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Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 20 March 2023

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 20 mars 2023

The House met at 1015.

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

Prayers.

INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Before we do members' statements, I'm going to ask for the House's attention so that I may address the issue of the participation of independent members.

On August 10, 2022, at the beginning of the 43rd Parliament, I advised the House on how the 10 independent members would be given a reasonable opportunity to participate in our daily proceedings and in debate. Given that there are now 11 independent members, our practices must be adjusted accordingly.

During question period, in addition to the one independent member recognized to ask a question each day and the second independent member recognized every Tuesday, I am prepared to also recognize a second independent member every alternate Wednesday. This will allow us to accommodate 11 independent members into the previously established eight-day rotation. Each independent member recognized during question period will continue to have the opportunity to ask one question and one supplementary.

With regard to members' statements, there will continue to be one statement allotted to an independent member every sessional day. However, each individual member will be entitled to participate once per 11-day period instead of once per 10-day period.

I want to thank the House for its attention.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

JOURNÉE INTERNATIONALE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF LA FRANCOPHONIE

M^{me} Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: Aujourd'hui, nous célébrons la Journée internationale de la Francophonie. Today, we are celebrating International Francophonie Day.

Je considère cela comme un grand honneur de pouvoir saluer notre jeunesse franco-ontarienne : les élèves des écoles Père-Philippe-Lamarche, Saint-Jean-de-Brébeuf, et Monseigneur-de-Charbonnel, et aussi les jeunes représentants de la FEFSO, la Fédération de la jeunesse

franco-ontarienne, qui sont à l'Assemblée aujourd'hui pour célébrer avec nous.

1020

Je voudrais aussi saluer M. Fabien Hébert, le président de l'Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario.

Comme fidèle francophile, je suis très émue de pouvoir célébrer les nombreuses contributions et acquis de la communauté francophone à notre province—de l'identité sociale et culturelle, au développement économique pour assurer des communautés francophones fortes et un avenir radieux à nos jeunes.

Durant les quatre dernières années, nous avons déployé des stratégies et des mesures concrètes témoignant d'une volonté sincère de contribuer au renforcement et à l'épanouissement de notre espace francophone. Nous avons mis de l'avant des changements structurants pour les générations à venir.

Le français, la belle langue de Molière, est la cinquième langue la plus parlée au monde. L'Ontario appartient à cette belle famille francophone internationale.

À nos jeunes : soyez fiers de qui vous êtes, de vos racines et de votre héritage franco-ontarien. Soyez fiers de vos ancêtres, les peuples fondateurs de notre pays dont la présence remonte à 400 ans. Soyez fiers de vos symboles, le drapeau vert—

Le Président (L'hon. Ted Arnott): Merci beaucoup.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms. Jessica Bell: I recently met a mom in my riding, Amy. It was very hard to listen to Amy's story because it felt like her life was impossible. She's a working parent, she's a single parent, and she's also a parent of two children with autism. Her oldest is eight and he is very high-needs. He cannot be left alone.

Amy was very clear with me when I talked to her that what she is desperately needing is stable and regular funding for therapy so that her children can reach their full potential. She needs funding for summer programs for kids with autism, which she has a hard time finding, so that she can keep her job and pay the rent. She emphasizes it is essential for her economic survival that she get help. Without support, Amy describes her life as "living in hell."

She has been waiting months for provincial funding she is eligible for and it has not arrived. I will make sure to follow up with the minister opposite to inquire about her case because she is in distress. She is not alone. There are thousands of people like Amy.

I recently spoke to Surrey Place. It is a provider of excellent autism programs in my riding of University-Rosedale. They emphasized to me in that meeting that the

need for autism programs is growing, while their ability to provide for this need is shrinking. There are more children waiting for preschool speech and language programs, and that is unacceptable. I want to see something in the 2023 budget—

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

HELLENIC HERITAGE MONTH

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: I rise today to recognize Hellenic Heritage Month in Ontario. Our Legislature is the only one in Canada to officially recognize this celebration. As an Ontarian of Hellenic origin, I am proud to see our cultural history recognized and celebrated.

The Hellenic community has had a long and proud history in Canada, dating back to before Confederation. In Ontario, and in my own riding of Oakville North–Burlington, our community has committed to the province’s growth and prosperity by establishing schools, churches and businesses.

This month provides an opportunity for all Ontarians to celebrate the contributions of Hellenic Canadians to our province and country. The ancient Greeks, whose ideas and innovations in philosophy, science, medicine and the arts, laid the foundation for the freedoms and democracy that we enjoy today. On March 25, 1821, the Greek Revolution began, leading to the liberation of Greece from the Ottoman Empire’s 400-year occupation. Greek Independence Day celebrates the triumph of this revolution, which restored Greece’s sovereignty and allowed its people to regain their freedom after centuries of oppression.

In recognition of this, I invite all my colleagues to join me at the annual Greek Independence Day parade this Sunday on the Danforth in Toronto.

SOCIAL SERVICES IN NIAGARA REGION

Mr. Jeff Burch: It is an honour to speak about two of the incredible local not-for-profit organizations that operate in my riding. This morning I had the pleasure of joining Jon Braithwaite, CEO of the Hope Centre in Welland, and Christine Clark Lafleur, executive director at Port Cares in Port Colborne, for the Feed Ontario breakfast here at the Legislature.

The Hope Centre was created in 1974, when a group of concerned citizens and groups in Welland saw the need for an organization to assist those falling through the gaps in our community. Today, they support their community through their lunch program, food bank, housing stability and other programs.

Port Cares has been in operation since 1986. They’ve helped countless folks through their housing and crisis support programs, along with their employment and learning services. In January of last year, over 1,700 people were registered with the food bank, and that number has now skyrocketed to almost 2,700.

These incredible organizations continue to work industriously despite a growing surge in demand. Speaker, Niagara continues to be hard-hit by the soaring cost of living and rising inflation. People are struggling. We need to support organizations like Port Cares and the Hope Centre by providing them with appropriate, stable, long-term funding and investments in affordable housing initiatives. They deserve nothing less.

I want to thank their leadership, staff, board of directors and volunteers for their incredible work. Thank you.

BRAMPTON ROBOTICS

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Ontario is full of talented and resilient youth who continue to make their teachers, families and communities proud. My constituency of Brampton East is home to a not-for-profit youth organization known as Brampton Robotics. They promote science, technology, engineering, mathematics—commonly known as STEM—through their robotics program. Brampton Robotics works with youth across the region of Peel to engage and develop skills in fields such as computer programming, simple machines and building robotic technology. Using the skills they gain, the group takes part in various competitions ranging from local to international tournaments. On March 4, Brampton Robotics took part in a province-wide competition where out of 80 teams across Ontario, they qualified for two spots in the world cup taking place in Dallas, Texas next month.

I would like to take this moment to acknowledge the youth members of Brampton Robotics and recognize them for their dedication and hard work for this amazing achievement. I would like to recognize Prabvir Grewal, Harsharan Rakhra, Manjot Dola, Aryaen Sharma, Shiven Jaiswal, Mihir Grover, Kedar Vanikar and Arulini Muthu.

Mr. Speaker, it’s vital that we continue to support this province’s youth and provide them with quality education so they can go on and compose a skilled workforce that will advance the technological, political and economic fabric of Ontario.

HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Ms. Catherine Fife: The Ontario Nurses’ Association submitted the following recommendations for Ontario budget 2023—they make sense; they will save lives and money:

“(1) Retain nurses and health care workers by improving their working conditions and show them respect:

“—drop the costly appeal of the Bill 124 Superior Court decision, which struck down the wage-suppression legislation as unconstitutional.

“—bargain in good faith—what a concept.

“—legislate 10 permanent paid sick days for all workers.

“—create more full-time nursing positions to reach a minimum of 70% full-time.

“(2) Bolster the health workforce and plan for the future:

“—launch a robust recruitment strategy to bridge the RN care gap”—Ontario needs at least 24,000 new RNs.

“—increase the number of RN seats at Ontario universities and college stand-alone programs by 10%....”

—invest in nurse-practitioner-led primary care.

“(3) Ensure the safety of the nurses and health care professionals:”

—address violence in the workplace;

“(4) Stop the privatization of Ontario’s health care system...:”

“—cap the percentage usage of agency nurses.”

And finally, fund public health and increase the funding to 100% so that every community across this great province has the same services and resilience to outbreaks.

Save lives. Save money. Invest in the people in our public health care system in budget 2023.

OXFORD FAMILY SKATES

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: March break is an opportunity for children across Oxford to recharge their batteries. They also get to enjoy the last few days of Oxford wintertime activities—like playing in the snow, skiing and tobogganing—before the mercury begins to rise. After a three-year break due to COVID, it was great to hold my annual family skates across my riding. Constituents of all ages came out to show off their skills, learn to skate or just take it easy with some casual laps around the rink. It was great to see so many smiling faces. Afterwards, everyone got to warm up with hot chocolate while enjoying a cookie or two.

1030

On Monday, I held my Ingersoll family skate, where a constituent told me how she calls the town the heart of southwestern Ontario, because it’s no more than an hour’s drive to London, Stratford and Lake Erie.

My skate on Tuesday morning was hosted in the Colin Campbell Community Arena in Tillsonburg, which was named after the former hockey player and coach who was born there. I was off to Norwich that afternoon, where the turnout was beyond our expectations—we had over 100 people show up.

I want to give a big thanks and a shout-out to volunteers Beth, Michael and Jim for helping me set up and run the events. I also want to thank the community centres and arenas for hosting. I look forward to holding my family skates again next year with even larger attendance.

RAMADAN

Mr. John Fraser: Today, across Ontario, Muslim families are preparing for the holy month of Ramadan. This Wednesday, Ramadan will commence after sundown.

Ramadan is one of the five pillars of Islam, as well as faith, prayer, alms and pilgrimage. Ramadan is a time for fasting and sacrifice. It’s a time for prayer, reflection and spiritual growth. And it’s also a time to strengthen ties with family and your community.

I’m looking forward to the many iftars that we’re going to have in Ottawa South. And to our Muslim friends and neighbours: Thank you for giving your children the gift of faith. It will sustain them.

I wish for all a joyous and meaningful month of Ramadan. I know it’s early, but let me be the first to say, Ramadan Mubarak.

MEMBER FOR MISSISSAUGA—ERIN MILLS

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: On February 25, I hosted a community bowling evening in my riding of Mississauga—Erin Mills. We hosted the event at Classic Bowl, one of the largest bowling centres in Canada. It was lots of fun and a great success. We were expecting 150 guests at the event, but we had over 860 people who ended up attending. I would like to thank the community for participating and for their continual support.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, I am proud of what we were able to accomplish these past months at the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, where I served as a parliamentary assistant for the past four years. It’s one of the province’s richest ministries, fostering strong interconnected communities and aligning closely with my own goals of multicultural outreach. My deepest gratitude goes to the minister for his leadership on the portfolio and for giving me the opportunity to work closely with him,

Last week, I was honoured to be appointed as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery. I would like to thank the honourable Premier and the minister for putting their trust in me. In my new role, my goal shall remain—as it has always been—to make life easier for all Ontarians. I am honoured to be entrusted with this responsibility, so help me God.

COMMUNITY LIVING CHATHAM-KENT

Mr. Trevor Jones: I had the honour to spend St. Patty’s Day morning with my friends at Community Living Chatham-Kent to learn more about the Outward Bound program and to see first-hand their investments in technology made possible by a successful Ontario Trillium fund grant.

This organization supports more than 550 people and their families across our municipality. Under the leadership of their executive director, Ron Coristine, this amazing team works to enrich the lives of people with diverse abilities by providing quality services and meaningful, inclusive opportunities. Guided by principles to provide services that are fiscally responsible, person-centred and based on informed choice and positive outcomes, Community Living C-K promotes physical and emotional well-being, flexibility and a deep respect for cultural differences to ensure everyone has the opportunity to thrive, be active and contribute to our community.

Early in the pandemic, Community Living was quick to adopt technology to ensure these strong relationships between staff, clients and families remained intact. Thank

you, Community Living Chatham-Kent, for all the important work you do every day in our communities, and congratulations on your successful grant application.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes our members' statements for this morning.

REPORT, INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that the following document was tabled: an interim report concerning the Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, from the Office of the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario.

WEARING OF SHIRT

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

Mr. Joel Harden: Speaker, I seek, through you, your respect and support to wear a Carleton University Ravens hoodie in the House today, because the women's and men's basketball teams both won the national championship last weekend—first time in 38 years.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa Centre is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to wear the Carleton Ravens sweatshirt. Agreed? Agreed.

INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Okay, we're doing points of order. The next point of order is the member for Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: I seek the unanimous consent of the House that, notwithstanding standing order 67, the time for debate on the supply bill, Bill 77, be allocated as follows: 54 minutes to each of the recognized parties and 12 minutes to the independent members as a group.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'd ask one of the pages to take the document from the member.

The member for Ottawa South is seeking the unanimous consent of the House that, notwithstanding standing order 67, the time for debate on the supply bill, Bill 77, be allocated as follows: 54 minutes to each of the recognized parties and 12 minutes to the independent members as a group. Agreed? Agreed.

INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): And a second point of order by the member for Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: I'm seeking unanimous consent of the House that, notwithstanding standing order 40(e), five minutes be allotted to the independent members as a group to respond to the ministerial statement regarding la Journée internationale de la Francophonie.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa South is seeking the unanimous consent of the House that, notwithstanding standing order 40(e), five

minutes be allotted to the independent members as a group to respond to the ministerial statement regarding la Journée internationale de la Francophonie. D'accord? Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I'm honoured to welcome to Queen's Park today my lovely wife, Kate Bartz, the mother of our daughter, Annie, who's at Queen's Park.

I also want to welcome to Queen's Park today the chair of the Office of the Worker Adviser of the WSIB, a former labour leader and skilled-trades worker, Pauline Niles. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

M. Guy Bourgouin: Il me fait plaisir d'introduire le président de l'AFO, M. Fabien Hébert. Je sais qu'il y a beaucoup d'organismes francophones aujourd'hui ici dans la Chambre. Je voudrais vous souhaiter la bienvenue et aussi une joyeuse Journée internationale de la Francophonie.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I'd like to warmly welcome everyone from Feed Ontario to Queen's Park today, with a special shout-out to Pauline Cripps, who's the administrator of the Guelph Food Bank. Thanks for all the great work that you do.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Today I'd like to introduce and welcome to Queen's Park Linda Tracey, the CEO of Marianhill long-term-care home in Pembroke. She's joining AdvantAge Ontario today for their advocacy day, and they'll be having a reception in the evening, as well. I hope everybody can join. Welcome to Queen's Park, Linda.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: A number of individuals are visiting us today, including Sammi Ho from Friends of Ruby; Candice Cosbert from Nellie's women shelter; and Bee Lee Soh and Daniela Mergarten from the Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness. From Dixon Hall, we have Faisal Ikram, Janet Lambert, Matt Song and Robert MacFarlane. Finally, we have, from the Fred Victor Centre, Eiman Elwidaa. Welcome to Queen's Park.

1040

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: I'd like to welcome McDonald's Canada to the House today. They're here on their advocacy day and if people are interested in some "McFun," they're hosting a reception at 5 o'clock this afternoon in the dining room.

MPP Jill Andrew: [*Inaudible*] visiting Queen's Park today. I'd like to welcome Jasmine Badru, Sierra Lewis, Emily Coussons, Kimberley Grant, Neisha Tyne-Currie, Mayhe Choudhury and Amanda Lazenis, all from Street Haven; along with Cory Roslyn from Elizabeth Fry; Alana Jones from Fred Victor; Chris Snodgrass from Dixon Hall; Eiman Elwidaa from Fred Victor; Kate McNerney from Friends of Ruby; Samantha McDonald from YMCA; Rob Aversa from city of Toronto; Chirysh Dupie from the Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness and Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre. Welcome to your House.

M^{me} Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: Je voudrais souhaiter la bienvenue à et saluer notre jeunesse franco-ontarienne : les élèves de l'école Père-Philippe-Lamarche, Saint-Jean-de-Brébeuf et Monseigneur-de-Charbonnel, et aussi les jeunes représentants de la FEFSO, la Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne, qui sont à l'Assemblée aujourd'hui pour célébrer avec nous. Et aussi, je voudrais saluer M. Fabien Hébert, le président de l'Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario. Bienvenue à Queen's Park.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I would like to introduce Clare Flynn from St. Catharines's Brock University. Clare has been helping out in my QP office for the past couple of weeks.

Also, I have some very honoured guests that I'd like to introduce to the House today: Melodi, and Shawn Bennett, the founder of the Valhalla Project. The Valhalla Project works to assist in training service dogs for first responders and military service members that suffer from PTSD.

I also want to welcome to this House a special guest star today, my good friend Siren. Welcome to your House.

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I want to wish a warm welcome to June Muir, the CEO of the UHC Hub of Opportunities, to Queen's Park today. UHC supports those in our community affected by underemployment and unemployment. Thanks, June, for all your hard work, and delighted to welcome you today as part of the Feed Ontario day of action.

Ms. Jessica Bell: I'd like to recognize Anna Morgan from Ernestine's Shelter, Keith Hambly from Fred Victor, Mina Mawani from Dixon Hall, Brian Harris from St. Felix, Sarah Davis from Cornerstone Housing for Women, and Ray Eskritt from Harmony House. Thank you so much for coming today.

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: I want to welcome Jonas Boyce. It's his first time being a page. He's like my nephew, and I know you will want to pinch his cheeks when you see him, but please don't. Welcome, Jonas.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Assuming there are no objections, I'd like to continue with introduction of visitors.

The member for Sudbury.

MPP Jamie West: I'd like to welcome Dan Xilon, the executive director for the Sudbury Food Bank, to Queen's Park today.

As well, I'd like to welcome Sylvia and Debra, who were the guest speakers at the Feed Ontario breakfast this morning. They did an amazing job, Speaker. Thank you.

Mr. Billy Pang: Today, I'd like to welcome Ms. Abby Katz Starr, president and CEO for Unionville Home Society. Also, today, she is here for AdvantAge Ontario advocacy day. Thank you.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'd like to welcome Samantha Dangubic, Martin Listur and Alejandra Ruiz Vargas from the Fred Victor organization; Nthabiseng Ditshweu and Michelle Bilek from the Peel Alliance to End Homelessness and Peel Poverty; Laverne Blake from Ernestine's; and Gagan Jot Singh from Nellie's. Welcome to your House.

Hon. Jill Dunlop: I would like to introduce a couple of guests, John Maggias and Sarah Pais, and also from my

riding, Chris Peacock, who is here from the Sharing Place Food Bank in Orillia. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Joel Harden: Merci à nos amis de la francophonie pour être ici entre nous.

I also want to recognize Michau van Speyk—great to see you here—from the autism movement, and Sarah Davis from Cornerstone women's shelter. Thank you for what you do in our community.

Mr. Deepak Anand: It is a pleasure to welcome Dwayne Green from Malton Village Long Term Care Centre. Thank you for taking care of those who took care of us. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Bhutila Karpoche: Also joining us in the House today are Sylvia Braithwaite and Inta Dukule from Fred Victor; Kate Chung from Accessible Housing Network; Hyunjin Cho, Monica Amenya and Mathuri Ravindranathan from Ernestine's Women's Shelter; and Margaret Bilson from Nellie's. Welcome.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: It's a great pleasure to welcome a number of constituents from my riding of Simcoe—Grey today: from the Wasaga Beach Ministerial Food Bank, Christina Armstrong, Wendy Blemings and Patricia Miscampbell; from the Ontario Association of Osteopathic Manual Practitioners, I'd like to welcome President Nancy Spence; and it's a great pleasure to welcome Logan Hockley, OPP special constable and Wasaga Beach resident.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: I would like to thank everyone who came here from Feed Ontario for your powerful and important message that you gave to us this morning. In particular, I would like to welcome Volker Kromm and Erin Waddington, who have come here from Thunder Bay. Thank you for all you do.

