

Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario



Assemblée
législative
de l'Ontario

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

No. 81A

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

N° 81A

1st Session
43rd Parliament

Monday
29 May 2023

1^{re} session
43^e législature

Lundi
29 mai 2023

Speaker: Honourable Ted Arnott
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
Greffier : Todd Decker

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<https://www.ola.org/>

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7400.

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7400.

House Publications and Language Services
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service linguistique et des publications parlementaires
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

ISSN 1180-2987

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Monday 29 May 2023 / Lundi 29 mai 2023

Royal assent / Sanction royale

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott) 4459

Former Clerks of the Assembly

Hon. Paul Calandra 4459

Motion agreed to 4459

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Less Red Tape, Stronger Economy Act, 2023, Bill 91, Mr. Gill / Loi de 2023 visant à réduire les formalités administratives pour une économie plus forte, projet de loi 91, M. Gill

Hon. Parm Gill 4460

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff 4463

Mr. Terence Kernaghan 4467

Mr. Lorne Coe 4468

Ms. Sarah Jama 4468

Mr. Brian Saunderson 4468

Third reading debate deemed adjourned 4469

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉES ET DÉPUTÉS

Events in Oxford

Mr. Ernie Hardeman 4469

Barrick Gold Corp.

Ms. Jessica Bell 4469

Events in Etobicoke–Lakeshore

Ms. Christine Hogarth 4469

Summer safety / Sécurité estivale

Mr. Guy Bourgouin 4470

Decoration Day

Mr. Trevor Jones 4470

Employment practices

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche 4470

Government policies

Mr. Graham McGregor 4470

Climate change / Health care

Mr. Adil Shamji 4471

Niagara Week

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff 4471

Skills Ontario Competition

Mr. Matthew Rae 4471

Wearing of hockey jerseys

Mr. Dave Smith 4472

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEUSES ET VISITEURS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott) 4472

Mr. John Yakabuski 4472

Ms. Chandra Pasma 4472

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner 4472

Mme France Gélinas 4472

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon 4472

Mme Dawn Gallagher Murphy 4472

Hon. Victor Fedeli 4472

Mr. Tom Rakocevic 4472

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy 4472

Mrs. Daisy Wai 4472

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam 4472

Hon. Stephen Lecce 4472

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed 4473

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson 4473

Mr. Rob Flack 4473

Mr. Sheref Sabawy 4473

Ms. Jess Dixon 4473

Armenian Heritage Month reception

Mr. Aris Babikian 4473

Member's birthday

Miss Monique Taylor 4473

Member's birthday

Hon. Doug Ford 4473

QUESTION PERIOD / PÉRIODE DE QUESTIONS

Health care

Ms. Marit Stiles 4473

Hon. Doug Ford 4473

Hon. Sylvia Jones 4474

Government accountability

Ms. Marit Stiles 4474

Hon. Caroline Mulroney 4474

Government accountability

Mr. Joel Harden 4475

Hon. Caroline Mulroney 4475

Automotive industry

Mr. Logan Kanapathi 4476

Hon. Victor Fedeli 4476

Amateur hockey

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens 4476

Hon. Neil Lumsden 4476

| | |
|---|------|
| Energy rates | |
| Mr. Dave Smith..... | 4477 |
| Hon. Todd Smith..... | 4477 |
| Ontario farmers | |
| Mr. John Vanthof..... | 4478 |
| Hon. Nina Tangri | 4478 |
| Hon. Doug Ford | 4478 |
| Temporary nursing agencies | |
| Mr. Adil Shamji | 4478 |
| Hon. Sylvia Jones..... | 4478 |
| Affordable housing / Homelessness | |
| Ms. Goldie Ghamari..... | 4479 |
| Hon. Nina Tangri | 4479 |
| Tobacco control | |
| Mme France Gélinas | 4480 |
| Hon. Paul Calandra | 4480 |
| MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam | 4480 |
| Small business | |
| Mr. Brian Riddell | 4480 |
| Mr. Sam Oosterhoff | 4480 |
| Education funding | |
| Ms. Chandra Pasma..... | 4481 |
| Hon. Stephen Lecce | 4481 |
| Accessibility for seniors and persons with disabilities | |
| Mr. David Smith | 4482 |
| Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho..... | 4482 |
| Long-term care | |
| Mr. Wayne Gates | 4482 |
| Hon. Paul Calandra | 4482 |
| Indigenous mental health and addiction services | |
| Mr. Ric Bresee | 4483 |
| Hon. Michael A. Tibollo | 4483 |
| Notice of dissatisfaction | |
| The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott) | 4483 |
| Superior Corporate Services Limited Act, 2023, Bill Pr25, Mr. Fraser | |
| The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott) | 4483 |
| Reception | |
| The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott) | 4483 |
| Krystle Caputo | |
| Hon. Michael Parsa..... | 4483 |

**REPORTS BY COMMITTEES /
RAPPORTS DE COMITÉS**

| | |
|---|------|
| Standing Committee on Justice Policy | |
| Ms. Goldie Ghamari..... | 4484 |
| Report adopted..... | 4484 |
| Standing Committee on Social Policy | |
| Mr. Brian Riddell | 4484 |
| Report adopted..... | 4484 |

| | |
|---|------|
| Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy | |
| Ms. Laurie Scott | 4484 |
| Report adopted | 4484 |

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

| | |
|---|------|
| Mount Pleasant Public Cemeteries Act, 2023, Bill 113, Ms. Bell / Loi de 2023 sur la société Cimetières publics Mount Pleasant, projet de loi 113, Mme Bell | |
| First reading agreed to..... | 4484 |
| Ms. Jessica Bell..... | 4484 |

MOTIONS

| | |
|---|------|
| Committee sittings / Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs / Standing Committee on Public Accounts | |
| Hon. Paul Calandra | 4484 |
| Motion agreed to | 4485 |

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

| | |
|------------------------------|------|
| Éducation en français | |
| Mme Chandra Pasma | 4485 |
| Domestic violence | |
| Ms. Christine Hogarth..... | 4485 |
| Education funding | |
| Ms. Jessica Bell..... | 4485 |
| Taxation | |
| Ms. Andrea Khanjin..... | 4486 |
| Hospital services | |
| Mr. Chris Glover | 4486 |
| Health care | |
| Mr. Terence Kernaghan..... | 4486 |
| Taxation | |
| Mr. Lorne Coe..... | 4486 |
| Social assistance | |
| M. Guy Bourgouin | 4487 |
| Taxation | |
| Mr. Graham McGregor | 4487 |
| Land use planning | |
| Ms. Jennifer K. French..... | 4487 |
| Taxation | |
| Mr. Brian Riddell | 4487 |

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Hazel McCallion Act (Peel Dissolution), 2023, Bill 112, Mr. Clark / Loi Hazel McCallion de 2023 sur la dissolution de Peel, projet de loi 112, M. Clark

| | |
|------------------------------|------|
| Hon. Nina Tangri..... | 4488 |
| Mr. Matthew Rae..... | 4492 |
| Mr. Terence Kernaghan..... | 4496 |
| Mr. Brian Saunderson..... | 4496 |
| Ms. Jennifer K. French..... | 4496 |
| Ms. Christine Hogarth..... | 4497 |
| MPP Jamie West..... | 4497 |
| Mr. Jeff Burch..... | 4497 |
| Mr. Brian Saunderson..... | 4506 |
| MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam..... | 4506 |
| Mr. Graham McGregor..... | 4506 |
| Mr. Terence Kernaghan..... | 4506 |
| Ms. Andrea Khanjin..... | 4507 |
| Mr. Joel Harden..... | 4507 |
| Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto..... | 4507 |
| Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong..... | 4510 |
| Ms. Andrea Khanjin..... | 4510 |
| MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam..... | 4510 |
| Mr. Brian Saunderson..... | 4510 |
| MPP Jamie West..... | 4511 |
| Mr. Matthew Rae..... | 4511 |

Superior Corporate Services Limited Act, 2023, Bill Pr25, Mr. Fraser

| | |
|---|------|
| The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche)..... | 4511 |
|---|------|

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Monday 29 May 2023

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 29 mai 2023

The House met at 0900.

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

ROYAL ASSENT

SANCTION ROYALE

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that in the name of His Majesty the King, the Administrator has been pleased to assent to certain bills in Her Honour's office.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Trevor Day): The following are the titles of the bills to which His Honour did assent:

An Act to amend and enact various Acts with respect to the health system / Loi visant à modifier et à édicter diverses lois en ce qui concerne le système de santé.

An Act to amend various Acts with respect to infrastructure / Loi modifiant diverses lois sur les infrastructures.

An Act to amend the Mining Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur les mines.

An Act to enact the Queen's Park Restoration Secretariat Act, 2023, and to make certain amendments to the Legislative Assembly Act and the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act / Loi édictant la Loi de 2023 sur le Secrétariat de la restauration de Queen's Park et apportant certaines modifications à la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative et à la Loi sur l'accès à l'information et la protection de la vie privée.

An Act to implement Budget measures and to amend various statutes / Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à modifier diverses lois.

An Act to revive Artgem Granite and Marble Inc.

An Act to revive 1753461 Ontario Ltd.

An Act to revive 816537 Ontario Inc.

An Act to revive Flight Level Canada Inc.

An Act to revive J2M Collingwood Holdings Inc.

An Act to revive 414087 Ontario Limited.

FORMER CLERKS OF THE ASSEMBLY

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Speaker, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to move a motion without notice

arranging the ceremony for honorifics for former Clerks of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Calandra is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to move a motion without notice arranging the ceremony for honorifics for former Clerks of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. Agreed? Agreed.

I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Speaker, I move that, following the proceeding "introduction of visitors" during the morning routine on Wednesday, June 7, 2023, the Speaker shall interrupt proceedings and the House shall observe a ceremony, in the following form, in recognition of former Clerks Mr. Claude DesRosiers and Ms. Deborah Deller:

That at that time, Mr. Claude DesRosiers and Ms. Deborah Deller be permitted to attend the floor of the chamber while it is in session; and

That the government House leader be permitted to present orders in council to be laid upon the table; and

That the Speaker shall read the orders in council to the House; and

That the Speaker be authorized to make statements in recognition of Mr. DesRosiers and Ms. Deller; and

That following such statements, Mr. DesRosiers and Ms. Deller be invited to take honorary seats at the table; and

That the remainder of the morning routine shall continue following the ceremony; and

That the standing orders of the assembly be amended as follows:

The following new order is added:

"148. Former Clerks of the Assembly, while entitled by the order of the Lieutenant Governor in Council made pursuant to section 77.4 of the Legislative Assembly Act, 1990, to use the honorific title 'The Honourable' and after such order is laid upon the table, are permitted to attend the floor of the chamber while it is in session and take an honorary seat at the table at their pleasure."

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Calandra has moved that following the proceeding introduction of visitors during the morning routine on Wednesday, June 7, 2023—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Dispense? Dispensed.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

LESS RED TAPE, STRONGER ECONOMY ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 VISANT À RÉDUIRE LES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES POUR UNE ÉCONOMIE PLUS FORTE

Mr. Gill moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 91, An Act to enact two Acts, amend various Acts and revoke various regulations / Projet de loi 91, Loi visant à édicter deux lois, à modifier diverses lois et à abroger divers règlements.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the minister care to lead off the debate? I recognize the Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

Hon. Parm Gill: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to lead off third reading of Bill 91, the Less Red Tape, Stronger Economy Act, 2023. Once again I'll be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the member from Niagara West.

Our government has made it a priority to continuously track down and remove unnecessary, redundant and outdated regulations that hold Ontario's economy back. Since 2018, we have eliminated more than 16,000 individual compliance requirements for businesses, reducing our total regulatory burden by 6.5%. These changes have helped save businesses, not-for-profit organizations and the broader public sector nearly \$700 million in annual regulatory compliance costs. That's \$700 million that can now be reinvested in Ontario's economy.

This ongoing work is necessary because red tape causes frustration, expenses, needless delays and complications for everyone: individuals, businesses, non-profit organizations and for the broader public sector. We are proud of our progress but continue to look for ways to do more on a daily basis, because regulatory burdens are barriers to our productivity, to innovation and to our economic competitiveness and development. And they result, of course, in real cost.

Just look at Ontario's track record during the last 15 years of the previous Liberal government, of course supported by the official opposition. Our province had the highest regulatory burden in the country. Companies were tangled in endless regulations. Debt, deficits and taxes went up. Hydro rates spiralled out of control. More than 300,000 manufacturing jobs packed up and left our great province.

When we formed government in 2018, we knew that there had to be a change, and we worked hard to make that happen. Under the leadership of our Premier and this government, we have brought forward 11 different red tape reduction and regulatory modernization packages that have helped get our province back on the right track. We are committed to continuing this important work while maintaining those important rules and regulations that are necessary to keep people safe and protect the environment.

But make no mistake, Speaker, reducing red tape is not just about counting the number of regulations and trying to reduce them; it is about the impact those changes are

having on real people and businesses across our great province—changes like accelerating timelines for municipal approvals for broadband projects to support our goal of bringing high-speed Internet to every community in Ontario by 2025; changes like helping businesses embrace new technologies so they can improve safety standards for their workers and reduce their carbon emissions; and changes like saving people time and frustration when they access government programs, by offering more services online so people don't have to wait in line.

0910

This package is the result of continued collaboration across government with other partner ministries and extensive consultations with a range of stakeholders and people across the province to develop an unparalleled inventory of red tape reduction ideas. I'm proud to say that the proposed Less Red Tape, Stronger Economy Act is our government's 10th burden-reduction bill and our largest one to date, with 37 different schedules. It sets out measures to build a stronger economy, improve services and save Ontarians their most valuable resource, which is time. It's an important part of our larger spring 2023 red tape reduction package, which contains additional regulatory amendments and policy changes that contribute to a common goal of reducing red tape. If passed, Bill 91 will streamline processes and modernize outdated practices across multiple areas of government and several sectors of Ontario's economy.

Speaker, we find ourselves in uncertain economic times, and while Ontario has remained resilient, we cannot take anything for granted. That's why it's so important we continue our effort to streamline Ontario's regulatory climate so we can make it easier to invest and do business in our province. How we work together to address regulatory burdens will affect us now and for generations to come.

A wide-reaching red tape reduction bill like this one simply isn't possible without the assistance of our partner ministries across government, who best understand the issues that their sectors are facing and how we can implement solutions to solve them. Our goal with the burden-reduction initiative in our proposed bill is not to get rid of rules and regulations for the sake of doing so, but rather to ensure that we no longer rely on ones that are burdensome, inefficient, inflexible or outdated, and that the ones we do rely on are current, and enforced properly, predictably and consistently. With those principles in mind, Speaker, I would like to take another opportunity to speak to some of the items with the spring 2023 red tape reduction package and how they will make life better for people right across our great province.

I'd like to start with a change from the Ministry of Infrastructure, which is playing a leading role in our government's plan to build Ontario, with transit, highways, hospitals, universities and broadband. As a government, we have committed to connecting every community across the province to high-speed Internet by the end of 2025, because high-speed Internet is no longer a luxury, it is a necessity. Speaker, this is a goal we are getting closer and

closer to meeting each day. Yet some Internet providers are still facing unnecessary delays in receiving required municipal permits and approvals when they go to build the broadband that our residents so desperately need. That's why our bill is proposing amendments to the Building Broadband Faster Act, 2021, that would enable more efficient collection of utility infrastructure data to optimize routing for projects, to plan networks and to prevent delays in the permitting process between municipalities and Internet service providers. This will ensure that ISPs can plan, design and build a high-speed Internet project as quickly as possible, connecting more communities across Ontario to high-speed Internet faster.

But it's not just broadband that our government is building. In the last two and a half years, the government has attracted billions of dollars in new manufacturing investments, including from global automakers and suppliers of batteries for electric vehicles. These are top-tier companies and employers who are looking for new opportunities for industrial facilities and mineral extraction in Ontario. It's huge news for our economy, but these projects are going to require access to many critical minerals. We have a responsibility to ensure the miners who do the difficult work of supplying those critical minerals or other raw materials our province needs are kept as safe as possible.

That's why, working with our colleagues at the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, we have amended various provisions in the mines and mining plants regulations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act to improve ventilation requirements in underground mines and lower exposure to harmful diesel exhaust to the most protective levels in North America. Amendments were also made to requirements for ventilation systems and equipment, management-of-change procedures, ground control, hoisting and explosives. These include allowing for new technologies, like track-mounted robots, to identify loose rocks, misfired explosives and other safety hazards, while keeping workers out of danger. It's a great example of enhancing safety protections for workers while providing employers with more flexibility to meet these requirements—an ideal example of what reducing red tape can accomplish.

Speaker, working with the Ministry of Transportation, we've also brought forward new initiatives to help move people and goods safely and efficiently across the province. We're proposing an amendment to the Highway Traffic Act that would prohibit drivers from overtaking snowplows working in a staggered formation across highway lanes. This is intended to help reduce motor vehicle collisions with snowplows on higher-speed, multi-lane highways, making the public safer and reducing the burden on emergency responders, health care services and the insurance sector, including our legal system.

We are also proposing to remove duplicative requirements for the towing and vehicle storage sector. To improve safety for people needing a tow and those working in the towing industry, the province is taking steps to implement a certification program that would require tow

operators, tow truck drivers and vehicle storage operators to meet certain requirements to operate in Ontario. But as we roll this out province-wide, the ministry is also proposing amendments to the Municipal Act and City of Toronto Act that would ensure operators and drivers in the towing and vehicle storage industry are not required to pay multiple licensing and certification fees or adhere to different municipal requirements when the provincial certification program is in effect.

We are also proposing additional measures in our red tape reduction package to encourage and reinforce the need for pre-consultation with the Ministry of Transportation for any Planning Act submissions, such as official plans, development proposals or housing proposals that include work adjacent to provincial highways. Pre-consultation with MTO would help streamline and ensure timely comments, approvals and permits by ensuring proponents and municipalities are aware of MTO requirements before starting significant work. This could translate into tangible cost savings of thousands of dollars by avoiding project implementation delays and reduce the potential for frustration and dissatisfaction for proponents and municipalities.

0920

Next, I'd like to share three modernization measures coming from the Ministry of Colleges and Universities. First, Bill 91 is proposing enhanced administrative monetary penalty collection for long-standing non-compliant private career colleges. Under the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005, administrative monetary penalties are levied against career colleges and other institutions that contravene the legislation. These rules, of course, help to address bad actors who prey on students, protect compliant institutions and uphold the integrity of the private career college sector. That's why we're proposing to strengthen collection of outstanding administrative monetary penalties for non-compliant career colleges by leveraging enhanced collection tools. This will ensure the accountability of training providers, protect students and promote a healthy and vibrant private training sector.

The Less Red Tape, Stronger Economy Act is also proposing to require legislative reviews of the Private Career Colleges Act every five years. When originally passed, the Private Career Colleges Act included a requirement for review seven years after its coming into force. This requirement was completed in 2013, and now there is no requirement in the legislation for any further review. By introducing regular reviews of the Private Career Colleges Act, Ontario is supporting career colleges in staying responsive to the needs of the economy and employers in preparing students for great careers and keeping Ontario open for business. Finally, we're also proposing to update the name, to the Ontario career colleges act, to signal the importance of career colleges in preparing students for high-demand professions.

Speaker, working with the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, we have also proposed new legislation to implement the Convention of 23 November 2007 on the International Recovery of Child Support and

Other Forms of Family Maintenance, also known as the 2007 Hague Convention. The 2007 Hague Convention is an international treaty that applies to obtaining, changing and enforcing spousal and child support orders when parents or spouses live in different countries. If legislation is passed to implement the convention in the province and the government of Canada ratifies the convention, Ontario would be able to enforce support for Ontarians from 34 additional countries, for a total of 55 countries across four continents. This amendment would make Ontario one of the first provinces in Canada to implement the 2007 Hague Convention. If passed, current procedures would also be streamlined to provide Ontarians with access to faster, more efficient and easier processes to establish, vary and enforce support orders internationally, so that payments flow more quickly and reliably. This would help save time and reduce frustration for families in Ontario's support orders system.

In our bill, we have also proposed amendments to the legislative framework for financial protection programs administered by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Financial protection programs, or FPPs, help protect farmers from financial risks, like a dealer defaulting on a payment of a farmer's grain or livestock, or an elevator operator who doesn't return grain to a farmer upon demand. They are currently governed under three separate acts: the Grains Act, the Livestock and Livestock Products Act and the Farm Products Payments Act. The legislative framework of having three separate acts has made it burdensome to administer. That's why we're proposing to replace them with one consolidated, updated and streamlined act, which would, if passed, support the current and future needs of the sector.

While we're talking about farmers, Speaker, I'd also like to highlight a proposed regulatory amendment under the Milk Act, one that has come directly from ongoing conversations with the Ontario Dairy Council. As with other industries, Ontario's dairy industry has changed over the last several decades and regulations have not kept pace with new technologies, practices and products. Some legacy requirements remain in regulation, resulting in unnecessary costs for dairy producers and processors. By modernizing the regulations under the Milk Act, we would help the burden and costs for dairy processors, while maintaining the high food safety standards that people have come to expect from Ontario's agri-food sector.

Next, I would like to speak to a very important proposed amendment from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. As part of a phased approach in creating a framework to regulate carbon storage in Ontario, the Less Red Tape, Stronger Economy Act is proposing amendments to the Oil, Gas and Salt Resources Act to accommodate innovative technologies. This regulatory framework would give Ontario the ability to establish protective checks and balances for testing and demonstration projects on private land, including for carbon storage. We're talking about piloting technology that has the potential to store 30 years' worth of carbon emissions. Carbon storage plays an important role in Ontario's low-carbon hydrogen

strategy, which sets out a vision for a low-carbon hydro economy in our province, one where we can develop a self-sustaining sector in the province, evolve our energy system, create local jobs and attract investments, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It's a win-win for Ontario.

We are also proposing amendments to the Courts of Justice Act. Each year, the Office of the Children's Lawyer's financial position and records are reported in public accounts. We are proposing changes to the act that would remove the requirements that the Auditor General also audit the Office of the Children's Lawyer, saving them both time and resources. In addition to this, we are looking to amend the Substitute Decisions Act to clarify that an attorney has the power to access personal information about an incapable person. These amendments would provide clarity, simplify processes and make it easier for substitute decision-makers to do their job.

Building on this, we are also proposing an update to the Creditors' Relief Act to modernize the delivery of court services and make communications quicker and easier by allowing the sheriff's office to send enforcement documents by email.

We're also looking to fix legislation under the Execution Act for collection of judgment awards, including seizure of debtors' property, to clarify when the principal residence exemption in forced sales can apply.

0930

The bill also includes proposed changes to the Trustee Act that would make it clear that investment managers of trust properties may invest in mutual funds, pooled funds or segregated funds on behalf of a trustee.

And we have proposed amendments to the Cannabis Licence Act which would reduce costs and red tape for retailers who wish to transfer their operating licence, retail authorization and cannabis inventory to a new cannabis retail licence holder.

We also have some exciting amendments to the Ontario Energy Board Act, which would allow the Ontario Energy Board to facilitate innovative pilot and demonstration projects, such as exploring the idea of peer-to-peer energy trading. There is a vast potential for energy innovation that could modernize the way we produce, distribute or consume energy, and eliminating red tape associated with pilot and demonstration projects has the potential to reveal real value for the sector and for customers. The bill also proposes changes to keep energy rates affordable for Ontarians by amending the Ontario Energy Board Act to prohibit any administrative monetary penalties, fines or fees imposed by energy utilities from being recovered from customers through energy rates.

