a high inflationary rate. Did they pass on those savings to the people of

Ontario? No, they did not. What they did, though, was put it into an unallocated contingency fund. The reason why this is so important—I believe the FAO has said the same thing in various public settings—is that it removes the transparency and the accountability over this funding allocation. Every dollar that comes through this place on behalf of the people of the province is allocated. Sometimes, as I've just told you with home care, you can allocate it, but you don't necessarily get it out the door.

But in the instance of a massive contingency fund—and Ontario is an outlier in this regard—by underspending on home care, by not getting the appropriate amount of money out that you targeted for education, all of this money goes into this unallocated contingency fund—a slush fund, if you will. This removes our responsibilities as MPPs—it actually removes our rights as legislators—to oversee those expenditures and that amount of money.

This is something that is a new practice, I would say, for any government. The Liberals couldn't do it because they ran regular operational deficits. But this money should be in the system. That's the key part I want to say. This money should be in the court system, for instance. There's a young person in my riding who was assaulted. She has been waiting three years for her day in court. That is justice denied.

We would support a more streamlined funding system into the court system. We would obviously support more funding into mental health—and I want to thank the minister for coming to Carleton Place in the fall and talking about the importance of community. Help us help you, is what I want to say. We want the minister who is responsible for mental health to receive the resources that he needs to get that money out the door and into communities—all communities across the province.

But when you have this much money—the last quarter came out, so now it's \$2.9 billion, ahead of a massive budget—and knowing that organizations like the Children's Hospital Coalition are asking for \$371 million, this money could have got to those hospitals to alleviate that surgical backlog back in the fall. So the question that the people of Ontario should be asking of this government is, what are you waiting for? How bad does it have to get before you spend the money that you actually said you would invest in health care, in education, in transportation, in infrastructure and in mental health?

And so we see this unallocated contingency fund as fairly detrimental from a financial transparency perspective, because we don't even know—if we started the year off with \$4.6 billion and now we're at \$2.9 billion, we don't know where that money went to. The government is, one could argue, actively preventing us from doing our job, and that doesn't serve the people of this province very well.

I did want to—this came up, actually, in budget delegation. You'll know that the finance committee hasn't travelled for the last few years because of the pandemic. We did go to 11 different cities. It was an interesting selection of cities, I might add, though. We missed all of the London area, all of the Kitchener-Waterloo-Cam-

bridge area. We didn't go to Niagara. It's not like tourism is a big thing, I guess, in Ontario. We tried to go to Sioux Lookout. We had Red Lake. We ended up in Kenora. We went to Sault Ste. Marie, to Sudbury, to Timmins. We went to Ottawa. We went to Kingston. We went to a fair number of places but we missed a good part of south-central and southwestern Ontario. We also travelled Bill 46, the red tape reduction bill, but not too many people showed up to that. I just wanted to give a few of the perspectives of what we heard on this committee.

In Red Lake, one of the nurses who spoke to us, her name is Meghan Gilbert and she is the chief nursing executive. She said that to have an agency nurse working alongside you making four times as much as you impacts morale, work culture, patient satisfaction and patient safety. It depresses the caring environment because it speaks to how the government values nurses and health care workers. This is where Bill 124 was called “humiliating.” If you want to build up a health care system, you have to support the people that are in that system. If they feel that the government is actively working against them, that obviously will impact productivity and work outcomes. She went on to connect wage suppression with morale suppression.

This was also around the time that we found out that the Minister of Health actually had received a briefing note from her own ministry saying how Bill 124 would negatively impact the health care sector. So even the ministry—the minister's own ministry—has told her how negative Bill 124 is for the entire sector. And still, they press on and are fighting and appealing the decision in court which found the legislation to be a violation of our charter rights.

We also heard from—I want to say, the Alzheimer Society showed up in a big way this year, because they have warned this government of the negative impact of not investing in those supports. We heard from caregivers as well. The province of Ontario definitely needs to understand and to support the people who are caring for their partners who are experiencing Alzheimer's. This is one of the cruellest diseases that we see in Ontario right now and across the world.

This is what we heard from Stéphanie Leclair, and this was in northeastern Ontario: It currently takes, on average, 18 months for people in Ontario to get an official dementia diagnosis, some patients often waiting years to complete diagnostic testing. More than half of the patients suspected of having dementia in Ontario never got a full diagnosis. Research confirms that early diagnosis saves lives and reduces care partner stress. They said, and this is a direct quote, if we don't act now and invest, “Ontario's hospitals will exist solely to house/care for those who have dementia or Alzheimer's.” The sector is warning you that if you don't plan now, if you don't invest now, there will be greater costs down the line.

I'm sure that we all know somebody who is going through this journey. It is a cruel journey for the entire family. If you don't want the further pressures on the health care system the plan that you have, if you're not

willing to course-correct—I hope that the government recognizes that keeping people out of hospital by those community supports is one of the main pillars of trying to rebuild the health care system. The demographics of this province are also well known. They were well known before the pandemic. We have an aging demographic and the population has certain needs; we need to plan for those needs. That's what a responsible government does. It's not like you don't have the money. The money is in an unallocated contingency fund.

**0950**

Really good organizations like L'Arche Sudbury came. They came with solutions. That's what was so impressive about this budgetary process: People are not just asking for a handout, they're not just asking for cash. They've come to the table saying, "We want to partner in a very real and genuine way. We'll do our part, we'll fundraise on our part, but we need a financial partner, a willing partner to come to the table." L'Arche Sudbury did an amazing job on that.

I want to say, the post-secondary institutions, like Algoma University, came forward and they've identified one of the key issues around the health care human resources crisis, which is that people in that sector are not being supported. Bill 124—a humiliating piece of legislation—aside, they've recognized that certain training needs to be incorporated to deal with the complex mental health and societal issues that people are facing. They want to be part of the solution, and they want to train people to deal with people who are incredibly vulnerable.

We did hear from the Ontario Public School Boards' Association. This started some time ago, but they have an Indigenous Trustees' Council, which has made a recommendation to the government of Ontario and the Minister of Education to create a compulsory course that deals with reconciliation and the residential school history of this country—basically just to tell the truth about what happened in Canada. They see this as a true path to reconciliation.

One of the quotes that I heard, which really resonated with me through this, is that the Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair, chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, points to education as key to reconciliation: "Education got us into this ... and education will get us out" of it. It was powerful presentation because education really is the great equalizer for so many communities, if it's done right and if you build those supports for student well-being and make the school really the hub of the community.

Doug Gruner of the Ontario College of Family Physicians came to us, I believe it was in Ottawa, and he expressed a great deal of frustration with the system that surrounds the hospitals. He said they can't get patients into specialist appointments. Over two million Ontarians don't have a family doctor, 150,000 have no family provider whatsoever and 75% of family physicians do not work in family health teams—and that supportive work environment actually retains those health care professionals.

He referenced the underutilized surgical suites across Ontario. Why aren't we making the most of our publicly

funded hospitals and the investments that have been made in those surgical suites? We should be opening them as much as we can to alleviate that devastating wait-list.

They had a solution for the Minister of Health around time allocation. They said that by providing some technology and some technical supports by way of a medical scribe, doctors could spend more time with patients and less on paperwork.

These were solutions that came from the sector. They were informed, they're research-based, they're evidence-based and they're looking for solutions.

I could go on at length about some of the great people who came and who took the time to come to these budget selections. I feel like the government members weren't so keen on the Bill 124 conversation, to say the least. But not one delegation—not one—said anything good about Bill 124, because there really isn't anything to say that is good about Bill 124. The only good thing that we can say is that at least the courts have upheld the law of this province, and they did so again earlier this week, which—thank goodness we have the court system in Ontario, although the government really should just call the last 15 court cases a lawyer employment strategy, in my view.

Earlier this week, the third-party election guidelines that the government brought in prior to 2022 were struck down in the courts, as well—and deemed it null and void and a violation of charter rights, and also a piece of legislation which prevented Ontarians from participating in their own election.

I wish people were paying attention to this kind of thing, because it's a whittling away of our democratic institutions in some regard. When legislation is brought in by a government which undermines the rights of the people we serve, everybody should be paying attention. The court system obviously has been focused on this for some time, as well.

There are a number of other ministries that the estimates capture—certainly, the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs is timely, given our discussion around Bill 71 yesterday and some of the comments that were made by some government members about indicating what's good for Indigenous communities. I think that our critics and our speakers yesterday were quite strong on this. Reconciliation only happens when you actually engage in an authentic and honest conversation and when you include Indigenous communities in that conversation, particularly as it relates to treaty rights and the fact that it's their land. One would think that would be a core principle of any kind of consultation process. As is already indicated with the building mines faster act, Indigenous communities are already gearing up to go to court. I suspect that you'll lose that court case, as well. So it actually makes fiscally responsible sense to engage with those communities sooner, at the very beginning—because consultation after the fact is called disrespect. Those are certainly our concerns with Bill 71.

On the transportation funding: The FAO also identified a \$656-million discrepancy in funding that's supposed to be going out for transportation and for transit. This is particularly impactful on the people of Toronto, with the

Eglinton Crosstown and Metrolinx—the lack of transparency as it relates to the Ottawa LRT and the Eglinton Crosstown. The people of this province have the right to know where that money is going and how much money is actually going to profits versus infrastructure. The transparency language that we heard earlier, quite honestly, doesn't resonate on this side because we're still looking for answers.

But I will say, at the very least, we do have a very good understanding now of how poorly prepared the health care sector is for the changing demographics, as indicated by the FAO yesterday.

I do want to say, just because I've been consistent on the Bill 124 conversation and the question arose yesterday—if the government of the day loses the court case, the appeal of Bill 124, which the government is actively appealing right now, the cost to Ontario just in hospitals—60% of the funding around hospitals goes to wages because you need people to deliver health care. Beds do not deliver health care. If the government of the day loses that case, the—what is it called?

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Back pay. Thank you. The back pay will be \$3.6 billion.

**1000**

Instead of doing the right thing, accepting the court ruling that it's unconstitutional and violates charter rights; instead of actually valuing health care workers, nurses, PSWs and everyone that works in a hospital, who have been capped at 1% now—and during the pandemic, also, collective bargaining rights were violated during that process around sick days and benefits and what have you, because if you work in the health care sector, apparently you're not allowed to get sick.

But if the province actually loses the court case, the financial repercussions are monumental, and it will have to happen in a massive way. You can't just keep fighting and fighting and fighting in court—although you have done that with the mandate letters; now you've lost four times. It's just a common practice. It's a transparency and accountability thing that the government is not so keen on, but cabinet ministers usually release their mandate letters, indicating their priorities, their directions, their vision for the ministry.

I'm really interested in reading the mandate letter for the Minister of Health, I have to say. I am. Because when you are actively underutilizing the operating rooms that exist and the surgical suites in Ontario, you are actively underfunding that particular pressure point that exists in the province of Ontario, and at the same time you're proposing this parallel system of private profit-driven surgical suites, then I'm sure that mandate letter says this is the intentional goal: to create this two-tier system.

I see I'm running out of time, which can't be real.

I think I just want to say, on the so-called transparency of the money, clearly there are some significant issues. The \$2.9 billion that's currently unallocated right now should be out there in the health care system. It should be

part of the retention of the experienced, talented people that are working in the health care system right now.

The fact that we heard so clearly—and all the government members heard the same message. That's the value of having a budgetary process which is open, public and transparent: that we all hear the same thing, and it's captured in Hansard. What doesn't work very well is the other parallel system that the Minister of Finance does, where they have their invite-only—and we ran into this issue in Niagara, right?—where the government has their own consultations that are not public and that are by invite only and you get three minutes, somebody rings a bell and you're done. And we don't have any documentation from those consultations, which would be valuable, don't you think?