Hon. Todd Smith: I would also like to welcome the folks from Feed Ontario for all the good work that they're doing and thank them, particularly Matt Brown, who is the chair of the Gleaners Food Bank, doing great work in the Bay of Quinte region.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I'd like to acknowledge and welcome Amy Collins from the Elizabeth Fry Society of Northeastern Ontario. She's here with a number of other individuals who are asking to put affordable housing in the Ontario budget for their lobby day. I'd like to welcome Nadine Sookermany from Fife House, as well as her colleague Casey Sabawi.

We are also joined by a number of individuals from Street Haven, a fantastic organization in my community—they are led here by Siu Mee Cheng, who is executive director: Bobbi Gunn, Marcie Pekar, Charmaine Clark, Beth Edward, Nicola Andrews, Meesha Husbands, Jennifer McTaggart, Shanna Humphreys—and I want to extend a very special welcome to Sarah Crosby, who is here with her six-week-old daughter.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): There continue to be members on both sides of the House who want to introduce their guests. I'll continue, unless there's some objection.

The member for Perth—Wellington.

Mr. Matthew Rae: I'm pleased to rise to welcome Steve Harrison, CEO of Tri-County Mennonite Homes, who is here as part of AdvantAge Ontario's advocacy day.

I'd also like to introduce Steve and Vivi Goettler from my riding of Perth–Wellington, owners of Goettler fine furniture. They are also the proud parents of George Goettler, who many of us in this place know. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. John Vanthof: I'd like to welcome Paul Chatelain. He's the CEO of the MICs Group of hospitals and long-term care, and he's here with AdvantAge.

Ms. Natalie Pierre: I'd like to welcome Robin Bailey, executive director from the Burlington Food Bank. Welcome to Queen's Park.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: I would like to welcome members of Therapeutic Recreation Ontario: Karen Wall, Melissa Enmore, Kate Dupuis and Divijaa Sahni. Thank you for being here.

Mr. John Jordan: I want to thank and welcome members from AdvantAge Ontario and thank them for all their hard work in long-term care: Steven Harrison, Carey Duncan, Linda Tracey, Bill Krever, Megan Garland, Dwayne Green, Abby Katz Starr, Sue Graham-Nutter, Amy Porteous, Paul Chatelain and Lisa Levin. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Wayne Gates: It's an honour today to welcome page Claire Fish from my beautiful riding of Niagara Falls. I had the opportunity to meet her parents. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It's an honour to welcome former MP for London North Centre, Glen Pearson, and his partner, Jane Roy, as part of the Feed Ontario breakfast. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Chris Glover: I'd like to welcome, from Feed Ontario, from the Ottawa Food Bank, Alexandra; from the Food Bank of Waterloo Region, Valerie and Kimberley; from the Table Community Food Centre, Deborah Anne and Sylvia; from the Mississauga Food Bank, Christie and Meghan; from the Brockville and Area Food Bank, JoAnne; from the Burlington Food Bank, Robin; from the Daily Bread Food Bank, Talia; and from Feed Ontario, Alison, Amanda, Andrea, Ashley, Carolyn, Erin, Ervin, Jakob, Lara, Sarah Adelaide and Shanade. Thank you all so much for being here and for all of the work you do.

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Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'd like to welcome Mike Cartan, who is here today as part of the Feed Ontario delegation and who is the father of my constituency assistant, Leah Cartan. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes our introduction of visitors for this morning.

QUESTION PERIOD

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: Good morning. Bonjour, monsieur le Président. Premièrement, j'aimerais souhaiter une bonne Journée internationale de la Francophonie à toutes et à tous.

Speaker, the Premier likes to say the Integrity Commissioner cleared him 1,000% over his greenbelt grab. But do you know what the Premier won't say? Whether or not he told the commissioner that developers were charged admission to the stag-and-doe.

The commissioner has said that his clearance at the time was "only as good as the information provided to me by the member or their staff."

My question is to the Premier: Did he disclose all of the details about these events to the Integrity Commissioner?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: The Premier has been working with the commissioner on this, and the commissioner will continue his review of that. At the same time, we are going to continue to focus on the things that Ontarians have asked us to focus on, and that includes ensuring that we build more homes across the province of Ontario, ensuring that we continue to make important investments, like the investment that we saw with Volkswagen.

I want to take a moment to congratulate the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade and the Premier, who have brought yet another important investment to the province of Ontario which will see thousands of jobs coming to the province of Ontario. This is a province that is moving in the right direction. We are one of the leading jurisdictions when it comes to the automotive manufacturing of tomorrow and when it comes to batteries. It is a whole-of-government approach, which includes the Minister of Mines, the Minister of Energy, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the finance minister, the labour minister, the education minister and the Solicitor General, and all of government working—

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

The supplementary question.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I don't know; maybe the House leader didn't hear my question, because I was asking about the Ford family stag-and-doe and the Integrity Commissioner's investigation. By the way, Speaker, there is so much evidence mounting that the Integrity Commissioner told us he can't get to it all at once because he's so busy summoning witnesses.

Expert after expert has proven that we have more than enough land to build affordable homes for people without paving over the greenbelt for overpriced luxury mansions. But this government doesn't like experts when they get in the way. Last week, we learned that this government quietly muzzled the Greenbelt Council so they couldn't speak out against the Premier's land grab.

My next question to the Premier is, what was his government so afraid the council would say?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to reply.

Hon. Steve Clark: We appreciate the work of all of our members on all of our committees that affect the Ministry of Municipal Affairs—all of the stakeholders, including those members of the Greenbelt Council. For months, I attended those meetings and I worked collaboratively with the council and will continue to do so as we move forward.

But again, the Leader of the Opposition is fundamentally not talking about the problem in this province. The problem in our province is there are not enough homes to meet people's needs. There is a generation of sons, daughters, grandsons and granddaughters that have no path to home ownership. New Democrats will always stand against that. This government will continue to put plans, bills, regulations in place that get shovels in the ground. That's our commitment to the next generation.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: The problem is this government: Five years later, and life is less affordable in this province under this government's watch.

In 2018, this Premier promised Ontario that he would never touch the greenbelt. He swore up and down that he would protect it. Conservative promise made; Conservative promise broken.

Now we risk losing vital farmland, a massive carbon sink and a key protection against flooding, all so that a few well-connected insiders can make a profit.

Concerned Ontarians, including those of us in the official opposition, have called on the federal government to intervene. So my question is to the Premier: Will his government do the right thing and stop this unnecessary greenbelt grab, or do we need to wait for the feds to protect the land that he won't?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: This must be the same federal government that promised in 2015 that they would stop the Pickering airport and return that back to farmers, and we still haven't seen that promise kept by the federal government.

This is the same, of course, Liberal and NDP coalition that ripped thousands of acres away from farmers in the Rouge National Urban Park, Mr. Speaker. When we were bringing the Rouge National Urban Park federally, they wanted to take farmers off the land—kick them off—and they wanted to reforest that entire area. In fact, the previous Liberal government evicted a generational farmer so they could create a park that, 15 years later, only recently opened. That is the record of the opposition.

We are going to continue to ensure that the people of the province of Ontario have access to homes, Mr. Speaker. Generations have come to this province with the dream of home ownership, and, because of the work we're doing, thousands and millions more are coming because they know they have the hope of a job. Mr. Speaker, with us they're going to have their first home.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, if you want to talk about housing, let's talk about how well this government's plan on housing has been going. It is harder than ever to find an affordable place to live in this province, and homelessness is at a record high.

In Toronto, on average, three unhoused people died every week last year—three a week. That's 187 lives lost because this government didn't have the plan in place to ensure they had a safe and stable place to live. Speaker, if you're homeless in Toronto, your life expectancy is now half that of a housed person. That is not normal.

My question is to the Premier. Will he bring back real rent control and invest urgently in the supportive housing we need to help prevent even one more life from being lost?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Steve Clark: There's a lot to unpack there, Speaker, and I want to remind Ontarians that every single time this government has brought forward progressive housing policy, one thing has happened: New Democrats have voted against it—every single time. Even Ontario's Big City Mayors have joined us in asking the federal government to pay our fair share. There's one party—one party—that won't join our government in support of that, and that's New Democrats.

In fact, Speaker, let's lay it on the table. New Democrats want to tax affordable and non-profit housing. That's what they continue to stand up for. On this side of the House—and our members in front of me—our government will continue to believe that non-profit and affordable housing—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): There was an unparliamentary remark. I don't know who said it. If it happens again—it had better not.

The Leader of the Opposition.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, New Democrats will always stand up for truly affordable places to live in this province. And this government should be ashamed for that response. Thirty-two per cent fewer housing starts last year in this province—that's your record.

And it's not just Toronto, Speaker; from Essex to Milton to Kanata to Timmins, we now have a homelessness crisis in every corner of this province.

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario points to this Conservative government's terrible policy and chronic underinvestment. Why is the government sitting on \$6.4 billion while people are falling into desperation without safe and stable homes to live in?

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, there are two people that I want to talk about right now—to steal a phrase from the Premier, two true champions for municipal support and for support for housing: That's Premier Doug Ford, who led the way with the federal negotiations and provided \$4 billion to support our municipalities; and the other, Speaker, is our finance minister, the Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy, who has consistently taken our message to the Deputy Prime Minister in those negotiations around funding.

I'm proud to be with a government that continues to stand up for municipalities during the pandemic, that continues to increase the Homelessness Prevention Program that New Democrats voted against, the social

services relief fund increase that New Democrats voted against.

1100

It's pretty rich coming from the Leader of the Opposition when she says one thing, but then when it's time to vote, we all know what's going to happen: New Democrats always vote no, every single time.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: This government can give each other as many gold stars as they like, but I would like to ask them to listen to the people in the galleries today, who are representing the folks that are experiencing this right now. We know they know that this Conservative government is failing Ontarians when it comes to affordable housing. Their inaction on homelessness isn't just a moral crisis; it is an economic failure. It is costing every one of us more in emergency room visits, in shelter services, in lost economic participation. Speaker, this government has abandoned its goal of ending chronic homelessness by 2025.

My question to the Premier is, will he recommit to this goal and invest the funds required to get it done?

Hon. Steve Clark: The only people who are committed to getting it done are the Ontario PC party. Let's remember, when we increased the Homelessness Prevention Program, they did not support that. New Democrats did not support that. When we created the by-name lists, which the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness recognizes is fundamental to being able to identify and to be able to deal with the homelessness problem in our country, they did not support that. New Democrats said no. We continue to provide the necessary dollars.

I've said this in the House, and Minister Smith was the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services when we made that first Social Services Relief Fund announcement right here in the Legislature three days after the pandemic was called. Those dollars in our most vulnerable helped food banks, helped PPE, made sure that our most vulnerable in the middle of that pandemic were supported.

We're going to continue to work with our partners, but we need the federal government and we need New Democrats to support us when we ask—

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

The next question.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms. Jessica Bell: My question is to the Premier. Last week, the city of Toronto's long-awaited housing plan came out. In that report, it said that the housing plan is at "high risk" because of this government's controversial Bill 23. Toronto is now on track to lose \$1.2 billion in development fee revenue earmarked just for shelter space and affordable housing. They're losing that revenue at a time when Toronto's housing affordability and homelessness crisis is getting worse.

Minister, what exactly is your plan to help Toronto solve the housing affordability and homelessness crisis?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Steve Clark: You know, the NDP, Speaker, are a party that supports taxing affordable housing. They're a party that supports taxing non-profit housing. The narrative that that member continues to put forward is not correct. The municipalities will still be able to charge development charges—that's a given.

But, again, what we're talking about is affordable housing, non-profit housing. I spent last week touring developments that would ultimately save hundreds of thousands of dollars to create more housing opportunities for our most vulnerable. This is the type of housing that we want to incent, and that's why we're providing that development charge relief. So for the member to say what she just said in the House, I invite her to say it outside.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question: the member for Scarborough Southwest.

Ms. Doly Begum: Back to the Premier: Mr. Pranesh Das, a single parent who has been living in a basement apartment for a decade with his adult son and teenage daughter, has been waiting since 2014 to get a response on their RGI application with TCHC. His children grew up, started high school and university, his wife passed away, all while being stuck on a wait-list and being underhoused. This family is losing hope. I really hope that the minister won't give me his talking points or how he's going to rip apart the greenbelt.

My question is: With the budget day coming up, will this government financially commit to increase the stock of deeply affordable housing and social housing for all Ontarians like Mr. Pranesh Das?

Hon. Steve Clark: I guess I could ask the member opposite the same question. When we have increased dollars in the past, you didn't support that.

We'll take your question at face value. We'll reach out to Toronto Community Housing, which has all the operational decision-making for your constituent. But the fact of the matter is this: The NDP supports taxing affordable housing. They support increased taxes for affordable housing. They support increased tax on non-profit housing.

We need to build more non-profit housing for Toronto Community Housing. We need all 47 service managers and our two Indigenous program administrators to work with us to get shovels in the ground faster. They're committed to doing that. But again, Speaker, there's one partner that's on the sidelines, and that's the NDP.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Rob Flack: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. For years, hundreds of thousands of auto and manufacturing jobs were chased out of our province by the previous Liberal government, leaving Ontario unprepared for the electric-vehicle revolution. Simply put, Ontario was in no

position to build the cars of the future. That's why our government must take aggressive action to rebuild our province's auto sector and attract investment, all while growing the economy and creating good paying jobs.

Last week, we were absolutely thrilled to hear the historic investment announcement from Volkswagen in my riding of Elgin–Middlesex–London. Can the minister please provide more information about this game-changing—in fact, generational-changing—investment and what it means for this province?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you to the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London for his important role in bringing Volkswagen to his riding of St. Thomas. Rob, you did spectacular work.

Last week, we landed an historic investment from Europe's largest automaker: This is Volkswagen's first overseas EV battery manufacturing plant, right here in Ontario. Speaker, they had sites all over the globe to choose from, but they selected Ontario because they saw that we are transforming Ontario's automotive supply chain to build the cars of the future. They saw that we lowered the cost of doing business in Ontario by \$7 billion annually, and that brought \$17 billion in auto investment. They saw that we're building an EV auto sector, and they wanted to be an important part of that. This Legislature says, "Welcome, Volkswagen."

Interjections.

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

Restart the clock. Supplementary question.

Mr. Rob Flack: Thank you to the minister for his response. It's truly spectacular to see the commitment and hard work of our government pay off in the form of attracting significant investment to this province. And thank you to the leadership of the Premier and this minister, who I know worked diligently and hard and got this job done. As a competitive jurisdiction, we are now ready and easier to do business and invest and build, not only in Elgin–Middlesex–London but throughout the province.

Securing a major deal such as Volkswagen's decision to pick Ontario—as he says, over 40 sites in North America that we competed against—for this electric-vehicle battery plant didn't happen by accident. Clearly, much planning, effort and co-operation took place in advance to get to this point.

Speaker, can the minister please elaborate on what steps were taken to promote Ontario as a favourable destination for Volkswagen and how he got the job done?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: This game-changing investment from Volkswagen has been almost a year in the making: dozens of meetings beginning last April; a sales mission to Volkswagen in Germany in October; countless face-to-face meetings between our teams, many of them weekend-long marathons; and four meetings with Premier Ford. As we all know, there is no better deal closer in Ontario than Premier Doug Ford. All of this amounted to one of the biggest investments in the province's history.

1110

From our talented workforce, our clean energy, to Ontario's comprehensive EV ecosystem, our abundance

of critical minerals, our message has been clear: Ontario has everything companies need to succeed.

Speaker, this investment is a major vote of confidence in Ontario's position as the global EV supplier to the world.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: My constituent Sarah has been forced into homelessness with her six-week-old infant. Sarah is trying desperately to find a space in a shelter—any space. She has been calling shelters consistently for weeks and still cannot get placed, not even with a newborn.

Sarah is here at Queen's Park today to watch this debate. She wants the Premier to know that she will lose her child if she does not have access to safe shelter and housing for baby Mia.

Premier, where will Sarah and her baby, Mia, be sleeping tonight? Will his budget deliver the money for shelters and real affordable housing? Where will she go? When can she get a permanent home? Can she get one by the end of this week?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Thank you very much for the question.

I would certainly be happy to meet with the member's constituent.

It is for Sarah and for others across the province that we are working so hard to ensure that we can bring jobs and opportunity to the province of Ontario. It is why the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has been working so hard to bring more housing to Ontario. That includes affordable housing, and if you look across the government, what the Minister of Education did to ensure that we had the best child care deal in the country, because we want Sarah and we want people in communities across this province to not only have hope today but hope for tomorrow, so that they can have a job, they can have opportunity, they can live in a safe province of Ontario—one that is booming. That is exactly what we're doing, whether it's the broadband infrastructure investments we're making, investments that we're making in housing across the province of Ontario, and why we are working so hard with our partners in the municipal government to ensure that, especially, purpose-based rentals and—

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

The supplementary question: the member for Windsor West.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: To the minister: In five years of Conservative government, housing insecurity and homelessness have increased, food insecurity and food bank use have skyrocketed. Meanwhile, the minister just stood over there and sang the praises of his government. I don't think that's something you should be proud of.

My question is to the Premier.

In the first quarter of 2023, 51 families in my riding were supported by the Welcome Centre Shelter for

Women. Of the 166 total family members, 61% of them were children or youth. Executive director Lady Laforet says the biggest predictor of our future homeless population is the children accessing shelters today. Shelters continue to hear announcements of record funding increases to supports for children and youth who have experienced violence and who are entering the shelter system, but the front lines aren't seeing it. In the 20 years that Lady has worked in the system, she hasn't seen a single cost-of-living increase to the Homelessness Prevention Program.

My question is this: When will the Premier and his Conservative government stop the photo ops and empty funding announcements and actually do something to end the cycle of homelessness and provide these families with the supports they need?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Steve Clark: I just want to take this opportunity to correct the member. This government, when it consolidated its three homelessness programs into the Homelessness Prevention Program, not only took those dollars but added an additional \$25 million, which was distributed to our 47 service managers. We also made a significant investment to our Indigenous program administrators by adding additional supportive housing in the Indigenous Supportive Housing Program. What the member is talking about simply is not true. The dollars show that this government continues to increase spending—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to caution the member on his language.

The next question.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Rob Flack: My question, once again, is to the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade.

As we know, the investment from Volkswagen represents a truly significant deal by attracting a new major global automotive manufacturer to our province. But landing this highly competitive—and we've talked about that—sought-after investment required support from many offices and many teams. Speaker, will the minister please elaborate on how broader government efforts contributed to last week's announcement?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Securing this game-changing Volkswagen investment was an all-of-government effort. Thank you to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing for getting the land under one jurisdiction; the Ministry of Infrastructure for the land assembly; the Ministry of Finance and the Treasury Board for providing the resources to make this deal happen; the Ministry of Energy, making sure we have the clean and adequate energy to run this plant; the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs for their valuable role in our duty to consult; the Ministry of the Environment and Ministry of Natural Resources—both making certain that all permits are defined and

progressing. Many more, Speaker, will come in the supplementary, but it's obvious: This was a whole-of-government team working together to make this deal happen.

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

Mr. Rob Flack: Thank you to the minister for his answer. It's great to hear that this was truly a team effort and resulted in Ontario securing this historic investment.

I also want to thank our municipal partners, who stepped up and showed tremendous leadership as part of this process securing a major investment from Volkswagen. Whether it was St. Thomas, Central Elgin, all of Elgin county or, in fact, the city of London, they all did a wonderful job in supporting the efforts.

Unfortunately, in previous years my riding and others in southwestern Ontario were associated with job losses in manufacturing. This investment sends a strong signal that our community and all of southwestern Ontario is back in business. Without a doubt, many members of this government helped to bring this good news last week to fruition. Speaker, will the minister continue to elaborate on the efforts and successes we had in the last week?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, as mentioned, it is an all-of-government effort. Thanks to the Ministry of Transportation providing plans to access this exciting new development; the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Colleges and Universities for their plan to train the people who will work at this new plant; the Ministry of Mines to promote our critical minerals; the Ministry of the Solicitor General, as our bid needed a plan for fire and safety for this expansion; the Ministry of Education for their child care plans; the Minister of the Attorney General for their work in crafting our agreements.