In addition to this, we're also looking to allow mutual insurers incorporated under the Corporations Act to decide the size of their board of directors to give companies greater flexibility, and to amend the Pension Benefits Act to remove requirements for plan administrators to provide additional notices to members who have already opted to receive communications in electronic format when they retire.

In addition to these measures, we are also proposing to save time and reduce burdens by amending Ontario's business law statutes and regulations to permanently enable businesses, not-for-profits and condominium corporations to hold virtual or hybrid meetings, facilitate virtual or hybrid voting, and enable certain notices or documents to be sent electronically.

And we're making updates to the Motor Vehicle Accident Claims Act to authorize the fund to make statutory payments from a designated purpose account, consistent with the recommendations by the Auditor General.

We're also looking to strengthen board governance for Ontario's tourism and culture agencies by reducing unnecessary red tape and delays in appointment processes, supporting business operations, increasing flexibility in appointments to support strengthened agency oversight, and clarifying board governance rules to reduce confusion and support business success.

Building on this, we are also proposing to modernize legislation for eight public agencies and a publicly funded organization to follow the best practices of their provincial agencies by incorporating a "protection from personal liability" provision for board members. The proposed changes would clarify rules for public appointees and align these agencies with governance best practices, modernizing the governance framework for these organizations and making it easier and more attractive to serve on their boards.

The Less Red Tape, Stronger Economy Act, 2023, also proposes changes to the Niagara Parks Act which would make it easier and faster for routine land easements to be granted on the Niagara Parks Commission's properties. This change would allow for routine utility work to take place quicker, giving residents of Niagara much-needed access to utilities such as cable, natural gas and water systems.

With that, Speaker, I'd like to turn it over to my parliamentary assistant, the great member from Niagara West.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutila Karpoche): The member from Niagara West.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: My thanks to the minister for his inspiring words this morning. I know, on a Monday morning, it's exciting for all the new pages who are here in the House. This is some of the first debate that they've had the opportunity to enjoy and I can tell you, the way it started off this morning, they're going to be getting a lot more of this sort of interesting discussion of the affairs of state that we have here to discuss in the Ontario Legislature.

I just wanted to begin by thanking the minister for his leadership, for his vision and for his steadfast tenacity in fighting job-killing red tape and in fighting unnecessary regulations that waste time, that waste money and that don't serve a practical purpose. When it comes to good regulations that protect health, that protect safety, that protect our environment, I know that the minister is one of the first to say we need to keep those important regulations in place. Yet, at the same time, when it comes to cutting unnecessary, onerous and duplicative processes that do nothing to add value, that do nothing to protect health and

safety and the environment, this is a minister who listens and then acts, who doesn't just speak but gets the job done. I would say he's an example of some of the best that this government has to offer in serving the people of the province of Ontario. My thanks to the minister for his participation in debate this morning. I'm honoured to be able to build on the work that the minister has spoken about and worked closely with my team on.

I also want to begin this morning just briefly by acknowledging that my beautiful wife, Keri, and my son, Sullivan, are at home right now watching this. Hi, Sullivan. I hope you understand some of what dad's talking about this morning. I know for them too it's a good Monday morning when we can discuss red tape reduction and what we're doing to keep a strong future for my son and for so many others here in the province of Ontario.

Before I dig into some of the details of the legislation that the minister didn't have the opportunity to get into yet this morning, I do want to take a few moments and remind everyone about why what we're doing to reduce burdens is so important.

Last year, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business estimated that red tape costs small businesses in Canada approximately \$11 billion each year—\$11 billion, Speaker. And that's just small businesses. Ontario used to be known as the most heavily regulated province in the country. When we formed government in 2018, we knew that had to change urgently. We set out to make that happen, to remove the unnecessary and outdated regulations that cost Ontarians time and money. And we did. Since July 1 of 2018, our government has reduced the number of regulatory compliance requirements affecting businesses by 6.5%. Why does this matter? Because these changes ensure that we're able to increase jobs and investment in Ontario, making it less expensive, faster and easier to do business, to set out one of the best regulatory service standards in North America.

It's not just what we're doing, Speaker, it's why we're doing it: to ensure that future generations continue to see an Ontario that is the economic driver and innovator of this country. We're delivering on that commitment. Our government has taken more than 450 burden-reducing actions to date, reducing 16,000 individual compliance requirements while continuing to look for ways to improve.

We've continued the practice of introducing two high-impact red tape reduction bills every year, one each fall and one in the spring. In fact, this government has delivered some nine high-impact pieces of red tape reduction legislation in the last five years. And here we are today, at the third reading of our 10th and largest red tape burden reduction bill to date.

We have made a commitment to save Ontario businesses, including not-for-profit organizations in the broader public sector, at least \$400 million in annual compliance costs by March of 2022, not to mention the numerous hours that have been saved as well. I'm pleased to state that for the record, we have not only met but actually exceeded this goal. Our red tape reduction measures have

so far saved businesses, not-for-profit organizations, municipalities, school boards, colleges and universities, and hospitals nearly \$700 million in annual compliance costs. That's \$700 million each year that Ontario businesses and public-serving organizations can put to better use. Our newest red tape reduction bill, the proposed Less Red Tape, Stronger Economy Act, will save Ontario businesses even more when fully implemented.

0940

Speaker, we've come a long way. We continue to be grateful for the ideas that we've received from stakeholders, from people across the province and from our ministry partners, who have worked diligently to streamline processes and modernize outdated practices across multiple areas of government. It's what has allowed us to continue delivering on our commitment to support economic competitiveness and create high-quality, well-paying jobs and an attractive investment climate.

I'm going to tell you a little bit more about how we do the work that we do. Every time the Ministry of Red Tape Reduction gathers together and considers a new idea, a new bill or change to the regulatory structure or the legislative structure, we draw on seven guiding principles, which consistently direct our efforts to reduce red tape. These principles are enshrined in the Modernizing Ontario for People and Businesses Act.

The first principle is that recognized national and international standards should be adopted when possible. This is because we know that harmonizing requirements across jurisdictions reduces costs, reduces the time that it takes for compliance and makes it easier to do business across borders. On this note, I think of last week's announcement from the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development with the news that engineers are now going to be able to practise here in Ontario as soon as they arrive in this great province.

The second pillar is that small businesses should have less onerous requirements when it comes to compliance when compared to larger businesses. It recognizes that smaller businesses, the mom-and-pop shops, don't have the same resources as their larger counterparts to focus on compliance. I'm sure this is something we've all seen when we visit job creators in our communities. Small businesses don't have large legal divisions. They don't have the resources to be able to dig through mountains of paperwork and they're not able to meet some of the same requirements in some heavily regulated areas that a larger business would.

The third is that any entity subject to regulations should be provided accessible digital services whenever possible, because in 2023, we shouldn't be asking people or businesses to have to fill out long paper forms anymore.

The fourth principle we operate under is that regulated entities, such as businesses, services and broader public sector organizations, which demonstrate excellent compliance should be recognized. Businesses which have been known to break the rules should be penalized, while those which are known to follow the rules should be given a break.

The fifth pillar is that unnecessary reporting should be reduced and steps should be taken to avoid requiring regulated entities to provide the same information to the government again and again and again, for little to no reason. Nothing is more frustrating than filling out the same form over and over and over, or having to repeat the same story to multiple ministries or different levels of government. The Premier sometimes has called this the merry-go-round. You go around the circle, around the circle, and every time, you fill out all the requirements; one person makes one change at one point, and you've got to go back around the merry-go-round and make changes all over again.

The sixth pillar is that instruments should prioritize the user by using clear communication, setting reasonable response times and establishing a centralized point of contact. This is a straightforward requirement. People and businesses should be able to understand the requirements imposed on them by government. You shouldn't need a legal background. You shouldn't need to speak bureaucratese or governmentese, as I know so many in this building do, in order to be able to access the services that you rely upon.

The seventh principle is that an instrument should specify the desired result that regulated entities must meet, rather than the specific methods used to attain that result. Good outcomes are really, at the end of the day, what we're concerned about, and we recognize that there can be many different ways to get to that same result. We want to encourage innovation, not discourage it.

As the minister mentioned in his remarks earlier this year, this year's spring red tape reduction package focuses on three key themes: (1) paving the way for better services; (2) helping Ontario businesses grow; and (3), saving Ontarians time. I'm going to spend a few minutes this morning speaking to a few more initiatives from our spring package which help us realize these three commitments.

First, when it comes to paving the way for better services, I'd like to highlight an initiative that's coming from the Ministry of Transportation which looks to modernize agency governance at the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission. The Ontario Northland Transportation Commission is an agency which has an important role to play in our government's plan to build a stronger Ontario. We've committed to restoring passenger rail service from Toronto to northern Ontario, and we're well on our way to delivering on that promise, with planning under way and three new state-of-the-art trainsets on order from Siemens Mobility.

Along with this work, our government is proceeding with developing a new and clearly defined transportation-focused mandate for Ontario Northland, which will be brought forward in this House in the future as part of new, modernized legislation. This is a necessary change because the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission Act is a legacy statute from 1902, which has seen limited changes and does not align with modern agency legislation. Speaker, 1902: To remind everyone, that's six years before the Ford Motor Co. invented the Model T and

34 years before the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility was born. Clarifying the agency's mandate will help increase agency alignment with the government's strategic vision and empower that agency to deliver on priority projects like the Northlander.

Another way we're proposing to improve access to services is by proposing amendments to the Ontario Energy Board to better protect ratepayers. Speaker, I was elected in the fall of 2016 on a theme of hydro and hard work. Those who weren't perhaps here in the bad old days under the former Liberal government don't remember the havoc that skyrocketing hydro rates played in Ontario's economy. It led to manufacturing jetting out of this province as fast as they could go. It led to residents in my community speaking about having to make the choice between heating and eating. And, I would argue, it led to my by-election victory in the fall of 2016. But since that time, Speaker, our government has been able to move forward on taking actions which protect ratepayers and ensure we have a clean, reliable and affordable source of hydro.

But Speaker, you might be surprised to learn that currently, utilities can pass on costs that they've incurred from failing to comply with their statutory obligations to ratepayers through increases to rates. You heard that right: They break the rules, and you pay the tab—absolutely mind-blowing. We're putting an end to that practice. This amendment will protect ratepayers from paying for the costs incurred because of non-compliant situations and help to keep rates predictable—a step in the right direction, and yet another demonstration of our government's commitment to keeping hydro rates low.

Speaking of the Ministry of Energy, I would love to share some more information about another way that this red tape reduction package is actually helping some innovative businesses grow here in the province of Ontario. We know that Ontario's clean energy grid is a competitive advantage in attracting investments and jobs to the province. We've heard about this from businesses, and we've heard about this also internationally. Speaking with the Minister of Energy, when he went to eastern Europe, there was a huge amount of interest in our nuclear grid, our amazing combination of clean, reliable nuclear power and our hydro stations, of course, that in the Niagara region are not just part of our history but an integral part of our industry. As we see the energy sources of the future coming online, we know that there's more that can be done in this space.

0950

That's why we're proposing amendments through this legislation to the Ontario Energy Board Act. This would allow the Ontario Energy Board to remove certain regulatory barriers to innovative pilot and demonstration projects. The Ontario Energy Board has put forward a proposal which will expand the Ontario Energy Board's authority to facilitate innovative pilot and demonstration projects, such as exploring the idea of peer-to-peer energy trading. There is a vast potential for energy innovation that will revolutionize the way we produce, distribute and

consume energy, and eliminating the red tape associated with these pilot and demonstration projects has a real potential to demonstrate value for consumers, ratepayers and the broader economy. Now, innovative projects which come from this program and are scalable could provide electricity ratepayers benefit, not just through lower rates and a more reliable and resilient system, but also by providing a positive impact to Ontarians by making it easier for businesses that provide stable, well-paying jobs to thrive.

Speaker, we're also proposing amendments to reduce costs and red tape for retailers through the Cannabis Licence Act for those who wish to transfer their operating licence, retail authorization and inventory to a new retail licence holder. These changes would also apply to licence holders who have changed their ownership structure. It's important to emphasize these proposed changes would not change any of the existing eligibility rules for a cannabis retail authorization or an operating licence, including limits on the number of stores that can be owned by a single operator or restrictions that exist around the location of stores.

Speaker, something I also care about that this legislation helps move forward on is what we're doing to save the most valuable resource that any of us have, which is time. At the end of the day, I believe, we have around two billion seconds in our average lifespan, and so if you think about each of those seconds, it's the most finite resource that any one of us will ever have. To be able to use that time wisely, to be able to use that time well, is a gift, and not to have to waste that time on endless government bureaucracy, endless government red tape and regulations, especially when they're unnecessary or outdated, is an important way that we as legislators can help safeguard for our constituents their most important resource: time.

For this example, I would like to highlight an initiative coming from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development—say that three times fast, eh? The ministry is seeking to clarify the concept of “survivor” in the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act in relation to terms such as “surviving spouse” and “cohabiting” as well as other related issues. Modernizing the approach that the WSIB takes in relation to survivors will improve operational consistency in decision-making, reduce administrative burdens and enable the WSIB to process claims faster and save Ontarians time.

Now, there are a few other ways we are working to save Ontarians time as well. We have proposed amendments to electronic forms of delivery under the Pension Benefits Act. Currently, pension plan administrators are required under the act to provide reminder notices to members by regular mail, even if they've opted in to receive communications in electronic form. In other words, you get a note saying, “Sign up for a digital copy of this particular notification for your pension plan,” and being someone who wants to not just save time but also perhaps save emissions and reduce your paper output, you go online, you go to the website connected through the paper notification you got and you sign up to receive these email

notifications. And you do, which is great. You get your first notification, and perhaps a week later, all of a sudden you get the duplicate of this information in the mail. Okay, perhaps they missed it. The next notification comes out perhaps a month later and once again, you get it through email—great—and a week later or a few days later, you get it again via mail. That's because it's mandated under Ontario law that you have to get those notifications, even if you opt in to the electronic form, by regular mail. But the proposed amendments in this legislation would eliminate that need to send retiring plan members unneeded reminder notices. In other words, they would still be able to get those notices if they wanted them, but they would also be able to not get those notices and have it only online if they want. This will also in turn reduce costs and duplication for the pension plan administrators, and we all know that if we can cut that management fee just a little bit, that's savings directly in the pockets of those pension plan holders.

We've also proposed changes to allow for virtual board meetings to be made permanent. You might recall the early days of the pandemic, when so much happened so quickly and we were forced to take processes that had always been done on paper or in person and put them online. At that time, temporary legislative amendments were made to several business law statutes and the Condominium Act as well to generally allow corporations, including not-for-profits, to hold virtual meetings regardless of requirements in their governing documents or in the legislation. It goes without saying that this has been extremely popular and a very successful measure, particularly for smaller organizations who may not have had the physical infrastructure, such as the office space, to host these meetings in person. That's why the Less Red Tape, Stronger Economy Act is proposing to implement permanent changes to replicate the purpose of the temporary measures with respect to virtual meetings and to enhance additional virtual processes related to notices and records. We believe that this change will modernize virtual process rules, reduce the burden and make life easier for individuals as well as for businesses and corporations.

Alongside this change, we're proposing to amend the Corporations Act to modernize the board composition requirements for mutual insurers. Currently, the Corporations Act requires the boards to constitute insurer boards in multiples of three. The ministry proposes to amend the act and remove that requirement by making it consistent, rather, with similar requirements under the Business Corporations Act. The proposed change, if approved, would give these companies flexibility and save money for their insurance policy holders.

These are all measures that impact people directly, but we know that a significant part of red tape reduction is also about reviewing the way we do things here in government to make them more efficient and more effective. A great example of this is the three initiatives in our bill put forward by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport. One of the proposed changes is to amend some outdated legislation to strengthen board governance for Ontario's tourism and culture agencies. The proposed amendments

would reduce unnecessary red tape and delays in the appointment process, and support business continuity as well as increased flexibility in appointments to support strengthened agency oversight and governance. For example, this legislation will standardize board terms of office to be up to three years at pleasure, rather than a fixed term, which will provide for flexibility to meet operational, policy or business needs. These are relatively straightforward amendments that just make sense. They're about allowing Ontario's tourism and culture agencies to run more efficiently and effectively.

The ministry is also seeking to modernize agency governance and clarify rules for Ontario's public appointees by incorporating "protection from personal liability" provisions in legislation and regulations for their agencies and transfer payment entities. The amendments would strengthen board governance and make it easier to attract the best candidate for board service, allowing the ministry agencies and transfer payment entities to maximize their economic impact.

Additionally, the ministry is proposing legislative amendments that, if passed, would streamline approvals for Ontario's people, businesses and agencies. The proposed changes to the Niagara Parks Act, for example, would make it easier and faster for routine land adjustments to be made on or near Niagara Parks Commission properties. The change would allow for routine utility work to take place faster, giving the residents of Niagara much-needed access to things such as cable, natural gas and water systems. The proposed changes to the Art Gallery of Ontario Act would support the government and the AGO's commitment to transparency by getting annual reporting information to the public faster.

There are also several modernization measures of this type that originate from the Ministry of the Attorney General. The ministry is proposing to amend the Courts of Justice Act to remove the requirement that the Auditor General examine and report on the accounts and financial transactions of the Office of the Children's Lawyer. This is a historical and antiquated requirement. It dates back to a time when the Office of the Children's Lawyer was not embedded within the Ministry of the Attorney General. But today it operates as a program area of the Ministry of the Attorney General, and it doesn't have any funds in the bank or trust accounts outside of the Consolidated Revenue Fund. It means that its financial position is already reported in the province's public accounts and there's no other set of books maintained for the office to report on its own finances. As a result, to comply with the Auditor General's audit requirements, the office is required to create a separate set of financial documents which are not used for any other purpose; solely for this audit. Even with our proposed amendment, the Auditor General will still retain the ability to audit the Office of the Children's Lawyer as part of the Auditor General office's normal scope and powers; the only difference is that it will no longer be compulsory to do so on an annual basis.

1000

The ministry is also proposing to update the Creditors' Relief Act, 2010, which governs the distribution of money among eligible creditors where the sheriff has enforced a

court or tribunal order for the payment of money. Currently, the only way a sheriff can deliver this notice is by mail or in person. Speaker, it's 2023. We know that there are faster, better ways to communicate. This change, if approved, would permit the sheriff to serve documents by email, improving and simplifying communications between sheriffs' offices and stakeholders. It's simple, it's straightforward, and it just makes sense.

We've also proposed to make amendments to the Execution Act which, if passed, would clarify when the principal-residence exemption in forced sales can apply. It's a housekeeping change which would provide clarification as to the original intent of the act.

The Attorney General ministry is also proposing a change to the Trustee Act to make it clear that investment managers of trust property may invest in mutual funds, pooled funds or segregated funds on behalf of a trustee. This would remove the current limitations on investment-manager activities and make the law more consistent with current industry practice.

Speaker, the minister spoke about this, but there's a lot of work that goes into the consultation and development of these red tape reduction packages. We've been working collaboratively with stakeholders from across our ministry partners. We've been consulting with a wide range of partners, people and stakeholders from across the province to build an unparalleled inventory of ideas. I want to encourage those who are watching today who may have ideas to go to ontario.ca/redtape, and provide your feedback and solutions and ideas and ways that we could unleash the potential of Ontario through that portal. I want to take a moment to recognize some of the pieces coming out of this package that directly address ideas and requests such as those that came from stakeholders and people across the province.

Earlier, the minister spoke about an initiative coming from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development which updated mining regulations to reflect current practice and technology, keep the regulations up to date and reduce regulatory burden on the sector. We know that Ontario's mining sector is a crucial part of our economy, providing jobs, investments and raw materials which are essential for the manufacturing and construction industries. That's why I want to thank the labour partners and the management leaders of the mining sector advisory committee for helping our government identify these much-needed amendments. They will help us to strengthen occupational health and safety for miners who support this vital sector by leveraging new technology, such as drones, to better protect them from airborne hazards.

Another example is that the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks recently repealed outdated recycling regulations for soft-drink containers. This was supported by the Canadian Beverage Association. Before curbside blue box programs became common, Ontario required a portion of soft-drink containers to be refillable to encourage their diversion from landfill. As you can imagine, a lot has changed with time, and the regulations

in place are no longer reflective of current recycling practices or consumer behaviours. So we've revoked out-of-date regulations associated with soft-drink containers because producers already have ambitious targets and collection diversion requirements under Ontario's new blue box regulations.

One last example is the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs's intention to make regulatory amendments under the Milk Act. Dairy farmers are a vital component of the province's agricultural sector, and coming from a long-time dairy family, I know how important it is to ensure that they're supported. While Ontario's dairy industry has evolved significantly over the last decades, regulations haven't kept pace with the new technologies, practices and products. This has resulted in unnecessary costs for dairy producers and processors. So after receiving a request from the Ontario Dairy Council, the ministry set out to find ways to amend the regulations to minimize the regulatory burden, enable innovation and improve consistency with other jurisdictions. And that's exactly what we've done. We're ensuring our dairy farmers can focus on what's important: producing the highest quality milk and dairy products.

Speaker, I'm very proud of the work that's gone into today's legislation, and I'm proud of the work that's happened because of so many coming together to work together to reduce the regulatory burdens on people and business. I'm eager, as I know every member in this House is, to support this great work going forward. The 42 initiatives in the Less Red Tape, Stronger Economy Act and in the spring red tape reduction budget will pave the way for better services, helping Ontario businesses grow and saving the people of this province time and money. The items in this, our 10th and largest burden reduction bill to date, build on over five years of progress, moving forward in modernizing legislation, regulations and policies that are burdensome, inefficient and inflexible for the people of Ontario. Simply put, this bill will lead Ontario to more economic certainty, confidence and stability and continue to position Ontario as a key player in the North American and global landscape now and for generations to come.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutila Karpoche): Before we move on to questions and answers, I want to welcome back to the House Cheri DiNovo, member for Parkdale-High Park in the 38th, 39th, 40th and 41st Parliaments. Welcome to the House.

Questions?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Only this government could open up almost all of the laws in Ontario and fail to address the challenges that so many Ontarians face. It's deeply ironic, Speaker, that the minister, the parliamentary assistant and this government have the audacity to speak of modernity and outdated legislation and then go backwards on animal welfare.

In 1997, under the Harris government, this House was united in support of Bill 139, which stopped training and trialing areas from getting new licences or transferring licences. A letter from the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, the

Animal Alliance of Canada, Northern Ontario Tourist Outfitters, World Wildlife Fund and the Bear Alliance all supported this Bill 139.

Will this government listen to the people of Ontario, remove schedule 14 and listen to all stakeholders before moving backwards on animal welfare?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutila Karpoche): Response?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Well, I appreciate the advice from the member opposite, but I do have to say, it always seems passing strange to me when I hear the members of the opposition stand and start talking about listening to stakeholders when it comes to red tape reduction. I don't think I've seen any member of the opposition actually bring forward ideas to reduce red tape. I haven't been invited to any consultations in the member opposite's riding with stakeholders to get their ideas about reduced red tape.

We on this side of the House have an open-door policy. We want to sit down with people who have suggestions. We want to get their ideas. Unfortunately, we haven't seen that same willingness to partner, to be collaborative, to have a meaningful dialogue with partners and with stakeholders on the opposite benches. So I'm hoping that the member opposite, speaking about the importance of consultation with stakeholders, will learn something about our government's actions and ensure that he does open those doors in his constituency office, get those ideas and bring them to ontario.ca/redtape.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutila Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Speaker, good morning. You'll know that under the Liberals' watch, we lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs that left the province altogether. Now, the people in my riding expect that our government will implement measures that will pave the way for better services and make it easier for businesses to invest in Ontario and succeed. I'd like the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Red Tape Reduction to expand further on what steps we have in place within this legislation, if passed, to help businesses in Ontario succeed and create new jobs.