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** Yes.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I do. It actually caused some confusion too, because some people were like, "Well, we got invited to this budget consultation, and the member who represents that area wasn't invited," which is a whole other level of disrespect, but sometimes you've just got to get used to that stuff. Fortunately, we have such good working relationships with the people of this province that they call us and they say, "Why weren't you there?" And I said, "That's because that's the government's system." If you want to come to the public, transparent, open budget consultation, then by all means, come to it and try to get into it. Of course, the government conveniently forgot London and Niagara and K-W, and so people had to travel. If you're putting up barriers to people engaging in their budget—just like this is their House—it doesn't instill trust and it doesn't instill confidence, I would say.

I just want to finish on the FAO report from yesterday, because there were five areas that the FAO focused on: long-term care; hospital capacity; emergency rooms, which we already heard about; home care; and I think most importantly, key provincial workforce measures and the impact on the people who work in those systems. There is a desperate need also, and this is just a clarification. When they're focused on the health care human professionals, it was not comprehensive of all professionals. It certainly didn't engage the issue of the doctor shortage as well. Perhaps there may be a separate report on that. But it did make me think though that where so few people have access to a primary care provider—two million to be in the area—because the system is still designed as the doctor being the gatekeeper for the entire health care system. If you don't have a family doctor, it's really hard to access a specialist, to have a health care contingency care plan where you see a very clear guideline as to how you can get better again.

With so many Ontarians not having access to a doctor, it does raise the issue of what is the strategy? Our health critic has been so strong on the nurse practitioner-led clinics, because a nurse practitioner, if you did so choose to invest—once again, we hope that it's in the budget—a single nurse practitioner can alleviate a wait-list of 900 patients because they're funded differently. It's a very holistic model of care. I believe there are nine current

applications into the government to address northern and rural communities and to address key areas where people do not have family practitioners.

The chamber has also advocated—I mentioned they were here earlier—that accelerating the registration of internationally educated medical professionals should be happening right now. The government says that they're doing this on nursing, but I just want to leave the government with this one key piece: You can't recruit nurses from other provinces into a broken system. It doesn't work. The smart investment, the fiscally responsible investment is to respect the people who are currently working in the system, because they're experienced and they're connected to those communities. That in and of itself will help you recruit health care professionals into those sectors, be it into the mental health field or into home care or into the hospital system.

We also have to provide an opportunity for internationally trained medical doctors to access the system in Ontario. Our critic on this from Scarborough has been incredibly strong. This was a topic that I was talking with my concierge last week. His name is Mohammad; he's from Pakistan. He's a renal specialist. He's a doctor, and he's working as the concierge in my building. He has four children. He took the medical exam. He failed by one point, so now he's a concierge.

I'm working with him because I think the Ontario College of Family Physicians has recognized that there have to be opportunities where trained medical professionals can reach their potential in Ontario. We're desperate for doctors. We're desperate. What a missed opportunity. Ontario should be a province where you come to this province and you get the opportunity to reach your potential, because Ontario needs you. This actually was interesting because the same day, one of our northern members was talking about how much it costs to fly and house folks who need to travel for dialysis. The smart investment is on recruiting and retaining those medical professionals in communities that desperately need those talented people. I'm certainly hoping that the government can make some progress on that as well.

With that, I just want to conclude by saying we are going to be respectful of the people's voices that we heard during the budget consultation, we are going to continue to fight for greater transparency in the funding and we're going to push the government to actually acknowledge that the plan that they have for health care right now is a plan that will fail. We need that acknowledgement to be made by this government, because having a \$21.3-billion discrepancy is basically setting up the health care system in Ontario to not be successful, and I would hope that none of us want that to happen

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With that, Madam Speaker, I just want to say thank you for your undivided attention. I look forward to budget 2023.

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

Mr. Calandra has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of the Attorney General. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Carried on division.

Mr. Calandra has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Carried on division.

Mr. Calandra has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Energy. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Carried on division.

Mr. Calandra has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Carried on division.

Mr. Calandra has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Carried on division.

Mr. Calandra has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Carried on division.

Mr. Calandra has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Health. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."  
 All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."  
 In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Carried on division.

Mr. Calandra has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Colleges and Universities. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."  
 All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."  
 In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Carried on division.

Mr. Calandra has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Finance. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."  
 All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."  
 In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Carried on division.

Mr. Calandra has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."  
 All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."  
 In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Carried on division.

Mr. Calandra has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."  
 All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."  
 In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Carried on division.

Mr. Calandra has moved concurrence in supply for the Office of the Premier. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."  
 All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."  
 In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Carried on division.

Mr. Calandra has moved concurrence in supply for the Cabinet Office. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."  
 All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."  
 In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Carried on division.

Mr. Calandra has moved concurrence in supply for the Treasury Board Secretariat. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."  
 All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."  
 In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Carried on division.

Mr. Calandra has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Transportation. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."  
 All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."  
 In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Carried on division.

Mr. Calandra has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Infrastructure. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a nay.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."  
 All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."  
 In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Carried on division.

Mr. Calandra has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."  
 All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."  
 In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Carried on division.

Mr. Calandra has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."  
 All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."  
 In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Carried on division.

Mr. Calandra has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."  
 All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."  
 In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Carried on division.

Mr. Calandra has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Francophone Affairs. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Carried on division.

Mr. Calandra has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of the Solicitor General. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Carried on division.

Mr. Calandra has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Education. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Carried on division.

Mr. Calandra has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Long-Term Care. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

**Interjection:** On division.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Carried on division.

*Motions agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** It is now time for members’ statements, and I will remind the members, these are 90-second statements, not a second more.

## MEMBERS’ STATEMENTS

### SCARBOROUGH SOMALILAND COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

**Mr. David Smith:** I’d like to thank Abdi Batun and the entire board of directors of Scarborough Somaliland Community Association in my riding of Scarborough Centre for inviting me to their ribbon-cutting opening ceremony on Saturday, March 4, 2023.

The Scarborough Somaliland Community Association is committed to addressing the unique needs of the Somali community, including youth, seniors and people with disabilities, as well as supporting new Somali immigrants and refugees transitioning to life in Canada through provision

of culturally and linguistically relevant educational, training and mentorship services.

Cultural community organizations are community champions and play a pivotal role in meeting the short-term settlement and the long-term integration needs of many immigrants and refugees. As we look to these skilled immigrants to fill our labour shortage and grow our economy, I continue to support and advocate for cultural organizations in Scarborough Centre and across the province. Thank you for your countless contributions to Ontario’s social, economic, community and political fabric.

## ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING

**MPP Jill Andrew:** The arts and culture sector, artists and cultural workers have been disproportionately hit by COVID, and to be frank, it’s not COVID alone. This government has chronically cut and underfunded the arts well before the pandemic, despite the fact that we can count nearly 30 billion ways in which arts and culture contributes to our GDP, not to mention the near 300,000 jobs the sector creates for our province.

### 1020

Make no mistake: Committing to sustainable funding at or above the rate of inflation is key to the survival of our creative sector, a sector where most creatives weren’t even able to get CERB during the pandemic, and most in live performance saw their careers go poof without notice.

Most government funds for smaller art organizations tend to be targeted towards individual short-term projects, which does not help the organization build capacity for long-term planning. That is why I’m demanding today that the OAC budget for the Ontario Arts Council remain at \$65 million in the 2023 provincial budget. On behalf of every creative worker and community-based organization in St. Paul’s, we’re pleading with this government: Do not cut the already strapped Ontario Arts Council budget again, especially with the work that they do for priority groups like deaf artists, artists with disabilities, artists of colour, francophone artists, Indigenous artists and new-generation artists, to name a few.

Speaker, visit any gallery, any museum, any theatre, any library, any art studio. The arts are the way—

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

## SKILLS TRAINING

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** Skills empower people. Through financial independence, empowered people empower families, and empowered families empower communities. This is how we empower humanity. This is precisely what Connecture Canada, from Mississauga–Malton, is doing: breaking the cycle of poverty, one family at a time, through the development of open environments that encourage French-speaking immigrants to explore opportunities for careers and entrepreneurship.

Funded by OTF since 2020, through the Braids on Call training program, Connecture has helped more than 90

women from marginalized communities in Peel to become certified braiders. Graduate braiders can earn decent money, setting them firmly on the road to financial security.

Last week, I had the opportunity to attend a graduation ceremony, as the new graduates celebrated the launch of their careers. I witnessed the smiles of confidence and the laughter of their successful future. I can still feel the music of their success in my heart.

Mr. Speaker, this is a great example of skilled trades transforming life. I'd like to extend my sincerest thanks to executive director Rose Cathy Handy, the entire staff and volunteers at Connecture for supporting the Franco-Ontarian community. Braids on Call is now encouraging trained braiders with entrepreneurial skills to attract more clients and become business partners to scale up. My best wishes for your—

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

#### HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Speaker, I want to talk about a topic that's weighing on Ontarians' minds, and that's the public health care system. This government is making changes to decimate those services that people rely on.

I want to share an email I have received. This woman wanted to remain anonymous, so I can't give her name. She says, "I got the quote \$3,680 to do the cataract surgery in a private clinic. If I don't want to pay, I have to wait for 15 months to get the appointment in St. Joseph's Hospital. Where can I get help to find out other cities' hospital waiting times for cataract surgery?"

Speaker, those operating rooms are there. They're ready to take more people who need public health care for cataract surgeries. We need to fund those institutions that already have that infrastructure. Bringing a bill that's going to further privatize our health care system is wrong. It won't make a change to what people are requiring.

The NDP has given a suggestion, so I want to give those suggestions back to the government, so that they will consider those instead of further privatizing our health care: adequately fund hospitals, repeal Bill 124, expedite training and hiring international nurses, create more nurse practitioner-led family clinics. These are the things that are going to keep public health care public, and they're going to have the quality of care that our constituents deserve and expect—not privatization of hospitals and public health care services.

#### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Aris Babikian:** Our government's commitment under the leadership of the Premier and the Minister of Health to improve the quality of health care in Scarborough has begun to pay off. Recently, I had the pleasure of attending the groundbreaking of the Northpine diagnostic imaging department at the Scarborough Health Network's general hospital. The people of Scarborough have been

waiting for 20 years for this state-of-the-art diagnostic imaging unit. I would like to commend the Scarborough Health Network team for this important achievement.

This is the first of many groundbreaking projects in Scarborough—Agincourt and Scarborough. Other health-related capital infrastructure projects, such as the brand new Birchmount Grace hospital and the Bridletowne dialysis centre, are in the various stages of the planning and approval process.

In addition to health infrastructure projects and the allocation of thousands of long-term-care beds, our government is backing the opening of the new Scarborough Academy of Medicine and Integrated Health at the University of Toronto Scarborough campus. This school will serve local communities in Scarborough by graduating physicians, nurses, PSWs, physical therapists and other life sciences professionals.

Scarborough is not the forgotten borough anymore. Scarborough is getting the attention it deserves.

#### AUTISM TREATMENT

**Ms. Doly Begum:** Earlier this week, we had dozens of families of children with autism here at Queen's Park with the autism coalition, who brought stories of the struggles that they face every single day, and they wanted us to listen to those concerns.

Families have been stuck in the vicious cycle of dysfunction of the Ontario Autism Program for years. Parents wait for years to get an invitation, and then keep waiting for their assessment, and then they keep waiting for their funding to be released, and then they wait to access to the programs that the child actually needs. And then, when they find access to that program, sometimes their funding deadline finishes or it starts again. This is the vicious cycle that they go through every single day here in this province. This is the reality.

The program has set a target of registering 8,000—yes, 8,000—children into the program. But the reporting from Global News shows that we have only registered 888. If the program applications were to stop today and there were no new applications, we would need 66 years—66 years—to get through the program wait-list.