Thank you to every ministry here—red tape, ServiceOntario, agriculture, women's economic opportunity, children's services, health, mental health, long-term care, citizenship, seniors, tourism. Speaker, every single minister was consulted and contributed at the cabinet table and made this historic deal happen.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Chris Glover: Six hundred thousand people accessed Feed Ontario food banks last year. Two thirds of the people who access food banks are on Ontario disability support or Ontario Works. The government has left food banks to deal with our homelessness and hunger crises because they have refused to double ODSP and OW. Will this government do what is right and double ODSP and Ontario Works to ensure that food banks are not left to deal with the homelessness and hunger crises in this province?

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

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Our government is working across ministries to create the supports and implement the supports that people need when they're at their most vulnerable, and that's exactly why, during COVID, we invested \$1 billion in the Social Services Relief Fund. It's

why we also have been investing \$83 million through the Ontario Trillium Foundation to provide grants to help eligible non-profit organizations, including food banks, recover and continue to deliver vital programs.

As part of Ontario's effort to support children, youth and families, we've also provided millions of dollars in funding to Feed Ontario. That funding assisted Feed Ontario in producing and distributing pre-packaged hampers and supporting the great work that food banks do across the province. The Student Nutrition Program is another example of another ministry supporting the exact needs that the member opposite described. We will continue to do this important work.

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

Mr. Chris Glover: Mr. Speaker, the reliance on food banks continues to grow under this government, and that's something that you should be ashamed of.

Deborah, who is in the House today, was cut off ODSP support when she turned 65. Now her rent, which is geared to income, has increased, and she's lost most of her health benefits. This has left her in an even more precarious situation than when she was on ODSP. She has no option but to go to a food bank for support.

1120

Feed Ontario has become increasingly concerned that this government will consider federal CPP benefits as a subsidy to ODSP. Will this government commit to doubling ODSP and Ontario Works and not cutting off people like Deborah when they turn 65?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: The truth is that our government is providing more for social assistance than any government in the history of this province. We have increased ODSP in an amount that has not been done for decades. We have increased the earnings exemption threshold by 400% to allow more people to be able to work and retain more of the dollars that they need to live in dignity. We've been working with the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the member for Spadina–Fort York to withdraw.

Mr. Chris Glover: I'll withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Children, Community and Social Services has a few more seconds to reply.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you, Speaker.

We have been working across ministries to make sure that we develop the programs that are necessary to support people. ODSP is one program. As you've heard, the food bank programs are there as well. This is something that is taken in combination with other programs that are available, and I'm very proud to say that our government—

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

The next question.

NATURAL GAS WELLS

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. The Globe and Mail recently published a report about gas wells in Ontario, the first petroleum-producing province. While today there is a responsible natural gas industry, there is a problem with legacy dormant wells, and southwestern Ontario is ground central.

In Norfolk county alone, there are 2,634 dormant wells, one of which has been in the news for years. The county lacks the expertise to remedy or monitor the situation. One more problem well could financially destroy the municipality. We know, in Wheatley, the issue was acute, with an explosion, and experts predict it's just a matter of time until another explosion occurs. Southwestern Ontario is literally a powder keg ready to blow. Where will it be: Chatham-Kent, Lambton, Elgin, Norfolk?

Speaker, to the minister: What is the ministry's plan to address legacy wells in Ontario?

Hon. Graydon Smith: I want to ensure this House that we are doing everything we can to protect the safety of Ontario's people, population and communities, especially in southwestern Ontario.

I had a meeting with Mayor Martin from Norfolk at the ROMA conference in January, and she came to say thank you for the investment that this government has made in a well that was problematic in their community. The conversation went on, and we had a great talk about what we can do.

We are continuing to work on legacy oil and gas wells and continuing to have conversations to invoke a strategy that will make a meaningful difference, but absent is federal dollars that have gone to other jurisdictions. In 2020 and in 2022, my office wrote the federal government and asked that Ontario be made a partner and to have these dollars available to us, and we continue to wait for a response to that to help with our plans here in Ontario.

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

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: Thank you to the minister for his response. I want to be clear, and I want to differentiate between abandoned wells and private gas wells rural landowners use as their source of power: The latter group are not a problem, but yet they received a letter stating there will be no extension to any licensed well after September 2032.

Speaker, I hope the ministry can find a more positive way forward for my farmers and farm families, especially in Haldimand county, who rely on these wells. But at the same time, the ministry must take action on legacy wells.

A recent McGill University study looked at abandoned wells, testing levels of hydrogen sulphide and methane. The study concluded the methane levels were underestimated. Methane is a greenhouse gas, and hydrogen sulfide can be toxic. This problem is bigger than the province of Ontario, and I'm heartened to hear, Speaker, that the minister is putting pressure on the federal government. I'm asking what additional pressure the ministry will put

on the federal government to ward off a pending environmental and catastrophic disaster.

Hon. Graydon Smith: Thank you again for the question from the member opposite. Again, we will continue to ask the federal government for support, but as we go through this process, I think it's important to also know that we will be in communities in southwestern Ontario this spring, at important listening sessions to hear from communities, to hear from people that are directly affected by this problem. Again, we are taking this very seriously and developing a strategy that will benefit Ontarians, especially those in southwestern Ontario, in the future.

I think it's really also important to note that for the folks in Wheatley, who have been through a devastating and difficult time, this government has been there every step of the way. Premier Ford was there for them every step of the way, and my visit in October, to be able to speak with homeowners, business owners and officials—as I said, we would use this as a learning experience. We mean that and we are going to implement that in the solutions going forward.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. It was my pleasure to welcome the minister to my riding last week as we visited the United Mennonite Home in Vineland. Walter Sguazzin and the team at United Mennonite Home offer exceptional care, long-term care, supportive housing and independent living for seniors in my community. We reviewed their plans to expand and offer more supportive and affordable housing for seniors in Niagara.

Now, I know our government's recent update to development charges will open new opportunities for organizations like United Mennonite Home, and I'm wondering if the minister could speak a little bit about how these changes will make it easier for not-for-profits to build affordable housing and deliver critical services to vulnerable Ontarians, such as those in my riding who are looking forward to these investments continuing to be made.

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, I want to thank the member for Niagara West for the great tour that we had in his riding last week. You sure know what a great job the member is doing when you spend some time in their riding, meeting with their constituents.

I've said it many times—this morning, actually in the House—that our government does not believe that non-profit and affordable housing providers should be charged huge, unsustainable fees when looking to build affordable housing for vulnerable Ontarians. That's why, through More Homes, Built Faster, Bill 23, our government is eliminating development charges for affordable, non-profit and select attainable housing.

I'm hearing from housing providers from all corners of the province about the immediate and the positive impacts that these changes are having, with affordable and non-profit housing providers now being able to reinvest these savings into their projects and create more opportunities

for their residents. I'll have more to say in the supplementary.

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

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: For too long, governments did nothing, leading to a crisis in affordable housing in the province of Ontario, but our government took decisive action under the leadership of this minister and Premier Ford to deliver on a mandate to build 1.5 million homes here in the province of Ontario.

We know from the Ontario Housing Affordability Task Force that we've seen some municipalities raise development charges by some 900% over the last 20 years, a completely ridiculous number. Our government must urgently respond to their recommendations and implement measures which will address the housing supply crisis and get more homes built faster.

At a time when Ontarians are struggling with a rising cost of living, we know that the fees that are put onto these builds, especially not-for-profits and affordable housing, only push the dream of homeownership further out of reach for so many and harm some of the most vulnerable, including our seniors. Speaker, could the minister please elaborate to the House what our government is doing to incentivize more affordable housing here in the province of Ontario and in my riding?

Hon. Steve Clark: I'm proud of the changes our government has made, and I'm thrilled to see that shovels are getting in the ground. The project that we toured was a tremendous campus of care that United Mennonite Home was working on. In fact, the savings that they would receive because of Bill 23 was \$1.6 million, very significant dollars to help that project become shovel-ready.

Earlier that week, with the member for Whitby, I toured a Habitat for Humanity build, along with the Durham Region Non-Profit Housing Corp.'s new affordable housing that they hope they will open later this year. Their savings was over \$500,000 on that affordable housing project.

Our government is committed to lower the cost of housing, to get shovels in the ground faster and to support some of the great non-profits like Habitat and like United Mennonite Home. Thanks for the question.

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

FRENCH-LANGUAGE SERVICES

M. Guy Bourgouin: Ma question est pour le premier ministre.

Lors des consultations prébudgétaires, mon collègue le député de Timiskaming–Cochrane a demandé au président de l'assemblée de la francophonie, M. Fabien Hébert, de nous dresser un portrait et une évaluation des services de santé en français depuis la réforme de 2019 et de comment les initiatives du ministère de la Santé, du ministère des Soins de longue durée et de Santé Ontario se transposent en résultats pour les services aux patients francophones. Sa réponse? Il ne savait pas parce qu'il n'y a pas d'indicateurs de performance.

1130

Alors, ma question pour le premier ministre : pouvez-vous nous dire quels sont les résultats de cette réforme pour la santé des francophones et à quels indicateurs vous vous fiez pour en tirer un portrait juste?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: You know, it is really important that when we look at the expansions that we are doing with Bill 60, we also understand where the needs and the areas of expansion have to happen. Of course, one of those processes for assessment will be how we can better serve the francophone community in the province of Ontario. That is why I am so excited about Bill 60, because we now have a formalized process that ensures where the needs are in the community, close to community, will be part of the application approval process. And it will ensure, to the member's point, that when we are looking for areas that have traditionally not been served as well and perhaps have longer wait-lists, we now have a process through Bill 60, if passed, to ensure that we can expand those surgical community and diagnostic areas.

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

M. Guy Bourgouin: Merci pour la réponse de la ministre, mais on a entendu beaucoup de paroles et, encore, le problème persiste, parce que nous avons toujours les mêmes choses qui arrivent. Les commettants qui viennent à nos bureaux, ils se plaignent toujours—des plaintes à cause de manque de services en français.

Alors, je vous re-pose la même question : comment est-ce que le ministère fait pour recueillir les données et répondre aux besoins de la communauté franco-ontarienne?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the Minister of Francophone Affairs.

L'hon. Caroline Mulroney: Je remercie le député de l'opposition pour sa question.

Notre gouvernement prend très au sérieux les services en français en santé, en éducation, et à travers les services du gouvernement. Nous avons modernisé pour la première fois la Loi sur les services en français dans la province de l'Ontario—la première fois depuis que la loi a été promulguée en 1986. Le parti de l'opposition a voté contre la modernisation de la loi sur les services, et c'est vraiment quelque chose de très décevant parce que c'est vraiment un projet de loi de base pour les francophones en Ontario.

Monsieur le Président, en ce qui concerne les soins de santé, je travaille en étroite collaboration avec ma collègue la ministre de la Santé, et j'ai eu la chance aussi de parler à l'AFO la semaine dernière concernant leurs recommandations pour la modernisation de la loi et la provision des services en français. On va continuer à travailler avec la communauté et avec le ministère de la Santé.

SKILLS TRAINING

Mr. Matthew Rae: My question is to the Minister of Education. I also want to personally thank him for his advice and friendship in our time working together.

Ontario's population is growing rapidly. Our government is ensuring that we're building houses, but we also must ensure that we're providing the next generation of Ontario students with the skills they need to succeed. For over a decade and a half, the previous Liberal government neglected to prepare our students for the jobs of tomorrow that are absolutely required to build and sustain Ontario. In the construction sector alone, we know we will need 70,000 workers by 2027 to meet our province's growing infrastructure needs. New knowledge and skills must be taught to our students so that they will be successfully prepared to fill the jobs that are so desperately needed.

Can the minister please explain how our government is equipping our students for lifelong careers that will build Ontario for generations to come?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Allow me to take a moment to thank the member from Perth–Wellington for his exceptional leadership in the ministry and in this province. He has moved the yardstick forward on a major file of modernizing our curriculum, because we want our young people to learn the life and job skills that have been missing in the curriculum under the former Liberals.

For a decade of inaction, while the economy changed around the world, Ontario's students were learning a stagnant curriculum, disconnected from the job skills necessary. Because of our government and our leadership, we are now ensuring a modern curriculum in math, in science, in computer sciences, in technology. Right across the STEM curricula, everything has been modernized with an emphasis on mandatory learning on financial literacy and on life skills. Things like learning about taxation and about credit and debt, about learning how to save for a home—these are real skills that are necessary that are now infused. In addition to hiring the best educators based on their merit, together we're giving these kids their best fight of—

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

The supplementary question.

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you to the minister for that response. It's certainly encouraging to hear about the leadership our government is demonstrating by encouraging skilled trades careers for our young people, along with investments to deliver on that commitment. However, these efforts will not pay dividends if our students are not connected with the skills or opportunities they need to pursue a career in the skilled trades field. Given the reality that one in five jobs by 2026 will be in the skill trades, it will take an all-hands-on-deck approach to meet the need in our society.

Speaker, can the minister please explain what actions our government is taking to ensure that our students are exposed to the opportunities that are available in the skilled trades and other technology fields?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: It's a critical question. Of course we know there's hundreds of thousands of skilled labour shortages today in our economy. Because of the leadership of the Minister of Economic Development and the Premier, we have more investments, including Volkswagen, a historic investment in Ontario and a sign of confidence in our future.

Mr. Speaker, to ensure those companies can fill their workplaces with skilled labour, we're ensuring for the first time, starting in September 2024, that every student in grade 9 or 10 will now be required to take a technological education course, opening up their horizons and their opportunities to these good-paying jobs and meaningful careers where they exist.

Mr. Speaker, there are a wide variety of options for young people, and most especially, as the minister of social and economic opportunities for women had said just weeks ago, this is going to create a greater pathway for more women to enter the trades, enter tech and get the best-paying jobs in this economy.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question is to the Premier. If you were a resident of a private, for-profit long-term-care home in Ontario during the pandemic, you were nearly twice as likely to die from COVID-19 as in a not-for-profit home. But this government is helping for-profit long-term care to expand even after 5,400 people died. Extendicare announced an agreement to buy Revera's shares in 18 homes and manage the remaining 31, pending the approval of this government.

My question to the minister is simple. Why would this government allow one of the worst actors in long-term care to get more control of and make more profits from this sector?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, I guess I shouldn't be surprised by that question because the member opposite has voted against every single initiative that we've put in place to improve long-term care across the province of Ontario.

Just Friday, colleagues, I was at the Reka Centre in Toronto, a wonderful not-for-profit, announcing an additional \$1.2 billion to increase the level of care to three hours and 43 minutes across the province of Ontario. Ironically, that member and that party voted against that investment, Mr. Speaker.

Now, we've also brought in, through the Fixing Long-Term Care Act, the toughest—the toughest—regulations across the province and across this country. We've also doubled the amount of inspectors to have the highest inspector-to-home ratio not just in Canada, but in North America. All that time, that member and that party voted against it, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: This government can ramble about their investments but doesn't answer the question. Private, for-profit homes—

Interjections.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Why don't you guys listen? Private, for-profit homes had—and I want you to listen here—78% more COVID deaths than non-profit homes. Those are our parents, our grandparents, our moms, our dads, our brothers and sisters. Extendicare had one of the

highest death rates during the pandemic, and now they will own one in every five homes in Ontario.

What will it take for this Conservative government to start caring for the well-being of people in long-term-care homes above corporate profits and friends and donors, and protect and stop the dying in long-term-care homes? Some 5,400 died, most in for-profit homes.

1140

Hon. Paul Calandra: Again, Mr. Speaker, let's look at what the opposition want us to do. They want us to nationalize long-term care. They want us to spend billions of dollars buying real estate. Instead, what we're going to do is put the toughest regulations in North America, which we've done; back that up with the highest inspector-to-home ratio in North America, which we've done; and increase the level of care to four hours, which we are doing—this year an additional \$1.2 billion, next year an additional \$1.8 billion, which we are doing.

We're going to hire 27,000 additional health care workers for long-term care alone and we're making sure that we're getting the homes built, because the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is giving me MZO's so that I can get those homes built.

The Minister of Colleges and Universities is training PSW's and nurses to ensure that we can get it done.

The Minister of Labour is training the people who are building these homes across Ontario.

We're building homes and staffing them, we're giving them the highest level of care—something that they have voted against every single time.

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

M. Stéphane Sarrazin: Ma question s'adresse à la ministre des Affaires francophones.

Aujourd'hui, c'est la Journée internationale de la Francophonie; mars étant le Mois de la Francophonie. La communauté francophone de l'Ontario est essentielle au succès social et économique de notre province. Je suis fier de mon héritage francophone et fier de servir la communauté francophone de ma circonscription de Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

Notre gouvernement doit soutenir les entreprises et les organismes qui offrent des services en français et desservent les francophones. Mes électeurs m'ont dit à quel point l'inflation élevée et l'incertitude économique mondiale ont eu un impact sur leurs activités commerciales.

Monsieur le Président, la ministre peut-elle dire à la Chambre comment notre gouvernement appuie les communautés francophones de ma circonscription et de l'ensemble de la province?

L'hon. Caroline Mulroney: Je remercie mon collègue pour son excellente question.

Le Programme d'appui à la francophonie ontarienne, le PAFO, est un programme phare du ministère des Affaires francophones, dans lequel notre gouvernement investit 2 millions de dollars par année. Ce programme vient en appui à la francophonie ontarienne en offrant un soutien financier à des projets qui visent à : renforcer la capacité

des organismes et des entreprises à offrir des produits et des services aux francophones de la province; promouvoir le recrutement de personnel francophone bilingue; et créer des occasions pour célébrer la francophonie en Ontario.

En ce Mois de la Francophonie, je suis heureuse de lancer l'édition 2023-2024 du programme. Notre gouvernement continue de poser des gestes nécessaires pour l'avancement de la francophonie ontarienne.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

M. Stéphane Sarrazin: Merci à la ministre pour cette réponse. C'est un plaisir d'entendre parler du lancement de la nouvelle édition du PAFO. Soutenir les communautés franco-ontariennes et les organismes à but non lucratif, les entreprises sociales et les entreprises francophones est d'une importance vitale.

Grâce à ces initiatives, notre gouvernement assure non seulement la qualité de vie et le développement de la communauté franco-ontarienne, mais aussi sa participation active au développement social, culturel et économique de la province.

Monsieur le Président, la ministre peut-elle nous en dire un peu plus sur l'importance de la Journée internationale de la Francophonie et sur la façon dont notre gouvernement reconnaît les besoins particuliers de la communauté franco-ontarienne?

L'hon. Caroline Mulroney: La Journée internationale de la Francophonie est l'occasion de reconnaître les contributions de la francophonie ontarienne, établie depuis plus de 400 ans, et de reconnaître la diversité et les accents multiples de la communauté francophone de l'Ontario, qui s'enrichit chaque année en accueillant en son sein de nouveaux arrivants de langue française.

Notre gouvernement reconnaît l'atout que représente la francophonie ontarienne, et on s'engage à appuyer les entreprises et les organisations francophones afin qu'elles continuent de contribuer au bien-être économique et social de la province tout entière.

Les programmes que sont le PAFO, l'Entente Canada-Ontario sur les services en français et la promotion du commerce interprovincial via l'accord Ontario-Québec font partie de la Stratégie de développement économique francophone de notre gouvernement pour appuyer le milieu des affaires francophones de l'Ontario et aussi appuyer le rayonnement de la communauté.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

MPP Lise Vaugeois: In many communities in Thunder Bay–Superior North, it is impossible to recruit educators and health care workers because there is nowhere to house them. We can even offer to pay them \$150,000 but they still might not be able to find a place to live. With new mines coming, if there is no new housing built within existing communities, workers will be stuck living in camps, leading to increased isolation, high rates of addiction and risks to neighbouring communities.