1010

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: My thanks to the member for Whitby, someone who is a strong advocate for his community and someone who understands the importance of getting it done when we build our economies and the value that that has for families to put food on the table, send their kids to university, have a good life, pay for a home. That really comes down to ensuring that we have a strong economy.

I'm born and raised in the Niagara region. I absolutely love the area that I call home, and I love the people who I have the pleasure and privilege of representing. But I remember for 15 years, when the Liberals were in office, that feeling of hopelessness that often I would encounter when I spoke with young people my age who were worried about being able to get into a good well-paying job, people who said, "I see manufacturing in Niagara leaving. I see

high unemployment in the Niagara region," and they were saying, "Where are we going to go?" Some of them had to perhaps move into the GTA in order to be able to get work.

Speaker, over the past five years, I've seen that change. I see people—young people, new Canadians, those who are moving to Niagara because of its opportunity, and that's directly because of the measures that we're taking in this legislation and in the nine previous packages.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutila Karpoche): Questions?

Ms. Sarah Jama: Schedule 5 of this bill is focused on regulations around cannabis. It's interesting that this government is attempting to make business for retail cannabis easier while possession charges continue to affect a disproportionate number of racialized and other marginalized people across Ontario. I think this is a really great example of how this bill is so far removed in its entirety from the everyday experiences of our combined constituencies.

While focused on businesses who continue to make profit off of this industry, will this government also focus on the full decriminalization related to cannabis possession?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: If I'm understanding the question correctly, the member opposite thinks we should be decriminalizing more drugs; I guess that is where she's going with this. I'm not sure, frankly, what that has to do with the legislation before us.

This legislation is really about reducing the amount of time and energy that people have to spend in being able to do regular business practices. But if the member opposite is interested in bringing forward legislation to decriminalize more drugs—I don't know about other members in this House; for myself, I think we've seen in BC the impact of those policies that the New Democrats brought forward, and we've seen the impact of those policies on the streets of downtown Vancouver and the east side of Vancouver. I'm not sure what that has to do with the legislation today.

Today what we're talking about is legislation to ensure we're building good jobs, that people have hope and opportunity, that they're able to put food on the table for their families. That's what we're focused on doing.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutila Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Brian Saunderson: My question to my colleague: In my rural area of Simcoe–Grey, we know that Internet connectivity is a huge issue. For our local farmers that rely on connectivity for monitoring their herds, for the dairy farmers, and their broods, for the chicken farmers, it's an essential connectivity. We also see it locally through the pandemic with school and education going online. Many families did not have adequate access to Internet.

I'm wondering if the member could speak to the issue of promoting and supporting a drive to get Internet to all Ontarians so that my residents in Simcoe–Grey have an idea of what's coming forward.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Broadband is one of those issues that I've heard a lot about throughout my time here in the Ontario Legislature. It's one that I know we all care about. In the 21st century, being able to access the Internet to do your work is crucial.

I appreciate the member speaking about the impact that it has on agriculture, because the member is absolutely right. When you don't have access to good high-speed Internet, it becomes increasingly difficult to do the work of a farmer in the 21st century, especially with the high-tech requirements that farmers today have and especially when it comes to their ability to update crop data, to be able to have their GPS systems in place and build off that work.

We're taking actions to reduce the time that it takes to get approvals to get those broadband projects moving, and we're doing that in collaboration with the Minister of Infrastructure—with our rural municipalities as well, who have been fierce advocates for these kinds of investments. And really what we're saying is we shouldn't have to wait months and months and months for the approvals in order to be able to drive that broadband through the ground and to be able to expand it to more areas. So we're cutting the timelines that are required and associated with that, to make it faster, easier and make sure that we're getting more people connected when and where they need to be.

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

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

EVENTS IN OXFORD

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: This past week has been a busy one in my riding of Oxford. I had the pleasure of attending several events on Victoria Day and throughout the week. First, I participated in the Victoria Day parade in Woodstock Monday morning. I had a great time connecting with my constituents and seeing familiar faces. The parade featured marching bands, horses, floats from local organizations and businesses, vintage cars, entertainers and more. Later that day, I made my way to the Thamesford Calithumpian parade. The antique cars, tractors, stilt walkers, clowns, dancers, jugglers and other entertainers did a phenomenal job of getting the crowd excited.

On Friday I joined the Minister of Long-Term Care for peopleCare Tavistock's construction-start ceremony for their all-new building. For years, peopleCare has been working with the municipality, the county and the province to build more beds, and I'm delighted to see that our government has approved 100 upgraded and 28 new long-term-care spaces in Oxford with this new facility.

Sheena Campbell, the vice-president of communications and engagement at peopleCare, said that the ministry has a strong commitment to get these beds built and I saw that on Friday. PeopleCare is also proposing to offer specialized dementia care services when their new, fully air-conditioned building is built.

It was great to have spent an exciting long weekend with my constituents and to witness our government's efforts to fix long-term care in Oxford.

BARRICK GOLD CORP.

Ms. Jessica Bell: In May, a resident of University–Rosedale, Lateef Baloch, attended the annual general meeting of Barrick Gold. Mr. Baloch attended the AGM because Barrick Gold has just signed an agreement to mine in the province of Baluchistan, his former home, without informing or consulting local residents. Instead of answering questions, the CEO undermined and discredited Mr. Baloch, using his refugee status to distract the shareholders from the company's actions. He told Mr. Baloch to go back to Baluchistan.

Mr. Baloch is a law-abiding resident of Canada and has every right to be here. If he did go back to Baluchistan, he would face persecution for his work as a human rights advocate standing up against oppression and the forced disappearance and killing of people.

Canadian companies have a responsibility to not escalate conflict in regions around the globe and Canadian companies have a responsibility to secure free, prior and informed consent from impacted people and governments before beginning a mining project in Canada and around the world. That is what I am calling on Barrick Gold to do.

EVENTS IN ETOBICOKE–LAKESHORE

Ms. Christine Hogarth: The month of May has been eventful as I made my way around Etobicoke–Lakeshore. I was honoured to attend and be a judge and hand out awards at the Fusion of Arts and Hearts Competition, hosted by our Catholic district school board trustee, Teresa Lubinski. The event was a celebration of artistic expression from students in over 18 schools in the community.

I also joined constituents at the Franklin Horner Community Centre for the Ridley's Mother's Day high tea, where many seniors got all dressed up to enjoy a day together.

I was proud to bring greetings to the Rotary Club of Toronto Tibetan for their new District 7070 club charter celebration.

With the parliamentary assistant of agriculture, food and rural affairs, we held a local consultation on upgrading the Veterinarians Act.

Last week, I participated in a town hall on affordable housing at LAMP community centre, an issue for many in our community. I want to thank the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for removing development fees for not-for-profit and affordable housing. This will make did difference.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, I was at the Dorothy Ley Hospice with my colleague MPP Cuzzetto for their annual charity event hike. I want to thank them for their support, and I want to thank them extremely for their support during my mother's illness over the last couple of months.

Next week I'll be debating Clare's Law. Behind it is a story of tragedy but also of hope, and I'll speak on that in more detail on that day. I hope all members will be present and lend their support.

SUMMER SAFETY SÉCURITÉ ESTIVALE

Mr. Guy Bourgoïn: Ontario is warming up. Lakes and rivers up north are unfrozen, and tourism will reach its peak in northern communities. As the seasons change, the north comes to life and is ready to welcome Ontarians to celebrate nature and wildlife through various activities like camping, fishing and hiking.

1020

Je veux prendre le temps de rappeler des mesures de précaution pour plusieurs activités estivales afin d'assurer la sécurité des résidents, des visiteurs et, surtout, celle des enfants.

Le nord de l'Ontario est connu à travers le monde comme regorgeant de lacs, rivières, baies et ruisseaux qui n'ont rien à envier aux autres pays. Pour des activités nautiques comme la pêche, le kayak et le bateau, les vestes de sauvetage—les « personal flotation devices »—sont fortement encouragées en tout temps lorsque vous êtes sur l'eau. Assurez-vous que vos enfants portent les vestes de sauvetage adéquates. Vous devez aussi être équipés d'une trousse de secours dans vos bateaux en cas d'urgence.

Our region is also known for breathtaking hikes and outdoor activities like camping. To ensure your safety, always let someone know of your location and itinerary. Also, be informed of fire restrictions in your area and take precautions when attending your fires, as well as properly extinguishing it when leaving the grounds.

Finalement, n'oubliez pas de laisser les lieux que vous avez visités dans leur état d'origine et de profiter de tout ce que la nature a à vous offrir. N'empruntez que les routes formelles et n'endommagez pas la flore.

Most of all, enjoy every bit of what the north has to offer.

DECORATION DAY

Mr. Trevor Jones: In 1905, Spanish American philosopher George Santayana wrote, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” I was thinking of this quote when I stood at a solemn ceremony yesterday at Legion Memorial Field, Maple Leaf Cemetery, in Chatham-Kent.

Yesterday, our Royal Canadian Legion Branch 642 celebrated Decoration Day, a tradition dating well back before Remembrance Day was proclaimed as our nationally designated day to celebrate the lives of the brave men and women who gave their lives in military service so that we could be free. As I stood along veteran soldiers and their families under a cloudless, sunny sky, at the graves of men and women from my community who wore our country's uniform, I was humbled to think so many volunteered to defend our nation at its most perilous times.

Yesterday, people of all ages came out to pause and reflect on our precious democracy, on a world that remains mired in conflict and on the sacrifices of those who gave their today so we could have our tomorrow. The gravesites of our fallen were tidied, some attendees read aloud the

names of the fallen and the small, humble tombstones were decorated, as is tradition, with new Canadian flags, a small gesture of remembrance and gratitude. Lest we forget.

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: A question everyone has asked themselves is, “How much should I tip?” It's a question that often sparks heated debate. There are differing guidelines and social norms, adding to the confusion and anxiety around tipping.

But how about no tip? There are two restaurants in Parkdale—High Park, Barque Smokehouse and Then and Now, who are challenging the concept of tipping by getting rid of it completely. They have implemented the no-tipping strategy to ensure that the dining experience is free from guesswork, while providing workers with predictable income.

As a diner, what you see is what you pay; no more mental math or awkward calculations at the end of a meal. And for the hard-working staff, they know exactly how much they will earn, giving them the ability to plan their lives.

Speaker, I feel this is a trend worth pursuing and would encourage other establishments to have a conversation with their employees on the matter. The no-tipping model creates a more relaxed and enjoyable dining environment for all. It's time to simplify the experience of dining and provide workers with the stability they deserve.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Mr. Graham McGregor: We're now nearing the end of our spring session, and June is right around the corner. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of my colleagues in the House for their service to the province, as well as take a minute to highlight the great work that our government has accomplished in the past months.

Speaker, our government, led by Premier Ford, has made significant strides as we combat the housing crisis, improve Ontario's health care, enhance our children's education, make Ontario safer and strengthen our economy.

We're building on our progress to speed up housing starts. From January to April, we saw over 27,000 housing starts, which represents a 16% increase over the same period last year. On rental, that's almost 7,000 starts, double where we were at this time last year.

We're also breaking from the status quo on our health care system that has stifled innovation and struggled to respond to growing challenges and changing needs.

On the education side, we're taking action to boost literacy and math skills and ensure the province's public education system focuses on what matters most: important, life-long skills.

We're taking action to crack down on criminals and make Ontario safer, whether that's on auto theft or ensuring that high-risk and repeat violent offenders comply with their bail conditions or helping address the rise of hate incidents against religious and minority groups.

As we're continuing to spur job growth and build a strong economy for Ontario families, more than 600,000 people are working today than they were before this government.

Speaker, I promised my riding that I would work my back off on their behalf. This spring was no different. Let's continue to get it done.

CLIMATE CHANGE

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Adil Shamji: Last Wednesday, I had the opportunity to hear Prince Hussain Aga Khan at the Ismaili Centre in Don Valley East, speaking about his seminal work documenting the fragile beauty of our living seas. His remarks and photography were inspiring and humbling—a stark reminder of the vulnerability of our marine ecosystems. In its wake, I am reminded of the critical need to preserve our environment and fight against climate change.

This weekend, Ontarians made their voices heard in one of the largest volunteer-run referendums in our province's history. The referendum, organized by the Ontario Health Coalition, was on the issue of whether our public surgical and diagnostic services should be handed over to private, for-profit interests. Mr. Speaker, hundreds of thousands of votes have been cast. When so many people take the time out of their busy lives to vote on one of this government's most controversial and consequential policies, we should all take note.

On Friday, I travelled the province, lending my support to various voting stations across southwestern Ontario. I visited Brampton, Guelph, St. Catharines, Welland and Niagara Falls, and in every one of these locations, people had been impacted by emergency room closures and out of control wait times. Our health care system is headed in the wrong direction, guided by a faulty set of priorities.

On behalf of the hundreds of thousands of Ontarians who came out to vote to save our health care, Mr. Speaker, I ask of the government, please, for all of us, put your priorities back in the public interest.

NIAGARA WEEK

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Just a few days ago, the regional municipality of Niagara and the Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce hosted Niagara Week here at Queen's Park. We were joined in the chamber by former long-time MPP and chair of the region, Jim Bradley, as well as a number of local mayors and regional councillors, bringing a unified voice of growing better together. My thanks to all members who took the time to sit down with these local leaders from the Niagara region. We know that they were welcomed with open arms by a number of ministers, parliamentary assistants and policy staff, as well as many other members. A highlight of Niagara Week was a key meeting between the Chair and Premier last Monday, together with Minister Clark.

As well, many of you had the opportunity to attend and engage with representatives of the Niagara at the Niagara Week dinner reception, featuring local wine and food. As a grassroots MPP, I pledged I would be first and foremost Niagara's voice here at Queen's Park, not Queen's Park voice to Niagara, and last week, our government opened the door to Niagara as we heard about a number of key issues and priorities for the region, including municipal infrastructure, economic development, housing, the agricultural sector and increased access to transit.

Speaker, our government delivered at the end of Niagara Week when the Premier, Minister Mulroney, Minister Lumsden and Minister Cho all travelled to Niagara to announce the doubling of GO train services between Union Station and Niagara Falls beginning on May 20.

Whether it's working for Niagara, one of the other 444 municipalities or the rest of the province, our government is working with municipal partners across this province to get the job done.

SKILLS ONTARIO COMPETITION

Mr. Matthew Rae: I rise today to recognize a set of great achievements by a group of young people in my riding of Perth–Wellington. Earlier this month, a team of grade 7 and 8 students from St. Mary's Catholic School in Listowel and a grade 10 student, Anne Doig, from St. Michael Catholic Secondary School in Stratford all won gold at the 2023 Skills Ontario Competition.

1030

The student team from St. Mary's competed in the Lego mechanical engineering category. Their project was to design and build a monorail. They worked tirelessly to perfect their skills in preparation for their competition.

Anne Doig from St. Michael competed in the aesthetics category, securing first place. This is the second consecutive year that Anne has won the gold medal in the Skills Ontario Competition for this category.

Thank you to the educators at both St. Mary's and St. Michael for encouraging, supporting and advising these bright young students. Thank you to Skills Ontario for organizing this annual competition and for everything you do to prepare Ontario's youth for the jobs of tomorrow.

The Skills Ontario Competition serves as an exceptional platform for these students to exhibit their skills across a diverse array of trades. Speaker, as the Premier says, a job in the skilled trades is a job for life.

Again, congratulations to the students of St. Mary's and St. Mike's on your resounding victories. This splendid achievement reflects not only upon yourselves but also on your schools and indeed our entire community.

WEARING OF HOCKEY JERSEYS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Peterborough–Kawartha has a point of order.

Mr. Dave Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you know, the OHL championships were completed on our constituency week. So I would seek unanimous consent for the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London to wear the maroon and white home jersey and the member for London North Centre to wear the white and maroon Peterborough Petes' OHL champion away jersey.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Peterborough–Kawartha, who is gloating today, is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to allow the member for Elgin–Middlesex–London to wear one of the Peterborough Petes' jerseys and the member for London North Centre to wear one as well. Agreed? Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm very pleased to say that we have some special guests in the Speaker's gallery today: a delegation of Canadian senators representing the province of Ontario. We have with us the Honourable Salma Ataullahjan, the Honourable Rob Black, the Honourable Andrew Cardozo, the Honourable Donna Dasko, the Honourable Victor Oh and the Honourable Kim Pate. Please join me in warmly welcoming our guests from the Senate of Canada.

Before moving on, I'll remind members that all of you are invited to a lunch reception in honour of the senators at room 230 of the Legislative Building. Also, later on in the afternoon, we're going to be having a round table discussion with members of provincial Parliament in room 340 of the Legislative Building starting at 1:30 so that we can have a dialogue with our guests from the Senate. You're all warmly welcome to attend those two events.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'd like to welcome guests from Waste to Resource Ontario this morning to the Legislature: board Co-Chairs Paulina Leung and Gary Diamond, board members Denis Goulet and Bob Martin, and team member Ravneet Gill. Please come by their lunch reception in room 228 to learn more about the essential work they are doing for our communities in the waste and recycling sector.

Ms. Chandra Pasma: On behalf of the official opposition, I'd like to welcome our guests from the Ontario Autism Coalition, including Kate Dudley-Logue, vice president; Steve Legault, an Ottawa parent; Sandra Huh; Karen Bojti and Michau van Speyk, along with former MPP Cheri DiNovo and Trustee Curtis Jordan from the Upper Canada District School Board, who is the first autistic individual elected to a school board in Ontario's history. Welcome.

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: It's my pleasure to welcome a gentleman who has walked with history in some of our toughest moments. A survivor of the Holocaust, Mr. Nate Leipziger, who is with us together with his wife, has participated in 20 March of the Living trips, received an honorary doctorate from the University of Toronto and numerous medals. He has worked tirelessly for tolerance in the world of freedom for anyone who is oppressed.

Joining Nate today are his wife, Bernice; Cary Green; Kevin Green; Lisa Pinkus; Arla Litwin; and Jennifer

Green. And they're also joined by Michael Levitt, the executive director of the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal foundation of Canada. Welcome to the Ontario Legislature.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It's my pleasure to introduce Hillary Buchan-Terrell—she's advocacy manager for the Canadian Cancer Society—and, of course, my good friend Cheri DiNovo, MPP from Parkdale–High Park for many, many years. Thank you for being here, ladies.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Glorious morning to everyone. It is my honour and privilege to introduce a tremendously talented woman who has definitely made Toronto a much better place to live. The former deputy city manager, Tracey Cook, is in the House.

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: It is my privilege to introduce Dr. David Jacobs and the members of the Ontario Association of Radiologists, who are visiting for their Queen's Park day and will be meeting with MPPs over the course of the day. The OAR represents 1,000 radiologists who specialize in medical imaging and strive to ensure timely access to diagnosis and better patient outcomes.

I would also like to welcome Sherry Wilcox, a lawyer and breast cancer patient, who is here with her daughter and will be sharing her story to shed light on the importance of lowering the age of breast cancer screening. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: I'd like to welcome Raed Kadri—he is the head of the Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network and also the VP of the Ontario Centre of Innovation—and Flavio Volpe, president of the Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association. They're here with Project Arrow, the Ontario-built EV that's outside.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I would also like to take a moment to welcome Tracey Cook, former interim city manager and former deputy city manager at the city of Toronto, as well as Dr. David Jacobs and all the radiologists who are visiting today.

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: It is with great pleasure that I welcome to the House today Father Tom Rosica, celebrating 37 years as a priest with the Basilian order, former CEO of Salt and Light television and the national director of World Youth Day 2002. Welcome, Father Rosica.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Unless there are objections, I'd like to continue with introductions.

Mrs. Daisy Wai: I'd like to extend my warm welcome to my friend Senator Victor Oh and the senator's team as well.

I'd also like to welcome the students from Red Maple Public School. They're going to come in later on; they're downstairs studying all the interesting things about our House here. I would also like to welcome the teachers: Ms. Goraya, Ms. Smith, Mr. Ng and Ms. Rosen.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Good morning, Speaker. I'd like to welcome the Canadian Lung Association, the Heart and Stroke Foundation, and the Canadian Cancer Society, and in particular Hillary Buchan-Terrell.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I want to welcome to Queen's Park four students from the University of Toronto who are studying STEM education. I want to welcome Janis Wong, Momo Uji, Mantoj Grewal and Eva McGuire. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: I would like to welcome my father, Moid Khan, as well as my uncle, Farid Khan, visiting from Dubai. Welcome to Queen's Park.

1040

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm delighted to introduce to everyone Dawson Hallahan. He is from Belgrave, Ontario, and he has joined the Huron–Bruce constituency team this summer. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Rob Flack: I'd like to welcome Beth Allison, principal in the London District Catholic School Board. Welcome back to Queen's Park—a great friend from the London area.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I would like to introduce and welcome the newest member of my team: Andrew Tadrous. He's here today for the first time to visit Queen's Park. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Jess Dixon: Continuing the theme of “you never know who Jess will meet on Instagram,” it is my honour to introduce both a dedicated dad and a serving member of the London Police Service. We have Officer Chris Golder in the House today, a former dedicated school resource officer and very proud father of our page Arisa. He will be here all week monitoring her progress.

ARMENIAN HERITAGE MONTH RECEPTION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Scarborough–Agincourt.

Mr. Aris Babikian: Good morning, Speaker. I don't have anyone to introduce, but I would like to bring to the attention of our colleagues in the House that today we are celebrating the Armenian Heritage Month. This is the inaugural celebration which will take place in rooms 228 and 230 between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. Many leaders of the Armenian community from St. Catharines, Cambridge, Hamilton, Mississauga, Oakville and Ottawa will join us, but in addition to that, we will have other ethnic groups like the Chinese community, the Greek Cypriots, Tamil and the Jewish community who will join to us celebrate. Everyone is welcome.

MEMBER'S BIRTHDAY

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Hamilton Mountain.

Miss Monique Taylor: Just a quick indulgence: I would like to wish the member from St. Catharines, Jennie Stevens, a very happy birthday today.

MEMBER'S BIRTHDAY

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I believe that concludes our introduction of visitors.

Do you have a point of order? Point of order: the Premier.

Hon. Doug Ford: Talking about birthdays, it's our great member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound's birthday, Rick Byers. Happy birthday. He's turning 40.

What I would recommend, Mr. Speaker, is the NDP member and the PC member should maybe go out for lunch today and celebrate together.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I'm already taken.

Hon. Doug Ford: She's my favourite MPP around here.

Interjection: Hey.

Hon. Doug Ford: Sorry, buddy.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes our introduction of visitors and birthday greetings. It is now time for oral questions.

QUESTION PERIOD

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Marit Stiles: Good morning, Speaker. This government didn't campaign on a plan to sell off our public health care system. At no point during the campaign did they say they were going to bring in two-tier health care. That's why, on Friday and Saturday, hundreds of thousands of Ontarians voted in the Ontario Health Coalition's citizen-run referendum to keep our health care system public. People are making their voices heard because of overwhelming evidence from many other provinces that the government's plan will worsen services for patients and cost so much more.