Speaker, I cannot even imagine the pain some of these parents are going through. Some of them come to my office, and the tears—I cannot tell you the horrible situations they are going through. I implore this government to take a hard look at the program, invest the funding that's necessary and make this program—

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

#### ABILITIES CENTRE ACCESSIBILITY AWARDS

**Ms. Patrice Barnes:** I rise today to say that it's an honour to represent the people of Ajax. This past weekend, my colleagues MPP McCarthy, MPP Coe, MPP Quinn, Minister Bethlenfalvy and I had the privilege of celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Durham Abilities

Centre and its first Accessibility Awards, entitled “unlocking potential,” hosted at the Deer Creek banquet facility in Ajax. The Accessibility Awards is an event to recognize people creating change that reimagines how people with accessibility live, work and play.

I want to congratulate all the nominees and winners, but a special congratulations to Shanjay Kailayanathan, who was honoured with the Jim Flaherty award. This award is presented to a person who has shown leadership in a significant contribution toward the promotion, development, and advancement of accessibility and inclusion.

Shanjay was involved in a car accident at the age of 15 that left him paralyzed from the chest down. Rather than seeing this as a barrier, he pushed on to receive a degree in software engineering and found a company called Accession Technologies, through which he developed a driver assistance program that uses facial recognition and voice recognition to activate distinct functions of vehicles, making driving easier and more accessible.

This remarkable young man is a true community champion and nephew of MPP Kanapathi. I would like to personally congratulate Shanjay on this award and your tremendous contribution to breaking down barriers.

#### EXPLOSION IN ORLÉANS

**Mr. Stephen Blais:** About three weeks ago, the residents of Orléans were awoken by an enormous jolt. The walls and windows of their homes were shaking and, a few moments later, the near constant sound of emergency responders racing somewhere in the distance.

On February 13, a home under construction in a new subdivision exploded, and it destroyed four homes and damaged many more. The explosion could be felt for kilometres, and I've read that it was heard as far away as the village of Vars.

I'd like to thank the emergency responders in the city of Ottawa for their quick and decisive actions that morning. Two people were rescued from the rubble with serious injuries and several others were hospitalized, including children. Residents of nearly 30 households were displaced for several days. When you see the images of destruction, it's hard to understand how nobody lost their life.

1030

I'd like commend my city councillor, Catherine Kitts. She and her team were on site right away ensuring residents were being taken care of, that neighbours were being provided the information they needed to ensure that those displaced had somewhere to sleep and receive a hot meal.

There will be several important lessons to be learned from what happened: lessons for home builders in securing their sites, lessons for first responders, and lessons for this government and the lack of supports to help those who no longer have a home to move into.

#### GREATER NAPANEE PRIDE COMMITTEE

**Mr. Ric Bresee:** As we are watching the news from the United States, we're seeing the painful reversal of years of

advances in civil rights. We can be thankful that that's not the case here in Ontario, but we can never take for granted that basic human rights will not be trampled. We all must remain diligent.

I want to share with this House a poem that was written just after World War II—you may have heard it—by Martin Niemöller:

First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a socialist.

Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.

Speaker, earlier this week I had the pleasure of hosting a group of people from the Greater Napanee Pride committee. These are dedicated members or allies of the LGBT community, and they came here to show that, like everyone else, this is their House.

I'm forever grateful that in this House and in this government, all of our constituents are represented.

Yesterday was International Women's Day, and March 31 will be international trans recognition day. I ask all of the members of this House to celebrate our differences, to celebrate our diversity, with respect and humility.

#### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

**Mrs. Nina Tangri:** Yesterday, Speaker, we observed and celebrated the many accomplishments of women in this House and around the world.

I would like to take this opportunity to mention two women who had a profound influence on my life:

First, my mother: Widowed and left to raise six children on her own, the resilience, work ethic and kindness of my mother was what was instilled into me. I was the youngest of six siblings and was also probably the most challenging of all of my siblings. My biggest regret in life is that she passed away before I was first elected. I know that she was extremely proud of me and she continues to bless me from above.

The second influence in my life was my constituent and former Mississauga Mayor Hazel McCallion. In 1998, when I hosted a national conference on spousal abuse, she spoke about the increase of people fleeing abusive situations and opened up yet another shelter in Mississauga. Since then, I've heard from women all over who said they would probably be dead if it wasn't for those shelters—true leadership.

I've talked about the two most influential women who helped shape who I am, but now I'm fully influenced by my two granddaughters, Tara and Tia, ages four and two. To see the world through their eyes, to make decisions as a parliamentarian that not only affect us but to build homes, hospitals, highways and communities to make sure that our future generations—

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

## LEGISLATIVE PAGES

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'm going to ask our pages to assemble.

I am sad to have to report that it is now time to say a word of thanks to our legislative pages. Our pages are smart, trustworthy and hard-working. They are indispensable to the effective functioning of the chamber, and we are very fortunate to have had them here.

To our pages: You depart having made many new friends, with a greater understanding of parliamentary democracy and memories that will last a lifetime. Each of you will go home now and continue your studies, and no doubt will contribute to your communities, your province and your country in important ways. We expect great things from all of you. Maybe some of you will someday take your seats in this House, or work here as staff someday. Who knows? We wish you all well.

Please join me in thanking this group of legislative pages.

*Applause.*

## HOUSE SITTINGS

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 9(h), the Clerk has received written notice from the government House leader indicating that a temporary change in the weekly meeting schedule of the House is required. Therefore, the House shall commence at 9 a.m. on Monday, March 20, 2023, for the proceedings of orders of the day.

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** It is my distinct honour to welcome Dhondup Wangchen to the Legislature today. He is a Tibetan filmmaker who became a political prisoner for six years for his documentary *Leaving Fear Behind*. He was named an Amnesty International prisoner of conscience and is the recipient of the International Press Freedom Award. Speaker, I worked on the campaign to free him, and I can't believe he's in the House today. Joining him is Youngdoug Tenzin, who is an executive member of the Tibetan Canadian Cultural Centre.

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** Meegwetch, Speaker. *Remarks in Oji-Cree.* Good morning. It's an honour to welcome people from Kiiwetinoong; specifically, from the Neskan-taga First Nation: Chief-elect Chris Moonias, Daren Sakanee, and Sharon Sakanee.

Meegwetch for coming.

**MPP Jill Andrew:** I'm very, very proud to welcome Jana and Steve Lanys-Morris here. I don't see them. They were sitting in the members' gallery. Maybe their service dogs have taken them out for a bit. Those service dogs' names are Maverick and Phoenix.

Welcome from St. Paul's to Queen's Park, your House.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I am super excited today to welcome my niece Emma Welsh-Huggins to Queen's Park. She's sitting in the members' gallery over here. She

doesn't want me to say this, but I'm going to brag about her. She was the digital director for Elizabeth Warren's Iowa caucus campaign during the last presidential election.

1040

**Hon. Graydon Smith:** There's a birthday visiting today, and that birthday landed on the shoulder of my fabulous parliamentary assistant and the member for Hastings-Lennox and Addington.

Happy birthday.

**Mr. David Smith:** I would like to congratulate Nolan Wu, who has served in the House as a page. I didn't get a chance to meet him until today. I wish him well in the experience that he has at the Legislature, and I hope to see him at noon today.

**Ms. Stephanie Bowman:** I would like to welcome several members of my staff in the constituency office, as well as a number of women who are leaders in the community in Don Valley West: Julie, Sheila, Lita, Shakhlo, Barb, Jennifer, Najia, Marilyn, Ombobola, Judie, Kamrana, Shazia, Fatma, as well as my mom, Barb, and my daughter, Maddi—here today for a very special gathering to talk about the stories of these women. Some of them are just new from Nigeria. They're studying at Seneca College, volunteering in my constituency office. They're lawyers in their home country, and we want them to do well here. I want everyone to welcome them warmly.

## QUESTION PERIOD

## INDIGENOUS RELATIONS

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** Speaker, the people of Neskantaga have not given Ontario consent to build a mining road on its traditional and Treaty land. Chief Wayne Moonias said nothing will go through the territory without the free, prior, informed consent of the people. He said a couple of days ago, "You're not going to cross our river system without our free and prior informed consent, you're going to have to kill us..." Those were his words.

To the Premier: What is the government doing to uphold the law, follow its Treaty 9 obligations and obtain consent of all First Nations impacted by the northern road link?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Minister of Northern Development, Minister of Indigenous Affairs.

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** We're proud of our efforts to build consensus around a number of resource projects across northern Ontario. Take, for example, the Côté Gold project, where Mattagami and Flying Post First Nations play a substantial role in the development of that area, including very much the mine itself. In Greenstone, we see an extraordinary opportunity with the Kenogamisis development corporation, comprised of four Indigenous communities that have come to us and asked to play a vital role in the development of Greenstone and the surrounding area and the mining project. Similarly, the corridor to

prosperity is an opportunity for all Indigenous communities in that area to unleash new health and social and economic benefits, to bring in better forms of energy, stronger broadband, better critical infrastructure.

This is a massive northern development opportunity. We'll build consensus with those communities, and we'll look forward to an opportunity to build the critical mineral mine of a world-class scale.

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

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** When Neskantaga had the water crisis and they had to evacuate for 60 days, this minister never made a call to the leadership.

This government is fast-tracking mining approval processes by removing environmental safeguards like requiring completed mine closure plans in Bill 71.

My question to the Premier: How will taking away requirements to approve mining closure plans protect Indigenous and treaty rights in the Ring of Fire?

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** We're very excited about the opportunity—a world-class northern development opportunity that brings a corridor to prosperity for a group of isolated communities who want better infrastructure, who want better economic opportunities for their families and for those communities.

As somebody who has lived in a couple of those communities and worked closely with the leadership of some of those communities over the years—there is growing consensus that we can do these projects, that we can strike a fair balance, that we can build consensus and meet the demands of the single biggest environmental policy ever advanced by a subsovereign government, and that is to bring critical minerals from that region and other parts of northern Ontario into a fully integrated supply chain for electric vehicles and battery capacity. I've heard it from Indigenous communities. I've heard it from Indigenous businesses. The Minister of Mines has been working very hard to ensure that we do this the right way, and we're going to get it done.

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

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** Back to the Premier: When this government says that they have the support of First Nations in the region for the Ring of Fire project, it misleads investors, it misleads others.

Speaker, what—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'm going to ask the member to withdraw his unparliamentary comment.

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** I withdraw.

This is a textbook play right out of the colonial play-book, where governments divide and conquer First Nations. We live it every day.

How will you ensure all First Nations are on board?

*Interjections.*

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

Response, the Minister of Mines.

**Hon. George Pirie:** Thank you for the question from the member opposite.

This is a bill about building mines. It's about bringing prosperity to northern Ontario. It's a bill about securing the supply chain for critical minerals so that, in fact, the critical minerals that are produced in northern Ontario will be matched with the mining might in southern Ontario. These minerals, right now, are being secured in Russia and China and Congo, and we need those minerals secured in Ontario, out of northern Ontario. There is no compromise with the Indigenous duty to consult. There is no compromise with Ontario's environmental standards. This is a world-class bill that will benefit every single citizen in Ontario.

## HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** My question is to the Premier.

Yesterday, the Financial Accountability Office made it abundantly clear: This government has not allocated sufficient funds to support health care programs to get Ontarians the care that they need.

We are already seeing the worst emergency room wait times in over a decade. Without additional investment, Ontarians can expect those wait times to get even longer. We had 145 unplanned emergency room closures just last year.

This Premier promised to end hallway medicine. There are people in this province who would be happy to get into a hallway just to access some medicine.

To the Premier: Will the government commit to covering this \$21.3-billion shortfall in health care? Your plan is designed to fail. You can course-correct.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health.

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Thank you very much for the question.