Will the government provide direct funding to support the building of housing in northwestern Ontario that also

takes into account the higher costs of building in smaller, northern communities?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Associate Minister of Housing.

Hon. Michael Parsa: I thank my honourable colleague for the very important question. She's absolutely right. We are working very hard to make sure that there are more homes available across the entire province, which is why if you look at our record the last couple of years, we had a number of housing starts that we haven't had since 1987. And we're not going to stop there, Mr. Speaker. We're going to continue to go forward. Why? Because of the jobs that we're creating for the people of this province. We don't want to be second to any jurisdiction. We have the best and brightest living right here in this province. We think we're number one in everything. We'll make sure we have the houses for the jobs that are coming to this province, thanks to the help of this minister and our Premier. Rest assured, we'll make sure that we'll even break the records of previous years. We'll get to our 1.5 million homes so we don't let your constituents down.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary. The Member for St. Catharines.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: My question is to the Premier. A recent CMHC rental report found that new rental supply is not translating to lower rents. In fact, households on Russell Avenue in St. Catharines are being gouged with a 17% rent increase. This is because this Conservative government has cut rent control on new builds. These are young families. These are professionals with good incomes.

Question to the Premier: Can you explain why your housing plan is leading to a transfer of profits from young families in Niagara to outside developers? Will you take these double-digit rent increases seriously by implementing real rent control today to put families first?

Hon. Michael Parsa: Thanks for the question. The young family that the member is referring to is exactly who this government is fighting for, to make sure that they are not priced out of the housing market. Mr. Speaker, because of our government, the rent increase guideline is capped at 2.5%.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Hon. Michael Parsa: If it weren't, because of inflation, it would be at 5.3% or higher. Now, we've said it time and again: We need more supply. We're in a housing supply crisis in this province, but we're the only ones who are fighting for the people of this province. We're the only ones that are saying that we need to make sure we bring the housing prices down so that people can afford it.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Hon. Michael Parsa: But the opposition continuously opposes us. They'll talk about housing, Mr. Speaker—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Hon. Michael Parsa: —but they'll vote against it. They'll talk about protection for tenants.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Opposition, come to order.

Hon. Michael Parsa: We put in a bill—they'll vote against the protection for tenants. Two record years: Last year, we broke the record in the province's history for the number of purpose-built rental units—

Interjections.

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

SENIORS

Mrs. Robin Martin: My question is for the Minister of Seniors and Accessibility. Seniors in Ontario want the ability to be active and socially connected in their communities. Our government must support investments that address social isolation and help older adults live healthy lifestyles. I was pleased to see the minister recently visit North York to announce funding as part of the Seniors Community Grants Program. Our local community is appreciative of the work by the Premier and this minister in providing support for programs and educational activities for seniors.

Speaker, can the minister please explain why this funding is important for the constituents of North York and for seniors across Ontario?

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Thank you to the member from Eglinton–Lawrence for this important question. The members from Toronto west are doing a marvelous job to make sure seniors are getting the funding they deserve. Social isolation is enemy number one. We must keep seniors connected and active to fight social isolation. That is why our government has invested over \$22 million into almost 1,200 seniors' projects across Ontario. This is one of the many ways we are working for you to build a better Ontario.

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

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you to the minister for that response. Seniors in our province face additional barriers in accessing services that can prevent social isolation. As Ontario's population continues to age, our government must continue to provide seniors with high-quality supports. Empowering our seniors in their own communities will contribute to overall improved health and social well-being.

Speaker, can the minister please elaborate on how the Seniors Community Grant Program benefits our seniors in our province?

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Thank you again for the important question. The MPPs for Eglinton–Lawrence, Etobicoke Centre, Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Etobicoke North, Willowdale, York Centre and York South–Weston are showing passion and leadership when it comes to improving the lives of seniors in Ontario.

Since 2018, Toronto West has received almost \$2 million for Seniors Community Grants to stop social isolation and fight ageism. These grants support

educational activities, improve mental health and support low-income seniors to live a better life in their communities. This program is one of the ways we are working for you to serve the needs of Ontarians.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes our question period for this morning. This House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1152 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It gives me great pleasure to welcome Katie Dean as well as her son Logan Dean. Katie is the founder of the Viewer Discretion Legislation Coalition.

I'd like to also provide a warm welcome to members of my constituency staff, including Marie Rioux, Suhaib Al-Azem, Madeline Vrolyk and Alex Wild, who are visiting Queen's Park today.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Deepak Anand: I would like to recognize Mr. Sarabjeet Singh Arora from Punjabi Arts Association, who has come to Queen's Park for the first time. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: I'd like to welcome Savannah Chu Morrison, who is here on her first day as a page. Welcome, Savannah.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I want to take a second to recognize Kyle Fritz, who's here today from my policy team in the minister's office. He has done such tremendous work with all of our policy folks around the legislation that we're set to introduce. Welcome.

Mr. Deepak Anand: I'd like to welcome Navdeep Gill to Queen's Park. She has been here multiple times. She loves us. She loves Queen's Park.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE POLICY

Mr. Lorne Coe: I beg leave to present A Report on the Modernization of the Bail System: Strengthening Public Safety from the Standing Committee on Justice Policy and move the adoption of its recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Coe presents the committee's report and moves the adoption of its recommendations.

Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you, Speaker. I would.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the permanent membership of the committee: MPP Mamakwa, the Vice-Chair, MPP Bailey, MPP Blais, MPP Hogarth, MPP Jones, MPP Ke, MPP Kusendova-Bashta, MPP Riddell, MPP Saunderson, MPP Stevens and MPP Wong-Tam, as well as MPP Dixon and MPP Vanthof, who regularly served as substitute members of the committee. I'd also like to extend my thanks to the Committee Clerk.

The committee extends its appreciation to the witnesses in attendance at the hearings, including officials from the Ontario Provincial Police, the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, the Ontario Provincial Police Association, the Police Association of Ontario, the Toronto Police Service and the Toronto Police Association.

The committee also acknowledges the assistance provided during the hearings and report-writing deliberations by the Clerk of the Committee and staff from the legislative research branch.

Speaker, with that, I move adjournment of the debate.

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

Debate adjourned.

INTRODUCTION OF GOVERNMENT BILLS

WORKING FOR WORKERS ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 VISANT À OEUVRER POUR LES TRAVAILLEURS

Mr. McNaughton moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 79, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour and other matters / Projet de loi 79, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'emploi, le travail et d'autres questions.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Hon. Monte McNaughton: The government is introducing the Working for Workers Act, 2023. Our new legislation would, if passed, improve labour laws to respond to changes in how people work, better protect vulnerable workers, and grow our province's labour supply so that we have the workers we need to build our province.

Our proposed changes would expand on the successes of the Working for Workers Act, 2021, and the Working for Workers Act, 2022, that are already helping millions of workers across Ontario.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

VIEWER DISCRETION ACT (IMAGES OF FETUSES), 2023

LOI DE 2023 SUR LES ENVOIS SOUS PLI DISCRET (IMAGES DE FOETUS)

Mr. Kernaghan moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 80, An Act to regulate the mailing of images of fetuses / Projet de loi 80, Loi réglementant l'envoi d'images de fœtus par la poste.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: This bill provides that no one shall send a graphic image of a fetus by mail or otherwise distribute such an image unless the image is contained in an opaque envelope, the exterior of the envelope includes a description of the contents and the exterior of the envelope clearly identifies the sender. The penalty for violating this prohibition is a fine of \$100 per image.

This legislation has been passed in London and Woodstock—and hopefully in St. Catharines soon—by municipal councils.

I'd like to thank Katie Dean for all of her work, her advocacy and for sharing her strength and her story.

CROATIAN HERITAGE DAY ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 SUR LE JOUR DU PATRIMOINE CROATE

Ms. Skelly moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 81, An Act to proclaim Croatian Heritage Day / Projet de loi 81, Loi proclamant le Jour du patrimoine croate.

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'd like to invite the member to briefly explain her bill.

Ms. Donna Skelly: The bill proclaims May 30 in each year as Croatian Heritage Day.

ENHANCING PUBLIC TRANSIT ACCESSIBILITY ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 SUR L'AMÉLIORATION DE L'ACCESSIBILITÉ DES TRANSPORTS EN COMMUN

Ms. Begum moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 82, An Act respecting accessible public transit / Projet de loi 82, Loi concernant des transports en commun accessibles.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Ms. Doly Begum: Our transit system is essential for commuters across the province, and we are thankful to transit workers and community members for making it as accessible as it may be. However, there still remains some work to be done.

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This bill amends the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001, to provide that the Minister of Transportation and the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility shall jointly conduct a review of standards for public transportation organizations with respect to the accessibility of existing transit stations and stops. It provides 12 months for the ministers to do so and provide a report on their findings to the Legislative Assembly.

The act is also amended to provide that every public transportation organization shall ensure that all stops and shelters are accessible to persons with disabilities—be it someone visually impaired, someone in a wheelchair, whatever means it may need be—that persons with disabilities can access bus bays in transit stations without having to leave the premises and that persons with disabilities can access all trains, light rail transit and streetcars in transit stations.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

JOURNÉE INTERNATIONALE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF LA FRANCOPHONIE

L'hon. Caroline Mulroney: Monsieur le Président, chers collègues, c'est avec un grand plaisir que notre gouvernement souligne aujourd'hui la Journée internationale de la Francophonie.

Cette journée singulière pour les francophones de l'Ontario, du Canada et du monde entier nous invite non seulement à rendre hommage à la langue française et aux cultures francophones, mais aussi à favoriser une coopération active et le développement à long terme de la Francophonie internationale, forte de 321 millions de personnes sur les cinq continents.

Je suis heureuse de saisir cette occasion pour rappeler que l'Ontario représente la plus grande communauté francophone du Canada à l'extérieur du Québec. Les efforts de notre gouvernement visent à renforcer notre francophonie et à lui donner les moyens voulus pour continuer à contribuer pleinement à la vitalité économique, sociale et culturelle de toute la province.

C'est pourquoi l'Ontario mise sur son statut de membre observateur auprès de l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, l'OIF, qui rassemble 88 États et gouvernements membres, pour mettre en valeur toute la richesse culturelle et le savoir-faire socio-économique de notre communauté francophone.

Au mois de novembre dernier, j'ai eu le grand privilège de représenter le gouvernement de l'Ontario au 18^e Sommet de la Francophonie, la rencontre biennale de l'OIF, qui a eu lieu à Djerba, en Tunisie.

Cette mission m'a permis de rehausser la visibilité de l'Ontario français et aussi de nouer des liens avec certaines

instances gouvernementales et des organismes non gouvernementaux pour ouvrir la voie à des possibilités de coopération et promouvoir l'Ontario comme une destination de choix pour ceux et celles qui veulent étudier ou travailler en français ou dans les deux langues officielles.

C'est aussi dans le cadre de ce sommet que j'ai signé le protocole d'entente entre la province de l'Ontario et la communauté française de Belgique. Il s'agit du premier accord de ce genre pour l'Ontario avec un partenaire international.

Lors de mes interactions avec d'autres États membres, j'ai constaté à quel point l'Ontario français suscite de l'intérêt, que ce soit au chapitre de l'éducation, de l'innovation sur le plan numérique ou encore de l'économie.

Justement, en ce qui concerne l'économie, nous avons déployé des efforts soutenus depuis quelques années pour mousser la francophonie, particulièrement à travers la création de la Fédération des gens d'affaires francophones de l'Ontario et les réalisations qui en découlent. Avec le soutien de notre gouvernement, la FGA a fait sa marque très rapidement.

La FGA compte aujourd'hui, en plus de 15 membres fondateurs, environ 4 000 entreprises et entrepreneurs franco-ontariens dans ses rangs. Ses avancées en faveur de l'entrepreneuriat francophone sont remarquables. La fédération compte une plateforme de marketing numérique, Quartier d'affaires. Au 31 mars 2022, 343 organisations y étaient inscrites : 193 entreprises fournisseurs de services professionnels en français et 150 vendeurs de produits ou services aux particuliers.

La fédération propose aussi un service de conciergerie aux gens d'affaires francophones de l'Ontario dans les domaines de l'exploration de l'entrepreneuriat, la création d'une entreprise, le financement gouvernemental pour les entreprises et l'obtention de contrats dans les marchés publics. La FGA a aussi lancé un écosystème permettant aux entrepreneurs de se faire accompagner à travers les différentes phases de maturation d'entreprise, comprenant la préincubation, l'incubation, l'implantation et l'accélération d'entreprise.

Il est évident que notre gouvernement reconnaît que la prospérité économique contribue à la vitalité sociale et culturelle de toute communauté, y compris la communauté francophone. Cela vaut aussi pour la disponibilité de services en français de qualité, qui y contribue tout autant.

C'est pourquoi nous avons réalisé la modernisation de la Loi sur les services en français, pierre angulaire de notre stratégie sur les services en français. Nous avons voulu donner à cette modernisation tout son sens en adoptant un nouveau règlement sur l'offre active, qui d'ailleurs entrera en vigueur dès le 1^{er} avril 2023. C'est dire à quel point nous avons été à l'écoute de la communauté et de ses parties prenantes en inscrivant de manière très explicite ce que veut dire l'offre active et comment elle doit se traduire sur le terrain. Ainsi, nous avons établi des mesures précises visant à ce que les Ontariennes et les Ontariens désireux d'obtenir des services en français sachent, dès le premier contact, que les services sont à leur portée et qu'ils peuvent y accéder sans attendre.

La francophonie ontarienne, établie depuis déjà 400 ans, s'enrichit chaque année en accueillant en son sein de nouveaux arrivants de langue française et au contact d'une population croissante de francophiles. À l'instar de la population ontarienne, la francophonie est empreinte de diversité, ainsi que d'accents et de visages multiples, à l'image de la famille élargie francophone réunie à l'échelle mondiale.

Répondre aux besoins des francophones reste au cœur de notre engagement. Grâce à l'appui et la collaboration de tous mes collègues au sein du gouvernement, ainsi que du partenariat indispensable que nous entretenons avec les parties prenantes de la communauté francophone, je suis confiante que notre gouvernement va continuer de poser les gestes nécessaires pour l'avancement des services en français et de la francophonie ontarienne.

Je suis aussi convaincue que de favoriser le rayonnement de cette communauté francophone créative, engagée et entreprenante saura mettre en valeur l'Ontario dans son ensemble, tant à l'échelle nationale qu'à l'international.

À vous toutes et tous, francophones et amis de la langue française, je vous souhaite une merveilleuse journée de la Francophonie. Monsieur le Président, chers collègues et membres de l'Assemblée, merci de votre attention.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Responses?

M. Guy Bourgoin: Bonne Journée internationale de la Francophonie à tous.

Le rôle de la langue française n'a pas seulement une importance dans notre histoire et notre culture—mais c'est également notre droit constitutionnel. Notre communauté a le droit d'avoir accès aux services de santé, d'éducation, du système judiciaire, ainsi que l'appui des programmes gouvernementaux, en français. Nous avons le droit de vivre notre vie dans notre langue maternelle.

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Ceci dit, oui il a eu des améliorations, mais certains services par contre ont encore de grandes lacunes. Nos soins de longue durée en Ontario : on parle qu'il y a seulement 13 maisons de soins de longue durée désignées francophones—13, dans une si grande province. C'est un problème quand on pense où est-ce qu'on envoie—parce qu'il a une pénurie de lits, comme on le sait, pour les francophones, aussi. Dans ma région, écoute, j'ai 60 % de francophones. On a deux maisons et elles ne sont pas désignées encore. Oui, on offre les services. Les services sont là, mais ils ne sont pas désignés francophones. Ce qui fait qu'on en a 13 dans la province.

Le système judiciaire : trop souvent, à cause qu'on est francophone, on doit attendre plus longtemps. Il y a un manque de juges, un manque de traducteurs, et ceci est problématique pour la communauté franco-ontarienne. On doit faire mieux. Comme gouvernement, vous devez faire mieux. Vous devez adresser ce problème. On a rien qu'à penser à la femme—avec l'arrêt Jordan—qui n'a même pas pu témoigner pour une agression sexuelle. Elle n'a pas pu témoigner à cause qu'il y a manqué de temps. On devrait avoir honte comme province.

Les soins de santé : le manque de spécialistes et de main-d'œuvre oblige nos commettants à se déplacer à

l'extérieur de la ville pour des rendez-vous et des traitements. C'est presque impossible de se faire soigner en français, dans notre langue maternelle. Quand on pense qu'on doit voyager—à Sudbury, quand on parle de Kapuskasing ou de Hearst, ça nous prend cinq ou six heures pour s'y rendre. Écoute, rien qu'à penser à la tempête de neige en fin de semaine où on a eu quatre pieds de neige avec les routes fermées. Ça veut dire que c'est très difficile pour les francophones de se déplacer.

Nos hôpitaux ont toujours et encore un manque de services francophones. On a le droit de se faire servir en français dans les régions désignées; même là, il manque de services en français. On entend de belles paroles de ce gouvernement, mais les Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes, encore, manquent de services, manquent de médecins, manquent de gardes, d'infirmières. On a une pénurie d'infirmières—imagine-toi la grandeur de la province et imaginez-vous, dans les services en français, comment c'est difficile de trouver des services en français.

Les soins de longue durée : on n'a rien qu'à penser, encore, dans les soins de longue durée, comment le monde n'est pas servi. Comment te fais-tu soigner dans les hôpitaux ou dans les soins de longue durée quand tu ne peux même pas t'exprimer dans ta langue pour le mal que tu as, ce qui fait que tu n'as pas de bons soins?

Les autres services : on n'a rien qu'à penser aux bureaux de santé publique. Quand ils ont modernisé—vous avez entendu la ministre parler de moderniser la Loi sur les services en français—ils ont omis de mettre les bureaux de santé publique. Quand on était dans une pleine crise de pandémie, on a omis de mettre la santé publique, qui informait la population.

C'est ça, les services en Ontario. C'est ça, quand le gouvernement dit qu'il est à l'écoute de la francophonie mais qu'il n'adresse pas des problèmes fondamentaux en santé.

Les fameuses cliniques privées qu'ils ont annoncées : elles ne sont pas assujetties à la Loi sur les services en français. Ils disent qu'ils sont à l'écoute des francophones? C'est drôle; je parle avec les mêmes organismes francophones, et ces organismes-là demandent depuis belle lurette de reconnaître qu'on a besoin de services en santé publique, que les cliniques doivent être assujetties à la Loi sur les services en français, et ce gouvernement fait l'oreille sourde.

Que dire de la situation de notre commissaire à l'ombudsman? J'ai rencontré l'ombudsman. Je n'ai pas eu les réponses que je voulais avoir, mais peut-être que ça démontre combien c'est important, que notre commissaire doit être indépendant.

Alors—quand je regarde le temps, ça passe vraiment. Le PAFO : on parle de 2 millions de dollars quand il y a un besoin de 12 millions de dollars. Je vois que le temps s'écoule, monsieur le Président.

Vous pouvez voir en éducation, encore : manque de profs et manque d'écoles. Quand les écoles ne sont même pas bonnes pour les conseils scolaires anglophones, mais qu'elles sont correctes pour les francophones?

C'est ça que le gouvernement Ford fait. Le gouvernement dit : « Non, on est à l'écoute des francophones. » Je dois dire qu'ils ne sont pas à l'écoute très fort parce qu'on mérite beaucoup mieux que ce que le gouvernement nous donne aujourd'hui. Merci.

M. John Fraser: C'est un plaisir de célébrer aujourd'hui la Journée internationale de la Francophonie. Chaque année, le 20 mars est une occasion pour nous tous de réfléchir aux moyens nécessaires pour valoriser encore plus le français dans notre province.

Je suis fier de diriger un parti qui a continué à défendre les droits des francophones. Je suis très fier que le drapeau franco-ontarien soit désormais un symbole officiel de l'Ontario et qu'il soit affiché de façon permanente dans cette Chambre. Merci à ma collègue Lucille Collard et à tous les autres députés de tous les partis de l'Assemblée pour leurs efforts.