Speaker, to the Premier: Will his government listen to the people of Ontario and reverse course on their plan to sell off our public health care system?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: Thank you for that question. I don't call it a referendum; it was a political poll, driven one side. But in saying that, Mr. Speaker, because we do our polling too, right now and—I'm going to include the Liberals—through many years, we've compiled over 800 community surgical diagnostic centres that are operating right now in the province. What we're doing is we're expanding it. And the poll should be very, very simple. This is the way the poll should be: Do you want to wait in line for a hip replacement for 18 months or would you like to get something done in 60 days from the exact same doctor—the exact same doctor—in a surgical clinic, in a centre, and get out in two or three months?

We had the opportunity, myself and the Minister of Health—we went to Kensington Health. What a phenomenal facility that is. And I'm just wondering if the NDP wants to close Kensington Health doing 12,000 cataract operations a year. That's the question for the NDP, because it would be a disaster if we ever close Kensington Health and cancel 12,000 cataract operations.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: It's apples and oranges, and the Premier knows that.

This government's plans for health care are seeing emergency rooms in smaller and rural communities across

the province close for hours, for days or even permanently. Last week, I joined residents in Minden as they rallied desperately to save their local emergency room—it's set to close permanently this Wednesday. They're worried, Speaker, as anyone would be if the emergency room they relied on was shut down and they were forced to leave their community in a time of crisis.

Back to the Premier: How many communities will see emergency rooms close this summer because of this government's failure to act?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the Deputy Premier and Minister of Health.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: The NDP are satisfied with the status quo. I can tell you that our government is not. We have made many different investments that—to quote Anthony Dale, the president of the Ontario Hospital Association: “We're rushing to make up for lost time and the government has implemented a wide range of well-designed and very constructive programs to recruit and retain, to incentivize health care workers—and especially nurses—to consider practising in rural and remote communities.”

We're making that effort. We're making those investments and we will continue to do that because we understand, as Ontario grows, we need to continue to make the investment in health care—a health care budget that, I might add, is over \$80 billion in the province of Ontario. We are investing; we are ensuring the people who want to practise in the province of Ontario have that right through many different programs.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, it's working so well that the emergency rooms are closing. That's what's happening under this government's watch five years in, and it's not just Minden: Chesley, Walkerton, Seaford, Alexandria, Clinton, Perth, Campbellford. The ER in Thessalon announced this morning that it would be closed again today due to staffing shortages. This community has been without a primary care doctor for two years and now they're going to have to drive 40 minutes to an emergency room.

While you're busy trying to take more staff out of our system and move them into private, for-profit clinics, the solution is simple: Invest in the staff we need to keep those emergency rooms open.

To the Premier: What will he do today to make sure that this closure in Thessalon is the last ER closure Ontarians will see this summer?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Health.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: It's not what we're doing today, it's what we have already started, and that was, for example, a Learn and Stay program that allows three critically important health care pathways—the lab technicians, the

nurses, the paramedics who are willing to train in communities that are underserved have their tuition and books covered if they agree to stay on for an additional two years.

We have now in the province of Ontario, the first across Canada, as-of-right rules under Bill 60, which means that an individual clinician, doctor, nurse who wants to practise in the province of Ontario can do so today, instead of waiting months to get that qualification happen through the college.

We directed the College of Nurses of Ontario and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario to quickly deal with the backlog of individual, educated, trained people who are waiting for those licences. We now have, and we saw, a historic number of nurses who were able to pack into that program. We'll continue—

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

We'll move to the next question.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: This question is for the Minister of Transportation. A 2018 report by the Auditor General revealed serious problems with the construction of the Eglinton Crosstown and the public-private partnership set up to build it. The minister could have acted to fix these problems, but two years later, a follow-up report said “no improvements had occurred.”

1050

In fact, the problems had gotten even worse. The P3 contractor was “building at risk,” which means the safety of these designs had not been confirmed. It suggests that the deficiencies with the Eglinton Crosstown could be much more serious than the public is being told.

Speaker, why did the minister ignore the problems with the Eglinton Crosstown?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. But it is so ironic to hear the leader and members opposite ask about problems that are faced with the Eglinton Crosstown, because we brought forward a bill to this House in 2020 to address a lot of the problems related to a lot of those delays that were created that we saw in the Eglinton Crosstown, Mr. Speaker. It was a bill called the Building Transit Faster Act. It couldn't have been more clear what the intention of that bill was. And what did the opposition do, Mr. Speaker? They voted against it.

So for the Leader of the Opposition to stand in this House and ask why we're not building transit faster, I would ask her, why did they vote against that important piece of legislation so that we can avoid a lot of the problems with the Eglinton Crosstown, get shovels in the ground faster and build the transit that the city of Toronto and York region and Hamilton deserve?

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: The minister needs to follow along here. They passed their bill and we are in this situation. It's done nothing.

Speaker, transit P3s in the United Kingdom experienced repeated lawsuits, insolvencies and bailouts. A £30-billion P3 scheme to upgrade the London Underground fell apart. Costly P3 failures like this are why the UK's Conservative government abandoned P3 contracts altogether in 2018. Now, Ontario is running into the same costly delays, overruns and deficiencies.

If the Eglinton Crosstown P3 contractor doesn't get another public bailout, are we going to see the whole thing collapse just like what happened in the UK?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: The Leader of the Opposition is asking me to follow along. With all due respect, Mr. Speaker, I would ask her to follow along. We passed the bill because of the majority that we have, despite their voting against it in 2020.

And what have we seen? In 2019, the Premier introduced the most ambitious public transit expansion plan anywhere in North America. Since then, Mr. Speaker, we've seen shovels in the ground on the new Ontario Line, a line they voted against. We have seen significant progress on tunnelling on the Eglinton Crosstown West extension. The tunnel is halfway done. In Scarborough, we've seen significant progress on the Scarborough subway extension, and just a few weeks ago, we announced the RFQ for the Yonge North subway extension.

They claim to believe in and stand up for transit riders and for the people of the city of Toronto, York region and Hamilton, but at the end of the day, the Leader of the Opposition and her party always vote against it.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: This is outrageous, Speaker. This minister needs to demonstrate that she is focused on protecting the interests of the public and the transit riders and not the interests of private contractors and political insiders. And, yet, this minister has stacked the Metrolinx board with cronies, including former Conservative politicians and fundraisers. Her latest appointee is Mark McQueen, the private financier who gave the minister her first big job in Canada and has donated thousands of dollars to her and to the Conservative Party.

Confidence in Metrolinx and the minister are at an all-time low. So, Speaker, to the minister, why is she appointing her friends to the Metrolinx board instead of fixing the problems with the Eglinton Crosstown?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: What's truly outrageous is to hear the Leader of the Opposition stand here and pretend to be standing up for transit riders while, during the height of the pandemic, our government brought forward, with the federal government, the Safe Restart Agreement to provide billions of dollars to keep our essential public transit running throughout the pandemic, to get our essential workers to and from work—Mr. Speaker, \$1.5 billion to the TTC alone, \$2.1 billion to public transit systems across the province of Ontario. But do you know what the NDP did? They voted against it. If they had had their way, we would have had to shut down the TTC; we would have had to shut down OC Transpo; we would have had to shut down municipal transit systems

across the province. But thanks to the leadership of our Premier and our government, we put forward substantial funding to keep public transit going.

We're building public transit. We are supporting it—
Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. Stop the clock. I will remind the House that I need to be able to hear the member who has the floor and that interjections are always out of order.

The next question. Start the clock.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Joel Harden: Back to the transportation minister: 16 months ago, the transportation minister said she would investigate consultant Brian Guest and his firm, Boxfish. Mr. Guest was a key adviser to Ottawa's LRT, a former vice-president of Metrolinx and the key leader in most of Toronto's LRT contracts, including the Eglinton Crosstown. Boxfish earned millions for contracts in LRT systems that are failing or don't work. The minister at the time said she was "extremely concerned about any perceived or potential conflict of interest" with Mr. Guest and pledged to investigate him and Boxfish.

Speaker, we have done our own investigation, and we have confirmed that Mr. Guest has never been investigated; neither has Boxfish.

If the Minister of Transportation was truly extremely concerned, why did she break her promise to this House and the people of Ontario and fail to investigate Mr. Guest or Boxfish for any of these contracts?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: We conducted an internal investigation and determined that the consultancy work that was being provided by Boxfish needed to come to an end—which it did—at Metrolinx.

Mr. Speaker, that member opposite knows full well how important it is to make sure that people who are building a transit system have the time to make sure they do it right. That's why our government called a public inquiry into what happened at the Ottawa LRT. That's why, learning the lessons that Justice Hourigan put forth in his report on the problems that plagued the Ottawa LRT, our government is determined to make sure that with respect to the Crosstown we do it right and we make sure that we build this system properly and that it is safe for transit riders, that it's safe for transit operators, and it will open when it is safe for all.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Joel Harden: Back to the transportation minister: It's confusing for the opposition when we do our own freedom-of-information search and we ask specifically, "Has an investigation been done into Mr. Guest and Boxfish?" and the minister's assistants get back to us with a no, and we're told in this House that somehow an investigation has happened. Is the minister prepared to make that investigation public? This firm, Boxfish, has worked on the Eglinton Crosstown, worked on stage 1 of Ottawa's struggling LRT, and all we know to date, from

publicly available information we have asked for and received, is that nothing has happened.

So, very clearly, to the minister: The investigation that she claims to have done—will you make that internal investigation public? Will accountability be brought to the Eglinton Crosstown, to stage 1 of Ottawa's LRT, and to every other transit project being done under this government?

Interjections.

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

To reply, the Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: The member opposite talks about what's confusing. I think what would be confusing for his constituents in Ottawa would be to find out that he voted against the Safe Restart funding that we provided to the Ottawa transit system. Year after year after year, during the pandemic, our government put forward millions and millions of dollars to make sure that the Ottawa transit system could continue to run for his residents, for his constituents, for the essential workers who were taking care of us during the pandemic. We put that money forward, and when the member opposite had a real chance to support public transit in his riding and in his city that he stands up here and talks about defending, he voted against it. I think that is what is very confusing, and he owes an answer to his constituents for why he did so.

1100

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. Last week, the minister was in Germany again to continue meeting with and attracting investments in the automotive and EV sectors. With the recent news of Volkswagen coming to Ontario, there is no question that the province should continue to focus on its manufacturing capabilities and ensure that there are good jobs for families across the province now and into future.

Speaker, can the minister please provide us with an update on his recent trade mission to Germany?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, the mission to Germany was an opportunity to build on the \$25 billion in auto and EV investments that we've landed in Ontario in the last two and a half years. We were able to thank the Volkswagen team who we worked with day to day to land this historic \$7-billion investment here in Ontario.

It was an opportunity to discuss the nature of the main suppliers they now need to begin operations. Cathode, anode, separator, copper foil, electrolyte, lithium hydroxide: Speaker, these aren't just words. Each of those are main components needed in a battery and each of those represents a \$1-billion-to-\$3-billion company coming here to Ontario.

Speaker, we're also talking about a suppliers' day to help identify opportunities for their new facility in St. Thomas.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you, Minister, for that great response. It sounds like this trade mission comes at a critical time in Ontario's automotive and EV journey. The future of transportation is shifting towards electrification and with this comes a renewed focus on clean technology. Ontario must continue to promote itself as a great place to do business, but beyond that, it must promote itself as a leading jurisdiction in the EV revolution.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please elaborate on how companies overseas feel about investing in Ontario, and what they see our competitive edge to be?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: In Germany, we also met with Mercedes-Benz and many EV parts companies to promote Ontario as a destination of choice. Of note were Elring-Klinger and Eberspächer Group. ElringKlinger currently operates a manufacturing facility here in Leamington, and Eberspächer has facilities in Mississauga and Concord.

We also took a day trip to Poland to meet with similar companies.

What we heard everywhere was consistent: In this turmoil-filled world—post-pandemic, Russian invasion, Chinese-dominated supply chains—they all look at Ontario as a sea of calm and a stable, reliable, trusted partner. They also view Ontario as a safe jurisdiction, safe for their employees, safe for their families, safe for their executives to visit. We showed them that Ontario is all that and more.

AMATEUR HOCKEY

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: A few weeks ago, the NDP and I presented evidence of a cash-for-access culture in minor hockey that is letting rich parents buy their children spots on teams, shutting out talented, young athletes in the process. Evidence of not-for-profit teams being bought and sold for millions in private profits—the Minister of Sport shrugged his shoulders.

Since then, a whistle-blower provided the minister with new evidence of this widespread corruption—financial documents and communiqué that suggested this is happening at every level. Do you know what they heard back from the minister? Nothing.

My question to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport: How much more evidence of corruption does he need before he takes complete action?

Hon. Neil Lumsden: Good morning to everyone. I thank the member opposite for the question.

I've been in contact with the members of the GTHL and we have discussed the ongoing investigation that is happening, that if something is exposed with respect to wrongdoing, dollars or whatever, we—as in our ministry—will be brought up to speed.

Mr. Speaker, the one thing I don't want to get caught up in is speculation—someone says one thing, and someone says something else. Let's, like everything else, get the facts of what's going on. When we get the facts, we will respond. But only until we have the facts and the information—then we can make good decisions.

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

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Last week, the whistle-blower sent information to both our offices. It seems to me that's quite a bit of fact on those papers. I'm willing to send it back over to the minister if he'd like.

Speaker, I don't buy it. The minister says an independent investigation is under way, but it is akin to the GTHL investigating itself. The minister says he has "no authority." Speaker, that is not accurate at all. His ministry regulates provincial sports organizations. The Ontario Hockey Federation is that organization; the GTHL is its member. The ministry requires these organizations to verify annually that they meet the requirements for this special status. Speaker, the puck is supposed to stop with the Minister of Sport.

Back to him: When will the Minister of Sport do his job and take responsibility by launching an actual investigation to stop this corruption?

Hon. Neil Lumsden: Thanks again for the question. The ministry does not have a direct relationship with the member organizations of the PSOs and has no authority over their operations.

The GTHL is a member of the Ontario Hockey Federation, and I think she knows that, Mr. Speaker, because the member opposite is well versed in what's going on.

But, again, when we talk about an independent investigation, I don't believe I've received a phone call back from those that are doing the investigation or the GTHL with their findings.

Once again, I know there are conversations that go around. It is sport, Mr. Speaker, and everyone has an opinion. But I'd rather respond and act on results and specific information before we would get involved with the PSOs and help sort this out.

ENERGY RATES

Mr. Dave Smith: My question is for the Minister of Energy. Individuals and families and even businesses in my community, as well as all across Ontario, are looking for relief on their energy bills. When our government was first elected in 2018, we made a commitment to make life more affordable for the people of Ontario. We have to make every effort to deliver on our commitment, and we need to be providing more ways for Ontarians to take control of their energy bills and encourage energy conservation.

Under the previous Liberal government, Ontario witnessed out-of-control energy costs as a result of their failed policies. The people of Ontario expect our government to do all that we can do to reduce these costs.

Speaker, can the minister please explain how our government is providing support to the people of Ontario in helping them save on their energy bills?

Hon. Todd Smith: Congratulations to the member opposite on his Peterborough Petes winning the OHL Championship last week.

As usual, the member is correct. I know from my time as a critic on that side, Ontarians felt helpless as they watched their hydro bills just skyrocket on a monthly basis.

Then, in 2018, we took office. We began taking steps to reduce the costs and empower customers to lower their costs. We implemented the Ontario Electricity Rebate, the OER, which is lowering the cost of electricity by 12%. We introduced more customer choice. We gave customers the power to take control of their hydro bills with the Green Button standard being implemented right across, possibly saving customers up to 18%. Electricity customers also will soon have the right, and they do in some jurisdictions, to have an ultra-low overnight rate. I'm going to have more to say about the Peak Perks program coming up in my supplementary.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

The supplementary question?

Mr. Dave Smith: I know the member from Ottawa South doesn't want to hear these things, but when I was out canvassing in 2018, in the rural part of my riding frequently I heard about people who had to make the decision between heating and eating. That's just not acceptable.

It's encouraging to hear about the many different energy initiatives and supports brought forward by our government to help Ontario's hard-working families and businesses.

1110

However, affordable energy remains a serious issue for our province. Our government must continue to implement solutions that will bring costs down and provide help to Ontarians, after the previous Liberal government squandered our province's clean-energy advantage. Our government must continue to show respect for the people of Ontario by implementing programs that offer choice and will help to reduce costs.

Can the minister please share more details about the recently announced Peak Perks energy program and how this will benefit the people of Ontario?

Hon. Todd Smith: I wouldn't say it three times fast, but the Peak Perks program is an energy efficiency program that means families will have yet another tool to help them with their energy bills. Families are going to receive a \$75 financial incentive this year for lowering their energy use at peak times, and they can receive it in future years, as well, if they remain in the program—a \$20 incentive. That's good for families, and it's really good for our grid. And this new program—

Interjections.

Hon. Todd Smith: It's funny hearing the members opposite scoff, because during their time, electricity prices were soaring. These folks are afraid of giving people control of their electricity bills because they can save money. Everybody remembers what the Liberals did to energy costs in this province, and I can't believe—when Premier Kathleen Wynne said it was the biggest mistake that she made during her time here as the Premier—that they're still defending it, and they will still defend it.

We're bringing in an—
Interjections.

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

ONTARIO FARMERS

Mr. John Vanthof: My question is to the Premier. Bill 97 will allow three severed residential lots per farm property. This could severely limit livestock expansion because of MDS guidelines. In response to my question a few weeks ago, the minister stated: “We have taken a thoughtful approach, and we are going to be okay.” Since then, Ontario farmers have united to stand in strong opposition to the proposed severances—beef farmers, Ontario Pork, dairy farmers, chicken farmers, OFA, CFFO, NFU and others. These are the people who feed our cities, and they're telling you this is a mistake.

Will you remove the ag severance provisions from Bill 97?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To respond, I recognize the Associate Minister of Housing.

Hon. Nina Tangri: Speaker, the NDP continues to spread misinformation about our government's balanced and thoughtful proposal—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the member to withdraw—

Hon. Nina Tangri: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): —and conclude her answer.

Hon. Nina Tangri: Our government has a balanced and thoughtful proposal that is still open for public consultation. As we've previously stated, our goal has always been to support farmers, their families and agricultural workers by increasing the supply of homes near their place of work. That is why we've put forward for full consultation a thoughtful draft proposal that would establish specific criteria to allow farmers the voluntary option of adding additional residential lots to their own land. The government intends to extend the commenting period on the Environmental Registry of Ontario beyond the original closing date of June 5. This will give the public a greater opportunity to comment on these proposals and will give our government more time to consider alternative solutions to support multi-generational farm families while addressing the concerns that have been raised over the—

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

Mr. John Vanthof: I sincerely hope the government does reconsider because the issue that they have missed—there is no problem for a farm putting more residences on the farmstead itself. Everyone is in agreement about that. The problem is, when you sever a lot—and I've had to do it on my own farm. I had to buy the neighbour's house so I could actually expand my farm. That's going to happen over and over again if we don't fix it.

So I'm encouraged that you're willing to reconsider. I hope that the Premier does reconsider and fixes Bill 97 so

that livestock operations aren't restricted when they try to expand.

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Doug Ford: Thank you for the question. This is going to be one of the times we all kind of agree, including the farmers. We do. We had a great meeting with all the farmers on Friday and came up with a solution about the severance. But the number one complaint that I get when I go to the farms is, “I want my kids to stay on the farm,” and there are certain jurisdictions that won't allow you to build an additional residence.

The other number one complaint is—and I heard it this morning from a farmer I spoke to on the way down here: He has 100 migrant workers who work on the farm who are critical to his operation, but he has no place to put them. We're going to come up with a happy compromise and work with the farmers, because they're the ones who have to live with this day in and day out. Believe it or not, we're all kind of on the same page here. We're going to work with them.

But they did say one thing, Mr. Speaker. They said there's no government in the history of this province that supported the farmers more than this government and they appreciated it.

TEMPORARY NURSING AGENCIES

Mr. Adil Shamji: My question is for the Minister of Health. Just over two months ago, I tabled my private member's bill to address the most predatory hiring and recruitment practices used by temporary nursing agencies, while also establishing a safe and responsible licensing framework. Mere days after I tabled this legislation, the Minister of Long-Term Care stated that he would form a technical advisory committee to examine the issue of price gouging by nursing agencies.

But since then, it's been radio silence. Instead, all we've heard is a cry for help from hospitals and health care workers in response to legislation like Bill 124 and a worsening lack of government support. This kind of public policy makes the tragic situation in Minden inevitable. Now this government is doing what it does best: It's looking the other way. It's washing its hands of the Minden hospital, and it's washing its hands of our health care system. Why? So that temporary nursing agencies can profit? So that private, for-profit clinics can turn a profit?

This government is an expert in looking the other way. When will the Minister of Health stop looking the other way and look at the mess she's made of Minden's and Ontario's health care?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: While the member opposite continues to defend the status quo, we are not satisfied with the status quo here, which is why we have made so many different investments that are ensuring we have health human resources available across Ontario.

We are experiencing challenges, as are all Canadian jurisdictions, in ensuring that we have sufficient staffing. But we are doing that with investments: two new medical schools in the province of Ontario. We have never seen this kind of investment in training, in retaining, in keeping and giving people the opportunities to practise in medicine that we have in the province of Ontario.

I might remind the member opposite that it was actually Kathleen Wynne, in her major exit interview after she was defeated, who talked about the regret that she had in terms of cutting residency positions for physicians and, in fact, not sufficiently supporting the health care system. We're making the investments. We're doing that work. It's—

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

The supplementary question.

Mr. Adil Shamji: You'll have to forgive me but it's the same hollow talking points from the Minister of Health. When I was in Minden last Sunday, I was told about how temporary nursing agencies came to the region and picked hospitals clean of their staff.

Patients rely on local emergency departments in times of crisis. This isn't about Minden, it's about the 2.2 million Ontarians who don't have access to a family doctor, who are forced to rely on emergency rooms as their only source of primary care.

This government claims hospital closures are not their jurisdiction. Well, the greenbelt wasn't supposed to be their jurisdiction either, but somehow this government finds a way to get what it wants.

If they wanted to keep local hospitals open, they would. Solving emergency room closures would mean paying health care workers a fair wage. It would mean telling private, for-profit interests to rein it in. But they won't.

I know this government loves saying yes to corporate interests, but just for once, for the sake of patients, not profits, will this government say no to the most predatory practices of temporary nursing agencies?

1120

Hon. Sylvia Jones: As the member opposite talks about the need for investments, he actually voted against Bill 60. What would Bill 60 do? It actually ensures that people have as of right, so clinicians who are practising in other Canadian jurisdictions, for the first time in Canada, are going to be able to start working immediately in Ontario as they get that licence approved through the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario.

It is very challenging for me to listen to this information while we make the investments and they continue to continuously vote against those same investments. I don't understand how you cannot make the connection as a physician to understand that as of right in the province of Ontario is going to increase the capacity, ensuring the College of Physicians and Surgeons immediately access, approve and ultimately assess and give licences to internationally educated and trained physicians. Those are the changes that we are making that could have been done under the previous Liberal government but—

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

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

HOMELESSNESS

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: My question is for the Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. First, I would like to thank the associate minister along with the Minister of Housing for visiting Ottawa last week.

Everyone deserves to have a safe place to call home. That's why it's so crucial that our government addresses the need for more supportive housing across our province. We made a commitment to support Ontarians who are at risk of and those who are experiencing homelessness. As we work towards increasing housing supply across our province in the coming years, we must ensure that every Ontarian can find housing that meets their needs and budgets.

Speaker, through you, can the associate minister please elaborate on the measures our government is taking to increase the supply of affordable housing?