The members opposite in the opposition are trying to sow fear—fearmongering, really—about things like this.

This government's record speaks for itself. We've invested an additional \$14 billion in our health care system since 2018. That is almost a 30% increase, since 2018, in our health care funding. We've added more beds in four years than the previous Liberal government, supported by the opposition, did in 14. We've launched the largest health care recruitment initiative in Ontario's history. And we'll continue to make necessary improvements to make sure that Ontarians get the care they expect and deserve.

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

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Speaker, this province currently has 107,000 long waiters, waiting for surgery, in pain. There are 12,000 children waiting for surgery. It is unacceptable, it is unethical for the parliamentary assistant to say that you are doing everything that you can.

**1050**

The Financial Accountability Officer—who is independent, who is non-partisan and who is following the money—projects that Ontario will have less hospital capacity, less long-term-care capacity in 2028 than it did in 2018, and basically the status quo in home care

capacity. This is an important report that the government should be paying attention to.

So my question is to the Premier: Will the upcoming budget fully fund your own health care plans? Put the money in your own plan.

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

To reply, the member for Eglinton–Lawrence.

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Our government knows that wait times for surgeries and diagnostic tests have been increasing year after year, and we've said we're not okay with the status quo. We know that more work needs to be done, and we're doing it. That is why we announced our innovative plan for expansion of community diagnostic and surgical clinics, which the opposition is opposing at every step.

In fact, in the opposition, the member from Nickel Belt has been asking that we use hospital ORs more, if they have availability.

The hospital OR in Ottawa Centre is being used through a joint partnership. But every weekend, the member from Ottawa Centre, who is a member of the opposition, is out there, harassing patients who are trying to get hospital surgery—

*Interjections.*

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

**Mr. Joel Harden:** That's a straight-up lie.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I heard the unparliamentary remark that has been made by the member for Ottawa Centre. He must withdraw.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Withdraw.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Order.

Start the clock.

The member for Eglinton–Lawrence has the floor.

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, the surgeries are happening. They're OHIP-covered surgeries happening in an Ottawa hospital. Then, on the weekends, the member from Ottawa Centre is out there protesting, harassing the patients who are trying to get surgery at the hospital, which is OHIP-covered, which I thought—

*Interjections.*

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

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** The real crisis is within our health care workforce, which this government continues to disrespect with Bill 124, appealing the decision which found this legislation to be unconstitutional and a violation of charter rights. The workers who are in the health care system right now are overworked and they are underpaid. The government can talk about their so-called recruitment strategy, but you can't recruit people into a broken system. You should be focusing on retaining those workers.

The Financial Accountability Officer expects the province will need 33,000 more nurses and PSWs to keep up with the needs of our growing and aging population.

Back to the Premier: How does this government expect to recruit thousands more nurses and PSWs when, last

year, wages for Ontario nurses were among the lowest in the country?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** To reply, the Minister of Colleges and Universities.

**Hon. Jill Dunlop:** Thank you to the member for that question.

We are seeing a record number of students coming into the health human resources field. Under the leadership of this Premier and this Minister of Health, our government has launched the largest health care recruiting and training initiative in this province's history, and the results are there. I can tell you, the enrolment in universities alone this past fall, September 2022—over 109,000 students are entering into the nursing field; that's nursing alone. We are attracting more registered practical nurses, more PSWs, and creating pathways for these students to upskill from a PSW to an RPN, and from an RPN to a registered nurse. The opportunities are there, and students are seeing that.

Our new Learn and Stay program alone—the day we announced it saw over 14,000 students check the website, because students are interested in getting into the nursing field, and there are opportunities there to ensure that we have more health human resources in the underserved and northern areas.

#### AUTISM TREATMENT

**Miss Monique Taylor:** My question is for the Premier.

Amanda, a mother from the Niagara region, shared with me her heartbreaking experience trying to get an autism assessment for her child. She reached out to her MPP's office—the member from Niagara West—asking when her child would be able to get an assessment, only to be given OAP talking points by his staff. Amanda responded, "OAP services do absolutely no good without a written diagnosis, and the wait-list for a diagnosis in Ontario under his government is years long. We don't have years to waste waiting for an appointment, and we can't afford to pay thousands out of pocket." The MPP personally responded with the same talking points.

I want to make it crystal clear to the MPP: Children cannot access the OAP without an assessment and a diagnosis.

Why does the Premier and his government believe it's okay to ignore mothers looking for answers?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** To reply, the member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry and parliamentary assistant.

**Mr. Nolan Quinn:** I welcome the opportunity to give the member opposite the facts.

We have doubled the funding to \$600 million. Shortly after we formed government in 2018, there were 31,500 people registered with the Ontario Autism Program, of whom only 8,500 were receiving support. That means barely a quarter of people enrolled in the program were receiving any support, and that support was limited to one type of therapy. The other three quarters—that's 23,000 children—had no prospect of ever receiving supports from the Liberal government. Today, recognizing that there are

different needs to be met, over 40,000 children and youth with autism have received support through multiple streams in the program. That's almost five times more than at any point since we formed government.

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

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Speaker, we're seeing a growing trend. The members don't understand the difference between the OAP and getting an actual diagnosis.

Amanda contacted her MPP for information on the assessment backlog and instead was left feeling disrespected and unheard. All this MPP could do was spew OAP talking points and suggest she look at different provinces in the country. She asked him several times to answer her question about what this government is doing to tackle the wait-list for assessments, and he couldn't do that.

How can families believe this government when their own MPPs are unwilling to listen and have no suggestion other than maybe leaving the province?

So my question is clear: How can families access the OAP in a timely manner when it is taking years for them to get an assessment?

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

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** To be very clear, what the member across is saying is that because she doesn't agree with the policies of this government, the right thing to do is to attack the people who work in the constituency office of one of the hardest-working members of provincial Parliament. I've seen a lot of things in this place that have diminished the role of all of us, but I have never seen another member attack the constituency office of a member of provincial Parliament because they don't agree with the policy. You can disagree with the policy—fine, disagree with the policy, take it to the floor of the House like she has done. But don't attack the people who work in constituency offices.

I will remind the member opposite that it was this member for Niagara who brought new hospitals to his community after years of failure by that side of the House. It was that member of provincial Parliament who brought new long-term care. It was that member of Parliament who brought in a new autism program. It was that member of Parliament who brought in thousands of new nurses. It was that member of Parliament who—

*Interjections.*

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

The House will come to order.

Start the clock.

The next question.

## MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade.

Ontario's world-class manufacturing sector employs over 660,000 workers and is the lifeline of our province's regional economies, including in my riding of Essex.

When the previous Liberal government announced that Ontario's economy would shift away from goods-producing to service-producing sectors, they were unprepared for the exodus of jobs that would ensue. They were a government without a plan. The 300,000 manufacturing jobs that they sent running from Ontario came as a surprise to no one, but it left communities, including communities in southwestern Ontario, economically damaged.

**1100**

Will the minister please explain how our government is once again supporting the manufacturing sector and bringing back jobs to southwestern Ontario?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** By reducing taxes, lowering the cost of electricity and cutting red tape, we have seen manufacturers look to Ontario to expand again.

Every morning, Premier Ford gets what we call his one-a-day vitamin: the name of a company, where they're locating, how many millions they're investing, how many people they're hiring, and whether we have any skin in the game or not.

Sante Manufacturing in Aylmer invested \$7.5 million to accelerate their expansion, diversify their product line, and hire 15 people. Arvaspring in Middlesex is investing \$5 million to build a new state-of-the-art poultry processing facility to help enter international markets—MC3, \$6.8 million; Idol Core, \$5.1 million, 30 new jobs.

Since our election, businesses and industry have created 600,000 new jobs—proof positive that Ontario is open for business.

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

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** Thank you to the minister for his answer.

Ontario's booming manufacturing sector, including the important manufacturing sector in my riding of Essex, made this province number one in the world and the best to invest, live and grow.

This government has been successful in showing the world that Ontario is open for business. But just as any business changes, so does the world economy. And Ontario needs to keep up as we strive to remain competitive.

Will the minister please explain how our government continues to ensure that Ontario is a premier destination for manufacturers—both for our entrepreneurs and for the world's investors?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** The Liberals, backed by the NDP, turned their backs on businesses and sent them fleeing Ontario. We lost 300,000 employees over their reign.

This government dug deep and asked them, what do you need to return to Ontario? They told us—reduced taxes, less red tape, and to fix the Liberals' hydro mess. And we delivered. We did exactly what they asked. We reduced the cost of business by \$7 billion every year, and those businesses are now back here. The exodus is over. These companies have hired 600,000 men and women in the last four and a half years, and companies have recently announced millions in reshoring investments, adding thousands more new jobs—all because they know that Ontario is now the best place in the world to invest and succeed.

## CONSUMER PROTECTION

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** In my riding of Parkdale–High Park and across Toronto, more and more residents now live in condos. Condo residents experience numerous issues with property management, with the developer, and with poorly run boards. When they reach out to my office, they are shocked to learn that there's no effective regulator, no government agency and no tribunal that they can turn to that can hear disputes and resolve them in a quick and affordable manner.

The Auditor General has called for reform in the condo sector, and so has an all-party committee of this House.

My question to the Premier is, why did the Conservatives vote down an NDP motion to set up a condo authority tribunal?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The associate minister—no, sorry.

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

Speaker, as we have said numerous times, our government takes the matter of consumer protection in the condo sector very seriously, and we'll never stop taking the necessary action to protect Ontarians across the province. In fact, this government has already twice expanded the CAT's jurisdiction, and we'll continue to take a measured and intelligent approach to increasing the tribunal's power. And we are not stopping our efforts to improve protection for all Ontarians and ensure they have a safe and secure place to call home.

My ministry welcomes the Auditor General's feedback on Ontario's condo sector and has already begun consulting on ways to actively improve and expand the condo authority tribunal and its powers.

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

**MPP Jill Andrew:** My question is to the Premier.

Many of the residents in our community of Toronto–St. Paul's live in condos they rent or own. Condo living, as we all know in this House, is not cheap, and as more and more people move into them, they're encountering problems like broken elevators—yes—unfinished amenities, and mismanaged condo fees.

People deserve an accountable condo authority tribunal that can protect them and do so quickly—but this government voted against the official opposition's motion to do just that.

So my question is to the Premier: What is your plan to protect residents in condos?

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

As I said, this government has already twice expanded the Condominium Authority Tribunal's jurisdiction, and we will continue to take a measured and intelligent approach to increasing the tribunal's powers.

Speaker, it is this government that is making condo boards fairer and more transparent and improving the lives of the hundreds of thousands of Ontarians who call a condo home.

We will continue to work with the condo sector to implement the changes suggested by the Auditor General

and ensure that condo owners across the province are provided with the treatment they expect and deserve.

## SKILLS TRAINING

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** My question is for the Minister of Education.

As Ontario's population continues to grow, it is essential that our education system continues to equip our students for the jobs of the future that will help build Ontario.

For 15 years, the previous Liberal government stood idly by as the need for skilled trades workers ballooned and Ontario's curriculum grew obsolete to address the issue. As a result, Ontario has seen a troublesome decline in apprenticeship certification and trades diplomas earned.

At the same time, young people in the province of Ontario need to find good-paying and dignified jobs to succeed.

Will the minister please explain what measures our government has implemented to close the skills gap between our students and the jobs that we need to fill in Ontario?

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** I want to thank the member from Flamborough–Glanbrook for this important question.

We believe that we need to ensure every student in this province has a pathway to a good-paying job. That is the mission we are on. It was why we reformed and modernized Ontario's curriculum in math, in science, in computer sciences, in technical education, in careers. We have overhauled the curriculum to finally align with labour market needs, to give these young people a competitive advantage when they graduate.