De plus, pour ceux qui écoutent régulièrement les discours dans cette Chambre, on peut remarquer une croissance notable dans l'usage du français par les députés de chaque parti. Il y a quelques semaines on a même eu une question et réponse complètement en français pendant la période des questions, ce qui ne se produit pas souvent.

Cela dit, il reste encore beaucoup de travail à faire pour assurer que les francophones de cette province ont accès aux services en français.

Je suis fier que notre parti ait introduit la Loi sur les services en français en 1986. Les Franco-Ontariens ont droit à un accès aux services en français qui est l'équivalent de l'accès dont jouissent les anglophones. Le gouvernement a l'obligation d'assurer que cela soit une réalité—des services vitaux comme les soins de santé.

Je suis fier que notre parti se soit battu pour sauver l'Hôpital Montfort à Ottawa et que nous ayons doublé sa capacité et l'ayons désigné comme hôpital académique.

Je suis fier que notre parti ait mis en place le poste de commissaire indépendant aux services en langue française. Il nous faut quelqu'un avec le mandat de veiller à ce que le gouvernement s'acquitte de ses responsabilités en vertu de la Loi sur les services en français. Le bureau du commissaire aux services en français remplissait ce rôle très bien. Les francophones ont besoin de quelqu'un d'indépendant qui peut demander des comptes du gouvernement au sujet des services en français, pas seulement répondre aux plaintes. La communauté francophone en Ontario mérite un commissaire aux services en français indépendant capable de protéger ses droits linguistiques.

Nous devons promouvoir la langue française et veiller à ce que les droits linguistiques des Franco-Ontariens soient protégés.

Je sais que nous sommes tous fiers que l'Ontario ait sa place au sein de la Francophonie. Bonne Journée internationale de la Francophonie.

M. Mike Schreiner: Aujourd'hui nous marquons la Journée internationale de la Francophonie. Ensemble, nous célébrons la longue et riche histoire de la langue française autour du monde. L'Ontario a un rôle important

à jouer pour assurer la continuation et la célébration de la langue française.

Ontario has the second-largest French-speaking population in Canada; I'm obviously not one of those speakers, but I am proud to live in a province where people have the ability to enrich their lives with Canadian French culture and language.

I just want to say to all the francophonie how important it is for all of us to invest in French-language services, programming and support so everyone in this province can access the services and supports they need in français.

Merci beaucoup. Vive la Francophonie.

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PETITIONS

ÉDUCATION EN FRANÇAIS

M^{me} Chandra Pasma: J'ai l'honneur de me lever pour présenter une pétition qui s'appelle « Soutenez le système d'éducation francophone en Ontario.

« À l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« Alors que les enfants francophones ont un droit constitutionnel à une éducation de haute qualité, financée par les fonds publics, dans leur propre langue;

« Alors que l'augmentation des inscriptions dans le système d'éducation en langue française signifie que plus de 1 000 nouveaux enseignants et enseignantes de langue française sont nécessaires chaque année pour les cinq prochaines années;

« Alors que les changements apportés au modèle de financement du gouvernement provincial pour la formation des enseignantes et enseignants de langue française signifient que l'Ontario n'en forme que 500 par an;

« Alors que le nombre de personnes qui enseignent sans certification complète dans le système d'éducation en langue française a augmenté de plus de 450 % au cours de la dernière décennie;

« Par conséquent, nous, soussignés, demandons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario de fournir immédiatement le financement demandé par le rapport du groupe de travail sur la pénurie des enseignantes et des enseignants dans le système d'éducation en langue française de l'Ontario et de travailler avec des partenaires pour mettre pleinement en oeuvre les recommandations. »

J'appuie du fond de mon coeur cette pétition. Je vais y ajouter ma signature et l'envoyer à la table des greffiers avec Ethan.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Today I am pleased to present this petition to develop an Ontario dementia strategy.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas it currently takes on average 18 months for people in Ontario to get an official dementia diagnosis,

with some patients often waiting years to complete diagnostic testing;

“Whereas more than half of patients suspected of having dementia in Ontario never get a full diagnosis; research confirms that early diagnosis saves lives and reduces care-partner stress;

“Whereas a PET scan test approved in Ontario in 2017 which can be key to detecting Alzheimer’s early, is still not covered under OHIP in 2022;

“Whereas the Ontario government must work together with the federal government to prepare for the approval and rollout of future disease-modifying therapies and research;

“Whereas the Alzheimer Society projects that one million Canadians will be caregivers for people with dementia, with families providing approximately 1.4 billion hours of care per year by 2050;

“Whereas research findings show that Ontario will spend \$27.8 billion between 2023 and 2043 on alternate-level-of-care (ALC) and long-term-care (LTC) costs associated with people living with dementia;

“Whereas the government must follow through with its commitment to ensure Ontario’s health care system has the capacity to meet the current and future needs of people living with dementia and their care partners;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, call on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to develop, commit and fund a comprehensive Ontario dementia strategy.”

I fully support this petition. I will affix my signature and deliver it with page Claire to the Clerks.

ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE

Ms. Catherine Fife: This petition calls on the government to develop an Ontario dementia strategy.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas it currently takes on average 18 months for people in Ontario to get an official dementia diagnosis, with some patients often waiting years to complete diagnostic testing;

“Whereas more than half of patients suspected of having dementia in Ontario never get a full diagnosis; ...

“Whereas a PET scan test approved in Ontario in 2017 which can be key to detecting Alzheimer’s early, is still not covered under OHIP in 2022;

“Whereas the Ontario government must work together with the federal government to prepare for the approval and rollout of future disease-modifying therapies and research;

“Whereas the Alzheimer Society projects that one million Canadians will be caregivers for people with dementia, with families providing approximately 1.4 billion hours of care per year by 2050;

“Whereas research findings show that Ontario will spend \$27.8 billion between 2023 and 2043 on alternate-level-of-care (ALC) and long-term-care (LTC) costs associated with people living with dementia;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, call on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to develop, commit and fund a comprehensive Ontario dementia strategy.”

I want to thank the people from Peterborough, Guelph, Cambridge, Barrie and Whitby for providing these signatures.

LAND USE PLANNING

Ms. Doly Begum: I have a petition here:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the government’s Bill 23 will remove environmental protection for wetlands, woodlands and sensitive green spaces;

“Whereas various schedules in this legislation will remove significant powers from conservation authorities and prohibit them from protecting spaces;

“Whereas Bill 23 will take powers away from municipalities to implement their zero-emission and green development standards;

“Whereas Bill 23 will pave over conservation lands, agricultural lands and the greenbelt to profit developers and donors;

“Whereas it is absolutely necessary to maintain green development standards and continue to empower conservation authorities to conduct environmental assessments to ensure sustainability and safety of our spaces, wildlife and residents;

“Whereas this bill will have significant impact on the powers and finances of municipalities, weaken their ability to provide essential public services;

“Whereas Bill 23 will take away the powers of municipalities to protect tenants in the case of demovictions and harm renters and families who are looking to find safe, climate-friendly and affordable homes;

“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.”

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

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Mr. Chris Glover: This petition is entitled “Support Gender-Affirming Health Care.

“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 support this petition. I will pass it to page Morgan to take to the table.

ADOPTION DISCLOSURE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I want to thank the Sixties Scoop Network's Colleen Cardinal for submitting these petitions.

"Extend Access to Post-Adoption Birth Information.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas current legislation does not provide access to post-adoption birth information ... to next of kin if an adult adopted person or a natural/birth parent is deceased;

"Whereas this barrier to accessing post-adoption birth information separates immediate family members and prohibits the children of deceased adopted people from gaining knowledge of their identity and possible Indigenous heritage;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to extend access to post-adoption birth information ... to next of kin, and/or extended next of kin, if an adult adopted person or a natural/birth parent is deceased."

I fully support this petition. I will sign it and have page Paul deliver it to the table.

PROBATION AND PAROLE SERVICES

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the probation recidivism rate for high-risk offenders is 40% and very high-risk offenders is 57%; and

"Whereas Ontario probation and parole services has the highest number of offenders under community supervision in Canada, and Ontario probation and parole officers have the highest case counts in the country; and

"Whereas Ontario probation and parole officers' case-loads and workload demands are so high that it is extremely challenging to ensure offender compliance with probation and parole conditions; and

"Whereas the Ministry of the Solicitor General requires probation and parole officers to take on additional initiatives without providing additional resources, adding to chronic and systemic understaffing and under-resourcing; and

"Whereas Ontario's probation and parole officers issue more than 4,500 warrants each year on offenders who have breached their supervision conditions, and our criminal justice system does not actively seek their whereabouts, posing a significant threat to public safety;

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

"That the Ontario government hire an additional 200 front-line case-carrying probation and parole officers, hire an additional 50 probation support staff and implement a

plan to actively seek and enforce the more than 4,500 outstanding breach warrants issued each year by probation and parole services for absconding offenders in order to reduce Ontario's high rate of probation and parole recidivism, provide more effective client services, ensure the health and well-being of correctional staff and better protect public safety."

I am pleased to support this petition. I will affix my signature and send it to the table with page Skyler.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I want to thank Dr. Sally Palmer of McMaster University for these petitions 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;

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"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. I will affix my signature and send it to the table with page Ethan.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Chandra Pasma: I have the pleasure to rise today to present a petition signed by many members of my riding, including Ron Knox, and that were collected by my good friend Clarke Topp.

"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 small increase of 5% for ODSP still leaves these citizens below the poverty line, both they and those receiving the frozen OW rates are struggling to survive at this time of alarming inflation;

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

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

I wholeheartedly support this petition. I will add my name to it and send it to the table with page Morgan.

ADOPTION DISCLOSURE

Ms. Doly Begum: I have a petition here to extend access to post-adoption birth information, and I want to thank Adoption Support Kinship—ASK—and Wendy Rowney for their advocacy and for this petition for this issue.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas current legislation does not provide access to post-adoption birth information (identifying information) to next of kin if an adult adopted person or a natural/birth parent is deceased;

“Whereas this barrier to accessing post-adoption birth information separates immediate family members and prohibits the children of deceased adopted people from gaining knowledge of their identity and possible Indigenous heritage;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to extend access to post-adoption birth information (identifying information) to next of kin, and/or extended next of kin, if an adult adopted person or a natural/birth parent is deceased.”

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

ADOPTION DISCLOSURE

Ms. Catherine Fife: This petition is entitled “Extend Access to Post-Adoption Birth Information.” I want to thank Lynn Mayhew from families and the—incarcerated women and girls at the Andrew Mercer Reformatory, and Lisa Estall from Pembroke.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas current legislation does not provide access to post-adoption birth information (identifying information) to next of kin if an adult adopted person or a natural/birth parent is deceased;

“Whereas this barrier to accessing post-adoption birth information separates immediate family members and prohibits the children of deceased adopted people from gaining knowledge of their identity and possible Indigenous heritage;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to extend access to post-adoption birth information (identifying information) to next of kin,

and/or extended next of kin, if an adult adopted person or a natural/birth parent is deceased.”

I fully support this petition. I will affix my signature and give it to page Skyler.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUPPLY ACT, 2023

LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 2023

Mr. Sarkaria moved second 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 Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutila Karpoche): Mr. Sarkaria.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: It is my distinct honour to rise today here, in my capacity as the President of the Treasury Board, to speak about the Supply Act.

I'd also like to note that I will be splitting my time with my parliamentary assistants who are here—I know I can't say their names; my apologies—from the riding of Mississauga–Lakeshore and from the riding of Durham.

Madam Speaker, it's fair to say that a lot of us may not know about what the Supply Act is, and that's totally fine, but this, of course, does not diminish the value of what the Supply Act means and the value it holds. I believe this will give me an opportunity, actually, to take everyone through what it actually is—and a keen understanding of just how the Legislative Assembly authorizes the use of the public purse.

One of our most important functions as a government is to ensure that the people's money is spent on the people's priorities, and that in everything we do, Ontario's taxpayer dollars are treated with the respect they deserve.

The government of Ontario prides itself on its steadfast belief in transparency and accountability. That is why this government has received five clean audit opinions, which is a stark contrast to the previous government.

Every single dollar spent by the government comes from the province's hard-working taxpayers. As Ontario and the rest of the world face the ongoing challenges of economic and geopolitical uncertainty, it has never been more important for the government to be transparent and accountable when it comes to the public purse. We are all too familiar with these challenges—challenges that can seem abstract from afar but have real economic consequences every day. Geopolitical tensions continue to rise around the world, escalating while inflation and interest rates remain stubbornly high for Ontario families. There are also ongoing supply chain disruptions that continue to create economic challenges for businesses and consumers alike, and these challenges have touched all areas of life in this province and around the world. These

are uneasy times for many of the hard-working people of our province.

However, there is one thing that will support this province in these perilous waters, and that is the resiliency of Ontario workers, businesses, families and people. The people of Ontario are our province's greatest asset, and it is because of this that our government owes it to people to take careful account of every cent that is being spent in their name. I would like to take this opportunity, before I go much further into the mechanisms of the Supply Act, to acknowledge them.

Despite these challenges, our job creators still make tremendous sacrifices to create new opportunities for hard-working families, and Ontarians continue to seize those opportunities by training up and improving their skills and abilities.

Our resilience as a province and our ability to weather these storms is because of the dynamism and determination of our people.

Madam Speaker, in the face of economic conditions that I have touched upon, the business of government had to continue, and continue it did.

1350

I would like to begin by providing a brief refresher on the government's fiscal cycle.

The government tabled the 2022-23 expenditure estimates on September 8, 2022, and on December 5, 2022. The expenditure estimates provide details of the operating and capital spending needs of the ministries and the legislative offices for the fiscal year. This constitutes the government's annual formal request to the Legislature to approve funding requirements and spending requirements. Should they pass, the estimates provide each ministry with the legal authority to spend their operating and capital budgets.

Once expenditure estimates are introduced, they are referred to the relevant standing committee for review. The standing committees then select ministries to appear and answer questions specific 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 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 that have been tabled during this fiscal year.

It is important to note that our government is not proposing any new spending today. Rather, the government is simply looking to approve the spending outlined in the 2022-23 estimates.

The government introduces a Supply Act to provide the final statutory authority for the government's and this assembly's spending. I believe that it is an important enough process to merit a detailed description today.

Madam Speaker, we all recognize that health and education are two areas of utmost importance for the well-being and future of our province. That is why it is worth our time today to give a brief overview of the

government's spending in some of these really critical and crucial areas here today.

It makes sense to start with health because the health and well-being of the people of Ontario is the government's number one priority.

The people of Ontario rely upon the government to build a strong health care workforce, and that is exactly what the government is doing. Our government is working every day to provide Ontario's nurses, doctors, personal support workers and other health care professionals with the resources, support and guidance they need.

With this in mind, in August 2022, the Ontario government introduced its Plan to Stay Open: Health System Stability and Recovery. This five-point plan clearly lays out how to provide the best care possible to patients and residents. When fully implemented, this plan is expected to add up to 6,000 more health care workers—that means 6,000 more highly skilled and professional workers to help our loved ones when they need it the most. This is in addition to the more than 11,700 health care workers, including nurses and personal support workers, already added to the health system since 2020.

The government's dedication to bolstering the ranks of our health care workers is undeniable.

Since January 2022, another significant historic fact is that our government has been able to register and license more than 800 internationally educated nurses in Ontario through government-funded programming. This is a big win for the people of this province.

It doesn't stop there. The province anticipates that by next year at this time, more than 1,000 international nurses will gain the practice and language requirements necessary to apply their life-saving trade right here in Ontario.

Madam Speaker, let me step back here for a moment to share some information about the entirety of the government's health spending.

The 2022 budget announced a suite of initiatives to bolster the province's health care workforce, including \$230 million in 2022-23 to enhance health care capacity in hospitals. This investment alone supports thousands of hospital staff, including over 4,500 externs and 2,300 nurses. It also provided more than 300,000 additional hours of physician coverage in rural, remote and in-need hospitals. This represents a much-needed investment to make sure that people in every corner of this province can easily access the very best medical care. An investment of this kind is illustrative of the importance that our government puts on the health and welfare of every person in this province.

The 2022 budget also introduced a permanent wage enhancement for personal support workers and direct support workers. That support was in the form of approximately \$2.8 billion over three years. This investment supports more than 158,000 personal support workers and direct support workers who provide publicly funded services in hospitals, long-term-care homes, home and community care and social services.

As I just noted, our government's investment in the people who make up our health care system is impressive.

Of course, those dollars can only be as effective as their complementary investments in the facilities that make up the health care system itself, so I'm pleased to highlight a number of those investments as well, right now. This list, of course, isn't exhaustive, but it will give the House a quick look at some of the exciting projects that are already under way in this province, under the leadership of this Premier.

It is fair to say that our government is implementing the most ambitious plan for hospital expansion in Ontario's 155-year history. We are investing more than \$40 billion over the next 10 years to improve and increase space in the hospitals and community health centres, and build new health care facilities. This \$40-billion investment in Ontario's health care future will support more than 50 major hospital projects that will add 3,000 new beds over the next 10 years. These projects will build a stronger health care system and at the same time create good, strong, high-paying jobs.

Madam Speaker, I'd also like to touch upon some of these projects and the impacts that they have on communities.

As part of this \$40-billion investment into health care, communities like Brampton that were neglected for so long are getting a new hospital. We are building one of the largest new hospitals in Mississauga—and the member for Mississauga–Lakeshore, also my parliamentary assistant, has been a great champion for that program, making sure that we build new hospitals in communities that are growing at a very fast pace. My colleagues from Windsor are getting a new hospital—one of the largest health care investments in the history of this province, in Windsor. That is making sure that we take care of those cities that need it—places like Pickering in Durham region, where we are expanding health care access and building more facilities. The parliamentary assistant from Durham has been a strong champion for health care investments in his region—

Hon. David Piccini: And Northumberland.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria:—and Northumberland; Peterborough, as well. That's strong, strong advocacy from members, and it speaks to this government's commitment to their historic plan to build—a plan that looks at all Ontarians and supports the need for growing health care infrastructure across this province. This is on top of the 3,000 new beds that we've added since the start of the pandemic, that we've brought online, that the Premier and the Minister of Health supported—and continue to support the needs of this province as we continue to grow.

1400

Madam Speaker, these are some of the investments that we are making into the health care system from a capacity perspective.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the new medical school that is being built in the city of Brampton. For the first time in over a hundred-plus years, a new medical school will open in the GTA, right in the city of Brampton—but that, on top of the other hundreds of spots

that this government has been committed to supporting across the province; more doctors, more nurses, more health care professionals, all outlined in the budget that we put forward.

Unfortunately, we haven't had the support of the opposition, whose members have voted against hospitals in their own areas. All across the province, 50 projects under way—\$40 billion of health care investments that the members opposite have voted against. Medical schools being opened in this province, in the GTA, after a hundred-plus years, and the members opposite voting against those significant—voting against permanent wage enhancements for our personal support workers. The members opposite voted against some of these measures, which is very unfortunate, as we try to build a strong health care workforce. Over \$300 million in retraining skills for nurses—registered nurses—that the members opposite in the opposition voted against.

Our government will be committed to continuing those investments, and we will continue to ensure that we have our government and members on the other side of the House who are a part of our government continue to support this incredible work that our government is doing to build Ontario, build our health care capacity all across the province.

With that, I will pass it over to my parliamentary assistant.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Further debate?

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: I wish to thank the President of the Treasury Board, the member for Brampton South, for that kind introduction and for speaking first on the Supply Act.

It is my distinct honour to rise today to further detail the financial situation of the province of Ontario and the expenditures that the government is making through our plan to build Ontario.

I would also like to thank my colleague for detailing the spending in the crucial areas of health care and education.

Speaker, I must echo the minister's words and sentiments when it comes to health care and education spending. It is fair to say that those expenditures will likely shape the future of the province of Ontario. However, to make those investments, the province has to be in the financial position to do so.