Hon. Nina Tangri: Thank you to the great member from Carleton for the question. Our province is committed to tackling homelessness and ending the housing supply crisis in Ontario.

Speaker, last week, I was pleased to announce that our government is investing an additional \$24.1 million to create more affordable housing in Ottawa. The 138 new affordable and supportive units resulting from this funding are being built even as we speak. And I had the opportunity to tour the site last week, along with the member from Carleton, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and His Worship the mayor of Ottawa.

Speaker, this is a great example of how we will continue working with all of our partners across this province to make sure the most vulnerable people in our society are safe and homed.

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

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: It's encouraging to see how our government is investing in affordable and supportive housing in Ottawa. This funding is vital in providing safe and secure homes for individuals and families in my community of Carleton and across the city of Ottawa.

We know that homelessness is a serious concern throughout our province, and that's why our government must continue to provide solutions that address and prevent homelessness in Ottawa and across Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, through you, can the associate minister please expand on the measures our government is taking to assist municipalities as they support the most vulnerable people in our communities?

Hon. Nina Tangri: Once again, thank you to the member. Everyone deserves a safe and affordable place to call home, and I'm proud of the work this government is doing to create a better future for all Ontarians. I look forward to seeing the positive impact these new affordable homes will have on the lives of so many in Ottawa.

As I previously mentioned, we're committed to helping all of our municipal partners in their fight against homelessness. That is why our government has increased

funding for the Homelessness Prevention Program and Indigenous Supportive Housing Program by a historic \$202 million.

We will continue working to ensure our municipal partners have the tools they need to protect vulnerable members of their communities, because we know that when communities thrive, Ontario thrives.

TOBACCO CONTROL

M^{me} France Gélinas: Happy World No Tobacco week, Speaker.

My question is for the Premier. Tobacco is the leading cause of disease and death in Ontario. Tobacco is responsible for the deaths of 16,000 Ontarians every year and costs our health care system \$2.2 billion. The tobacco industry has caused this epidemic. The time has come for big tobacco to pay for the harm that they have inflicted.

All provinces, including Ontario, are presently in settlement negotiations with three major tobacco companies, but health care organizations with us today, including Canadian Cancer Society, Heart and Stroke, and the Lung Association have not been consulted at all. They are appealing to the government to adopt the reasonable measures included in their open letter to the Premier as part of a potential settlement.

Will the government guarantee that public health measures will be included in any agreement?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: I appreciate the question from the member opposite. Of course, we have been working very closely to ensure that there is maximum accountability with respect to the harm done to the people of the province of Ontario, and we'll continue to do that.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, I know that the Minister of Health as well as a number of colleagues on both sides of the House, frankly, have been working to ensure that not only young Canadians but Ontarians in general understand the challenges and the risks associated with cigarette smoking and tobacco use.

But specifically to the member opposite's question, we'll continue to work very, very closely with our partners to ensure the best possible outcome for the people of the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary question? The member for Toronto Centre.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: The Minister of Long-Term Care has said that their government is working very closely with those stakeholders, but they haven't even consulted them, so it's hard to imagine that that's actually happened.

Speaker, to the Premier: Over the past five years, beyond a few measures on vaping already implemented elsewhere in Canada, this Conservative government has not implemented a single new tobacco control legislation or regulation. The Ontario health care crisis is real. By the end of question period, two more people will die from this disease, from the use of tobacco. This happens every single hour. This government can do more to curb tobacco

use. They can do more to prevent addictions. They can do more to end disease and death. In Canada, there's \$500 billion in lawsuits at stake—\$500 billion in lawsuits.

It's time that the big tobacco industry is held accountable. It's time to make them pay. Will the Premier and the Conservative government finally prioritize this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to protect future generations of Ontarians from the harms, the disease and death caused by tobacco addiction and use?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Yes, because that's what we have been doing right from the start, whether it's with respect to this particular lawsuit—but how can the member suggest that any Ontario government or any member of this place has not been focused on ensuring that people understand the risks associated with cigarette smoking and tobacco use, Mr. Speaker? This isn't something that just the member has ownership of. In fact, I would ask the member to take a look at what a number of Parliaments have done to reduce the use of tobacco, to make it harder for people to access it. Ontario has literally led the way, and we have done that not by working in isolation, but all Parliaments, all members for decades in this place, Mr. Speaker.

So I would ask the member to maybe take a moment to look at the success not only of the Bob Rae government, of the Liberal governments, of the Conservative governments—we have all done our part. It's not her ownership. We've all done our part, and I'm very proud of what Ontario Parliaments have done to ensure that the people of the province of Ontario are safe.

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Brian Riddell: My question is for the Minister of Red Tape Reduction. Small businesses are crucial to Ontario's economy and their success, and their accomplishments are felt in all communities across the province. Unfortunately, many of them bear the burden of excessive regulation that prevents them from further growth. Ontario business owners want regulations that are easier to understand, faster to implement and less costly to comply with. That is why our government must continue to help people and businesses to save time and resources by reducing red tape, which will encourage new investments.

Speaker, can the minister please explain how our government is paving the way for better services and helping small businesses grow?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The parliamentary assistant and member for Niagara West.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you very much to the member for Cambridge for that question. During the 15 years of the former Liberal government, propped up by the NDP, we saw job-killing regulation after job-killing regulation brought into this chamber. It led to 300,000 manufacturing jobs leaving this province.

But under the leadership of this Premier and this government, we're taking a different approach. Today, we started third reading of the Less Red Tape, Stronger Economy Act, which will build Ontario's businesses by cutting red tape. The Liberals and NDP left businesses in places like Niagara and across small communities in this

riding without help when it came to accessing the broadband infrastructure they deserved, but by removing red tape, our government is getting the job done. We're making that process faster and ensuring that communities like those in Cambridge, like mine in Niagara West, are receiving the services they deserve, when and where they need them.

1130

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

Mr. Brian Riddell: Thank you for that response.

No one, except the Liberals and the NDP members, wants more red tape in our province. By reducing unnecessary regulation burdens, our government can create an environment that drives new investments and grows our economy, while maintaining high public safety and environmental protection standards. We must continue our ongoing efforts to support Ontario's hard-working job creators and enhance our competitive advantages for the years to come.

Speaker, can the minister please elaborate on how our government is fuelling future economic growth by modernizing Ontario's regulatory system?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you to the member for Cambridge. I know that the minister is leading the charge when it comes to cutting red tape, reducing costs for businesses and ensuring that it's easier to start, operate and expand a business, creating jobs and driving our economy forward.

Since forming government, under the leadership of the minister and this entire party, we've seen real progress. We've reduced Ontario's regulatory burden by 16,000 regulatory compliance requirements, saving businesses some \$700 million—not once, but every single year—in annual compliance costs. The results speak for themselves: over 85,000 new jobs in Ontario last year and, since we came to office, over 660,000 new jobs here in the province of Ontario.

We know there's more work to do to clean up after 15 years of Liberal and NDP mismanagement, but we're going to get the job done under this Premier and under the leadership of each and every member of this House. We won't stop—

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

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Last week, a letter from a teacher warned that students and staff at Tomken Road Middle School do not feel safe going to school. Tomken Road is far from alone. Violence in our schools is reaching a crisis level, but instead of investing in mental health supports and additional staff, this government offers nothing but platitudes. In fact, school boards are being forced to cut safety monitors and child and youth workers.

What will it take for the Premier to finally make the investments needed to keep students and workers in our schools safe?

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

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Mr. Speaker, there is absolutely nothing to dismiss about a 400% increase in mental health supports under our Progressive Conservative government. There is nothing platitudinal when the member from Burlington brings forth a motion calling on government to mandate mental health literacy in the grade 7, 8 and 10 curriculum, which we are doing for this coming September. We are taking action—not performative action, real action: investments, funding, staffing and mandatory learning in the school system.

This shouldn't be a political exercise for the NDP. We should be working together to further educate students on how they can see themselves as part of the solution on the day-to-day challenges of living a life in this country.

We know that there are challenges of violence in schools. That's why we're increasing support. There are 3,000 more EAs helping those kids. There are 7,000 more staff within our publicly funded schools. And this September—if the members opposite want to be supportive of those kids, vote for our budget, which will add 2,000 more educators to Ontario's schools.

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

Ms. Chandra Pasma: The minister can spin as hard as he wants—students, staff and parents can see with their own eyes that the supports are not there in our schools for our children when they need them.

Every day, students with autism and disabilities are being excluded from our schools, because the supports are not there to keep them safe at school. We did a survey of parents which shows only a small snapshot of the problem, and shows that at least 78 kids with special needs missed out on more than 555 hours of school in just the past two weeks.

Knowing the extent of the problem is the first step to fixing it. Will the government finally listen to parents, like the parents from the Ontario Autism Coalition, and finally track and publicly report on all exclusions in our schools?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Our government brought forth Bill 98, the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, specifically designed to increase transparency for parents in Ontario. Because we provide—the member from Eglinton—Lawrence speaks so passionately about this issue—\$125 million more in specific spec ed, and parents want to know where those dollars go, and they have a right to know. We're going to ensure more transparency.

There are 3,000 more education assistants hired by our government under our Premier's leadership. We, too, want to make sure that there's value for those investments and for that staffing. We added a 400% increase in mental health. We're spending more in special education than any government.

But the virtue is not just spending more; it's getting more out of the system for the kids we represent. We're going to stand up for better outcomes, more accountability and a better school experience for children in Ontario.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR SENIORS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. David Smith: My question is to the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility. May 28 marked the start of national accessibility awareness week. This is an opportunity for us to raise awareness about the importance of accessibility and to show our support for Ontarians with accessibility needs. We also celebrate community leaders and advocates with disabilities who are working to build a more inclusive society.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please explain how our government is promoting national accessibility awareness week?

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Thank you to the MPP from Scarborough Centre for asking this very important question. National accessibility awareness week is very important to this government and to me personally. Thanks to the leadership of the Minister of Labour, we are announcing over \$4 million to the Skills Development Fund this week. This marvellous fund will support local organizations like the Canadian National Institute for the Blind and the Geneva Centre for Autism. They make sure people with disabilities have the right programs and services to find meaningful training and jobs.

Join us in celebrating those who are making this province more accessible and inclusive for everyone.

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

Mr. David Smith: Every person in Ontario deserves inclusion and accessibility. It is great to see that our government is committed to raising awareness about the need to improve accessibility, but there is more that needs to be done to remove barriers in every community across Ontario to make life easier for people with disabilities. Our government must continue to move ahead with projects that will make accessibility a part of everyday life.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please explain what our government is doing to make Ontario more accessible?

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Speaker, there's no better advocate for accessibility than this Premier. He understands that accessibility and inclusion require a long-term vision. Every dollar we spend on infrastructure is a dollar being invested for people with disabilities. Every dollar of the historic \$60-billion investment into transit is being invested for people with disabilities. Every dollar that the Premier and this government are spending on building Ontario is a dollar spent on making the province more accessible. Project by project, community by community, we are making more Ontario accessible every day.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question is to the Premier. Last week, at a private, for-profit long-term-care home in Orillia, a resident who lives with a disability was forced to sit in their own waste for an entire night due to staffing shortages at the home. Staff were unable to assist the

resident because they didn't have any staff. And, according to the resident, it's not the first time this has happened.

1140
Speaker, when is this government going to put forward an actual plan to address the staffing crisis in long-term care and ensure that residents—our seniors, our parents, our grandparents—are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the government House leader and Minister of Long-Term Care.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I appreciate the question. The member is quite correct. I was very unhappy by what I heard last week. There were two instances that I've been unhappy with. In one instance, of course, there was an air conditioning challenge at one of our homes. The municipal home in that case has been fined \$25,000 under new rules that we brought into place. And in the other instance—again equally unacceptable, Mr. Speaker—I've asked the inspections branch to immediately go into the home and investigate.

At the same time, directly to the member's question, we are adding four hours of care a day per resident. This will be a North American leading standard. At the same time, we're adding an additional 27,000 health care workers to meet that standard. We started on doing that a couple of years ago, and the Minister of Colleges and Universities has a program that has been leading to thousands of people getting back into the sector, Mr. Speaker. I've been very excited about that.

We've also met our targets as we've been increasing the level of care. We've met our targets over the last two years. We do have a plan in place. Of course, the member opposite voted against that plan. He voted against extra staffing in his own riding, Mr. Speaker, but we will get it done. Don't worry.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: I appreciate the response, but I will say, if you repeal Bill 124, that will certainly help with your staffing.

This is not the first incident of this kind in a private, for-profit long-term-care home in the province of Ontario. We learned recently that this government is going to fast-track the expansion of Orchard Villa, a private, for-profit home where the military had to step in during COVID, where residents were left with spoiled diapers, rooms were overrun by bugs, and where some seniors died due to dehydration. And we know that during COVID, the vast majority of deaths happened in private, for-profit homes.

When is this minister and this government going to stand up to the private long-term-care companies and say enough is enough?

Hon. Paul Calandra: In fact, this government stood up on behalf of all residents in long-term care and passed the landmark Fixing Long-Term Care Act, which the member voted against. What does that include? It includes a guarantee of four hours of care. It includes a bill of rights for the residents in our long-term-care homes. They voted against that, Speaker. I've already said, we're increasing

staffing to four hours a day—a North American leading standard. We're building 60,000 new long-term-care homes.

I know the opposition is just ideologically opposed to anything that has to do with private individuals having any role to play in any part of society. We've talked about this before. The only thing that they care about is ensuring that people are dependent exclusively on government. We view things differently, Mr. Speaker. We want to give people the resources and the tools to succeed.

He talks about Orchard Villa; he talks about Southbridge. I am happy to report that they received their Canada accreditation to be one of the best long-term-care homes in the province of Ontario—

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

INDIGENOUS MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Mr. Ric Bresee: My question is for the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. Speaker, everyone in Ontario deserves the highest standard of mental health and addictions care. There is no health without mental health, which is why our government must continue to make investments to support Indigenous-led initiatives that are tailored to meet the needs of their communities.

Our government must remain committed to building an Ontario where everyone is fully supported in their journey towards mental wellness. This includes working with Indigenous partners and communities to improve access to mental health, addictions and well-being services.

Speaker, can the associate minister please explain what measures our government is implementing to make these vital services available in Indigenous communities?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Thank you to the member from Hastings–Lennox and Addington for this important question.

Ensuring that the services we provide are culturally safe and culturally appropriate is an extremely important part of building a continuum of care that works for everyone in Ontario.

Indigenous leaders have consistently told me, “Nothing about us, without us.”

Recently, I had the honour of attending the Kenora Chiefs Advisory mental wellness summit, where I heard directly from northern Indigenous communities about their needs.

I'm proud to say that after working with community leaders, we've developed land-based healing, detox and after-care programs with Kashechewan, Taykwa Tagamou First Nation and Mushkegowuk tribal council, with more to come.

Across the north, we're making investments to build capacity, aid in crisis response, and support local community members and front-line health care workers in First Nations communities.

Speaker, our government's investments are building out the culturally safe services that are critical to ensuring that in Ontario no one goes without the support they need.

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

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 36(a), the member for Ottawa Centre has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Transportation concerning the investigation into Boxfish and Mr. Brian Guest. This matter will be debated tomorrow following private members' public business.

SUPERIOR CORPORATE SERVICES LIMITED ACT, 2023

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I also need to inform the House that the Clerk has received a submission related to Bill Pr25, An Act to Revive Superior Corporate Services Limited. Pursuant to standing order 39(a), the submission stands referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

RECEPTION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Once again, I'll remind the members of the lunch that we're hosting for the group from the Canadian Senate over the lunch hour and the meeting we're having afterwards. If you can attend, it would be great to have you as part. The invitation is extended to all members.

KRYSTLE CAPUTO

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

Hon. Michael Parsa: Speaker, I'm pleased to take this opportunity to acknowledge my chief of staff, Krystle Caputo. She has been an invaluable asset to our ministry and to me personally since I've come to this role as the new Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. And before that, she was a great support to both Dr. Fullerton and the Minister of Municipal Affairs. As she takes her next step, I want to say to Krystle, thank you for everything that you've done for all of us, and I wish you all the very best.

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

The House recessed from 1148 to 1300.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE POLICY

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Justice Policy and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Wai Lam (William) Wong): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 102, An Act to amend various Acts relating to the justice system, fire protection and prevention and animal welfare / Projet de loi 102, Loi modifiant diverses lois relatives au système judiciaire, à la prévention et à la protection contre l'incendie ainsi qu'au bien-être des animaux.

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

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL POLICY

Mr. Brian Riddell: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Social Policy and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Wai Lam (William) Wong): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 98, An Act to amend various Acts relating to education and child care / Projet de loi 98, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'éducation et la garde d'enfants.

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

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON HERITAGE, INFRASTRUCTURE AND CULTURAL POLICY

Ms. Laurie Scott: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Wai Lam (William) Wong): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 97, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to housing and development / Projet de loi 97, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne le logement et l'aménagement.

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

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

MOUNT PLEASANT PUBLIC CEMETERIES ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 SUR LA SOCIÉTÉ CIMETIÈRES PUBLICS MOUNT PLEASANT

Ms. Bell moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 113, An Act respecting the continuation of the corporation known as Trustees of the Toronto General Burying Grounds / Projet de loi 113, Loi concernant la prorogation de la société connue sous le nom de Trustees of the Toronto General Burying Grounds.

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 University–Rosedale like to briefly explain her bill?

Ms. Jessica Bell: In response to the many concerns from Moore Park residents, we have introduced a bill to provide greater government oversight over Mount Pleasant Cemetery and affiliated cemeteries.

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Hon. Paul Calandra: I move that, for the consideration of private members' public bills, standing committees be authorized to meet as follows:

Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be authorized to meet on Wednesday, July 12, 2023; and

Standing Committee on Justice Policy be authorized to meet on Monday, July 10, 2023, and Tuesday, July 11, 2023; and

Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy be authorized to meet on Monday, July 10, 2023; Tuesday, July 11, 2023; and Wednesday, July 12, 2023; and

Standing Committee on Social Policy be authorized to meet on Tuesday, July 13, 2023; and

Standing Committee on the Interior be authorized to meet on July 10, 2023, and Thursday, July 13, 2022—2023, excuse me; and

That the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be authorized to attend the 2023 Legislative

Summit of the National Conference of State Legislatures in Indianapolis, Indiana from August 13 to 16, 2023; and

That the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be authorized to attend the 2023 Annual Conference of the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees in Whitehorse, Yukon from September 10 to 13, 2023; and

That the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be authorized to travel outside of Ontario and to meet during the summer adjournment upon agreement of its subcommittee on committee business.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Just to seek the clarification of the government House leader, I want to verify that his intention is to have the Standing Committee on Social Policy be authorized to meet on “Thursday, July 13, 2023” and the Standing Committee on the Interior to be authorized to meet on “Monday, July 10, 2023, and Thursday, July 13, 2023”?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Yes.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Okay, got it.

Mr. Calandra has moved that for the consideration of private members’ public bills, standing committees be authorized—

Hon. Paul Calandra: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Dispense? Dispense.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

ÉDUCATION EN FRANÇAIS

M^{me} Chandra Pasma: J’ai l’honneur de me lever pour présenter une pétition qui s’intitule « 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 œuvre les recommandations. »

J’appuie cette pétition. Je vais y ajouter ma signature et je vais l’envoyer à la table des greffiers avec Halle.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Ms. Christine Hogarth: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the World Health Organization (WHO) identifies intimate-partner violence as a major global public health concern, as it affects millions of people and can result in immediate and long-lasting health, social and economic consequences; and

“Whereas other Canadian provinces including Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba and Newfoundland and Labrador have passed legislation on the disclosure of intimate-partner violence history, to protect its citizens from domestic violence; and

“Whereas the disclosure mechanisms outlined in Clare’s Law would be an additional tool for police services to prevent intimate-partner violence; and

“Whereas over 43,786 people, as of April 19, 2023, have signed the petition ‘Justice for Bobbi: Adopt Clare’s Law in Ontario’ on change.org; and

1310

“Whereas people at risk of potential harm have the right to be informed of their intimate partner’s violent past—if the partner was a repeat offender of domestic violence;

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

“To urge the government of Ontario to adopt mechanisms for disclosure outlined in Clare’s Law—whereby information relating to intimate-partner-violence convictions can be used to assess risk of and prevent harm from intimate-partner violence.”

I think this is a great petition, and I will be happy to sign my name to it and give it to Amara.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Jessica Bell: “Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from the Elementary Teachers of Toronto to Stop the Cuts and Invest in our Schools.

“Whereas the government cut funding to our schools by \$800 per student during the pandemic period, and plans to cut an additional \$6 billion to our schools over the next six years;

“Whereas these cuts have resulted in larger class sizes, reduced special education and mental health supports and resources for our students, and neglected and occasionally unsafe buildings;

“Whereas the Financial Accountability Office reported a \$2.1-billion surplus in 2021-22, and surpluses growing to \$8.5 billion in 2027-28, demonstrating there is more than enough money to fund a robust public education system;

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

“—immediately reverse the cuts to our schools;

“—fix the inadequate education funding formula;

“—provide schools the funding they need to ensure the supports necessary to address the impacts of the pandemic on our students;

“—make the needed investments to provide smaller class sizes, increased levels of staffing to support our students’ special education, mental health, English language learner and wraparound supports needs, and safe and healthy buildings and classrooms.”

I support this petition. I’ll be affixing my signature to it and giving it to the page.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I’d like to table the following petition:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the federal government is increasing the escalated carbon tax by 14%, on April 1, 2023;

“Whereas carbon tax cost increase will put more pressure on consumers who are already struggling with inflation;

“Whereas we call on the federal government to stop the carbon tax, which is a tax hike that Ontarians and Canadians cannot afford;

“Whereas the government of Ontario is helping to reduce the cost of living by keeping taxes low, freezing and eliminating licence plate renewal fees and scrapping the requirement to have licence plate stickers for passenger vehicles, light-duty trucks, motorcycles and mopeds and building on these measures in Bill 85, Building a Strong Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2023, the government continues to help Ontarians with the cost of living;

“Whereas we call on the Ontario government to urge the federal government to halt the carbon tax increase, that will rise the cost of everything;

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

“To support the passage of Bill 85, Building a Strong Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2023.”

I will affix my signature and pass it on to page Amara.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Chris Glover: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Haliburton Highlands Health Services board of directors has, without consultation with the affected stakeholders, announced the permanent closure of the emergency department located in the municipality of Minden Hills, Ontario, effective June 1, 2023;

“We, the undersigned, petition that a moratorium of this decision be implemented by the Ministries of Health and Long-Term Care immediately for a period of a minimum of one year to allow for consultations with all affected stakeholders to occur.”

I fully endorse this petition. I will pass it to page Christopher to take to the table.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It’s my honour to present the following petition on behalf of Peri Ren, Samantha Bolger, Ayma Aqib and the class of 2025 medical students from the Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry at Western University. It’s titled, “Health Care: Not for Sale.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontarians should get health care based on need—not the size of your wallet;

“Whereas Premier Doug Ford and Health Minister Sylvia Jones say they’re planning to privatize parts of health care;

“Whereas privatization will bleed nurses, doctors and PSWs out of our public hospitals, making the health care crisis worse;

“Whereas privatization always ends with patients getting a bill;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately stop all plans to privatize Ontario’s health care system, and fix the crisis in health care by:

“—repealing Bill 124 and recruiting, retaining, and respecting doctors, nurses and PSWs with better working conditions;

“—licensing tens of thousands of internationally educated nurses and other health care professionals already in Ontario, who wait years and pay thousands to have their credentials certified;

“—10 employer-paid sick days;

“—making education and training free or low-cost for nurses, doctors, and other health care professionals;

“—incentivizing doctors and nurses to choose to live and work in northern Ontario;

“—funding hospitals to have enough nurses on every shift, on every ward.”