Mr. Speaker, we've also expanded the Dual Credit Program, which allows students in high school to take a college course or a course that helps them complete their apprenticeship training. It's a two-for-one deal. And under our government, we've seen an over-137% increase in students enjoying and benefiting from the dual credit expansion.

We've also expanded the Specialist High Skills Major program—a 40% increase for students in it—and the reason for this is because we want young people to graduate with the life and job skills that are necessary to get them the jobs of the future.

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

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** Back to the minister: By 2026, one in five in-demand jobs will be in the skilled trades.

In my own riding of Flamborough–Glanbrook, Adventec produces engineered products for the automotive industry that are critical for production of in-demand vehicles. The president of Adventec, Jim Campbell, tells me that he needs more workers to serve consumers in our community. I've been told that his company is consistently short at least eight workers. Specifically, Jim needs machinists and other technical skilled trades workers who will help his business grow. I know that this is a problem faced by many businesses right across Ontario.

Can the minister please elaborate on how our government is connecting young people with the jobs of Ontario in the future?

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** I think the member is absolutely correct; we have to do a better job at connecting young people to the jobs available. We have hundreds of thousands of jobs—300,000 today—unfilled.

This government has a plan, working across the ministry, to ensure young people have the connection points to employment, because we know a job means a life of dignity, it means owning a home, it means having purpose in this province.

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We want everyone to aspire to be bold in this economy. It's why yesterday I joined the Premier of Ontario to announce that we are finally going to allow students, after grade 10, to enter directly into the skilled trades, allowing them an immediate accelerated pathway to apprenticeship training. This is going to help solve the skills labour gap that exists in this country. I'm excited and I'm proud that we're working with our partners in labour, in the private sector and in school boards. All of us yesterday stood together with a mission to help these young people succeed.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Mr. Joel Harden:** My question is to the Premier.

The Rideau Canal Skateway is closed this year, for the first time since it opened in 1971. It's a major loss to our city—and millions lost to local tourism. Experts are pointing the finger at climate change, but frankly, we should be pointing the finger at Ontario's inaction on climate change.

Speaker, we're living in a climate emergency.

When will this government act like we are living in a climate emergency?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** To the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

**Hon. David Piccini:** I appreciate the question from the member opposite.

When it comes to acting to build a more sustainable environment, this government is acting. We've spent a record investment in public transit, taking millions of cars off the road. That member voted against it. When it comes to climate change impact assessment—the first of its kind—that member voted against it. When it comes to countless commitments—working on getting housing built for our next generation—he voted against it. What is his solution? His solution is to punish low-income and middle-class families with a carbon tax that is so punitive that we would drive jobs out and impoverish an entire generation of Ontarians.

When it comes to acting, we're working with industries like Algoma and Dofasco—the largest industrial decarbonization in Ontario's history. We're going to continue doing that, ensuring green jobs for generations to come.

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

**Mr. Joel Harden:** The minister has clearly recently visited the fiction book fair.

I'm going to actually cite a research document to which he's accountable. In 2021, the Auditor General said Ontario was on track to meet—wait for it, Speaker—20% of its climate emissions by 2030. That's not even half of a pass, and we hear the minister crowing about action.

While Ontario continues to not act, eastern Ontario maple syrup producers are sounding the alarm. They're sounding the alarm on earlier springs, on the expensive nature of boiling sap with a lack of support from this government on modern equipment. They are still suffering from the windstorm that hit our province in May 2022, with zero help from this government or that minister.

We know that this minister and the government will act immediately for big polluters—they'll repeat their talking points—but what will they do to support small businesses that have been hurt and are trying to grapple with our climate emergency?

**Hon. David Piccini:** If he talks about crowing with industry and job creators—yes, I sit down with them. I sit down with the union leaders, as well, to ensure we can create a next generation for youth and that it involves jobs.

My grandfather came to this country and worked in the steel sector. He would be proud to know that this government is decarbonizing, working with industry, expanding jobs.

If that member spent a little less time crowing and harassing people outside health clinics and actually sitting down with job creators, with research institutions, he would know that when it comes to GHG reductions, Navius, an independent world leader, validated this province's plan to reach our climate goals by 2030.

We're going to continue working with industry and investing record amounts in public transit, which he voted against; record amounts in housing, which he voted against; record amounts to ensure that we can build a more sustainable future, taking meaningful action, working with industry. I just wish he would join us and bring meaningful solutions, instead of harassment—

*Interjections.*

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

The Speaker is in no position to determine the veracity of statements that might be made during question period or during debate, but I would encourage members not to engage in personal attacks which inflame the passions of the House.

Start the clock.

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Ms. Stephanie Bowman:** Yesterday, the FAO provided their analysis on the government's health sector spending plan, and the numbers are clear and scathing. Their five-year plan is \$21.3 billion short. The FAO said, "The province has not allocated sufficient funds to support existing health sector programs and announced commitments."

The Conservative government promised five years ago to end hallway medicine. Under this government, a record number of people are waiting in the halls—1,300 people per day. Under this government, there have been 145 emergency room closures, and wait times for admission have passed 20 hours, on average.

Talking about investments does not equal providing care.

My question is for the Minister of Finance. Will the minister spend the money the government said they would or will their word once again come up short?

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

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** We've added more hospital beds in four years than the former Liberal government did in 14 years. Hospital capacity is at record highs. Emergency department wait times are coming down. And we've started to shorten wait times for key surgeries.

The highest hospital capacity, under the former Liberal government—not even during COVID—was 98%, with 1,087 patients waiting in hallways.

We're addressing all of those things. Nearly 100,000 people have been connected to convenient care at a pharmacy in their community for common ailments. We know we need to do more, which is why we have asked the federal government to take their fair share of funding and give it to the provinces for health care. We know we need to address more of these concerns.

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

**Ms. Stephanie Bowman:** Well, that was an excellent segue. I've been here less than a year, while this government is nearing five years in power. I'm here to fight for the future and a better Ontario for all. Trading barbs in this chamber will not address our health care crisis, but properly funding it will.

While the government boasts about record investments, Ontarians see record ER closures, record numbers of nurses leaving the profession, and a record shortage of family doctors.

The government has shortchanged our health care funding by \$21.3 billion, and while the federal Liberal government has pledged to cover half of that, this Conservative government appears to have no plan to pay their share.

My question to the Minister of Finance: Will he commit to putting the necessary money in the budget to address this shortfall or will he leave the people of Ontario short?

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** As the member opposite knows, this government has increased health care funding by \$14 billion since 2018. Last year alone, in our 2022-23 budget, we increased base funding for health care by \$5.6 billion. That's a lot of money. So I would like to add here that it represents, really, a hospital bed increase that we've been talking about—represents a 13.8% increase in hospital beds over an eight-year period, compared to a 2.5% increase in hospital beds over the 14-year period that that government was in power.

We knew we had an aging demographic that was coming, and that former Liberal government did absolutely nothing to prepare for what was coming. This government is addressing those concerns.

## MINING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Kevin Holland:** My question is for the Minister of Mines.

In my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan, mining represents a vital and vibrant part of our economy and our future. I am proud of the fact that there are approximately 850 Thunder Bay residents working at mines and hundreds more employed by service and supply companies that support this critical industry.

I had the opportunity this past week to meet with many in the industry at the PDAC conference, and it was great to see such a large representation from Thunder Bay and region present.

Our government must realize the potential for continued growth in this sector in order to strengthen the supply chain for electric vehicle production and technologies of the future. Securing this supply chain will benefit not only my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan, but its effects will support people all over the north and our entire province.

Can the minister please describe the current status and outlook for the mining industry in Ontario?

**Hon. George Pirie:** Thank you for the question from my colleague.

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This week, I attended the PDAC conference in Toronto. It's the world's largest mining conference. It attracts investors. It attracts mining companies. It attracts the manufacturing sector. It attracts service companies, including 100% Indigenous-owned companies like Black Diamond Drilling from Wahgoshig First Nation. They're all there. We had an incredible presence from Team Ontario touring all around that conference. The conference is abuzz with what's happening, with what this government is doing to ensure that it's creating the conditions to come up with innovations, with innovative solutions for challenges that the industry is currently having.

Ontario, under this Premier, is getting it done so that the mining industry can do what they do best: build the critical minerals mines of the future to secure the supply chain for the EV revolution.

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

**Mr. Kevin Holland:** Thank you to the minister for the response.

It is good news that our government's presence is recognized and well-received by mining industry leaders. In the past, the importance of the north was all but ignored, with a failure to invest in northern Ontario's mineral exploration and development sector. Our government recognizes the importance of the north and must continue being proactive and forward-looking, knowing that the future is optimistic for the mining industry.

Can the minister please explain how our government is implementing strategic initiatives to strengthen the mining sector?

**Hon. George Pirie:** Thanks again for the question from my colleague.

Our government, under Premier Ford's leadership, has a very clear vision for this province. We are the first government focused on connecting supply chains in the north and south, so Ontarians across the province can share in economic benefits. Unlike previous governments, we are leveraging Ontario's strengths in the mining and manufacturing sectors to build an integrated supply chain for EVs.

That's why our government launched our Critical Minerals Strategy, and we will continue to execute on this plan.

I had the privilege of announcing the next round of recipients of the Critical Minerals Innovation Fund at PDAC this week. This fund leverages the expertise and innovation we have in Ontario's critical minerals sector by funding research and development projects to secure the supply chain for critical minerals. The projects range from mining and mineral processing to the recovering and recycling of critical minerals. There are too many successful projects leveraging this fund to talk about in this short time, but what I can say is Ontario is taking action by making strategic investments—

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

#### GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

**Mr. Chris Glover:** In the year leading up to the last election, this Conservative government passed legislation that used the “notwithstanding” clause to strip Ontarians of their right of free speech. It suppressed the right of environmentalists, education and health care workers, and others to pay for advertising critical of the government.

The Ontario Court of Appeal has just ruled that the Conservatives' legislation trampled on Ontarians' right to vote in the last election.

Will this government apologize to the people of Ontario for robbing us of our democratic right to a fair election?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Attorney General.

**Hon. Doug Downey:** As the member opposite knows, I can't speak directly to the case, as it's still in front of the courts. We will appeal the matter. I can tell you that we were disappointed with the results, and we look forward to the dissent being given proper care at the Supreme Court.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** This government has robbed the people of Toronto, Niagara, York and Peel of their right to majority-vote democracy.

The Conservative government is politicizing the appointment of judges, allowing it to appoint Conservative-friendly judges.

Three times, this government has used the “notwithstanding” clause to strip Ontarians of their legal rights and fundamental freedoms under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The Court of Appeal has just ruled that the Conservatives violated Ontarians' right to vote in the last election. Is your appeal of that decision an indication that you

intend to not respect the democratic rights of Ontarians in the next provincial election?

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

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Mr. Speaker, I think the Attorney General answered that—

**Interjection:** Wow. Fascinating.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** This is fascinating. Now the NDP are suggesting that it was that particular piece of legislation—and that's what caused them to be shrunken to such a small level in this House, and somehow the people of the province of Ontario weren't thinking about housing, weren't thinking about transportation, weren't thinking about pocketbook issues; that little piece of legislation caused so much chaos, and that's why the NDP were shrunken to such a small level in this House.

Mr. Speaker, I can confirm for the NDP that the people of the province of Ontario relegated the Liberals to just seven or eight seats again, reduced the size of the official opposition, and increased the size of the Conservative government on this side of the House and that side of the House because they like what we are doing: bringing prosperity, hope and optimism back to the province of Ontario.

But you can continue to weave that tale that somehow that's what it was.

We'll continue to work hard for the people of Ontario, and I suspect the people of Ontario will continue to show their support for this government.

#### TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

**Mr. Rob Flack:** The tourism industry is vital to our economy, and I think everyone knows that. It supports almost 400,000 jobs across this great province.