The top-line details of the 2022 budget might be considered dry by some, but it is necessary for members of this House to get an idea of the province's current financial situation. Only with the latest information can we accurately paint a picture of the province's financial circumstances. Ontario's third-quarter finances, which were released last month, give us that information.

My colleague previously mentioned some of the challenges that must be considered when looking at any current economic data, but they do bear repeating. In the face of high inflation, rising interest rates, global geopolitical intrigue and ongoing supply chain disruptions, Ontario's economy has remained resilient. And it is to the credit of the people of Ontario that the province's real gross domestic product, the GDP, is estimated to have

increased by 3.7% in the last year. Seen in its proper context, this number is impressive.

Speaker, as we are now three months into 2023, we know that Ontario's economy is not immune to an expected global economic slowdown this year. It is true that reputable forecasters are bracing for an even more challenging year than was faced in 2022. That is why the government is maintaining a reasonable and realistic fiscal plan. Now is the time to double down on fiscal responsibility—that means ensuring fiscal policy that works with a strict and thoughtful monetary policy. Against this backdrop, the government has remained transparent and accountable—and releasing the 2022-23 third-quarter finances is in the service of doing just that.

It should be noted that the next economic and fiscal update, as part of the 2023 budget, will be this Thursday, March 23, 2023.

I'm happy to now get into some of the projections from the third-quarter finances, as it gives us context in terms of where we are financially today as a province.

Ontario's 2022-23 deficit is projected to be \$6.5 billion. While that is significant, it should be noted that it is \$13.3 billion lower than the outlook published in the 2022 budget—and that is \$6.4 billion lower than the 2022 Ontario economic outlook and fiscal review.

On the other side of the ledger, revenues in 2022-23 were projected to be \$196.4 billion. That is \$16.6 billion higher than the forecast in the 2022 budget and \$9.6 billion higher than projected in the 2022 Ontario economic outlook and fiscal review.

Of course, it is reasonable to ask why revenues were higher than expected. The revenue forecast reflects stronger-than-expected taxation revenues, which were a direct result of higher net tax assessments for 2021 and prior years.

The people of this province should know how much money is being spent on their behalf on the government programs designed to make their lives better.

Overall program expense in 2022-23—those expenses were projected to be \$188.6 billion, and that number is \$3.4 billion higher than the forecast in both the 2022 budget and the 2022 Ontario economic outlook and fiscal review. These increases are due to spending related to reopening of colleges and resulting additional on-campus activity, the government commitment to support the city of Toronto to address a portion of its 2022 operating deficit, and additional funding for prevention and containment of COVID-19 at long-term-care homes. The government feels that these expenses were necessary and appropriate. As well, these expenses have been partially offset by additional third-party revenues from colleges; ministry underspending, particularly underspending for infrastructure projects; and through the drawing down of existing contingencies within the fiscal plan.

Speaker, before I discuss some of the investments associated with Ontario's Plan to Build, I would like to put a little bow on some of these top-line budget numbers.

Interest on the province's debt is projected to be \$13.4 billion, slightly lower than the \$13.5 billion forecast in last year's budget.

Because of the lower deficit, the net debt-to-GDP ratio is projected to be 38.3% in 2022-23, 3.1% lower than the 41.4% forecast in the 2022 budget.

There is one additional point I would like to make about the overall budget within my allotted time. It is important to remember that the 2022 budget included a \$1-billion reserve in 2022-2023. This was to protect the fiscal outlook against any unforeseen changes in the province's revenue and expense forecasts. This demonstrates this government's prudent fiscal approach. The reserve was designed to insulate the province from unforeseen expenses of any kind. It also provides additional prudence in the government's fiscal framework. It should be noted that, if that money is not needed, the reserve is eliminated at year-end as part of the final projection for 2022-23, published in the 2023 budget.

1410

With that context in mind, I'd like to move on to Ontario's Plan to Build.

The first pillar of this comprehensive plan is rebuilding Ontario's economy. It is sad but true that Ontario lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs between 2004 and 2018. That was quite a hole to dig out of, but that is what we were up against, and we remain up against that sorry legacy. To deal with this, the government has a plan to help create the environment for jobs and to build prosperity everywhere for everyone. The key to doing this will be leveraging what we already have. An example of this is seizing Ontario's critical minerals. Our province is rich in the critical minerals that will be key to making sure that the next generation of automobiles are built right here in Ontario. The government's plan includes up to \$1 billion for legacy infrastructure such as all-season roads to the Ring of Fire, building the corridor to prosperity. Over the next three years, the government is investing nearly \$107 million to help the province compete with jurisdictions in a global race to develop and own these technologies that will likely define the future of transportation.

The second pillar of Ontario's Plan to Build is working for workers. This pillar included raising the minimum wage to \$15.50 per hour as of October 2022. The government is proud to be able to institute this important increase, largely helping the most vulnerable across our province. Under this crucial pillar, the government also plans to invest \$1 billion every single year in employment and training programs. These programs are to help workers all throughout Ontario to retrain and upgrade their skills. The world moves fast, and the skills one may have today might not be the ones needed for the jobs of tomorrow. That is exactly why retraining and upgrading is so important for our skilled workers. Our workforce must be agile and flexible—and the billions of dollars earmarked for this type of training is designed to do just that.

The third pillar of the plan is where the billions of dollars invested in infrastructure can be found. So many people in this province are wasting time, day after day, sitting in traffic or waiting for a train or subway. Bumper-to-bumper traffic, gridlock and transit delays are not only a nuisance, but they also cost this province billions of

dollars. This must change, and this will change. We can talk about traffic until we are blue in the face, but nothing will solve the problem until we get shovels in the ground to build highways, transit and other infrastructure projects to fight gridlock, boost the economy and create jobs. To do this, the government is planning one of the most ambitious capital plans in the history of Ontario. Over the next decade, these infrastructure projects will total \$159.3 billion, including \$20 billion in 2022-23 alone. The government is investing \$25.1 billion over the next 10 years to support highway projects across the province, including building Highway 413, building the Bradford Bypass, and enabling the widening of Highway 401 through eastern Ontario. There are many highway infrastructure projects and, frankly, there's not enough time to mention them all today. But that is the investment we are making to get Ontario moving again. The government is also investing \$61.6 billion over 10 years for public transit, including the Ontario Line here in Toronto and GO rail across the greater Golden Horseshoe and into southwestern Ontario.

The fourth pillar is something that any fiscally minded person can appreciate: keeping costs down. The government has a plan to help keep costs down by increasing housing supply, by making it less expensive to drive or take transit, and by providing direct relief on everything from child care to taxes. The government has committed to making it less expensive to drive by eliminating and refunding licence plate renewal fees for passenger vehicles, light-duty trucks, motorcycles and mopeds. The government made transit more affordable across the greater Golden Horseshoe by eliminating double fares for most local transit when using GO Transit services. The government is also working on lowering child care fees for parents by signing a \$13.2-billion agreement with the federal government. I know it has been mentioned many times, but it should be noted that the government remains committed to securing an average of \$10-a-day child care by September 2025. By putting more money back into the pockets of the parents of Ontario, the government is working toward a more financially secure future for all of Ontario's families.

The last pillar of Ontario's plan to build is a plan to stay open. It's true that Ontario fared better than many jurisdictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, and that is owing to the resilience of the people of Ontario. It is now the government's duty to make sure that Ontario is prepared to face any future challenges. The government is doing this by making historic investments in our hospitals, with an additional \$3.3 billion in investments in 2022-23. Over the next three years, the government is also investing \$3.5 billion to support the continuation of over 3,000 hospital beds put into place during the pandemic. As well, the government is investing \$1.1 billion over three years to support the continuation of hundreds of new adult, pediatric and neonatal critical care beds added during COVID-19.

Speaker, the people of Ontario deserve a government that has a real plan to build. Furthermore, the people of

Ontario deserve to know for sure that the money that is being spent in their names is being spent in a transparent and accountable way.

The government is proud of Ontario's plan to build and proud of its five pillars detailed today. The plan demonstrates how we are continuing to make essential investments to support the people and the businesses of this great province.

It should be noted that this supply bill, if passed, would formalize the investments I have outlined today. And at the risk of repeating myself, it is also important to note that the Supply Act, if passed, is not about approving new spending; the Supply Act is instead about providing legislative approval for the spending to which the government has already committed.

The review of the province's fiscal position as of the third-quarter finances and the detailed rundown of the government's Ontario's Plan to Build hopefully served as a reminder to all members of this House of the transparency and accountability that informs all government spending.

With that said, Speaker, I encourage all members to support this important piece of legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Further debate?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I'm very pleased to rise this afternoon, in my role as parliamentary assistant to the President of the Treasury Board, to expand on what the minister and my colleague the PA from Durham just said. It is an honour to be able to join this debate on the Supply Act for the 2022-23 fiscal year. It is an opportunity that I do not take for granted.

Speaker, the minister has already explained the mechanics of the Supply Act, and PA McCarthy has explained our Q3 results and Ontario's Plan to Build.

As I said last year at this time, I believe it is critical that all members understand every detail of the procedures of the fiscal cycle. That's what the people of Ontario expect from their elected officials, and that's what they deserve, especially now, during challenging economic times. Inflation and interest rates are rising, and the global supply chain has not completely recovered from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is only in this context that we can truly understand and appreciate the fiscal decision-making that has guided this year's expenses.

1420

Speaker, I know that this has already been said, but I want to reiterate: Every dollar spent by this government comes out of the pockets of the hard-working taxpayers of this province. That's why the people of Ontario demand accountability and transparency for all of the fiscal decisions made by their government. The families, the workers, the students and the most vulnerable among us, and especially our children and our future grandchildren, deserve this from their government.

As PA McCarthy said earlier, the government is not announcing any new spending today. The investments that the minister and the PA spoke about earlier have already been made, but we're required to pass the Supply Act at

the end of every fiscal year to provide final approval of all spending by the provincial government.

With that said, I would like to go into more detail about some of the major investments that the government has made, and I will also take the opportunity to outline why these investments have been made and how they will benefit the people of this great province.

As the minister said, the health and well-being of the people of Ontario has always been and always will be the top priority of this government. This is more than just talk; it's illustrated in many concrete actions.

For example, the government continues to make investments to improve health care in every corner of this province. In the 2022 budget, the government committed over \$40 billion over the next 10 years to build hospital infrastructure right across Ontario. That includes about \$27 billion in capital grants—grants that will get shovels in the ground to build the health care infrastructure that this province needs. That's about \$10 billion more for hospitals and other health care infrastructure than what was committed in the 2021 budget in the previous year. That's \$10 billion more that will go directly to increase capacity in hospitals and community health centres, to build new hospitals, and to renew our existing health care facilities.

This includes funding to support the complete reconstruction of the Mississauga Hospital in Mississauga–Lakeshore, which first opened in 1958. A few years later, I was born there. And my two sons were born there. My sister worked there, in medical records. My niece was a volunteer there. As Mayor Bonnie Crombie said, the COVID-19 pandemic revealed the need for major upgrades at the current hospital—in many cases, long overdue. Demand for hospital services in Mississauga is also expected to grow seven times more than the average Ontario hospital over the next 20 years. The truth is, we needed a new hospital 15 years ago, but the former Liberal government kept saying no. Now, because of this government's historic multi-billion dollar investment, the new Mississauga Hospital will be almost triple the size: 24 storeys and three million square feet, with 1,000 beds, 80% in private rooms. This will be the largest and most advanced hospital in the history of Canada. The minister and I had the opportunity to tour the construction site recently, where work is under way for a new eight-storey parking structure with spaces for almost 1,500 vehicles. This is an important first step in the project. And just last week, Trillium Health Partners and Infrastructure Ontario signed an agreement with EllisDon and PCL Healthcare Partners to deliver this project using a progressive, P3 approach.

Just across the Etobicoke Creek, the government is expanding the Queensway Health Centre, with a new nine-storey, 600,000-square-foot patient tower with over 350 new hospital beds, in a modern centre for complex care.

In the north end of Peel region, in Brampton, the government is working together with the William Osler Health System to transform Peel Memorial Hospital into a 24/7 in-patient hospital and urgent care centre. This

urgently needed upgrade will pave the way for a new emergency department to meet the health care needs of one of Ontario's fastest-growing communities.

There are hospital expansion projects planned or under way in communities right across Ontario.

For example, the government's investments will also support the redevelopment of the Ottawa Hospital's Civic campus. This means an expansion of access to programs and services, finally meeting Ottawa's bed capacity needs.

The government has also committed to support a new state-of-the-art, acute-care hospital in Windsor-Essex county to add more hospital beds and expand services in the region.

In Huntsville and Bracebridge, the government has provided funding for the redevelopment of their acute-care hospitals. These investments will improve community programs and services and expand access to diagnostic imaging, including MRIs and CT scans.

Speaker, we should also consider the Grand River Hospital and the St. Mary's General Hospital joint redevelopment project. The government's investments will expand these existing facilities and support the construction of another new acute-care facility. These investments will directly benefit the entire Kitchener-Waterloo region.

Northern Ontario will also benefit from the government's increase in health spending. To help address surgical wait times, the government is supporting the expansion of the cardiovascular surgery program at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre. This expansion will help to improve access to life-saving care in Thunder Bay.

Speaker, I realize that this list is long, but it's worth mentioning a few more items to show how this government has made health funding its top priority.

The government is committed to the construction of a new, modern hospital on the existing Uxbridge site of Oak Valley Health. This investment is necessary to replace another rapidly aging facility and to support the expansion of services and a new community health hub with long-term-care services.

It's important to remember that when the government plans these investments, we must always consider future population growth. It is critical that taxpayers' money is spent in the most prudent and responsible way to get the most out of each and every dollar.

That's the case with the government's support for the Stevenson Memorial Hospital. This investment will modernize facilities, support service delivery, and respond to the population growth that is expected in Simcoe county.

Speaker, during the pandemic, my team in Mississauga–Lakeshore prepared and delivered hundreds of meals to health care workers at the Scarborough Health Network's Birchmount site. I was pleased to see that the government's investment included an expansion of that site, including an in-patient tower and expanding the emergency department to reduce wait times and upgrade aging infrastructure.

There are many more projects that I could list. These investments, both to upgrade current facilities and to build new state-of-the-art ones, will help to ensure that the people of Ontario will have access to the best possible health care today and tomorrow.

Madam Speaker, as I've said, the health and well-being of the people of Ontario is the government's highest priority, and the capital spending that I just outlined shows this very clearly.

Along with health care, another important priority of this government is transportation. As my colleague PA McCarthy said earlier, highways, roads and public transit are the economic lifelines of this province.

At this point, I think it is important to point out how large Ontario is. Ontario spans over one million square kilometres, which is over 266 million acres. That makes this province larger than France and Spain combined. Ontario is over three times the size of Germany. And we have almost 7,000 kilometres of road—that's the second most in all of Canada.

It is easy to forget how extensive our province's road system is and how much time, effort and money it takes to maintain and upgrade.

That's why, as PA McCarthy mentioned, the government is investing over \$25 billion over 10 years to support highway expansion, maintenance and repair projects right across the province.

1430

I would like to take an opportunity to speak in more detail about some of the most important highway projects that are included in this investment.

There is the development of Highway 413, a new 400-series highway. As I said here last September, this project is critical to the economic well-being of both Peel region and the entire province. It will serve as a transportation corridor across Peel, Halton and York regions to support the movement of people and goods across the western GTA. This is already the single-most congested corridor in North America, and the greater Golden Horseshoe is adding at least 200,000 new residents each year. This necessary new highway will save drivers up to 30 minutes on their commute each way. That's five hours per week and 260 hours each year. That's 11 days every year. Highway 413 will finally bring relief to an area that so clearly needs it.

The government has also committed to the Bradford Bypass. This will be a new four-lane freeway, connecting Highway 400 in Simcoe county to Highway 404 in York region. Everyone who has sat in gridlock on Highway 400 can appreciate that this new freeway is expected to save commuters over 35 minutes per trip, compared to the existing route along other local roads. That's almost six hours per week, or over 300 hours each year.

I'd like to move on to the QEW Garden City Skyway project. This will include a new twin bridge over the Welland Canal, connecting St. Catharines to Niagara-on-the-Lake. This new bridge will keep traffic moving across this important trading corridor that links our international border crossing with the Golden Horseshoe.

The government is also committed to the next phase of construction for the new Highway 7 between Kitchener and Guelph. Again, this project will provide relief to commuters stuck in gridlock on Highway 401 and will connect the fast-growing urban centres of Kitchener, Waterloo and Guelph.

Also, there is an investment to rebuild over 21 kilometres of Highway 101, known as the Timmins connecting link. This is one of the largest connecting links in Ontario, used by 25,000 vehicles every single day.

Of course, transportation doesn't just mean highways. The government has also made investments that will support public transit well into the next generation. In the 2022 budget, the government committed almost \$62 billion over 10 years for public transit. This includes breaking ground on the Ontario Line here in Toronto. This line will provide rapid transit between Exhibition, Ontario Place and the Ontario Science Centre, and connect to over 40 other transit routes, including the GO train line, TTC subways and streetcar lines and the Eglinton Crosstown LRT.

Outside Toronto, the Bowmanville GO train expansion will expand rail service from Oshawa to Bowmanville on the Lakeshore East corridor to help reduce gridlock in my colleague PA McCarthy's community.

Moving west, the government has invested in expanding GO Transit rail to eventually offer weekend trips between London and Union Station in Toronto. This is part of our plan to transform the GO train network into a modern, reliable and fully connected rapid transit network. The goal is to cut down commute times across the province by increasing service, with faster trains, more stations and better transit connections.

As I said earlier this month in our debate on Bill 71, northern Ontario will play a critical role in the economic future of this province. But to help unlock its potential, we need better transportation opportunities in the north. That's why the government has committed \$75 million to bring passenger rail service back to northeastern Ontario. This will finally restore a key transportation option between Timmins and Toronto to help to connect northern Ontario to the financial centres in the south. This will be an important link for northern Ontario as the government continues to invest in unlocking the full economic potential of northern industries and natural resources, building new, made-in-Ontario supply chains to connect critical minerals from the north, including the Ring of Fire, to manufacturing in the south.

In closing, I would like to thank all the members for listening during this Supply Act debate, as we have highlighted spending on some key projects, particularly in the areas of health and transportation. These are two critical areas where every dollar spent will benefit the people of Ontario.

In the face of hard economic times, Ontario has demonstrated its incredible resilience and strength, and it is our government's job as guardians of the public purse to support the families, workers and businesses of this province. To do this, we must also build a strong foundation for future growth and prosperity. It's a heavy

responsibility to be trusted with the hard-earned tax dollars of the people of this province. It is not to be taken lightly. The pandemic has only highlighted this point. The government made a promise to be responsible and transparent about the province's economic and fiscal situation. And I believe, during this final process of the fiscal cycle, that is exactly what we're doing.

Again, I would like to thank the minister and PA McCarthy for their remarks earlier today.

Together with my colleagues, I urge all members to support the Supply Act, so that spending on these critical public services can be authorized for the current fiscal year.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: What a pleasure it is to be in the House today to address the Supply Act motion. I have to say, I actually have so much material to work with. I feel like a mosquito at a nudist resort, Madam Speaker. Literally, I don't even know where to start.

The President of the Treasury Board, my friend, talked a lot about transparency. I think that we agree on a few things, and one is that transparency is very much connected to trust. But this government has a serious, serious trust issue. The people of this province have been promised a set of goods. They were promised a budget in 2022, which had some detailed expenditures—and I'm going to go through some of them, because that matters. When you actually follow the money and you follow where the expenditures actually occurred, then you can see sometimes what the real priorities are. But the trust piece—this government, I will admit, is very, very, very good at announcements, and sometimes really doubling down on some of those announcements with re-announcements about expenditures.