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

TAXATION

Mr. Lorne Coe: “Whereas the federal government is increasing the escalated carbon tax by 14%, on April 1, 2023;

“Whereas carbon tax cost increase will put more pressure on consumers who are already struggling with inflation;

“Whereas we call on the federal government to stop the carbon tax, which is a tax hike that Ontarians and Canadians cannot afford;

“Whereas the government of Ontario is helping to reduce the cost of living by keeping taxes low, freezing and eliminating licence plate renewal fees and scrapping the requirement to have licence plate stickers for passenger vehicle, light-duty trucks, motorcycles and mopeds and building on these measures in Bill 85, Building a Strong Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2023, the government continues to help Ontarians with the cost of living;

“Whereas we call on the Ontario government to urge the federal government to halt the carbon tax increase, that will raise the cost of everything;

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

“To support the passage of Bill 85, Building a Strong Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2023.”

I'm going to affix my signature to this petition and provide it to page Giulia.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

M. Guy Bourgouin: Il me fait plaisir de lire une pétition intitulée « To Raise Social Assistance Rates ».

“To Raise Social Assistance Rates.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

“Whereas the recent 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'm proud to sign my signature and give it to page Luke to bring to the Clerks' table.

TAXATION

Mr. Graham McGregor: I have a petition here.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the federal government is increasing the escalated carbon tax by 14%, on April 1, 2023;

“Whereas carbon tax cost increase will put more pressure on consumers who are already struggling with inflation;

“Whereas we call on the federal government to stop the carbon tax, which is a tax hike that Ontarians and Canadians cannot afford;

“Whereas the government of Ontario is helping to reduce the cost of living by keeping taxes low, freezing and eliminating licence plate renewal fees and scrapping the requirement to have licence plate stickers for passenger vehicle, light-duty trucks, motorcycles and mopeds and building on these measures in Bill 85, Building a Strong Ontario Act ... 2023, the government continues to help Ontarians with the cost of living;

1320

“Whereas we call on the Ontario government to urge the federal government to halt the carbon tax increase, that will raise the cost of everything;

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

“To support the passage of Bill 85, Building a Strong Ontario Act, 2023.”

I couldn't agree more with this petition. I will give it to page Milan and affix my name to the petition.

LAND USE PLANNING

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am pleased to read this petition.

“Protect the Greenbelt.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Bills 23 and 39 are the Ford government’s latest attempt”—well, an attempt—“to remove protected lands from the greenbelt, allowing developers to bulldoze and pave over 7,000 acres of farmland in the greenbelt;

“Whereas Ontario is already losing 319.6 acres of farmland and green space daily to development;

“Whereas the government’s Housing Affordability Task Force found there are plenty of places to build homes without destroying the greenbelt;

“Whereas Ford’s repeated moves to tear up farmland and bulldoze wetlands have never been about housing, but are about rewarding PC donors and making the rich richer;

“Whereas green spaces and farmland are what we rely on to grow our food, support natural habitats and prevent flooding;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately stop all plans to remove what has long been protected land from the greenbelt, pass the NDP’s Protecting Agricultural Land Act, and protect irreplaceable farmland in the province of Ontario.”

Of course, I support this petition. I will affix my signature and will send it to the table with page Solomon.

TAXATION

Mr. Brian Riddell: I also have a petition to read to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the federal government is increasing the escalated carbon tax by 14%, on April 1, 2023;

“Whereas carbon tax cost increase will put more pressure on consumers who are already struggling with inflation;

“Whereas we call on the federal government to stop the carbon tax, which is a tax hike” on Ontarians and Canadians, and they cannot afford it;

“Whereas the government of Ontario is helping to reduce the cost of living by keeping taxes low, freezing and eliminating licence plate renewal fees and scrapping the requirement to have licence plate stickers for passenger vehicle, light-duty trucks, motorcycles and mopeds and building on these measures in Bill 85, Building a Strong Ontario Act ... 2023, the government continue to help Ontarians with the cost of living;

“Whereas we call on the Ontario government to urge the federal government to halt the carbon tax increase, that will raise the cost of everything....”

To support this bill, I will be adding my name to it. I feel it's unfair.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

HAZEL MCCALLION ACT (PEEL DISSOLUTION), 2023

LOI HAZEL MCCALLION DE 2023 SUR LA DISSOLUTION DE PEEL

Mrs. Tangri, on behalf of Mr. Clark, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 112, An Act to provide for the dissolution of The Regional Municipality of Peel / Projet de loi 112, Loi prévoyant la dissolution de la municipalité régionale de Peel.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): I turn to the minister.

Hon. Nina Tangri: It is my pleasure today to rise for the second reading of our government's proposed Hazel McCallion Act. I will be sharing my time today with the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

It is so fitting to name this bill after the late former mayor of Mississauga and former special adviser to our government. Hazel was a long-time proponent for an independent Mississauga, and today's announcement is a wonderful recognition of her legacy. Known admirably to so many as "Hurricane Hazel," she guided the city of Mississauga for 12 consecutive terms, from 1978 to 2014. Think about that: 36 consecutive years as mayor. And no one knew Mississauga better than Hazel. She guided the growth of Mississauga from a semi-rural bedroom community with a population of almost 281,000 to the sixth-largest city in Canada.

Hazel and her husband, Sam, moved to Streetsville—now part of Mississauga—in 1951. In 1963, she became the editor and business manager of the Streetsville Booster, a community newspaper founded by Sam. This got Hazel interested in public life. Within three short years, being Hazel, she was chair of the Streetsville planning board and president of the local chamber of commerce. That was in 1966. In 1969, she was elected mayor of Streetsville. When Streetsville became part of the newly incorporated city of Mississauga, in 1974, she became a Mississauga city councillor. After one term as councillor, she was elected mayor of Mississauga and never looked back, retiring in 2014 from her position as leader of a city with more than 713,000 residents.

Hazel was an advocate for autonomy for her city and was always looking to the future.

This bill, too, is looking to the future. Its purpose is to prepare the city of Mississauga, the city of Brampton and the town of Caledon for the decades ahead.

Let's look at the facts. According to Statistics Canada, at the time of the last census in 2021, Mississauga had a population of almost 720,000 people, Brampton's population was more than 650,000 people, and Caledon had a population of just over 76,500. By 2051, Mississauga is

expected to grow to 995,000 people, almost one million. And Brampton is not far behind; it is expected to be home to approximately 985,000 people. And Caledon is expected to be home to 300,000 people. Those numbers are remarkable—especially for Caledon, which is expected to almost quadruple in population. These municipalities have to be prepared to house and accommodate all these expected newcomers, and that's less than 30 years away. That requires not only housing, but infrastructure like roads, pipes for water, waste water and stormwater, libraries, schools, hospitals, parks, fire stations, and more transit. They all need to be planned and built. These municipalities have to start getting ready now, but sometimes there are barriers that cause delays and raise the cost of building the infrastructure and homes we need. These barriers include complex land use policies, with two layers of planning authority and lengthy planning approvals for new housing. When I mentioned two layers of planning authority, that may have been unclear for those members of this House who may not have come from a municipal background. Those members may not be familiar with municipal government structures in our province.

I therefore want to give a brief overview of the three types of municipalities in Ontario, as defined by the Municipal Act, 2001. Under the Municipal Act, the three types are single-tier, upper-tier, and lower-tier. In Ontario, there are no other types of municipality. As things currently stand, the region of Peel is an upper-tier municipality and Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon are lower-tier. These four municipalities operate together in a two-tier system. The Municipal Act sets out the responsibilities and powers of each type of municipality—Peel as the upper-tier municipality and Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon as the lower-tier municipalities. Another way of looking at it is, which level of municipality delivers what services.

I want to point out for some members that the official name of a municipality may include a term such as "township," "village," "town," or "city." You're likely familiar with terms such as "county" or "region," often used in the names of upper-tier municipalities. However, such terms usually do not determine the legal powers and responsibilities of a municipality.

To be clear, Mississauga and Brampton may call themselves cities, but they have no more responsibilities in a two-tier system than does Caledon, which calls itself a town.

1330

Under the Municipal Act, the roles and responsibilities for the three types of municipalities are standardized and clarified. An upper-tier municipality is usually responsible for arterial roads, policing, sewer and water systems, waste disposal, and health and social services. Lower-tier municipalities are usually responsible for services such as local roads, fire protection, recreation, and local land use planning.

I want to add that municipalities in an upper-tier/lower-tier system can work together to agree upon and change which tier is responsible for certain services and can migrate that responsibility between tiers.

Lower-tier municipalities collect taxes for their own purposes and for the associated upper tier and for school boards.

All of these municipalities—single-tier, upper-tier and lower-tier—have municipal councils.

So far, I have described the system as it works in the upper-tier/lower-tier municipal structure.

Now let's look at single-tier municipalities. An example of a single-tier municipality is the city of Toronto. A single-tier municipality is responsible for all local services. That usually means roads, transit, policing, fire protection, sewer and water systems, garbage collection and waste disposal, land use planning, health and social services, and recreation. These municipalities collect taxes for their own purposes and for school boards. That is the status that our bill, if passed, would give the city of Mississauga, the city of Brampton and the town of Caledon. The region of Peel would no longer exist.

Speaker, calls for the dissolution of the two-tier structure among Peel, Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon have been heard for many years. The current mayors of Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon are on board.

Let me quote Mayor Crombie: "This is a historic day for the people of Mississauga and for our future. I want to thank the minister and the Premier for answering our calls for an independent Mississauga. As Ontario's third-largest city that's home to 100,000 businesses and the province's second-largest economy, we're ready to stand on our own two feet and make our own decisions about the future of our city. An independent Mississauga will allow us to be more nimble when it comes to responding to the housing crisis, increase efficiencies, reduce duplication and save residents time and money."

Brampton mayor Patrick Brown said, "We expect to work closely with the transition board to achieve a result that respects the taxpayers of Brampton, allows our city to continue its significant growth, and treats all municipalities within Peel region equitably."

Caledon mayor Annette Groves said, "Caledon is a special place, and the town's residents have made it clear that they want Caledon to retain its unique identity.... We will work with the province to ensure a fair transition for our town that protects our financial security and makes sure residents continue to receive the high levels of service that they need and have come to expect.... We understand that this will be a lengthy and involved process and we look forward to working productively to reach an outcome that is fair, equitable and respects the current and future capabilities of a growing Caledon."

Speaker, all of the mayors understand our primary goal. This proposed legislation is about growth. Our government is working with our municipal partners in Mississauga, Brampton, Caledon, and across Ontario to provide the tools and autonomy required to deliver our shared commitments to the people of this great province. And we're counting on our municipal partners to do their part by being committed to this process and finding a constructive outcome that works for everyone. That includes addressing the housing supply crisis.

The region of Peel includes some of the largest and fastest-growing municipalities in Canada—municipalities that are poised for significant growth over the next few decades. Our government is supporting this growth by cutting red tape and improving efficiency while maintaining and improving the high level of local services Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon residents rightly expect.

Speaker, I want to give some background on how we partly identified the need for this proposed legislation.

Our government created the Housing Affordability Task Force in 2021. That task force was made up of building and development industry leaders and experts to recommend additional measures the government can take to help increase the supply of market rental and ownership housing. The task force report was published in February 2020. The task force stated in their introductory letter to the report—and I'll paraphrase: "For many years, the province has not built enough housing to meet the needs of our growing population...."

"Efforts to cool the housing market have only provided temporary relief to homebuyers. The long-term trend is clear: House prices are increasing much faster than Ontarian's incomes. The time for action is now."

The task force also pointed out that after meeting with a variety of housing sector partners, they heard solutions that fit into five themes: (1) increasing density across the province; (2) ending exclusionary municipal rules that block or delay new housing; (3) depoliticizing the housing approval process; (4) preventing abuse of the housing appeal system; and (5) financial support to municipalities that build more housing.

As the task force pointed out, there is a bottleneck when it comes to getting shovels in the ground for new home construction. Development approvals and appropriate zoning are often delayed or hindered because of differing priorities among upper-level and lower-tier municipalities, and some projects are even abandoned. Even if the project finally gets the go-ahead, a lot of damage has been done by the delays.

The C.D. Howe Institute found that restrictions and extra costs on building new housing are dramatically increasing the price of housing development. These restrictions include delays on projects and permit approvals. These are costs that are passed down to homebuyers and renters.

Delays are contributing to an unfortunate statistic cited by the Residential Construction Council of Ontario. RESCON previously said that we were underproducing housing by 12,000 units per year here in Ontario, and RESCON is now sounding the alarm about the need to double new housing production to meet the expected demand driven by population growth in the next decade.

We clearly need to do everything we can to help ensure the unimpeded construction of homes.

Fortunately, Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon have shown that they are shovel-ready, committed to growth and committed to cutting red tape. Single-tier status in Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon would help them deliver on their obligations and priorities, particularly in

addressing the housing supply crisis by meeting their municipal housing pledges of 120,000 new homes for Mississauga, 113,000 new homes for Brampton and 13,000 homes for Caledon by 2031, while at the same time recognizing their unique identities and circumstances.

Speaker, the mayors of Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon have also emphasized an important point: respect for the taxpayer. Our proposed legislation would enable the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to appoint a transition board for Peel region and its lower-tier municipalities. Appointing a transition board is important to help ensure that this dissolution process is designed from the outset to help ensure fairness, preservation of front-line services and workers, and respect for taxpayers, while providing some of our fastest-growing municipalities with the necessary tools to build the homes their current and future residents need. The transition board that the minister would appoint will provide advice to the province on a range of restructuring matters, including, but not limited to, service delivery, allocation of assets and liabilities, regional bylaws, labour relations and long-term financial sustainability. Additionally, the transition board would oversee the financial affairs of Peel region and its lower-tier municipalities to help ensure prudent financial stewardship as Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon prepare to become single-tier municipalities. This process will help ensure a stable and fair outcome that respects taxpayers while positioning these three municipalities for future growth. Our government's instructions to the transition board and our intentions throughout the process would be very clear: There should be no disruptions to front-line services.

1340

Speaker, our proposed changes, if passed by this House, would allow the city of Mississauga, the city of Brampton and the town of Caledon to become separate single-tier municipalities on January 21, 2025. The time is ripe for these large municipalities and fast-growing communities to have the tools and autonomy they need to support growth and build homes in the years to come. And I'm proud to be a member of a government that is ready to partner with them and support them and all other municipalities in Ontario as we work to help build 1.5 million new homes by 2031.

Speaker, this legislation is very close to home for me, not only as the Associate Minister of Housing, but also as the member of provincial Parliament for the riding of Mississauga—Streetsville. The late, great Hazel McCallion has been an inspiration for me for decades, and, just as she did, I see my job in politics is to help make life better for my constituents and all Ontarians. As Hazel was my constituent, we met constantly to discuss what was best for our constituents and for the people of Ontario.

Right now, housing is a major, if not the major, challenge to the quality of life facing Ontarians and the residents of Peel.

Under the leadership of Premier Ford, as Associate Minister of Housing—we've been working hard to make life better for Ontarians by tackling the housing supply

crisis head-on. That's why I'm so proud to support this bill. As I've said before, our government is working with our municipal partners to provide the tools and autonomy required to deliver on our shared commitments to the people of Ontario, including addressing the housing supply crisis. The proposed Hazel McCallion Act would do that by removing a layer of approvals in the land use planning and housing approvals process.

Speaker, I want to tell the House a little bit about the history of Peel. Peel county was created in 1852 and was originally part of the united counties of York, Peel and Ontario. Ontario county separated two years later. This left only York county and Peel county, joined and administered out of the city of Toronto. That was until growth made it advantageous for these two counties to separate in 1867. As a stand-alone county, Peel comprised the five townships of Toronto, Chinguacousy, Toronto Gore, Albion, and Caledon. These townships elected councils and were responsible for municipal roads, assessment of properties, public utilities such as water and electricity, libraries, and firefighting and policing services. The county level of government was responsible for such services and infrastructure as the jail and courthouse, county roads and bridges, a home for the aged, a health unit, and the emergency operational plan in the event of a natural disaster or war.

Population growth and industrial growth after the Second World War put great pressure on many of the county governments within Ontario. More regional co-operation was seen as a possible solution. That meant municipal restructuring again. The regional government model in Ontario was first implemented for parts of York county in 1953 with the creation of the municipality of Metropolitan Toronto. It was made up of the city of Toronto and the old townships of East York, Etobicoke, North York, Scarborough, and York, as well as several villages and towns that had been separated from the townships.

For Peel county, the regional government structure was created in 1974. By that time, the population had grown to 334,750 people. The old county of Peel was dissolved and replaced with the region of Peel as the upper-tier municipality. This new regional government had more responsibilities than the old county government. By 2015, its responsibilities included water, public health, waste management, paramedic services, long-term-care facilities, and policing.

The former five townships in the old Peel county, along with their respective towns and villages, were amalgamated into the cities of Mississauga and Brampton and the town of Caledon. As lower-tier municipalities, these two cities and town took control of local affairs such as tax collection, parks and recreation, firefighting, and libraries. The area continued to grow swiftly, and by 2014, 40 years after the creation of Peel, approximately 1.35 million people lived in the region.

As many of you know, Hazel McCallion had long advocated for Mississauga becoming its own independent city, separate from Peel region. In 2005, Mayor McCallion

ran a One City, One Voice campaign to separate, which was supported by 99% of the residents. Unfortunately, the Liberal government said no.

Mississauga has grown tremendously over the years into a major economic engine for the greater Toronto area. We are now the sixth-largest city in Canada, yet we still have little control over how our tax dollars are spent. That must change.

Speaker, the characteristics that dominate the brief history of the region I've just spoken about are its fast growth and the continually evolving municipal structures needed to address the massive need for housing created by this growth. Today, growth is once again putting pressures on how the area is run. Bold change is required to address the current housing supply crisis.

As someone who has raised a family in Mississauga—Streetsville, I know very well that housing is a challenge for many in the Peel area, as it is for many households right across this province. According to Peel region officials, the average-income family would have to save for over 30 years for a down payment at today's home prices if they wanted an affordable monthly mortgage.

Our government recognizes these pressures and has identified the proposed new single-tier structure for Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon as part of the solution to help meet housing demand, while maintaining and improving the high level of local services residents rightly expect.

Speaker, let's be clear. Single-tier status can help these municipalities address their housing supply issues and help them meet their municipal housing pledges. But this is not all our government has done to support the building of more homes across Ontario.

We have introduced a range of bold and transformative measures over the past several years to increase housing supply. We can see their growing and positive impact. For example, in the last two years, housing starts in Ontario have reached a level not seen in more than 30 years. Just last year, rental housing starts reached an all-time high.

These positive trends are the result of the policies our government has championed. We will make sure those positive trends continue. We've committed to updating and revising our housing supply action plans every year so we can continue to make progress toward our goal of 1.5 million new homes by 2031.

Our government's proposed Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act and related measures support increasing density and building more homes in existing communities, while making sure that enough land is available for the many new homes and jobs our province needs. We're making life easier for renters, while supporting landlords, and are committed to helping first-time homebuyers. From young people and newcomers to families and seniors, our government is helping people from all walks of life find housing.

But we cannot do this alone. We're counting on support from municipal governments—such as Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon—to partner with us to increase housing in communities across this province. That's why

I'm pleased to see that these municipalities have signed on to the municipal housing pledges. Early this year, the city of Mississauga pledged to do its part to tackle our housing supply crisis by meeting its target of 120,000 new homes by 2031. In March, Brampton city council endorsed their municipal housing pledge to help deliver 113,000 homes by 2031. And in February, the town of Caledon council endorsed a municipal housing pledge to deliver on its target of 13,000 new homes by 2031. This is the type of commitment and partnership that Ontarians are depending on. And the support our government has received since introducing our latest housing supply action plan—Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants—shows we are heading in the right direction.

1350

The Ontario Real Estate Association commended our government on supporting prospective homeowners, renters and rental housing providers, while also adopting a targeted approach to deliver on our goal to build a million and a half homes by 2031.

And the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing recently had the chance to speak about aspects of the plan with representatives at the Ontario Small Urban Municipalities association and the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association, together with the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities. Our government received positive feedback at all of these meetings.

Speaker, I want to impress upon the members of this House that our government's goal to create a million and a half homes by 2031 includes rental homes. This is important in municipalities such as Mississauga and Brampton with many renters.

To support renters, we continue to call on the federal government to defer the harmonized sales tax on all large-scale, purpose-built rental housing projects. This measure would help spur the construction of more rental housing units while helping to create jobs, encourage economic development, and support growth.

I want to remind the members of this House that our housing supply action plans build on each other. For example, in the fall of last year, More Homes Built Faster introduced changes to help home builders to replace older rental apartments with larger, more modern rental buildings. Our intent is to help increase the supply of purpose-built rental units in Ontario while helping to ensure existing tenants are also protected. And the proposals in our government's latest housing supply action plan would do exactly that. Currently, municipalities have the option to establish bylaws which regulate what developers can do when demolishing or converting these buildings, such as requiring that existing units be replaced.

And I'm glad to see that Mississauga already does have a rental protection bylaw. That bylaw applies to residential rental buildings in that city with six or more dwelling units. And for those municipalities like Mississauga that do have these bylaws, our proposed Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act would give the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing the authority, if used, to make regulations governing municipal rental replacement

bylaws. For example, they could require that replacement units have the same core features as the original units, and by “core features,” we mean—an example would be the number of bedrooms in the unit. Regulations could also require that displaced tenants are given compensation and have the right to move into the new replacement units at similar rent. This approach would ensure that if tenants move out of a two-bedroom apartment, they can then move back into a two-bedroom apartment, and that if they move out of the apartment paying a certain rent, they will have the option to pay a similar rent if they move back in. The big difference, of course, is they will have access to a more modern apartment—which we should all be able to agree is a critical part of protecting tenants.

A key aspect of our government’s Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants plan is speeding up planning approvals. We are proposing to integrate the provincial policy statement and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe into a single provincial planning statement. This would simplify existing policies and refocus them on achieving housing outcomes while providing specific direction to large and fast-growing municipalities like Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon on increasing their housing supply. In addition, it would ensure that appropriate planning policies are in place to support growth throughout the province and respond to market needs, while recognizing that one size does not fit all.

In our proposed provincial planning statement, all municipalities would be required to provide a range and mix of housing options.

And we propose to enable greater flexibility to build homes in rural areas such as in parts of Caledon, all while minimizing impacts on agriculture.

We also want the 29 large and fast-growing municipalities, like Mississauga and Brampton, to be required to plan for growth in major transit station areas and other strategic growth areas; for example, downtowns. Ensuring adequate density in these areas is all part of our plan in addressing Ontario’s transit needs with a comprehensive approach that also focuses on housing.

At the same time, as we encourage growth, we know we need to protect our resources.

Under our proposed provincial planning statement, municipalities would be required to designate prime agricultural and specialty crop areas to support our growing agri-food network.

We would also encourage municipalities to adopt a watershed planning approach to protect water resources while facilitating more new home construction.

Similarly, access to aggregate resources close to market would be protected. Stone, sand and gravel are essential to building and growing our communities. We therefore propose to create consistent requirements for aggregate extraction to ensure fairness between expansions and new applications.