Tourism activity is rebounding, yet when I speak to tourism operators and employees in my community, they express concerns about the future. Operators wonder what the future may hold for the upcoming tourism season. As well, job seekers, particularly students already trying to plan for summer jobs, wonder whether tourism is a good option to explore.

Can the minister please provide information on the status and outlook for our tourism sector?

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

**Hon. Neil Lumsden:** Speaker, I'd like to thank the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London for his question and for the conversation we have around the importance and the impact that tourism has not only in his community but, really, in all of our communities.

Not only is the tourism sector rebounding; it's becoming stronger than ever. Attractions, sporting events and festivals are up and running again. Hotels and restaurants are full and doing great business. There are examples of this across the province.

Fallsview Casino just opened a new concert theatre last week—with the headliner, Billy Joel. I believe a few

members here were at the concert, and I heard it was fantastic.

The Niagara Parks Commission expects a very busy 2023, and they're going to be hiring 350 new people.

Toronto's auto show was a huge success, and I know our Minister of Economic Development has been a big leader in that.

Speaker, a lot of great things are happening in tourism. We can't keep looking in the rear-view mirror. The tourism industry is not doing that. They're looking forward. A bunch of smart people—

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

**Mr. Rob Flack:** It's encouraging to hear the minister talk about such good news. The ongoing strength and prosperity of our tourism industry is obviously very important, as he said to everyone in this House.

Many people in my riding, again, rely on tourism for their jobs and have appreciated the various support grants that the ministry has provided that saw them through tough times of lower attendance at their venues and activities.

Tourism is vital to our province's overall economic prosperity and is helpful in enhancing the overall quality of life and well-being of Ontarians.

As a government, we must continue to provide investments and supports where needed, as I know we have done.

Can the minister please explain how this government is supporting and collaborating with the tourism industry?

**Hon. Neil Lumsden:** It is a great question, and I thank the member for asking it.

Mr. Speaker, I regularly meet with tourism operators by going to their locations and learning more about their businesses and the struggles that they've had, but more importantly, what they're doing to take themselves to the next level. And that's exactly what they're doing. They're growing faster and stronger than ever.

We've helped them through initiatives in sport hosting, like the 2023 Ontario Winter Games in Renfrew, which was a huge economic boost to that community.

The Tim Hortons Brier, a 10-day stint, is well under way in London. It will have a massive impact on that economy. Make sure you buy a couple of tickets.

Thunder Bay hotel occupancy is up from 2019.

The Minister of Education's announcement about helping people coming through high school and finding a better job and an opportunity for themselves—a lot of them will land in the tourism industry. There are great opportunities and great careers in tourism, and I'm glad there's going to be a mesh going on between high school—

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

#### MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** In the middle of a mental health crisis, Hamilton is losing two critical mental health agencies due to chronic underfunding by these Conservatives.

The Canadian Mental Health Association will now be required to take on these services, but this is an agency that is also struggling to keep up.

We put forward a very important motion to offer emergency stabilization funding for CMHA, and the Conservatives—wait for it—voted no.

Why are you adding to the crisis by denying funding for these vital services?

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

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** I want to thank the member opposite for the question.

Obviously, mental health is a huge priority for this government. That's why, when we were first elected, we ran on a promise to invest \$3.8 billion over 10 years into mental health and addictions. We've been doing that every year. We have an annualized increase in funding of \$525 million going out to various community groups. And we want to make sure that we have the care that people need, which is culturally sensitive and appropriate care.

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We're very proud of the investments we have made—\$525 million additional in annualized funding, which is a significant investment into that sector—and we'll continue to work to do more.

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

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** My question is for the minister of mental health.

When people, especially young people, can't get the help they need, they turn to our emergency departments. But we know that these Conservatives have underspent on our health care by almost \$6 billion, and emergency workers, as we know, are struggling.

The tragic story of Gord Lewis and the not-criminally-responsible verdict for his son has to be the most unimaginable consequence of your underfunding. The Lewis family shared that Jonny went to 10 emergency rooms seeking help in the 36 hours before Gord was killed.

In light of these tragedies, why are you closing your wallets and closing your hearts to people who are suffering?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

**Hon. Michael A. Tibollo:** Thank you for the question.

From when this government was first elected, it made a point of making substantial, unprecedented investments in mental health and addictions. It worked with all of the stakeholders and continues to work with children and youth mental health, CMHA and all the other agencies to build a continuum of care.

This is the government that created the Roadmap to Wellness. This is the government that created a ministry to work specifically on mental health and addictions and create the networks necessary to provide the supports for individuals.

We have identified where those gaps exist, and with a \$525-million investment on an annualized basis, we're building the system, filling the gaps, and ensuring that everyone in this province gets the support, the care, the help they need when and where they need it.

## HUNTING AND FISHING

**Mr. Brian Riddell:** My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Ontario is known for its rich and abundant natural resources. Our province is truly blessed with more than a quarter million lakes, shoreline access to four great lakes, and more than 490,000 kilometres of rivers and streams offering residents and guests exceptional fishing opportunities, which I personally enjoy. We appreciate that our neighbours and many of our other tourists want to share in these resources.

People travelling to Ontario to participate in hunting and fishing are required to follow a different set of regulations than residents. Questions have arisen about the potential strain and impact of outdoor recreation tourism on wildlife and the environment.

Can the minister please explain how our government is responding to the growth in Ontario's natural resources tourism?

**Hon. Graydon Smith:** Thank you to the member from Cambridge for the question.

We are so blessed in Ontario with those beautiful lakes, rivers, streams, forests full of abundant and diverse wildlife, and we work hard every single day to sustainably manage those resources for future generations.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things we do through hunting and fishing regulations and licences is to make sure we reinvest that money back into these programs, such as stocking eight million fish in over 1,200 water bodies every year. In addition, we invest millions of dollars—\$2 million per year—to support ongoing research, management and mitigation of invasive species across the province. These investments are important to the sustainability of the natural resources tourism sector.

Anglers spend more than \$1.6 billion a year, so thank you to the member from Cambridge for being part of that and creating jobs in northern Ontario.

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

**Mr. Brian Riddell:** Thank you to the minister for that response. It's good to know the recreational fishing and hunting sectors are continuing to grow sustainably.

With the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry's family fishing days, more Ontario families and friends can enjoy fishing anywhere in the province without having to purchase a licence or carry an Outdoors Card. Free fishing periods make it affordable and easy for people to enjoy a fun activity while experiencing this beautiful province.

The people of my riding of Cambridge are interested in learning more about the opportunities for outdoor recreation.

Can the minister please explain how Ontarians can access information about recreation opportunities in communities across the province?

**Hon. Graydon Smith:** Thanks again to the member for the question.

The free fishing weekend we just had on Family Day, by the way, was a great success. I had an opportunity to be

out in the great community of Brechin, meeting with families who were out on the lake trying fishing for the first time. It was amazing.

The Toronto Sportsmen's Show is coming up. It's an excellent opportunity for outdoor enthusiasts to gather and share their passion for hunting, fishing, camping, boating and the great outdoors. It's happening from March 16 to 19 in the Mississauga–Malton area, so a shout-out to the member for hosting such a great event in his area. There are lots of vendors there, including the Great Ontario Salmon Derby, Destination Ontario, Ducks Unlimited Canada, and the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. I encourage everyone who's there to stop by our Ministry of Natural Resources booth and meet some of the incredible people doing incredible work, like our conservation officers, and see a cooking demo. You can even drop a line and angle for live fish right there. It's an excellent opportunity to showcase what's happening in Ontario. I encourage members and all—

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

## NURSES

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** Over a year ago, I learned that nursing students were quitting the profession immediately after their hospital placements because of the relentlessly exhausting workload they both experienced and witnessed during their placements.

Fortunately, there are still a few new nurses entering the profession, but this week I was told about entire hospital units that are being staffed entirely by new nursing graduates because there are no senior nurses left to supervise or mentor them. Surely this is a health and safety risk for patients and for the new nurses.

The mass exodus of experienced nurses is surely a direct consequence of this government's continued attacks on public health care workers.

What I would like to know is—

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta:** A direct consequence of your fearmongering.

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** It's not fearmongering; it's a direct report from nurses, thank you very much.

What is this government doing to attract experienced nurses back to our public health care system?

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

**Hon. Jill Dunlop:** Thank you to the member for that question.

Building on the 14,000 nursing registrations in the province last year alone, our government is investing in a range of initiatives to track, train and retain even more nurses. As I mentioned earlier, this year alone in universities—this doesn't even include colleges—over 109,000 registrations in September 2022.

We are seeing an increase year over year of students entering into the nursing profession.

Look at the investments that are being made in long-term care alone—60,000 new and upgraded beds, and the beds that the parliamentary assistant to health mentioned

earlier in hospitals. The investments being made into the health care system are encouraging new and current nurses in the system. They want to be in nursing.

We expanded the new Learn and Stay program to include nurses, paramedics and lab technicians.

This is an exciting field that students are wanting to get into—health human resources—and this government is making the investments to ensure that they are successful.

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

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** It would be great if young nursing graduates actually stayed beyond their first two years, but that's not what we're seeing. Imagine the pressure on new nurses carrying the full responsibility for their patients without the guidance of experienced nurses.

At one hospital, 66 nursing graduates were just hired who did a significant amount of their clinical training online. You heard that correctly: new nursing graduates with next to no hands-on experience. Again, this calls patient safety into question.

How long do you think new nurses will stay in the profession when what few mentors they have had leave the profession out of compassion fatigue and exhaustion?

Again, this situation is a direct result of the government's strategy to undermine public health care.

Will the government stop wasting public dollars on its appeal of the unconstitutional Bill 124, revive the late career initiative, and create a strategy to attract experienced nurses back into our hospitals?

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**Hon. Jill Dunlop:** I think instead of the fearmongering that the member is bringing to the floor, we need to celebrate the opportunities that we're seeing—a record number of students entering into the nursing profession; as I mentioned, building on the 14,000 nursing registrants in the province last year alone. There are currently over 5,000 internationally educated nurses residing in Ontario whose applications are at various stages, who are able to enter the workforce sooner as a result of the changes that this government is making. We are breaking down registration barriers so that more health care professionals trained in Ontario and other provinces or internationally can practise here in Ontario.

We have a real opportunity here. We are seeing more and more nursing students entering into the profession—the work that our universities are doing, our stand-alone bachelor of science in nursing program now offered at colleges here in Ontario. We're seeing it across the province—a record number of students who are able to work in our rural and our underserved areas and stay close to home, in the hospitals and long-term-care centres that need those nurses.

## SENIORS

**Mr. Logan Kanapathi:** My question is for the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility.

Across our province, seniors deserve to live fit, active and socially connected lives. It is important that our government prioritizes support for our seniors to remain healthy, to socialize and take part in community life.

The support demonstrated by this minister for investments that help seniors is commendable and appreciated in communities across our province. I know that many communities are appreciative of the funding provided by our government from the seniors community grants. These funds will certainly benefit seniors in their communities, through programs and educational activities.

Can the minister please describe the importance of investments made by our government to support seniors in our communities?

**Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho:** Thank you to the hard-working member from Markham–Thornhill for asking such an important question. Seniors are the backbone of this province, and the member is doing a great job for seniors to get the support they need.

Mr. Speaker, thanks to the leadership of the Premier, we have created the programs and services to break down barriers of social isolation and fight against ageism. Since 2018, our government has invested almost \$22 million into over 1,200 seniors community grant projects across Ontario to fight social isolation.

Seniors have invested their energy to help build this province, and we stand with them.

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

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

Ontario's seniors are the province's fastest-growing demographic. By the end of this year, there will be three million Ontarians over the age of 65. With the investments made through the support of this minister, our government is taking real action to further empower seniors in their own communities.