We are very fortunate, in the province of Ontario, to have the Financial Accountability Officer. This position, this independent officer of the Legislature, came to be as part of the negotiations in a minority government. Minority governments can be very effective. We wanted greater transparency with the former Liberal government. You can't blame us, given some of the decisions that they made and some of the funding decisions that they made. I will also admit that we are still feeling the repercussions from some of those decisions, particularly on the energy file, for sure. The FAO has an expenditure monitor. Every quarter, he tracks where the money has gone, based on the government's own numbers. So the government says, "We are going to allocate this particular amount of money to health care," and then they make announcements and announcements and announcements. And then the FAO says, "Did that money actually go to health care?" Fortunately, we have the exposure of, really, what is happening.

We actually just got the Q3 expenditure monitor from earlier in this month, March 1, and lo and behold, combined over the first three quarters, the province was expected to spend \$129.2 billion but actually spent only \$122.8 billion—a \$6.4-billion difference, 5% less than expected. Now, the question comes. If government has

said health care, education, justice and energy—these are justifiable expenditures. You have the same formula that I think the FAO has. And then the FAO says, "Where did that money go?"—or in this case, and more importantly perhaps for this discussion, "Where did it not go?"

We're not talking about new money today. We, as the official opposition, one of only two parties in this House, have said that you made a promise to the people of this province. You said you were going to invest in autism. You said you were going to invest in community services. You said you were going to invest in housing. And that money did not flow.

1440

Just to break it down—because in order to be transparent on the lack of transparency, I want to be sure that the government understands why we have taken such issue with the budgeting of this government. Breaking it down around actual spending versus planned spending, the programs with the largest lower-than-expected spending include Metrolinx and municipal infrastructure projects.

This government talks a lot about capital infrastructure. They talk a lot about building hospitals. We heard this at the finance committee; my colleague and I travelled around the province. You can talk about beds all you want, but you are actually funding furniture if you don't have a nurse, if you don't have a PSW, if you don't have a doctor. It's just the facts.

The other underspending happened in the Ministry of Infrastructure capital program—\$644 million less; public health, \$605 million less.

What have we learned? We went through a global pandemic. It is not over. We are still feeling the effects of the various strains of COVID and long COVID. Nobody in the Ministry of Health is talking about long COVID at all. A responsible government would plan, do research, have an evidence-based policy around long COVID; not this government.

Certainly, underspending by \$605 million, over half a billion dollars, in public health to prevent people from getting sick—early intervention and prevention is the smart investment in public health.

Social assistance programs—this kind of surprised me—got \$453 million less; elementary and secondary education programs, \$432 million less; child care programs, \$396 million less than planned.

What is the problem? Where is the barrier to actually—you've acknowledged that there this is need in these areas, and you've set aside the funding, but the money doesn't flow. But we do have lots of announcements, and we do have lots of photo ops.

Just as an aside: I came in last night on the UP Express—and let me tell you, it was not express. When I look at this lack of \$462 million in the Metrolinx and municipal transit operating funding and I think about all the people who rely so heavily on public transit in this city, to not get that money out the door, to not invest that money, to not create those jobs, to not create those opportunities, is an economic non-starter. That train last night—it's a diesel train; you know this. To get on a diesel

train that chugalug-a-lugged me for 45 minutes from the airport to Union Station—it was a bit embarrassing. There were some Europeans on there, and they said to me, “Is this thing going to go fast?” And I had to say, “We’re not quite in the 20th century on public transit in Ontario yet.”

The expenditure monitor notes that the FAO provided all members of the Legislature—this office is open to everyone, and it is truly non-partisan.

On health care, the \$1.25 billion that didn’t get spent, that did not get “invested”—that’s actually the better word. It was not invested in a time when we saw the Children’s Health Coalition for the province of Ontario—CHEO is a big part of that coalition—asking for \$371 million to alleviate that 12,000-child wait-list. Some 12,000 children are long-haulers, so they’ve missed the opportune moment to receive surgery. The government has been silent on this request of \$371 million. I really hope that my friend the President of the Treasury Board is able to talk to the Minister of Finance and say—not only does it look bad to keep children waiting, languishing on a wait-list and not opening up those operating rooms so that children can reach their potential, and so that their surgery is not more complex and more expensive—as one parent said to me, “Does the minister not understand that I as a parent, when I go to work, am not at my full productivity if I know that my child is in pain?” Surely, we can all understand this concept.

Going down the sector breakdown, the education piece, the actual versus expected is less \$844 million in this last quarter as of December 31, 2022. The government has said, “We understand there’s a gap in learning.” The pandemic interrupted those learning patterns, especially for younger children and younger students. That money didn’t get out the door.

Children and social services: almost half a billion dollars, \$458 million.

And I have to say—in the total, though, because there’s another program which captures \$3.5 billion that didn’t get invested.

I can go through the other programs. These are important issues, but they’ve been encapsulated in the report, under a large umbrella, if you will.

The unallocated funds—let me just finish: You plan to spend \$6.4 billion in very important ministries. I know that the communities were expecting that funding. That funding didn’t get out the door. I wish sometimes that we could get answers in this place, because I really want to know, why did you not get the job done? The people of this province, in the interest of transparency, which the government has said that they care about, want to know, because without that transparency, there is no trust.

There’s a tale of two Ontarios here, and when you factor in the Indigenous communities, it’s actually three, because there are very different levels. But here at the Pink Palace, as we heard this morning during question period, when we had people from across this province who were lobbying the government for better services for the most vulnerable people in Ontario, including Sarah and her daughter, Mia, who is homeless—so a mother and a child

are homeless, and what do we hear from this government? “We’re going to create some jobs in another jurisdiction.” Sarah needs a roof. Sarah needs a place to call home. She needs to be safe. And you can talk about jobs—jobs and housing are connected. I don’t see why this government cannot draw that connection.

We also heard very clearly that housing is health care. We heard this from doctors in Ottawa. We heard this in Kenora. We heard this in Toronto very, very clearly. People who are precariously housed, who are couch-surfing, the 130 people living in tents in Waterloo region—these people are barely holding on. It was quite something, actually, to hear this morning from our leader about how many deaths happened every week over the winter. The fact that three people a week died in one of the richest provinces in Canada is really something that should keep us up at night.

The politicization of the housing file has reached a whole new extreme—because the not-for-profit sector is ready and willing to come to the table. In fact, they have applications. The minister, with the strike of a pen, could include in this budget direct partnerships with not-for-profits, and every single community in this province would have some form of supportive housing, some form of new accommodations. They’re ready and they are willing to come to the table—

Interjections.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Oh, they really don’t like it, but it doesn’t really matter, because it is the truth that the not-for-profit sector is ready.

They’ll come back and they’ll say, “Well, we have Bill 23.” I’d love to talk about Bill 23, because this is another example of a very powerful and dangerous disconnect between what is happening at this place, the Ontario Legislative Assembly, and what’s happening in our municipalities. And 444 municipalities are not wrong.

1450

I’m just going to quote AMO. I’m sure you saw the open letter where they basically begged you, as a government, to acknowledge that homelessness is a crisis. It was signed by non-traditional signatories. It was in the paper four days ago. I’ll make sure that the minister and the Treasury Board president get a copy of it. It was very powerful. I want to say that AMO has never been back on their heels to this degree. They have always seen the government of the day as a partner, and we have seen—I’ve been here for 10 years, and I have never seen things so bad between municipalities and the government of the day. That is the truth. So I’ll just quote AMO. This actually comes from a media source that said, “Cities Push Ontario to Roll Back Environmental Cuts, Commit to Truly Affordable Housing in New Budget”—and let me be really clear: I really hope that this government puts some real dollars in housing. Direct funding for attainable, affordable housing must be in this budget.

“We had no consultation. We weren’t invited to any meetings. In 125 years, it’s the biggest affront to Ontario’s municipalities that I’ve ever seen,” said Colin Best, president of AMO.

How can you call municipalities a partner if you don't even invite them to the table, and what excuse would you have to do that? It's just an honest question.

The article went on to say, "As Ontario nears a budget day on March 23, leaders at towns and cities are nervous about what other bombshells the ... government might be preparing to drop."

This doesn't instill a lot of confidence—this isn't like, "Oh, wow, the government is doing a really good job." Mayors, councillors, Best and Rosborough are concerned about Bill 23 because of the potential devastation to local governance—a very real concern—and environmental damage potentially set in motion, which weakens or eliminates wetland protections—a very real concern—expert oversight of watersheds and protection of species-at-risk habitats. Obviously, in 2023, it's hard to believe that we're having this conversation.

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario's executive director, Brian Rosborough, a long-time policy adviser to past Ontario governments, said, "Bill 23 was a complete surprise, and did not reflect consultation with Ontario's cities in any way."

But there was a task force, and the task force was great. The Liberals were really good at task forces. They were really good at round tables and special committees; it didn't always translate into action. This government seems to have followed in that tradition. My friend Tim Hudak was actually on the task force, but not one city official was on the task force.

Hon. David Piccini: I didn't know he was your friend.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Yes, me and Tim—we're like this.

"Rosborough said cities were 'categorically excluded,' despite the task force's focus on changing a planning and infrastructure regime that municipalities shape and execute."

I actually have to wonder: How is this playing out in local communities? Every municipality should have a connection with their member of provincial Parliament, and every municipality relies on clear and honest communication from their member—and, for me, for advocacy.

When the city of Waterloo looked at their long-term strategic plan and then looked at a housing subdivision which they had really hoped to formalize—it was 800 new homes, but then they realized that because the development charges were now going to be excluded, they would be short the funding for infrastructure.

How can the government of the day expect municipalities to move forward with very ambitious housing plans—affordable, attainable housing plans—if the infrastructure funding is not there?

A very animated Bonnie Crombie came to committee, and some of the government members got into it for a little bit. Mayor Crombie said, "You can't be so punitive. You can't be taking away this one tool that we have to build communities, so that housing can be built." They had ambitious plans, and they need ambitious plans, because Mississauga needs housing; Waterloo needs housing; London needs housing; Cobourg, Oshawa—they need

housing. But you need infrastructure. You need the infrastructure funding to make sure that the housing is possible.

Colin Best, who's the president, said that "because the province's development plan doesn't include input from local governments, it fails to help people who need housing most." I would have to say that we are in complete alignment with AMO on this.

"Rosborough said he has heard from rural communities that people are 'living in seasonal trailer parks and encampments in the woods' and Bill 23 does not address their core needs. Greater Sudbury, Waterloo region and Peterborough, among many other communities, have been struggling to house encampment residents."

Literally, people have no place to go. We have people living in cars in Ontario. We have families who have had to divide up their children just to find shelter for their kids. That's not building up a stronger Ontario. And having the knowledge—knowingly, intentionally underfunding municipalities leaves us to question, what is the motivation here? Because if Bill 23 is not the answer, what's driving this decision-making process? So we're very thankful that the Integrity Commissioner is reviewing how Bill 23 came to be, how portions of the greenbelt came to be suddenly open for certain developers. We have questions, and those questions are valid questions. We need transparency on some of those questions, because without transparency, there is no trust.

So we have a government that seems unwilling or even unable to acknowledge that homelessness is a very real crisis. At one point, it may have been those folks who live on the margins, who we don't see here in the public galleries at Queen's Park and who may not come into our offices—but I can tell you that that cultural shift has changed on housing.

I believe, and I know that many of my colleagues believe, that housing is everything. I remember very distinctly being in Hamilton a few years back, and legal aid had come in and did a presentation. Because families were so precariously housed and because children were having to move two, three, four times a year—different schools, no consistency, really a lack of support—nothing was stable without housing. Nothing is stable in a child's life if they do not have housing. That is why it's so important to fight for this. Those children become very resilient, but they certainly are fighting with one hand behind their back, because they don't know where they're going to spend the night. When you look at the social determinants of health—housing, nutrition—these things matter in the course of a child's life.

We're very thankful that AMO, on behalf of the 444 municipalities, has spoken up, has put out an open letter, is trying to get the ear of this government—because I'm pretty sure none of them got invited to any special events hosted by the Premier.

"Rosborough told the Narwhal that Ontario spends \$2,000 less per person on services and programs than the average of all 12 provinces and territories."

I remember the former Premier of this province, Ms. Wynne, bragging about this fact: "We spend the least

amount of money on services; we are so fiscally responsible.” So we do have some traditional funding gaps that are in health care, education. But what is this government doing? You say that you acknowledge it, but then when you follow the money, you see that the money is not getting to the core issues: the health care, the education, and the justice system.

“The homelessness crisis in Ontario is the direct result of provincial indifference”—this is very strong language from AMO; I personally have never seen anything like this—“and provincial underinvestment,” said Brian Rosborough. That is what he said to us at committee. That is what the government members who are on finance committee heard. If we are going to go through this exercise of travelling around the province and of saying to people, “Come to us with solutions”—because we did hear solutions. The not-for-profit sector, as I started off—I really am losing my audience here. Sometimes you don’t want to hear it, but I’ve got to say it, because I’m speaking the truth of what we heard at committee: “The homelessness crisis in Ontario is the direct result of provincial indifference and provincial underinvestment.”

1500

And then I have the FAO report, which demonstrates the underinvestment. I just can’t even imagine being in a position where there was a contingency fund. This is very different than a surplus. The contingency fund in this province is at a record high. At the beginning of this year, it was at \$4.6 billion. It is now sitting at \$2.9 billion—\$2.9 billion unallocated. We have no say over where the money is going, although the FAO, thank goodness, did come through; he did do some tracking. But there really is a lack of transparency. As I said, when you have no transparency, you don’t have a lot of trust, and I certainly don’t have a lot of trust. So we started the 2022-23 fiscal year with a total of \$4.6 billion in the unallocated contingency fund—unprecedented. The FAO has said that most provinces just don’t have that kind of slush fund sitting around, especially when you have pressing, urgent issues in health care and education. But some of the money in Q3 went to auto sector subsidies and some support of the Toronto 2022 budget shortfall.

That leads me back to the AMO conversation. Municipalities have said to the government, “We want to be part of the solution. We want to plan for growth. When you have housing, housing is connected to economic prosperity, because you can draw and attract people into your communities.” But at the end of the day, if you don’t have the housing, it really is hard to pull those people back into your community.

I think some of our members have mentioned this: If you’re talking about mining, when we were up in Kenora—there’s an opioid, mental health, health care crisis which really makes it very hard to imagine what support services are going to be available to people. Housing is one of those key issues. Her question today was met in some ways with ridicule by the government, but it’s a very valid question. If you are going to bring miners to the north, where are they going to live? The accommodation certainly is not there.

We do talk a lot about northern Ontario, and the potential of northern Ontario has not been realized at all. Our members of the official opposition have been very clear about what the north needs. They just need a fighting chance. They need the same parity of infrastructure funding. They need the same funding around health care and mental health resources. They want the investment in education.

The President of the Treasury Board also mentioned that they’re supporting doctors. Well, I talked a couple of weeks ago about the concierge at my building, Mohammad. He’s a medical doctor from Pakistan. His specialty is around dealing with dialysis and renal functioning. One of our northern members had been talking about how hard it is to get doctors to go to the north. Well, I guarantee you, if Mohammad was given a fighting chance to secure his licence here in Ontario, he would go to the north. He would bring his family. He wants to be a doctor. He’s trained to be a doctor. We need Mohammad to be a medical doctor in the province of Ontario, and yet barrier after barrier after barrier is set up against him. I’m going to connect him with the local media, and we’re going to tell his story, because the story of what this government is investing—or not investing—in, the story of this government’s so-called priorities and what’s actually happening on the ground are two very different stories.

Nowhere else is that as clear as day as when the President of the Treasury Board talks about nurses and how this government values nurses.

This morning, I did my statement based on the Ontario Nurses’ Association delegation to us at finance committee. I have to say, I don’t know why this government keeps fighting with the nurses. I have no idea why this government will favour more expensive privatized agency nurses over the very nurses who helped us get through the pandemic and who showed up every single day to hospitals across this province. They paid such a huge price. These are their recommendations—and I’m so happy to get more detail on this, because the President of the Treasury Board talked about operating expenditures. Well, every hospital in Ontario—their top expenditure is 60% for salaries.

You should be investing in the people who are doing the work. You should be investing in the people who take care of people. As I said, funding a bed is one thing—it’s a piece of furniture—but investing in the people in the system is really where a progressive government would be going.

This is what ONA said: Their number one recommendation is to retain nurses and health care workers—and this is what we heard. I remain convinced that you can have the most ambitious, most expensive, most glamorous recruitment strategy, but you cannot recruit into a broken system. It will never happen. That’s why nurses are going to Alberta. Regardless of the tête-à-tête that the Premier of Alberta and the Premier of Ontario is having—he’s like, “Can you please stop doing that?” Well, can you please treat nurses with respect so they will stay here in Ontario? It’s a basic concept. It’s not really a complicated concept.

When they talk about retaining nurses and health care workers by improving their working conditions and showing them respect—so this is from nurses. Nurses in Ontario do not feel respected. One of their first things is, they say to drop the costly appeal of Bill 124—this is the Superior Court decision which struck down the wage-suppression legislation as unconstitutional. So it's one thing to bring in an unconstitutional piece of legislation, but it's another thing to lose that case in court and to have the court say, "This is unconstitutional. This piece of legislation is working against the people you're elected to serve." And then it's another thing altogether to then go back to court and waste more tax dollars fighting that unconstitutional piece of legislation. It's not a good situation.

This government has a long history of spending a lot of time in court. We're still waiting to see the mandate letters. This is something that defies all logic. If the government of the day, the Conservative government of Ontario, is interested in talking about transparency, if they are interested in building trust with the people of this province, then open up your mandate letters. You have lost four times in court. You are spending money—you are throwing good money after bad—trying to prevent the people of this great province from finding out what's in the Minister of Health's mandate letter, and I'm very curious about that particular letter. I'm also really curious about community and social services, and children's services. I'm very curious about finance. I would be very interested to find out what the Minister of Education's mandate letter says. Why should I not, as a parliamentarian, as the critic for finance and Treasury Board, be able to see and be able to walk across the aisle and say, "What are your priorities? What has the Premier of Ontario said to you, as a parliamentarian? What direction, what marching orders—what are your goals?" What is so threatening about that? Why would the Premier be fighting that in court, having lost four times? I joke—I don't think it's very funny—but you are really employing a huge number of lawyers. It's sad.

We've actually never seen this before. There was some plays that the Liberals had taken. But when they got pushed on cash-for-access, which was a really big issue in that term—and I was sitting on the finance committee—they struck a committee. They reviewed what was happening at the federal level. They looked at other jurisdictions. They basically came clean on the fact that cash-for-access is not acceptable. I hope that we all agree that cash-for-access is not acceptable. But they did that. So why is the government of Ontario preventing the people that you serve—that we serve—from seeing the mandate letters? Because your actions are worrying many people across this province, particularly on the profitization of health care.

1510

So when the nurses say—and this is one of their recommendations, they go through Bill 124, they ask you to bargain in good faith. This seems very reasonable to me. Go back to the table. They say legislate 10 permanent paid

sick days for all workers. They acknowledge that getting sick in the workplace—you can have all your "working for workers" pieces of legislation, but at the end of the day, if those workers are getting sick on the job, that isn't good for patient care, it isn't good for patient outcomes and it isn't good for the workforce.

This is a tool that the minister has had. Our member from London West has brought forward several pieces of legislation. We have said to the government, "Let's work together on this so that sick people don't have to go to work and get more sick, and so that it doesn't compromise the overall health and well-being of the people that we serve."

The second thing from the Ontario Nurses' Association is bolster the health workforce and plan for the future. I have to say, some of these numbers are worrisome. They want the government to launch a robust recruitment strategy to bridge the RN care gap and for Ontario to reach the average RN-to-population staffing ratio in Canada. Just so that we're on par with other provinces, the province needs to hire at least 24,000 net new RNs.

They have some suggestions, though, Madam Speaker. They say "Maintain appropriate RN-to-patient ratios in all hospitals." They say "Increase the number of RN seats at Ontario universities and colleges by 10%." Why haven't you done that? I mean, this is something—it makes so much sense that you have to question why the government would not increase the capacity of new nurses in universities and colleges. Why? The people want to know—people who are international nurses who want to go into those programs, people who are RPNs who want to become RNs. That bridging program needs to be more streamlined.