As part of More Homes for Everyone, we made changes to the Planning Act and the City of Toronto Act to require municipalities to gradually refund fees for zoning bylaw

applications and site plan applications in certain cases, like in cases where the municipalities failed to decide within a specified time. In the spirit of collaboration, we did listen to municipal feedback, and we have postponed the start date from January 1 to July 1 of this year to give municipalities time to adjust.

Municipal representatives have also told us they need to be able to address the type of concerns that may come up in a site plan review of some smaller projects—for example, smaller projects like housing near train tracks—so we’re proposing to allow municipalities to use site plan control for residential projects with 10 or fewer units in specific circumstances.

Speaker, it’s always an honour to talk about our government’s housing supply action plans and our strong record on getting more housing built to bring the dream of home ownership closer to everyday Ontarians.

I do call upon the members of this House on all sides to join our government in supporting our municipal partners to get more housing built in their communities.

The proposed Hazel McCallion Act would help municipalities like Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon work more efficiently and effectively. It would enhance their ability to meet their municipal housing targets by 2031 and help us tackle Ontario’s housing supply crisis, and it would get us closer to our goal of helping build that 1.5 million homes.

1400

I want to thank everyone for listening intently today.

And I want to let everyone know that in the past few weeks, in my role as the Associate Minister of Housing, meeting with many, many different areas in this province, talking to housing providers, municipalities and all of those who desperately need housing—it has been an honour to see that the work we are doing is really making huge advances right on the ground.

I would now like to open the floor to the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): The member from Perth–Wellington.

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you to the Associate Minister of Housing for her great work in her relatively new role, as well. I was able to host the minister in my riding of Perth–Wellington during the break week last week, and I know we had a very fulsome day seeing some of the very innovative solutions to the housing crisis we currently face in Ontario from my rural riding’s perspective. So I just want to thank the minister for all the tireless work she does.

Speaker, it’s my privilege to speak on the details of our government’s proposed Hazel McCallion Act. As the Associate Minister of Housing said, this bill is about supporting housing, moving to greater efficiencies, and preparing Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon for growth in the years ahead, all while respecting the taxpayer and ensuring the continued delivery of high-quality services to the residents of these municipalities.

To set the stage for my remarks, I’d like to highlight the principles behind the proposed dissolution of Peel region

and the creation of three single-tier municipalities. I think these principles make clear what our government wants to achieve and hopes for the future of this thriving region.

(1) We respect and support the effective administration of local government.

(2) We continue to recognize that municipalities should be empowered with the tools needed to plan for population growth, including the tools needed to build more housing options, and, importantly, they should work together fairly and in good partnership with neighbouring municipalities.

(3) We understand that safe communities and the delivery of effective front-line services are key pillars for local government, including preserving front-line workers.

(4) We appreciate the importance of value-for-money and high-quality services, delivered in an efficient manner for taxpayers—because, Speaker, as you know, there is only one taxpayer in the province of Ontario.

(5) We acknowledge that, particularly where there are shared assets and services, municipalities should be treated in an equitable and fair manner whereby all residents, regardless of where they live, are respected and have access to excellent services.

Speaker, we think our bill reflects these principles and includes elements to help achieve our objectives; namely, the dissolution of the region of Peel and the creation of three independent, thriving, single-tier municipalities: Mississauga, Brampton, and Caledon. The process to accomplish this, if our legislation is passed, would help ensure fairness and the preservation of front-line services and workers, all while providing some of our fastest-growing municipalities with the necessary tools to build the homes their current and future residents need.

Our proposed changes would help these three future single-tier municipalities deliver on their obligations and priorities. It would help them meet their housing pledges—and I'm pleased to share with this place that all three municipalities in the region of Peel have committed to their housing pledges, under the leadership of the Premier. In Mississauga, in particular, they've pledged to build 120,000 new units; in Brampton, they've pledged to build 113,000 new housing units; and in the town of Caledon, they've pledged to build 13,000 new housing units by 2031. These are important steps to address our housing supply crisis that all communities in Ontario face, while at the same time we're recognizing their unique identities and circumstances.

Speaker, I'd like to point out to the members in this place the two-step process we are proposing to undertake. The bill before you would begin the process of dissolving the region of Peel and establish Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon as single-tier municipalities. Should the proposed Hazel McCallion Act pass, we intend to bring a second bill before this House to complete the dissolution process and bring the proposed changes into effect on January 1, 2025. Our government will be taking the time to get things right.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing would appoint up to five members, or a number prescribed by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, to the

transition board to help facilitate this change in local government. This transition board would have individuals with a mix of expertise and experience in areas such as municipal operations, finance, service delivery, housing, and labour relations. This board can be appointed only if this proposed legislation before this place is passed. If this legislation is passed, the minister would make the appointments as quickly as possible so that the transition board can get started on their important work and help bring certainty to the region of Peel, its three lower-tier municipalities, their employees and all of its residents. The board would be disbanded at the end of January 2025, or a date prescribed by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

And as with past practices used in municipal restructuring in Ontario, the cost of the transition board would be the responsibility of all four municipalities involved: the region of Peel, Mississauga, Brampton, and Caledon. These costs will be allocated in a fair and transparent way among the four municipalities involved.

The board would have two primary responsibilities. First, it would provide advice to the province on a range of restructuring matters, including service delivery, allocation of assets and liabilities, labour relations, and long-term financial stability, among others. Second, the board would oversee the financial affairs of Peel and its lower-tier municipalities to help ensure prudent fiscal stewardship. This process would help ensure a stable and fair outcome and respect taxpayers while positioning Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon for future growth.

I also want to point out that the board's work would touch on a range of sensitive matters, including labour relations and contractual obligations in respect of municipalities. As such, our government does not intend to make the board's findings public. However, the board would work closely with all parties as it works through the transition process.

Once the transition board is in place, their recommendations to the government would be due next year. This is to provide the board members with adequate time to work with the four municipalities and provide expert advice to our government on a range of complex matters. The transition board's recommendations would inform subsequent legislation. If passed, it would address any outstanding restructuring matters to ensure an orderly transition on January 21, 2025. This transitional board would work closely with Peel, Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon to ensure the public interest is protected throughout the entire process in local governance structure and local services people rely on every day.

Speaker, I want to impress upon this House that, if the proposed legislation is passed, the instructions to the board and our government's intention throughout the process are very clear: There should be no disruption to front-line services.

What our government also wants to make clear is that if the proposed legislation is passed, Peel region would still continue to exist until January 1, 2025.

And our government wishes to reassure the 1.5 million residents of Peel region that, as it stands today, there is no change to the role that municipal councils and staff play in making decisions and delivering services to them.

Once the transition board is appointed, it would work with Peel, Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon on a transition plan, including any changes to the decision-making process that lead up to the proposed dissolution date of January 1, 2025. As I said earlier, the board would be tasked to ensure sound decision-making processes. It would also be empowered to give directions with respect to certain municipal decisions to help ensure fairness to all three municipalities during the dissolution process.

Speaker, I'd like to address some questions that we've heard about the boundary adjustments for the three current lower-tier municipalities. On behalf of the government, I can state in this House that there is no plan or intention to alter the municipal boundaries of the city of Mississauga, the city of Brampton or the town of Caledon as part of the dissolution of the region of Peel.

1410

I also want to address questions about the financial impacts of the proposed legislation on Peel residents if it is passed.

Part of the transition board's work would be to bring to light the full financial impacts of this change. Our government is looking forward to that full and detailed analysis, and we are committed to supporting a fair and equitable outcome for taxpayers no matter where they live in Peel. As I mentioned earlier, there is only one taxpayer in Ontario.

Again, I'll repeat: There should be no disruption to municipal services local residents rely on at any time throughout the transition process.

I mentioned them already at length, but let's look at those services that are currently provided in the region of Peel, which is responsible for providing shared services between the city of Mississauga, the city of Brampton, and the town of Caledon. These services include such things as public health, garbage, waste and water services, paramedics, and social housing. Protecting those services for the residents of Peel is a top priority of our government if our legislation is passed. And we would expect Peel and the lower-tier municipalities to put the public interest first and foremost and ensure front-line services are protected and service levels are maintained for all residents of the region.

The transition board would also be considering service delivery, among other things, in its analysis and recommendations. The proposed timeline for dissolution has been set for January 1, 2025, to allow the transition board and the four municipalities enough time to work through these complex issues and ensure the services that Peel residents rely on are protected.

Speaker, in addition to services, there is also the question of how regional assets and revenues would be divided among Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon. It's a significant question. The proposed dissolution of Peel,

with nearly 1.5 million residents and more than 9,000 employees, needs to be done in a prudent manner.

For example, according to Peel's 2021 Financial Information Return, the net book value of the region of Peel's infrastructure, which is primarily made up of water, waste water and roads, was close to \$11 billion. There are shared assets and revenues, of course, and municipalities must be and would be treated in an equitable and fair manner whereby all residents—again, regardless of where they live in Peel—are respected.

That's why we have proposed enough time before the dissolution on January 1, 2025, to give municipalities and the transition board time to analyze and resolve the complex matters, including allocation of assets and liabilities, contractual obligations, services, governance, and employee relations.

Full consideration must also be given to the impacts on municipal labour processes and staffing if the proposed Hazel McCallion Act is passed. Our government respects and values the contributions of Peel region staff, and we recognize that this restructuring would be a significant change. We would expect the region to put in place measures to protect front-line services and ensure there are no service disruptions. Our goal is to protect services, respect taxpayers, and ensure that local governments continue to deliver throughout the transition process.

Our government is committed to putting into place a fair process through the transition board to help ensure employment matters are addressed in an equitable way. And where possible, we expect the transition board to bring forward solutions that use the existing expertise in the region to meet the growing needs of Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon.

Speaker, our government appreciates that this is a complex task we are proposing. And we are confident that we can accomplish a smooth transition in 18 months. Our proposed legislation, if passed, includes the time and expertise required to facilitate a structured and orderly transition. In addition, our government intends to bring forward subsequent legislation, informed by the transition board's recommendations, which would provide a further opportunity to ensure that the transition proceeds in a timely and effective way that supports local implementation by January 1, 2025.

And I will repeat for the record: Our government expects Peel, Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon to put the public interest first and foremost and ensure that front-line services are protected and that the service levels are maintained for residents. However, if there are ongoing issues, the Hazel McCallion Act, if passed, would also provide the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing with the authority to make orders with respect to certain municipal decisions if necessary.

I'm proud to be part of a government that does not shy away from taking on tough work or hard questions.

Much of the media attention has been focused on Mississauga and Brampton, but our government is fully aware of all of the lower-tier municipalities in the region of Peel.

We know the town of Caledon has its own challenges unique from those of Mississauga and Brampton. Caledon has the potential for massive growth over the coming years. We want to ensure that this transition supports that. The transition board would, if our proposed legislation is passed, advise our government on important considerations like financial stability and infrastructure issues like servicing to help address Caledon's needs. We are prepared to carefully consider the transition board's best advice related to Caledon. If the proposed Hazel McCallion Act is passed, we would receive that advice next year.

Speaker, before I conclude, I would like to address some other questions and speculation that have appeared in the media.

As many in this House are aware, on May 4, 2023, our government launched the process to procure third parties to audit the finances of six selected municipalities. Along with Toronto, our government is seeking participation from the regions of Peel, Mississauga, Brampton, Caledon and Newmarket in the audit. As an aside, some of the municipalities have already confirmed their participation. We intend to use these audits to reach a shared understanding of any potential or perceived impacts of our government's More Homes Built Faster Act as regards to changes to the development-related fees and charges. Once the procurement process is complete, the third parties would conduct the audits later this year. The findings of these audits could be used to help inform Peel's restructuring process.

Another question that has come up across certain areas of the province is the regional facilitators which we intend to announce for the regions of Durham, Halton, Niagara, Waterloo, and York, and the county of Simcoe. To be clear, there will be no regional facilitator appointed for the region of Peel. We are taking swift action with the proposed Hazel McCallion Act, and, if passed, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing would appoint a transition board to work with Peel, Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon. Our government will, however, continue with our commitment to appoint facilitators to assess two-tier governments, again, in the regions of Durham, Halton, Waterloo, York, and the county of Simcoe. Details on these appointments are under development, and our government will have more to share on that in the coming weeks.

Speaker, the proposed Hazel McCallion Act is a historic piece of legislation. Nothing less would honour her memory, as the Associate Minister of Housing alluded to in her remarks on the great legacy that Hazel McCallion left in this province and how she influenced the minister herself in her public life, but also many people in this place on all sides of the aisle. This really does honour Her Worship McCallion's memory to the fullest extent, I believe. Our government's intent is to help the people of Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon prepare for their futures as thriving and successful communities—as Hazel McCallion built Mississauga into such a thriving city. Just as with all communities across Ontario, our government is

ready and able to help them not only continue to be the best places to live, to work and to raise a family; we're there to help make them even better.

With this transition board and with this proposed legislation, if passed, it will help ensure, as the Associate Minister of Housing mentioned, we reduce duplication and ensure we get more homes built faster, achieving that goal of 1.5 million homes by 2031.

1420

As I mentioned in my remarks, it takes bold action to meet those commitments. I know we have laid that out in this piece of legislation, ensuring that we are going to get it right, ensuring that we are maintaining the services the residents of Peel should expect of all levels of government—those services that they depend on, ensuring that there is a seamless transition. This piece of legislation does that to great effect and lays out that process—the first step of a minimum of two. But as I alluded to in my remarks, the minister has the ability, if this legislation is passed, to adjust as needed to ensure that we have a fair transition for all single-tier municipalities in the region of Peel.

I know we are very aware that we want to ensure that we set up the town of Caledon for success in the future, to ensure that they can seize the day and really benefit from the growth they are experiencing, and to ensure that the city of Brampton and the city of Mississauga continue to be places that thousands of people across Canada and Ontario call home, and also to ensure that the thousands of new Canadians coming to our country every year can continue to rely on the city of Brampton and the city of Mississauga to call those places home. Our government believes this legislation will ensure that those communities continue to thrive in that aspect and that they continue to share the prosperity they have experienced over the years.

The proposed transition board really will focus on the expertise I listed in my remarks, around labour relations, service delivery, and waste water infrastructure, ensuring that their expertise is at that board, working with those lower-tier municipalities, ensuring that a smooth transition occurs in that process and that we see a great outcome of this. I know it has been asked for, for many years, it seems, as the associate minister alluded to in her remarks—that in the dissolution of Peel region, we ensure that we give Mississauga, Brampton and the town of Caledon the support they need and deserve for the future and the growth that Ontario has seen. This is just one of many.

As I mentioned, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing will be announcing the regional facilitators for the other regions of Durham, Niagara, York, Waterloo, the county of Simcoe and Halton in the coming weeks, and I know we look forward to seeing those findings.

All of these pieces of legislation that the Minister of Municipal Affairs brings forward are really about getting more homes built across Ontario and ensuring that, as I mentioned in my remarks, all our communities—whether it's in the region of Peel, whether it's in my riding of Perth-Wellington, or whether it's up north in Thunder

Bay, or anywhere else in Ontario—remain a great place to work, live and raise a family.

This piece of legislation will continue to build on those past successes that our government has brought forward, and I hope all members of this place would consider supporting it. It really is a testament to Hazel McCallion and her legacy to name this piece of legislation after her. If she was still with us, she would probably find it a great honour that this is named after her, building upon her successes as the mayor of the city of Mississauga.

We're ready to help them become even better—the city of Mississauga, the city of Brampton, and the town of Caledon. We are ready to help them achieve their best and their brightest.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to thank the associate minister and the member from Perth–Wellington for their introduction today.

I believe it would be an understatement to say that this government has an embarrassing track record when it comes to respecting local democracy. In my area, the removal of ranked balloting—a popular, forward-thinking and successful democratic innovation was stripped away by this government, even though that was wasteful and costly. It seems that the government has dropped “collaboration,” “consultation” and “listening” from their vocabulary, and even if the government does use these words, it's almost as though they ring hollow.

Some of the problems with Bill 112 are that the preamble mentions supporting local governments, but there's no negotiation process, there's no requirement for local council approval and there's no consideration of even local viewpoints.

I would like to ask the member from Perth–Wellington—Bills 23 and 39 weaken local democratic institutions and authorities. How can the member convince anyone that Bill 112 isn't more of the same?

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you to the member for the question.

As I alluded to in my remarks, we're establishing a transition board to work with, including the region of Peel, the four municipalities involved.

With Bill 23, I talked to many municipal colleagues in my riding—I believe it is 72, all told, in my riding of Perth–Wellington, and they always appreciate the open-door policy I have with them, working with them. When Bill 23 came before this place—they all understand that we need more housing, and that includes in rural Ontario and the region of Peel, which this piece of legislation helps to achieve, among many other things. They all know that this government will continue to work with them to get more housing built and to continue to support them where they need to be supported, whether that's through infrastructure funding to get those—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Thank you. Question?

Mr. Brian Saunderson: My question is for the Associate Minister of Housing.

We know we have a housing crisis across the province. Certainly, in my riding of Simcoe–Grey, we're seeing, with two growth nodes, both in Alliston and Collingwood, that there are incredible pressures there for housing.

But there's also incredible population growth in our province. For the first time in our history, we exceeded 15 million people last year, and we know we're going to be growing substantially. We grew by 400,000 new residents in Ontario last year. The federal government is planning to bring in 500,000 immigrants per year.

I'm wondering if the associate minister could please explain how this legislation, if passed, will help us to continue to grow to prepare for future growth and welcome new Ontarians looking to lay down roots in our province.

Hon. Nina Tangri: I do want to thank the member for the question.

Newcomers and those looking to purchase their first home in our province play an absolute vital role, whether it's in our economy, our growing, our enriching, our social fabric and our culture, and it's our duty to make sure that we have housing available for them. As we know, we're looking to about a half a million more newcomers coming in the very new future, and we must get that housing built.

This bill and the measures within this bill help alleviate duplication and red tape to allow more housing to be built faster. When housing can be built faster, there are less costs, and those cost savings can then be passed on to those purchasing new homes or to renters.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Question?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I listened with interest to the talk about what's needed in housing and how this government plans to get there.

In the region of Durham, we have a lot of housing need, but what is needed varies. In fact, the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions came to my riding and did a tour of downtown Oshawa with me. I appreciate his coming and taking a look, but what we all realized is that we don't have what is needed in terms of transitional housing, supportive housing. CMHA Durham said they have units but they don't have subsidy.

We don't just need the talking points about new housing that isn't going to affect people in desperate need right now. And when the regions are doing fantastic work but without what they need in terms of a partnership from this government—we're talking about regional government now. What are you going to do to be better partners?

Hon. Nina Tangri: I do want to thank the member from Oshawa for the question. She's right; we have to make sure we have all of the housing that's available for each person and their individual and unique needs.

For example, I was touring Perth–Wellington the other day, and we saw everything from women's shelters to purpose-built rental, mixed-use, supportive housing—mental health and addictions—all the way up to new homes and single-family homes.

We learn from many of our service providers and those not-for-profits, those people who are on the ground, who are providing those services, about what is needed. For

example, in my riding, we have a community not-for-profit build for some supportive units, but we also have to make sure we have those wraparound services provided. We can't build units and have them empty. We want to make sure those wraparound services are also provided for those people who are most vulnerable and who desperately need them.

1430

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Question?

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Thank you very much to the minister and the parliamentary assistant for the speeches today.

It doesn't matter where you live; we need more housing. We need to continue to act quickly on Ontario's housing supply crisis by empowering our municipal partners. I know that both you and the minister have spoken with all the mayors of the various places.

As part of this proposed change, I see that it talks about a transition board.

I'm wondering if you could expand on the role that the transition board would take and what its priorities would be.

Hon. Nina Tangri: Thank you to the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, one of our neighbouring ridings. We have very similar needs.

We do see that when we put together this legislation, the key part was to have a transition board of experts from all these sectors to make sure that when the date of January 1, 2025, comes around, that transition is as seamless as possible. What's most important, I believe, is that there is no disruption of services in policing, paramedic, services to those most vulnerable. They must continue. This transition board appointed by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing will make sure that happens. The finances of all of those municipalities and the region of Peel will be taken into account to make sure that it is fair and equitable for all of them—again, that that transition respects taxpayers, but it's done seamlessly, as well.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

MPP Jamie West: Just listening to the debate, one of the concerns I have with this bill is how quickly it's coming through. It was tabled on our last sitting day in the afternoon, and then my understanding is that it's going to be debated all night tonight to rush it through.

I think of Caledon, which has a very small population and a large land area. It reminds me of Greater Sudbury, where we have a small population and a land area of roughly the GTHA. If you're trying to fund infrastructure with a small tax base, it's very difficult to do, when you're trying to cover infrastructure and roads and things like that.

I'm wondering, how do we ensure that Caledon has the feedback required when bills like this are rushed through as quickly as possible?

Hon. Nina Tangri: I do want to thank the member from Sudbury for his question because it does show that many of our municipalities began small and have grown

over the years—and the infrastructure that needs to be built.

The date we have set is a year and a half from now to have the transition put in place. Up until then, things will continue as they are today. We want to make sure that when that goes through—Caledon is growing absolutely exponentially. They're going to quadruple by 2051. We are seeing that growth. I live very close to there, so I do see it today. It is great to see that people want to move into Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon. It's a great place to live. It's a great place to raise a family. There are now more businesses also moving into Caledon, as well. So we see that growth, and infrastructure is being built today. It will continue to be built to make sure, once again, that it is seamless. Caledon, obviously, will be taken into consideration—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Thank you. Quick question? The member from—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): No? Okay.

Further debate?

Mr. Jeff Burch: It's a pleasure to rise today and provide some comments on Bill 112, the Hazel McCallion Act, detailing the dissolution of Peel region.

I'd like to start off by saying that certainly myself and the folks on this side of the Legislature would not suggest that the dissolution of a region is necessarily a good or bad thing. I think we all know that across the province, different regions have different circumstances, different demographics, different histories. The member across the way detailed much of that history in her speech. So the devil will be in the details of this agreement.

Like any agreement or any plan, there has to be an element of public trust to move forward with. As my friend from Sudbury just mentioned, it's really difficult to start out on the right foot, to have that trust, when there is a lack of consultation and the appearance that a bill is being pushed through. This started with some news reports, media leaks, a sudden decision on our last sitting day that they're going to move forward with this very quickly, a tabling—and as was mentioned, we have night sittings all night tonight. So that is, by any stretch of the imagination, rushing a bill through.

We have to ensure that there is the right motivation, as well. This has to be something that will be good for taxpayers, be good for employees—which I will talk about. It can't be to speak to a former mayor's legacy or a current mayor's leadership aspirations or as a way to pass MZOs or strong-mayor legislation. Those are all things that are swirling out there, and the reason that those suspicions are out there is because of the lack of consultation and the speed with which this is being put forward.

I've also had a lot of comments about, is this really a priority? There are all kinds of concerns about hospital care in Brantford, affordable housing concerns—we all know about that—and the issue of affordability in general. There are so many issues out there that the government

could be focusing its attention on. Is this really where we want to go? Of course, the government will answer that they're trying to address the housing concerns.

I spoke this morning, before question period, with Salil Arya, who is the president of CUPE 966, something I would suggest the government really should have done. They have about 3,500 members, and 2,000 of them work at the region of Peel. They work in public works, public health, OW; there are four long-term-care homes. What the president told me, after speaking to his members over the weekend, was that they all remember the Premier going around during COVID and calling them heroes. They actually lost several members to COVID. Long-term-care workers are still dealing with COVID to this day in those long-term-care homes, and they're disappointed. They want me to let the government know they're disappointed and they're concerned about what will happen to the workers, many of them women. The reason they're so concerned is because there has been such a lack of consultation. It didn't take much for me to reach out and speak to union leaders, speak to workers. That's something this government should have done. That's part of their job. Workers are important. These aren't just jobs; there are people in these jobs. There are families who depend on these jobs. Legislation that's like this, this size of an endeavour, pushed through this quickly, creates great anxiety among workers. They want the Premier to know that he should come clean about the plans and indicate if workers' jobs are in jeopardy. What are the plans? Can he reassure them that there will be no privatization and contracting out?