Our government must continue to prioritize providing seniors with high-quality supports that contribute to their physical, mental and social well-being.

Can the minister please elaborate on the benefits of these grants for our seniors in communities across the province?

**Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho:** Thank you for another important question.

Mr. Speaker, seniors are the backbone of this province and deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. They are the ones who helped build the best province, Ontario. That is why we have invested into programs that keep seniors active, healthy and socially connected.

Since 2018, our government has invested \$59 million in 300 seniors active living centres across Ontario to promote healthy, active and socially connected living for seniors. Programs like this are key to the fight against ageism.

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

## MEMBER'S COMMENTS

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Point of order.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** A point of order, the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Thank you, Speaker. I rise under section 25(h) of the standing orders. This morning, in response to a question from the member for Waterloo, the

member from Eglinton–Lawrence twice stated that another member was “harassing” people. We maintain that the charge of harassment could be construed as a very serious allegation. So we would ask that in future that that would be considered, because it is a very serious allegation—we believe unsubstantiated, but that is not our decision to make. But the allegation is very serious.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** On the same point of order?

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Yes, the same point of order.

Thank you, Speaker. I know that during question period you had made a comment with respect to your ability to adjudicate such things.

I would also remind the House that, in many circumstances in debate in this place—on both sides of the House—things that we may disagree with have been levelled across the floor. We spent a good number of weeks early on in this session talking about a wedding, for instance. We may disagree on things, but it is the opposition’s right to bring that forward.

As you said at the beginning, when that was raised, it is not within your purview to assert what a member has or hasn’t done. If the member has some issues with that, then he is certainly welcome to take that up outside of question period with the appropriate authorities that are available to him.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I’ll say to both members on that point of order: I appreciate the advice to the Chair.

#### FRANCO-ONTARIAN FLAG

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** Point of order.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Point of order, the member for Ottawa–Vanier.

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the indulgence. I want to end this week on a positive note.

While I didn’t have to stand today to ask for unanimous consent on anything, I would like to take this opportunity to remind the House that two years ago, almost to this day, we all agreed and voted in favour of having the Franco-Ontarian flag displayed permanently in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as a reminder of the important symbol and the importance of our Franco-Ontarian community. I think it’s a moment we can all be proud of. So thank you very much. *Merci à tout le monde.*

#### NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Pursuant to standing order 36(a), the member from Hamilton Mountain has given notice of her dissatisfaction to the answer to her question given by the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. This matter will be debated on Tuesday, March 21, 2023, following private members’ public business.

#### VISITOR

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Now, relating to standing order 59, I’ll recognize the government House

leader to announce the business of the House when it next meets.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** I appreciate the opportunity to do that.

Let me again just thank all members for what has been a very productive week in the House.

If I may just take a moment to also congratulate my assistant Rolando Ong Jr.—this is his last day in the underpass today as my assistant. He is receiving a well-deserved promotion, Mr. Speaker. I hope you’ll indulge me. This is a kid who comes in every day, two hours, from Barrie to be at the House leader’s office at 6:45 every morning—and has been just an absolute awesome person. I wish him very well in his well-deserved promotion. Congratulations.

Of course, the Attorney General and I can talk about him stealing my great staff, but anyway—

**Interjection:** Solicitor General.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** The Solicitor General. Excuse me.

#### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Next Monday, when we come back, Speaker—as we already know, the House will return at 9 o’clock on the Monday, and we will be debating a bill which will be introduced today during routine proceedings. In the afternoon, we’ll be doing a bill to be introduced and Bill 75, the Queen’s Park Restoration Act.

On Tuesday, March 21, in the morning and afternoon sessions, we will be debating a bill which will be introduced. And in the evening, we will be debating Bill 70, Seniors Month Act, standing in the name of the member for Newmarket–Aurora.

On Wednesday, March 22, both in the morning and in the afternoon sessions, we’ll be debating a bill which will be introduced. And in the evening, we will be debating the member for London–Fanshawe’s motion number 34.

On Thursday, March 23, in the morning, we will continue a bill which will be introduced; and in the afternoon, at 4 o’clock, the Minister of Finance will present the 2023 provincial budget.

#### DEFERRED VOTES

##### BUILDING MORE MINES ACT, 2023

##### LOI DE 2023 VISANT L’AMÉNAGEMENT DE DAVANTAGE DE MINES

Deferred vote on the motion that the question now be put for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 71, An Act to amend the Mining Act / *Projet de loi 71, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les mines.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** We have a deferred vote now on a motion for closure on the motion for second reading of Bill 71, An Act to amend the Mining Act.

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

*The division bells rang from 1150 to 1155.*

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

On March 7, 2023, Mr. Pirie moved second reading of Bill 71, An Act to amend the Mining Act.

On March 8, 2023, Mr. Saunderson moved that the question be now put.

All those in favour of Mr. Saunderson's motion, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Gill, Parm	Quinn, Nolan
Babikian, Aris	Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Rae, Matthew
Bailey, Robert	Hardeman, Ernie	Rasheed, Kaleed
Barnes, Patrice	Harris, Mike	Rickford, Greg
Bouma, Will	Holland, Kevin	Riddell, Brian
Bowman, Stephanie	Hsu, Ted	Romano, Ross
Brady, Bobbi Ann	Jones, Trevor	Sabawy, Sheref
Bresee, Ric	Jordan, John	Sandhu, Amarjot
Calandra, Paul	Kanapathi, Logan	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Kerzner, Michael S.	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Cho, Stan	Khanjin, Andrea	Saunderson, Brian
Clark, Steve	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Schreiner, Mike
Coe, Lorne	Leardi, Anthony	Scott, Laurie
Collard, Lucille	Lecce, Stephen	Shamji, Adil
Crawford, Stephen	Lumsden, Neil	Skelly, Donna
Cuzzetto, Rudy	McCarthy, Todd J.	Smith, David
Dixon, Jess	McGregor, Graham	Smith, Graydon
Downey, Doug	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Surma, Kinga
Dunlop, Jill	Mulroney, Caroline	Tangri, Nina
Fedeli, Victor	Oosterhoff, Sam	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Flack, Rob	Pang, Billy	Thompson, Lisa M.
Ford, Michael D.	Parsa, Michael	Tibollo, Michael A.
Fraser, John	Piccini, David	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Pierre, Natalie	Wai, Daisy
Ghamari, Goldie	Pirie, George	Williams, Charmaine A.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** All those opposed to Mr. Saunderson's motion will please rise one at a time.

#### Nays

Andrew, Jill	Gélinas, France	Tabuns, Peter
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Glover, Chris	Taylor, Monique
Begum, Doly	Harden, Joel	Vanthof, John
Bell, Jessica	Karpoche, Bhutla	Vaigeois, Lise
Burch, Jeff	Mamakwa, Sol	West, Jamie
Fife, Catherine	Sattler, Peggy	Wong-Tam, Kristyn
French, Jennifer K.	Shaw, Sandy	
Gates, Wayne	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)	

**The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Trevor Day):** The ayes are 75; the nays are 22.

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

Mr. Pirie has moved second reading of Bill 71, An Act to amend the Mining Act. 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 1200 to 1201.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** On March 7, 2023, Mr. Pirie moved second reading of Bill 71, An Act to amend the Mining Act.

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	Rasheed, Kaleed
Andrew, Jill	Ghamari, Goldie	Rickford, Greg
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gill, Parm	Riddell, Brian
Babikian, Aris	Glover, Chris	Romano, Ross
Bailey, Robert	Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Sabawy, Sheref
Barnes, Patrice	Hardeman, Ernie	Sandhu, Amarjot
Begum, Doly	Harden, Joel	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Bell, Jessica	Harris, Mike	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Bouma, Will	Holland, Kevin	Sattler, Peggy
Bowman, Stephanie	Hsu, Ted	Saunderson, Brian
Brady, Bobbi Ann	Jones, Trevor	Schreiner, Mike
Bresee, Ric	Jordan, John	Scott, Laurie
Burch, Jeff	Kanapathi, Logan	Shamji, Adil
Calandra, Paul	Karpoche, Bhutla	Shaw, Sandy
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Kerzner, Michael S.	Skelly, Donna
Cho, Stan	Khanjin, Andrea	Smith, David
Clark, Steve	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Smith, Graydon
Coe, Lorne	Leardi, Anthony	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Collard, Lucille	Lecce, Stephen	Surma, Kinga
Crawford, Stephen	Lumsden, Neil	Tabuns, Peter
Cuzzetto, Rudy	McCarthy, Todd J.	Tangri, Nina
Dixon, Jess	McGregor, Graham	Taylor, Monique
Downey, Doug	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Dunlop, Jill	Mulroney, Caroline	Thompson, Lisa M.
Fedeli, Victor	Oosterhoff, Sam	Tibollo, Michael A.
Fife, Catherine	Pang, Billy	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Flack, Rob	Parsa, Michael	Vanthof, John
Ford, Michael D.	Piccini, David	Vaigeois, Lise
Fraser, John	Pierre, Natalie	Wai, Daisy
French, Jennifer K.	Pirie, George	West, Jamie
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Quinn, Nolan	Williams, Charmaine A.
Gates, Wayne	Rae, Matthew	Wong-Tam, Kristyn

**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 Deputy Clerk (Mr. Trevor Day):** The ayes are 96; the nays are 0.

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

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Interjections:** No.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Okay. I look to the Minister of Mines.

**Hon. George Pirie:** The Standing Committee on the Interior.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The bill is therefore referred to the Standing Committee on the Interior.

#### FARMLAND AND ARABLE LAND STRATEGY ACT, 2023

#### LOI DE 2023 SUR LA STRATÉGIE EN MATIÈRE DE TERRES AGRICOLES ET DE TERRES ARABLES

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

Bill 62, An Act to provide for the development of a farmland and arable land strategy and an advisory

committee on farmland and arable land / Projet de loi 62, Loi prévoyant l'élaboration d'une stratégie en matière de terres agricoles et de terres arables et la création d'un comité consultatif des terres agricoles et des terres arables.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Call in the members. This is another five-minute bell.

**Mr. John Fraser:** Same vote.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Same vote? I heard some noes.

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

*The division bells rang from 1205 to 1206.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** On March 8, 2023, Ms. Brady moved second reading of Bill 62, An Act to provide for the development of a farmland and arable land strategy and an advisory committee on farmland and arable land.

All those in favour will please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Andrew, Jill	French, Jennifer K.	Shamji, Adil
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gates, Wayne	Shaw, Sandy
Begum, Doly	Gélinas, France	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Bell, Jessica	Glover, Chris	Tabuns, Peter
Bowman, Stephanie	Harden, Joel	Taylor, Monique
Brady, Bobbi Ann	Hsu, Ted	Vanthof, John
Burch, Jeff	Karpoche, Bhutika	Vaugeois, Lise
Collard, Lucille	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	West, Jamie
Fife, Catherine	Sattler, Peggy	Wong-Tam, Kristyn
Fraser, John	Schreiner, Mike	

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

#### Nays

Anand, Deepak	Hardeman, Ernie	Rae, Matthew
Babikian, Aris	Harris, Mike	Rasheed, Kaleed
Bailey, Robert	Holland, Kevin	Rickford, Greg
Barnes, Patrice	Jones, Trevor	Riddell, Brian
Bouma, Will	Jordan, John	Romano, Ross
Bresee, Ric	Kanapathi, Logan	Sabawy, Sheref
Calandra, Paul	Kerzner, Michael S.	Sandhu, Amarjot
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Khanjin, Andrea	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Cho, Stan	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Clark, Steve	Leardi, Anthony	Saunderson, Brian
Coe, Lorne	Lecce, Stephen	Scott, Laurie
Crawford, Stephen	Lumsden, Neil	Skelly, Donna
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Martin, Robin	Smith, David
Dixon, Jess	McCarthy, Todd J.	Smith, Graydon
Downey, Doug	McGregor, Graham	Surma, Kinga
Dunlop, Jill	Mulrone, Caroline	Tangri, Nina
Fedeli, Victor	Oosterhoff, Sam	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Flack, Rob	Pang, Billy	Thompson, Lisa M.
Ford, Michael D.	Parsa, Michael	Tibollo, Michael A.
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Piccini, David	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Ghamari, Goldie	Pierre, Natalie	Wai, Daisy
Gill, Parm	Pirie, George	Williams, Charmaine A.
Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Quinn, Nolan	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker):** The ayes are 29; the nays are 68.