My future daughter-in-law just went through this process. I have to say, it took her so long. She's so talented. She got a job away right away because, of course, we need nurses, and she got put right into the pediatric unit right out of college. Nurses have told me—because there are so few nurses to mentor new graduates, and this is something that the Ontario Nurses' Association is genuinely concerned about, and so should the government. It is really important to have somebody to mentor a new nurse. You need that support. It is a hard, hard job, Madam Speaker. The emotional labour of being a nurse in the province of Ontario right now cannot be underestimated.

They go on to say "Expand the bridging programs"—I talked about that—and "stop the replacement of RNs with other classifications." That's a big issue. Changing the scope of practice willy-nilly isn't going to solve the underlying issue of not having the appropriate amount of nurses.

Ms. Doly Begum: Quality of care.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Sorry?

Ms. Doly Begum: Quality of care.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Quality of care, right.

And bring back the late career initiative—there are nurses who would come back into the workforce. They really would. But they're not going to come into this particular environment right now, and I honestly can't

blame them. I want them to feel supported, I want them to be encouraged and I want them to have the financial support to do the upgrading and the upskilling, but I don't blame them right now for not being there.

The other example that we had at committee, another solution that this government definitely could employ, is increased funding for nurse practitioners and community health centres. The fact that this province is not utilizing the capacity of nurse practitioners who can alleviate a wait-list by 900 patients—one nurse practitioner can carry a workload of 900 patients. Nurse practitioners are keen to work in smaller communities and rural and northern communities. Our health critic, the member for Nickel Belt, has been talking about the value and the capacity of nurse practitioners for years, and it truly is astounding. As I said, I really do hope that on Thursday in the 2023 budget we see a significant investment in nurse practitioners.

The third piece is around ensuring the safety of nurses and health care professionals. This speaks to recruitment, because nurses are still fighting to get the appropriate personal protective equipment. ONA says, "Guarantee access to N95s or a higher level of protection." They want to stay healthy. They want to stay healthy so that they keep their patients healthy, so that they can keep showing up to work.

Then, tackle head-on the growing epidemic of violence in health care settings. What we have heard in our local ridings, what nurses have experienced first-hand around physical and also emotional abuse—because people are so frustrated, that environment has been so demoralized. I think that's what we heard. We heard Bill 124 has been humiliating for them, and yet this government stubbornly, callously holds on to this legislation, fighting for it in court, even when the very people that you call heroes tell you that it is untenable. If you want to fix the problem, there are solutions here.

The last point from ONA is to stop the privatization of Ontario's health care system. This is a huge concern for this workforce. I would argue that you're kind of working at odds with yourself. You're trying to recruit nurses into a system, but you're creating a parallel system as well. That parallel system is now competing with the public system, and you have all the research and all the evidence which demonstrate that this will undermine the goal of staffing up our hospitals.

Why does the government not fund our current surgical suites, expanding those services? They are the public infrastructure in 100 public hospitals in this great province. Why would you not reach the potential and ensure that the capacity of those surgical suites is met? You could address the 12,000 children who are waiting. You could address the 90,000-surgery backlog of long-haulers—which is kind of a terrible name, but these are people who have been waiting so long that the optimum time to receive surgery and to have a really healthy outcome has come and has gone.

I can't imagine the finance minister knowing all of this now—and I want to thank the good staff at the Financial Accountability Office; they broke down these numbers for

us. They laid it right on the line, Madam Speaker. They said the investment needs to happen, or we will get to a point in time in the province of Ontario where—and these aren't my words—we will fundamentally lose whatever we have left of our public health care system.

I don't know about you on that side or this side, but these people here—these 31 people now, because we just won a really good by-election in Hamilton—we think that public health care is worth fighting for. It gets us up every day to come to this place, and even to have to listen to the rhetoric that we had to this morning during the non-answer-period time—lots of questions but not a lot of answers. When that does happen, it is essentially demoralizing, but at the same time, I think that the people we serve truly know what we're fighting for, because they see what's actually happening in Ontario. It doesn't matter what the press release says. It doesn't matter that you have some awkward nurses and doctors behind you in the photo op. The fact of the matter is that people know what's happening in our health care system and they're very concerned about it. Even the people who have money are concerned about it, Madam Speaker.

I want to talk about this one story that I just caught wind of on Friday. It's really good that the member from Hamilton Mountain has come into the House, because she has stood in her place for years now talking about the tsunami of complex-medical-needs children who age out of being a child into adulthood.

Cynthia Mulligan did a story last week. These parents came forward to tell their story. I believe they're from Simcoe: Michelle and Sean Crooks. They have twins who are 23 years old. Both boys have autism. During the pandemic, when the routines got broken, the supports fell apart, and Aidan, one of the boys, became very violent. It became too much for the parents.

1520

We all know some parents who are, really, at the breaking point. If you're meeting with parents and they're in this state, you have this genuine feeling of helplessness because there is nowhere for them to turn.

So I just want to say, their son Aidan, for the last eight months, has been in a psychiatric unit because there's no place else for him. As a parent, it's heartbreaking to watch these stories, because the solutions are there, and there actually even may be some resources, not in their genuine community—but the rules are so broken, the community supports are so fragmented, that there is no safety net. It is frayed, it is torn and it has been that way for a long time, which is why when you see that you underspent in community and social services by \$603 million—that money is needed.

Those agencies and the support services, they're ready to scale up. They want to be able to pay their people very well. They do. I don't know why people would be shaking their head. That money needs to get into the community. The government budgeted. They said, "We acknowledge that the need is there," but the money has not gone into the community.

So then you have parents—there's a cost to actually not investing. That's the other part. So because the money

didn't get out the door, because it's not in the community, because Aidan doesn't have any options, he's in an eight-by-eight cell, a padded cell, in a psych unit. That is not the appropriate place for a 23-year-old who has complex medical needs and autism. It is cruel, is what it is. His parents have said, "I think we broke, and now we're trying to put ourselves back together" again.

But the fact that there is an opportunity to change the course of Aidan's life to help these parents, the fact that you could do something on housing—you really could. The developers are not going to build affordable, attainable housing. Developers and home builders are in the business of business. The government of the day has a moral responsibility to do the right thing for the vulnerable people of this province. And in doing so—and I think that this is the frustrating part about it—you save money down the line, because the fact that Aidan has been in a psych unit for eight months costs a lot of money. It costs a lot of money for people to get so sick that they move past the emergency room and then they're in long-term care. It costs a lot of money to not get an assessment for a child in the education system and to see that child become so frustrated that they're excluded from school and end up in the justice system—the justice system that you also underspent and underinvested in to the tune of \$88 million just last quarter.

I have a young woman in my riding who was assaulted three years ago, at the age of 15. She has not had her day in court. But the person who assaulted her has already confessed to the assault. So that person is still out there in the community, and you wonder why women don't come forward and tell people about their experiences.

If the system does not respond in an ethical and trusting way, if the system is not transparent, then you don't have trust. So as the government stands in their place and talks about how great they are, it is my job, it is our job as the official opposition, to speak truth to power, and that is what we do every single day in question period. Now, we don't get the answers, because you have your talking points. But what we have is the people in our communities who know why we are fighting, and we are fighting for a strong public education system. We are fighting for a strong health care system. We are fighting you on the further profitization of the health care system. We're fighting on transparency and trust around the greenbelt.

This really has mobilized people. Perhaps the government is surprised by this. I personally am not surprised, because there have been a series of decisions that this government has made which have whittled away on goodwill. Goodwill and trust are also very much connected, and when you do follow the money, you see that the priorities are auto subsidies versus housing. You make some municipalities whole—you gave the city of Toronto some money—but then we heard today about a \$1.2-billion shortfall on housing. I don't know if you've seen Toronto housing lately, but who makes an investment in Toronto housing stock and then not maintains it, not keeps it up? It's like throwing good money after bad. You invest, but then you don't take care of the investment,

when we cannot afford to lose any more affordable housing in Ontario.

That truly is the most frustrating piece, Madam Speaker: The opportunity here to create good local jobs—because you can't send those jobs on housing offshore; those are good local community jobs. The educational system is clamouring for new folks. We heard Bill 124 has had a cooling effect on labour, full stop. And so people are looking for jobs that are less complex and that make more money, because those people who work in the public system—those people who go to work every single day to uphold our public services, to serve children, to serve seniors—those opportunities are not seen as true opportunities anymore. They were at one point, I would say. They genuinely were.

In fact, I have this crest in my office. It's actually my father-in-law's. He served in national defence for 40 years. Do you know who signed that certificate? Brian Mulroney. He thanked him for his service. This government is failing the people who serve in the public service. You are pushing them out.

In fact, the out-migration for the province of Ontario has never been higher. You are losing between 50,000 to 130,000 who are going to school here, but they're taking their skills and their talents to other jurisdictions, where they can afford a house, where their family can find child care, where their family can actually reach their potential. You can't blame people for doing that, but I can tell you, while you have Bill 124 on the books—which is, as we've heard, humiliating for workers; which caps them at 1%—people are going to leave the system, and you will never be able to recruit those people back into the system, because once they're gone, they're gone. They're not coming back to an unaffordable Ontario.

And so, while you have Bill 124—stubbornly, callously fighting for an unconstitutional piece of legislation in our courts, wasting taxpayer money—and while you have Bill 23 on the books, when 444 municipalities have said, "This is not helpful. This is disrespectful to the people who elected us, and this will not help with the affordable housing crisis in Ontario," and while this government stubbornly refuses to admit that homelessness is a crisis in Ontario—when all those conditions are at play, you have a chance on Thursday. You have a real chance with budget 2023, and that's what we're going to want to see.

We put in a dissenting opinion to the finance minister. We gave him some solutions and some suggestions, and we're going to be looking for those suggestions, because we want Ontario to be stronger. We want the people in public service to be respected. We want our health care system to be there. We want Aidan not to be in a psychiatric unit; we want him to be in a residential home, where he is loved and he is supported. Ontario can be that place, but it will take strategic investment.

While you sit on \$2.9 billion in unallocated contingency funds, while you basically say, "Yes, we have this slush fund, but we're just going to hold on to it for a rainy day," what you need to know is that it is raining in this province for so many people. The storm is here. You

helped create it. You helped create it when you froze the minimum wage in 2018-19 all the way through a pandemic, which, costed out, was \$7,000 a year for vulnerable workers.

You have the opportunity on Thursday to do the right thing, and we are hoping and praying on this side of the House that you do it.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Further debate?

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: This Conservative government talks frequently about how it's working for the people of Ontario, yet in the last three quarters, the expenditure monitor report from the FAO indicates that the government is underspending on the people of Ontario: on their health by \$1.25 billion, on their education by \$844 million, on children's and social services by \$458 million and on post-secondary education by \$175 million.

1530

Speaker, the government is asking us to vote for its supply bill even after they have failed to spend what they said they would. And with a record-level contingency fund that they've made a cabinet secret, as I sit here today in opposition, it's hard to think about voting for any of the good things that may be in this act. The government is refusing to adequately fund critical services that the people of Ontario rely on by refusing to pay nurses and other health care workers what they are worth. Refusing to spend to keep the people of Ontario healthy isn't financial prudence; in fact, it's the exact opposite.

While the government talks of record investments, they also have record contingency funds. And we may have record levels of taxpayer money being spent by this government to defend their losing battles around their unconstitutional laws in court. As the President of the Treasury Board accurately pointed out just this afternoon, every dollar they spend comes from the taxpayers of Ontario. But we don't know if this spending is at record levels because this government has not been transparent about how much taxpayer money they have been spending to fight in court. We do know that they budgeted \$30 million to fight the federal government on their carbon tax, only for the Supreme Court to uphold the federal climate policy. They made private businesses put up their political notices, and the court found that unconstitutional. Now they refuse to disclose how much they're spending on two further appeals: hiding their ministry mandate letters, and on the continued, ill-conceived and damaging Bill 124.

Fighting to hide their mandate letters has been going on since 2018—five years of wasting Ontarians' hard-earned tax dollars. I've spoken about Bill 124 many times and its damaging effects on our health care and education systems. But to add insult to injury, the government continues to waste taxpayer money—money they could be paying those health care workers—to keep fighting what the courts have called unconstitutional; to keep fighting market-interfering, wage-capping legislation that's driven away health care workers, nurses and other public sector workers.

And while the government decides to limit health care workers and nurses' wages to a 1% increase and decides

to spend taxpayer money to fight that illegal law in court, it speaks to the priorities of the government that they decide to create a record number of parliamentary assistants, effectively giving many of their MPPs a 14% raise.

Let's talk about transit, Speaker. This government talks about getting it done. Well, the Eglinton LRT, which goes through my riding of Don Valley West and was started under the previous Liberal government, under this government is over budget by millions of dollars. The tab is still being run up, and the government will not tell the people of Ontario when it will be completed or how much their errors have cost.

The previous Liberal government started to get the work done on the Hamilton LRT. This government spent money to cancel it, only to decide the previous Liberal government was on the right track and then decided to bring it back. Had they not cancelled the project, it would have been completed earlier and for less money.

Similarly, the Liberal government started the work on GO expansion, which would include electrifying trains, making them more energy efficient and faster. Unfortunately, this government delayed that project when they came into power, and now they boast about bringing it back. While building these transit projects is critically important, the government will not accomplish what these projects are intended to when the government does not spend the money needed to help cities operate their transit systems.

Because the member for Mississauga–Lakeshore raised it, let's talk a little more about Highway 413, the Conservative government's unnecessary project that they claim will save commuters 30 minutes. Data from the Ministry of Transportation, their own ministry, as reported by the Toronto Star, refutes this, and says that by using the existing 400, 401 and 407 highways, commuters could cross the GTA 16 minutes faster than they could using the proposed Highway 413 alone. Perhaps the government should tell the taxpayers of Ontario if it might be more prudent to buy back the 407 that a previous Conservative government sold off, rather than to build a new highway that does what the 407 is supposed to do.

We need a government that's willing to provide the services that people need, that's willing to invest in children's education and to build an economy that works for all. The government announces long-term investments while at the same crippling our health care system in the here and now by not funding it, and this is hurting the people of Ontario and our economy.

A recent article from CBC said 50,000 young people are leaving Ontario because they see better opportunity elsewhere. Building new subdivisions in the greenbelt is not going to address the housing crisis. Paving over agricultural land will not help food affordability. Underpaying our educators and health care workers until they quit is not going to give those same 50,000 young people the education system they need so their children can have a brighter future.

Health care, education, transit, protecting the environment and helping build opportunity for a brighter future

are indeed the business of government. Ontario needs a fiscally responsible government that is fully transparent about what it asks its ministries, that treats its health care workers with respect so they can do the work needed for the people of Ontario, a government that manages all parts of our economy, including implementing an affordable daycare system that works for families in Ontario. Ontario needs a government that is fully transparent about our finances instead of artificially inflating projected expenses by squirrelling away billions in contingency funds. That is why, sadly, I will be voting against this supply measure.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Further debate?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I'm up to debate the government's Supply Act to authorize expenditures for the government's fiscal plan. What I really want to talk about today is what this act will not supply for the people of Ontario.

Let's start with housing that people can afford. The experts have told us that over the next decade we need to build 160,000 deeply affordable homes in this province. Of those, 60,000 need to be permanent supportive homes with wraparound mental health, addictions and other supports. You won't see money for that in the Supply Act.

You won't see money for that allocated to ensure that we build affordable communities—communities where people can actually live in homes they can afford, close to where they want to work. Instead, what you have is a government focused on building million-dollar homes in the greenbelt, paving over the farmland that feeds us and contributes \$50 billion to the province's economy, the land that protects us from flooding, the wetlands that clean our drinking water. So let's supply the ability of the government to spend money on affordable homes instead of paving over the places we love.

Second, you won't see anything in the government's fiscal plan that will supply the ability to build affordable climate-ready communities with resilient infrastructure that's going to withstand the impacts of the climate crisis that we're already facing. According to the Financial Accountability Officer, in this decade alone—we're just talking about the next seven years—the government is going to need to invest \$26.2 billion just to make our public infrastructure have the ability to withstand the impacts of the climate crisis, \$14 billion for transportation alone—our roads, our highways, our bridges, our transit systems. You can see it—when I was coming to Queen's Park today, the number of potholes I hit alone coming in, let alone the climate impacts we're going to face—we're going to need \$6.2 billion over the next seven years just for water and stormwater systems and \$6 billion for buildings.

So, Speaker, think of the people and the communities, the municipalities who are going to be on the hook for this damage. We need to do far more to prevent it from happening in the first place—which you don't see in the Supply Act—we're going to need to protect the nature that protects us in order to reduce the financial costs of these risks. But at the very least, if the government is going to

ignore doing that, they should at least allocate the funding to build the resilient infrastructure to be able to withstand those impacts.

Third, there's nothing here that's supplying people with the solutions to address the health care crisis that we're facing and, in particular, solutions to pay the nurses and the front-line health care workers who care for our loved ones each and every day. We should be embarrassed in Ontario that we have the lowest-paid nurses in the country. The Financial Accountability Officer, an independent officer of the Legislature, in his latest report says that Ontario spends the lowest per capita on health care of any province in the country, and we have the lowest-paid nurses the country. So if we're going to solve the health care crisis, we actually need to invest in the people who care for our loved ones. That means getting rid of Bill 124. Stop wasting more money on lawyers to appeal it and actually start bargaining fair wages, better working conditions and better benefits for nurses and other front-line care workers in this province.

1540

The final thing that you won't see supplied in this expenditure plan is the base budget funding that our mental health services need to just be able to maintain existing levels of service, which anyone in the sector will tell you are already inadequate. Some 28,000 young people are on wait-lists that can go up to two and a half years to access basic mental health services.

I tell a story oftentimes of a young man I ran into in downtown Guelph. I never forget the day I asked him, "How are you doing?" He said, "I'm okay today, but it would have helped six months ago, when I was on suicide watch, if I could have accessed mental health services. But I finally got a call from somebody yesterday."

When we underfund basic public services like mental health services, those have real-world impacts on people's day-to-day lives, their quality of life, the quality of life in our communities. If you talk to small businesses in downtowns and along main streets all across the province, they'll tell you it has direct impacts on the economy of this province, the ability of the small businesses to generate the prosperity to fund high-quality education, public health care and the other social services we need.

Speaker, let's actually have a fiscal plan that supplies what the people of Ontario need to thrive.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Further debate? Further debate?

Pursuant to standing order 67, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Sarkaria has moved second reading of Bill 77, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023. 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 Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): On division.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutila Karpoche): Pursuant to standing order 67, the bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

SUPPLY ACT, 2023

LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 2023

Mr. Sarkaria moved third 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 Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutila Karpoche): Pursuant to standing order 67, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Sarkaria has moved third reading of Bill 77, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the

fiscal year ending March 31, 2023. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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 Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutila Karpoche): I declare the motion carried on division.

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

Third reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutila Karpoche): Orders of the day? The member from Barrie–Innisfil.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: No further business.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutila Karpoche): There being no further business, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1545.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day

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Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	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	
Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)	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
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough- Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)	Willowdale	Associate Minister of Transportation / Ministre associé des Transports
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	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
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Dowie, Andrew (PC)	Windsor—Tecumseh	
Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	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	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	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
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Michael D. (PC)	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	
Fullerton, Hon. / L'hon. Merrilee (PC)	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	
Gill, Hon. / L'hon. Parm (PC)	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	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
Jones, Trevor (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	
Jordan, John (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Ke, Vincent (IND)	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
Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	
Leardi, Anthony (PC)	Essex	
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean	
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
McCarthy, Todd J. (PC)	Durham	
McGregor, Graham (PC)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Associate Minister of Housing / Ministre associé du Logement
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
Pierre, Natalie (PC)	Burlington	
Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)	Timmins	Minister of Mines / Ministre des Mines
Quinn, Nolan (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Hon. / L'hon. Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Northern Development / Ministre du Développement du Nord
Riddell, Brian (PC)	Cambridge	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
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	
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Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, David (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Smith, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	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	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	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	

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