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

*Second reading negated.*

## LEGISLATIVE PAGES

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** There being no further business at this time, this House stands in recess—  
*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Kingston and the Islands has a point of order.

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg your indulgence for this point of order. I failed to introduce a page from Kingston and the Islands, Yonglin Su. I wanted to just thank him for his work this week, as well as the other pages. We really appreciate it.

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

*The House recessed from 1209 to 1300.*

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated March 9, 2023, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 110(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

*Report deemed adopted.*

## INTRODUCTION OF GOVERNMENT BILLS

### SUPPLY ACT, 2023

### LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 2023

Mr. Sarkaria moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 77, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023 / Projet de loi 77, Loi autorisant l'utilisation de certaines sommes pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2023.

**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 President of the Treasury Board care to briefly explain his bill?

**Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria:** The Supply Act is one of the key acts in the Ontario Legislature. If passed, it would give the Ontario government the legal spending authority to finance its programs and honour its commitments for the fiscal year that is to close at the end of March.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### GROUP OF SEVEN DAY ACT, 2023

#### LOI DE 2023 SUR LE JOUR DU GROUPE DES SEPT

Mr. McCarthy moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill 78, An Act to proclaim Group of Seven Day /  
Projet de loi 78, Loi proclamant le Jour du Groupe des  
Sept.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'll invite the member for Durham to briefly explain his bill.

**Mr. Todd J. McCarthy:** The works of the Group of Seven are internationally recognized. They are all recognized as artists from the early part of the 20th century. The works have captured the magnificent landscape of Ontario. Mr. Speaker, if it pleases the House, my bill will proclaim that Group of Seven day be declared annually on the 7th day of July. This date is to acknowledge the legacy and the works of the Group of Seven artists and their contributions to the province of Ontario from a cultural and artistic and historic perspective.

### 2253697 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2023

Ms. Ghamari moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill Pr18, An Act to revive 2253697 Ontario Inc.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

## MOTIONS

### COMMITTEE SITTINGS

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** I move that the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy be authorized to meet on Monday, March 20, at 2 p.m.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The government House leader moves that Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy be authorized to meet on Monday, March 20, at 2 p.m. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

## PETITIONS

### GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

**Mr. Chris Glover:** This petition's entitled "Implement the Renfrew County Inquest to End Femicide in Ontario."  
"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas since 2015, the same year of the tragic femicides of Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk, and Nathalie Warmerdam in Renfrew county, there have been at least 273 women killed in acts of femicide in Ontario;

"Whereas the Renfrew county inquest was published in June 2022 outlining 86 recommendations, 68 of which are under provincial jurisdiction, in order to respond to and prevent intimate partner violence and femicide;

"Whereas the provincial government has yet to respond to the Renfrew county inquest recommendations in any meaningful way;

"Whereas Black women, Indigenous women, racialized women, trans women and non-binary folks, unhoused women, women with disabilities, and women living in rural or remote communities are at a greater risk of femicide due to systemic discrimination and structural inequities that make accessing resources far more difficult;

"Whereas femicide is an epidemic;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to respond and report publicly on the findings of the Renfrew county inquest with specific and timely plans of action and accompanying budget to support implementation of the report's recommendations to eliminate intimate partner violence in Ontario."

I fully support this petition and I will pass it to page Charlotte to take to the table.

### VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARDS

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas in the First and Second World Wars, over 7,000 First Nation members, as well as an unknown number of Métis, Inuit and other Indigenous recruits, voluntarily served in the Canadian Armed Forces; and

"Whereas countless Indigenous peoples bravely and selflessly served Canada at a time of great challenges for Canada; and

"Whereas this spirit of volunteerism and community marked the life of the late Murray Whetung, who volunteered to serve in the Second World War; and

"Whereas many First Nations individuals lost their status after serving in the wars off-reserve for a period of time; and

"Whereas despite this injustice, many continued to recognize the value in continuously giving back to their community; and

"Whereas the values of volunteerism and community are instilled in the army, air, and sea cadets across Ontario; and

"Whereas the Murray Whetung Community Service Award Act establishes an award for the cadets and tells the story of Indigenous veterans' sacrifice and mistreatment;

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

"To urge all members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support the passage of the Murray Whetung Community Service Award Act, 2022."

I affix my signature to this petition and I will give it to the page Vedant.

## SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Ms. Bhutila Karpoche:** This petition is titled “To Raise Social Assistance Rates.” It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

**1310**

I fully support this petition and will affix my signature to it. I want to thank Sally Palmer for sending me these petitions.

## TENANT PROTECTION

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** I would like to present this petition.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there is an affordable” housing “rental crisis in Ontario;

“Whereas massive loopholes in the current rent control laws have led to unaffordable rental prices;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

“(1) Stop massive rent increases by re-implementing rent control for all units in Ontario, regardless of when they were built;

“(2) End the system that gives landlords incentive to drive people out of their units and homes so they can rent at new, much higher rents by implementing vacancy control;

“(3) Provide real financial consequences for landlords who fail to maintain their buildings, and ban the use of mandatory above-guideline rent increases to pay for standard maintenance and repairs.”

I will affix my signature and hand this petition to our page Wyatt.

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Ms. Doly Begum:** I have a petition here.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Toronto city staff’s assessment of Bill 23 notes that it does not sufficiently address housing affordability, but instead decimates the city’s ability to fund services for new residents;

“Whereas the assessment from officials, including the chief planner, notes that this bill will harm the city’s ability to build affordable rentals and new homeless shelters;

“Whereas this bill does not present solutions that would push developers to build in ways that would save homebuyers any additional cost or address the skyrocketing cost of housing;

“Whereas this bill will push for a revenue loss for Toronto while the city is anticipating an \$815-million budget shortfall and residents continue to struggle with not only day-to-day costs but also underfunded city services;

“Whereas this bill will impact the city’s ability to deliver on its 10-year housing targets, invest in new shelter services, and continue affordable housing development and protection programs that support vulnerable residents;

“Whereas this bill will decrease the amount of affordable housing required under the city’s zoning policies and deliver on the HousingNowTO targets and the annual financial impact of Bill 23 on Toronto would be approximately \$200 million, \$100 million of which would be removing housing services;

“Whereas Bill 23 will take away the powers of municipalities to protect tenants in the case of demovictions and harm renters, homeowners, and families who are looking to find safe and affordable homes and remove access to city services;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, call on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to repeal this harmful piece of legislation and engage in meaningful consultations with municipalities, conservation authorities, and communities to address the housing affordability crisis.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature to it and give it to page Taylor to take it to the Clerks.

## ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Joel Harden:** I have a petition here that reads, “Support Gender-Affirming Health Care,” to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas two-spirit, transgender, non-binary, gender-diverse, and intersex communities face significant challenges to accessing health care services that are friendly, competent, and affirming in Ontario;

“Whereas everyone deserves access to health care, and they shouldn’t have to fight for it, shouldn’t have to wait for it, and should never receive less care or support because of who they are;

“Whereas gender-affirming care is life-saving care;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support the reintroduction of a private member’s bill to create an inclusive and representative committee to advise the Ministry of Health on how to realize accessible and equitable access to and coverage for gender-affirming health care in Ontario.”

I want to thank the residents who gave me this petition, and I send it with page Adam to the Clerks’ table.

## SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I'd like to thank Dr. Sally Palmer of McMaster University for sending this petition:

"To Raise Social Assistance Rates.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

"Whereas the recent budget increase of 5% for ODSP, with nothing for OW, could be experienced as an insult to recipients, who have been living since 2018 with frozen social assistance rates and a Canadian inflation rate that reached 12%;

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

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

I fully support this petition, affix my signature and send it to the table with page George.

## TENANT PROTECTION

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** This petition is titled, "Real Rent Control Now." It reads, "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass the Real Rent Control Act to establish:

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

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

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

"—stronger enforcement and tougher penalties for landlords who do not properly maintain a renter's home."

On behalf of all of the tenants in Parkdale–High Park and across Toronto, I fully support this petition and will affix my signature to it.

*Report continues in volume B.*





**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Ted Arnott

Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Valerie Quioc Lim, Wai Lam (William) Wong,

Meghan Stenson, Christopher Tyrell

Temporary Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes par intérim: Mike Civil

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
<b>Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)</b>	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
<b>Barnes, Patrice (PC)</b>	Ajax	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough- Sud-Ouest	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
<b>Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)</b>	Pickering—Uxbridge	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Bowman, Stephanie (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Brady, Bobbi Ann (IND)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Bresee, Ric (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Byers, Rick (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
<b>Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)</b>	Markham—Stouffville	Minister of Legislative Affairs / Ministre des Affaires législatives Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
<b>Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)</b>	Scarborough North / Scarborough- Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
<b>Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)</b>	Willowdale	Associate Minister of Transportation / Ministre associé des Transports
<b>Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)</b>	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds— Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
<b>Collard, Lucille (LIB)</b>	Ottawa—Vanier	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Dixon, Jess (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Dowie, Andrew (PC)	Windsor—Tecumseh	
<b>Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)</b>	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)</b>	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
<b>Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)</b>	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
Flack, Rob (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)</b>	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
<b>Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Michael D. (PC)</b>	York South—Weston / York-Sud—Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiques et du Multiculturalisme
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
<b>Fullerton, Hon. / L'hon. Merrilee (PC)</b>	Kanata—Carleton	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
<b>Gill, Hon. / L'hon. Parm (PC)</b>	Milton	Minister of Red Tape Reduction / Ministre de la Réduction des formalités administratives
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Grewal, Hardeep Singh (PC)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Holland, Kevin (PC)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Hsu, Ted (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
<b>Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)</b>	Dufferin—Caledon	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
Jones, Trevor (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	
Jordan, John (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
<b>Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)</b>	Parkdale—High Park	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
<b>Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)</b>	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	
Leardi, Anthony (PC)	Essex	
<b>Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)</b>	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
<b>Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)</b>	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean	
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
McCarthy, Todd J. (PC)	Durham	
McGregor, Graham (PC)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
<b>McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)</b>	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
<b>Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)</b>	York—Simcoe	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
<b>Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)</b>	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Associate Minister of Housing / Ministre associé du Logement
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
<b>Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)</b>	Northumberland—Peterborough South	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
Pierre, Natalie (PC)	Burlington	
<b>Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)</b>	Timmins	Minister of Mines / Ministre des Mines
Quinn, Nolan (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
<b>Rasheed, Hon. / L'hon. Kaleed (PC)</b>	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises
<b>Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)</b>	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Northern Development / Ministre du Développement du Nord
Riddell, Brian (PC)	Cambridge	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
<b>Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)</b>	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Saunderson, Brian (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shamji, Adil (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
<b>Skelly, Donna (PC)</b>	Flamborough—Glanbrook	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-présidente et présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, David (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)</b>	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)</b>	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Smith, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)</b>	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
<b>Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)</b>	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
<b>Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)</b>	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Vaugeois, Lise (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
<b>Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)</b>	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity / Ministre associée des Perspectives sociales et économiques pour les femmes
Wong-Tam, Kristyn (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Vacant	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	