I heard about the transition board, which will be five people, and I kept hearing the words "service disruptions." Well, that's not the same as talking about the workers. It's not the same as talking about maintaining our public services and not seeing them privatized or contracted out.

Speaker, that leads me to some of the things that we as the official opposition will be looking for in this legislation.

First of all, in speaking to Fred Hahn from CUPE—and he has written a letter which I will speak about shortly, that CUPE, representing 2,000 workers, the majority of the workers in Peel region, have a seat on the transition board to represent workers. I think that's a reasonable request. I understand the need for a labour relations person, but I'd really like the government to consider putting someone from CUPE on that transition board. I'll read some parts from Fred's letter shortly, where he very clearly explains why.

We want to make sure this bill goes to committee. We don't know what the government's plans are. I can't say they're not planning to. They have options where they don't send it to committee, but it needs to go there because there hasn't been the necessary consultation up to this point and there needs to be that consultation, and that's what committee is for.

There needs to be an explanation how this will contribute to more affordable housing. We've heard over the last several days and the last week, I guess, that this is

a bill to create housing—that's the main part of this bill. The main focus of this bill is to create more housing. How will it do that? I don't see a clear line between what's happening here and creating more housing anytime soon.

1440

There has to be a commitment, as I mentioned, to no privatization and no contracting out. There is great anxiety among the workers. When I talked to the president and some other labour officials this morning, they're very concerned, and there are rumours going around. There have been rumours for some time about utility companies taking over some of the services, privatization, and that creates great anxiety among workers. If the government had done their job, their task, and talked to the workers ahead of time, they could have headed off some of this anxiety.

We know that throwing these municipalities into chaos will not help streamline the system to create more affordable housing. As I said, the devil is going to be in the details, and there's much to be concerned about with this bill because of the lack of details and some of the things that the government could have put in a bill that would have eased folks' minds.

There's nothing there to ensure that the board fairly represents the interests of the people of Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon. If he wants, the minister could put whoever he wants on the board. I've mentioned that I believe there should be a worker representative on that board, and I hope that the government takes that seriously.

The word "consult" is completely missing from the bill. There's nothing requiring the government or the transition board to consult with Peel residents or businesses about a restructuring process that will have a huge and as-yet unknown impact on their taxes and services.

There's no requirement for the government to publish the findings of the board with respect to the costs, benefits and risks of various restructuring options prior to making a decision. This wouldn't be the first time that this government spent a lot of time and a lot of money and didn't release or make public the results of that work.

The bill does not give the local municipalities of Peel an opportunity to negotiate the terms of the dissolution themselves rather than having a settlement imposed on them by the government.

There's no requirement that the government obtain the approval of local councils for its dissolution plan or even consider their viewpoints.

There are no guidelines to address impacts on municipal workers whose jobs are at stake, or the fate of various collective agreements, which is why it's so important we have a worker representative on that board.

There's no provision to compensate any municipality for the loss of access to any regional asset it helped pay for. In fact, the bill explicitly says that no one is entitled to compensation for anything under the act.

While large, urbanized municipalities the size of Mississauga, which is 718,000—or Brampton, about 656,000—certainly have the capacity to exist as single-tier municipalities, Caledon is medium-sized, with 76,000, a

mostly rural town, representing about 5% of Peel's population but more than half of the region's land area. With enormous provincially mandated growth expected for Caledon over the next few decades—much of it sprawl-oriented, driven by MZOs and Highway 413—the town will face serious challenges in funding and building the infrastructure required to support this growth. There will be further challenges in maintaining that infrastructure and providing the services currently provided by the region with a small tax base but a large land area to serve. Addressing such challenges is one of the reasons regional governments like Peel were created in the first place. The Ford government has not explained how it intends to address this issue.

It's not clear whether the three existing municipalities will retain their current boundaries. I think I heard a verbal suggestion that the boundaries would not change, but some regional restructuring proposals have envisioned Caledon's rural areas being added to Orangeville and/or Dufferin county, and Bill 112 doesn't rule out such annexations.

This dissolution was not sought by Brampton or Caledon. They've taken a position since the announcement, but how will the government ensure that a dissolution will benefit all three local municipalities and not just the one municipality that has pushed for it?

Brampton mayor Patrick Brown has claimed that dissolution would require Brampton to replace whatever regional assets may be transferred to Mississauga, including the Peel police headquarters or regional water and waste water facilities located in Mississauga. However, it's not obvious that the dissolution of Peel would necessarily result in the transfer of assets to Mississauga or require Brampton to replace any regional assets or deliver all the services currently delivered by the region. For example, Peel police could continue under a joint board—Caledon's policing services are delivered by the OPP—and Peel's water and waste water services could be delivered by an independent utility with the municipalities as shareholders each retaining their existing equity. In fact, the 2019 Deloitte report assumed such an arrangement will emerge. In that situation, how do we ensure that services are not privatized and that workers are protected?

On the other hand, if Peel residents, including Mississaugans, will still be required to share the cost of regional infrastructure and services by being bound to an independent utility rather than the region, then what's the point of dissolution at all? The bill gives this government an enormous amount of power over Peel residents and businesses, who are now required to give a blank cheque to a government that has a record for not dealing respectfully with local governments and local democracy.

I would like to talk a little about some of the stakeholder response. Because the way the bill has been rushed, of course, we're still gathering those responses. We've been hearing a lot of reactions and feedback to the bill. We know this government has a proclivity for ignoring the public, so I thought I would read some of the comments into the record, starting with the comment I mentioned from CUPE president Fred Hahn. Fred, very quickly in

learning about this, wrote, "Your government has embarked on a large and transformative project with Bill 112, the Hazel McCallion ... Act. The Canadian Union of Public Employees ... is a key actor in the region with several local unions representing thousands of workers that provide exceptional services to residents. We are requesting that CUPE and its locals be included in formal consultation on this legislation and offer our expertise for this reform.

"CUPE has the in-depth granular knowledge of the region that would be an asset to the transition board that will be set up to execute any migration of services to constituent municipalities. Including a CUPE representative on the transition board would give the government access to decades of knowledge on municipal reform, not least of which is how to harmonize workers' collective agreements which straddle across the three municipalities. An appointment to the board would channel one of the region's greatest assets—its workers—to this complex process."

So there's the offer by CUPE, and I hope the government will take it seriously. I think that they would be a great benefit to this transition board.

I've not been a part of a municipal dissolution or amalgamation, but I was very much involved in hospital amalgamations in Toronto when I worked for the service employees union. Some of you may remember the Humber River Regional Hospital, the three sites merging. There was a merging, and then a dissolution of the Sunnybrook Women's College hospital ONA that I was involved in negotiations with. It is a messy, messy process. There's the transition of collective agreements. There are representation votes. I think the timeline that the government has laid out is very, very ambitious from a labour relations perspective.

I want to talk a minute about infighting among municipal leaders, because one of the ways that that an inappropriate process can fuel discord is obviously with a lack of information. The Toronto Star printed an op-ed by Patrick Brown, and I think it's important to read some of that into the record, because it's a very concise and, I think, very factual letter. He writes, "This is an exciting time for Brampton. We are a vibrant and mature community that is the fastest-growing large city in Ontario."

He's not, by the way, speaking against the dissolution whatsoever but raising some very, very important concerns.

"Our population is projected to grow by 41% by 2051 and we have a plan in place to build the homes those families will need. With this rapid expansion, outpacing that of our neighbouring municipalities, the dissolution of Peel makes sense, but it will have a price tag—a big one.

1450

"We all know that Mississauga has wanted independence from Peel for a long time. Mayor Bonnie Crombie supports the dissolution of Peel because it will save Mississauga \$1 billion. What she conveniently doesn't mention is the fact that dissolution will cost Brampton and Caledon billions in turn. The truth is that the cost of replacing or upgrading infrastructure, future growth and other financial factors cannot responsibly be ignored when considering an undertaking like this. These costs are real—and they are enormous.

“For example, the two water and waste treatment plants that service Peel are located in Mississauga. What Mayor Crombie won’t acknowledge is that Brampton helped to pay for these essential facilities and the dissolution of Peel means Brampton will lose them as they have reached capacity—which also means a service agreement between the municipalities is not an option.

“Having to rebuild our water and waste water system from scratch is going to be both expensive and urgent—our research estimates at least \$4 billion. Ontario is in the middle of a housing crisis, yet we have been forced to turn down four housing projects recently because of a lack of servicing capacity. It is now time to pay for new water and waste water treatment plants in Brampton, and just when the bill is due, Mississauga wants to leave without paying.

“Brampton has also contributed to four Peel Regional Police facilities that are located in Mississauga. Policing costs across the region have been calculated using an assessment-based formula, meaning that every household in Peel pays the same amount.

“Mayor Crombie claims that they subsidize our policing costs, but this is simply incorrect. Data supplied by Peel Regional Police shows that Mississauga makes greater use of policing services, including more calls for service, due to their larger population. Additionally, Mississauga uses Peel police’s specialized marine unit, something Brampton obviously has no need for. We’re paying fairly for the front-line services needed within our city.

“Mayor Crombie’s argument about financially supporting Brampton and Caledon over the years is missing a fundamental point: the majority of growth has occurred in Mississauga—and we have all been paying for it. It is now Brampton’s turn to grow and we should get our previous investment in Mississauga back, and we should get it in 2023 dollars, not the cost when the water and waste water facility was built 50 years ago. We all know 1970s dollars are not equivalent to today’s dollars—the cost of labour, materials, inflation, required studies, and much more have increased the price tag far beyond what the Mississauga mayor is claiming.

“The fact is that Mississauga holds billions of dollars worth of infrastructure that is needed by all three communities and I intend to make sure that the value of our previous investments and replacement costs are taken into account. Everyone knows you can’t have taxation without representation. Well, I say no dissolution without compensation.”

He goes on to say, “I, too, have been pleased to hear Premier Doug Ford commit to ensuring that ‘Brampton will always be taken care of and they’ll be made whole.’ I will take Premier Ford at his word that he will make sure Brampton gets its fair share when Peel region is dissolved.

“We know our worth—and I am prepared to make sure that we get back everything we have invested into Peel over the years. Fairness for Brampton isn’t something that we hope for—it’s something we demand.

“Brampton welcomes independence, but we expect to get our fair share.”

That’s an example, Speaker, I would suggest, of the kinds of frictions that are going to take place because of the sudden nature of this legislation. And I think everyone

knows that there wasn’t the typical lead up to this bill. There wasn’t the typical consultation, and what’s happened has happened largely—the timing is for political reasons.

Caledon mayor Annette Groves said that she does not want to leave Peel region and described Caledon as the “child” of the Peel divorce, given its small size. Despite arguably facing more financial risk than either Mississauga or Brampton, Groves said, “We are confident that we will be taken care of throughout this process.” I’m not sure where that confidence comes from, Speaker, but I guess we will see.

Engage Peel organizer Harminder Dhillon said that he is concerned that “dissolution will mean ‘weaker’” responses to “environmental issues like dismantling conservation authorities and building Highway 413 through Caledon and Brampton.

“‘This is a typical conservative philosophy, just sort of divide and rule,’ he says. ‘It’s a local decision and then you sort of pit one against another. We had a voice of Peel; now we’ll have three voices.’”

I want to talk a little bit about the government’s desire to present this bill as a housing bill. They’ve even talked about affordable housing. The minister said, “The single-tier system would provide the municipal leaders of Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon with the tools they need to plan for future population growth and get more homes built faster.” I understand the claim that this bill is to help get more homes built faster; however, not once in the bill does it reference affordable housing. You can build a million homes, but if people can’t afford them, it’s not going to benefit people who need affordable homes. This government should explain how this legislation will lead to more affordable homes.

I would refer to a press release from the region of Peel in March 2023 where Peel is calling for immediate action to address the affordable housing crisis: “Peel region joins the Association of Municipalities of Ontario ... in calling for the provincial government to work more collaboratively with municipalities on efforts to increase the supply of housing, and for it to tackle the homelessness crisis in Ontario....

“Increasing the supply of housing is a priority for municipalities across Ontario, including Peel. Regional council unanimously passed a motion calling on the government of Ontario to take urgent action to end homelessness.

“In Peel, the affordable housing crisis is seen in many ways, including:

“—shelter use increased by 26.9% in 2021;

“—50% of demand for people with need for supportive housing continues to go unmet;

“—an estimated 90,000 households are in core housing need;

“—an average-income family would have to save a down payment over 30 years for an affordable monthly mortgage at today’s home prices.

“The provincial government’s Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 will reduce Peel’s ability to fund affordable housing projects by an estimated \$200 million.”

That's the environment in which this bill is being brought forward.

The report goes on to say, "Predictable and sustainable funding is needed to ensure municipalities can provide adequate housing services to meet the needs of their communities. Peel region is advocating to the government of Ontario for the creation of a municipal compensation fund to compensate the region, and its local municipalities, in order that they be provided appropriate funding to counteract the impacts of Bill 23 on municipal growth funding revenues and expenditures.

"AMO's pre-budget submission also highlights that the government of Ontario's per capita spending on programming is the lowest in Canada, at \$2,000 less per person than the national average. It states the homelessness crisis in Ontario is a direct result of decades of provincial underinvestment in areas such as affordable housing, community mental health and income assistance programs."

Speaker, these are examples of how this government is making things harder, not easier, and there's nothing in this bill that would convince us that anything is being done in Peel region about affordable housing or homelessness. Under this government, it's becoming even more challenging to find an affordable place to live. There's nothing in this bill to actually build the houses we need.

Their own budget shows the province moving in the wrong direction on housing, and that their dismantling of the greenbelt will make things worse. The budget predicts fewer housing starts next year than this year, and they are nowhere near on track to meet their stated goal of 1.5 million homes in 10 years. In 2022, 96,100 homes were started, with even fewer projected to be started in the following years: in 2023, only 80,300 homes; another decrease in 2024, with a projection of 79,300. As reported recently on Global News, that means over four of the 10 years set out in the province's plan, just 23% of its total target of homes would be built.

When asked about the government's ability to meet its targets, the Minister of Housing said Ontario will "do everything we can.... There's things out of my control." Well, Speaker, it is within the minister's control to make or not make commitments and to admit when a plan is not working. It's becoming clear to Ontarians that the plan is not working, that the government needs to change course if it is to effectively address the housing crisis and meet any of its targets. You can only make excuses for so long. Dissolving a region—while it may be the right thing to do, I don't think it's correct to claim that it's going to do anything to build more homes, especially affordable homes.

1500

In addition to the government completely missing its housing targets, we know that many of the homes that are being built are not affordable. According to Mississauga.com, the average price for Mississauga real estate jumped 17% in three months. It recorded a combined average sale price of \$1,076,000 in April. The average sale price for a semi-detached home came in at \$1,059,000 in April. For townhouse condos, it increased

for the fourth straight month in April, hitting an 11-month high at \$857,000.

According to InBrampton, the average home price in Brampton jumped \$20,000 for the second month in a row. According to a recent report from the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board that found the average price of all home types in Brampton jumped to \$1,028,000 in February—a more than \$26,000 increase from January's average.

According to the Toronto Star, in the town of Caledon, the average price for a home in Caledon was \$1.58 million in January 2023. That's up 33.9%, or over \$400,000, from December 2022.

The stats go on and on, Speaker. It's not just in Peel and Niagara where we're seeing people spending upwards of 60% of their take-home income on housing alone, but it's difficult to see how this bill can be connected to building more homes or building more affordable homes.

This government has ignored the advice of its own experts and its own Housing Affordability Task Force by not ending exclusionary zoning. The government has failed to enable missing middle housing to make it easier for people of all incomes, ages, family sizes and abilities to access affordable housing options in the neighbourhoods and communities they need to live in. There's nothing in this bill to build new social housing or protect existing social housing in Mississauga, Brampton or Caledon.

According to Peel region, the wait-list for an affordable unit in Brampton is five to eight years; in Mississauga, five to six years; in Caledon, one and a half to five and a half years.

We've been calling for a strong public sector role to deliver new affordable and non-market housing that the for-profit private sector can't or won't deliver. This government has relied almost entirely on the private market to deliver new housing. Their main tools have been deregulation, tax cuts and sacrificing more farmland and natural heritage to urban development. This approach has failed.

They've focused on delivering benefits to well-connected landowners and donors while sacrificing farmland and the greenbelt instead of focusing on delivering housing that is actually affordable and meets the needs of regular Ontarians. There is a great fear, Speaker, that this dissolution will be carried out in such a way as to continue the distribution of public assets to developers and the private sector.

There is a housing development in my riding, as I've talked about in the Legislature, that was approved in the 1980s and has yet to break ground. AMO and the big city mayors have all pointed out that there are 1.25 million homes in the approval pipeline that are not being built.

During question period, recently, I asked the minister, "Will this minister stop blaming municipalities, do what is fair and implement a sunset clause on approvals so that developers and builders must build housing in a reasonable period of time after they've been approved?" The minister avoided answering the question.

Our amendment to Bill 23 was rejected by this government in committee. That amendment was, “Subject to and in accordance with the regulations, a municipality may, by by-law, impose penalties on the owner of the land for failure to substantially commence development within a timely manner after the plans and drawings have been approved under this section.” That was an amendment that we put forward, and it was not successful.

Planners say that if the province could incentivize developers to build what is already approved, they’d be 85% of the way to their goal. In a CBC article, the chair of the Regional Planning Commissioners of Ontario, Thom Hunt, said that if the province could incentivize developers to build what is already approved by municipalities, they’d be 85%—well ahead of their target: “I think (the report) starts to tell the story that the housing supply challenge isn’t really a land supply or development approval problem. The bigger problem is, probably, how do you compel a developer to build? How do you increase the rate of construction?”

Again, there’s nothing specific in Bill 112 that would encourage these municipalities to do any of this to ensure that homes are being built. What we have in the bill is more wishful thinking by the government with no concrete plan or action, and actually, a stunning lack of information.

Another fear folks have communicated to us centres around the increase in the use of MZOs to bypass planning processes—and this has happened very recently in Mississauga. Mississauga residents and councillors are furious after this government granted an MZO request from a developer just a couple of weeks ago, bypassing local planning processes and municipal council to double a lakefront development.

In 2021, the Premier said, “We only sign an MZO once we get a letter from ... the chair of the region, the mayor of the city and council. Once it gets approved, it’s an ask by them. We don’t go into towns and all of a sudden just issue MZOs. It’s an ask from each region and each city...”

The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, in 2021, said, “Every minister’s zoning order that I consider on non-provincially-owned land comes at the request of a council resolution to me. It’s up to the council to do their public due diligence. It’s up to the council to do their Indigenous consultation. We value our municipal partners, but they’ve got to dot their i’s and they’ve got to cross their t’s before they send the MZO request to me.”

Well, the council wasn’t even told about this MZO in advance. It was a complete surprise to everyone.

On March 10, 2021, the minister said, “The municipality makes the request to the government and the government considers it. There is no other process, as the member opposite alludes to. Municipalities are in the driver’s seat.”

Speaker, how is the public supposed to trust this government on issues like this dissolution when they can’t trust them on planning issues or what they say in the Legislature?

There were a number of reactions from folks—local councillors Stephen Dasko, John Kovac. John Kovac said, “Maybe somebody’s listening right now from the province, maybe they’re even cackling, who knows (if) they’re laughing, I hope not.”

“I don’t think we’re the villain in this movie,” he also mused, suggesting “partner” may no longer be the correct description for the Premier’s provincial government.

Councillor Alvin Tedjo, on Monday night, when this was passed, accused the Ford government of planning Mississauga on the back of a napkin. One resident agreed, saying, “The Wild West is here.”

In this kind of an environment, how is anyone supposed to trust a government to do something like the dissolution of Peel region fairly?

Again, I want to be clear: We’re not against development. I worked as a councillor. I was very pro-development. I also like to see cities planned properly. We know we need affordable housing in Ontario. What we’re against is the way this province is treating municipalities, by forcing their agenda and their MZOs on them without the approval of local residents and councillors.

It’s difficult for anyone to trust this government to oversee the dissolution of the region.

What builds even more distrust is that again we have another bill dealing with municipalities that fails to fulfill the government’s promise to make municipalities whole after the financial ruin they may face from Bill 23. My friend across the way alluded to audits that were taking place. Four or five audits taking place across Ontario don’t put the minds of municipalities at ease when they’re facing the kinds of tax hikes and service cuts that Bill 23 is going to cause. There’s nothing to make up for the municipal deficits which will result in service cuts and higher property taxes. AMO has calculated that cities will see a \$5-billion revenue shortfall from Bill 23. As I’ve mentioned numerous times to this government, a recent Peel report says Bill 23 will cost the region \$2 billion to \$6 billion in lost revenues, and they’ll need to raise property taxes by at least 25%. Brampton also says it will need to raise property taxes by 80% due to Bill 23.

1510

On the city of Mississauga website, they say, “Ontario’s new legislation, More Homes Built Faster Act, has concerning impacts for Mississauga. Most notably, the bill decreased the amount of development and parkland fees municipalities can collect. These fees help us to pay for new parks and infrastructure like transit, roads, trails, sewers and more.

“It is estimated that Bill 23 changes could result in \$885 million in losses over the next decade in Mississauga. In Peel region, the losses total a projected \$2 billion....

“Many municipalities, including Mississauga, opposed these changes. We called on the government to reverse the proposed cuts to infrastructure and parkland funding. In response, the province committed to making municipalities ‘whole’ for any losses resulting from Bill 23. Before providing compensation, the province has announced that it will undertake” the audits that my friend across the way was referring to.

I’m not sure what audits are going to tell them when it’s very clear from the budgets of municipalities across Ontario that they’re missing billions of dollars from their budgets.

The province wants to build 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years; Mississauga’s share is 120,000 new homes.

However, there's no process requiring developers to build homes, even if the municipalities have provided approvals and granted discounts. The bill doesn't require developers to pass any of the savings they may gain onto new home owners.

The town of Caledon responded to Bill 23 with immediate action items to address impacts of the bill and position Caledon for success. The town is asking the province to further consult with municipalities and Indigenous communities before all parts of the bill come into effect.

"There are many layers of changes under Bill 23 and we are carefully working through them and what they mean for Caledon's future growth," said Mayor Annette Groves. "Our concerns remain with impacts to our environment, heritage, parkland and ability to plan and fund the infrastructure needed to meet the province's housing targets. We are doing the work now to help prepare Caledon for a prosperous and successful future, and we will need support from all levels of government, residents and stakeholders to plan for what is important to Caledon."

Property tax will go up, unless other funding tools are made available to the town. The town's ability to use development charges to pay for growth-related infrastructure will be reduced, and taxpayers will have to bridge the gap of millions.

I have a statement from the mayor of Caledon:

"As mayor of the town of Caledon, I am expressing my serious concern regarding the fast-tracking of" these bills. "I am asking the province for more time to understand its implications and the consequences to our town's future, our residents and businesses...."

"Caledon is in a position where it is expecting some of the highest greenfield growth in the province. Bill 23 will reduce the town's ability to ensure growth pays for growth resulting in higher tax rates and reduced levels of service. The bill will impact almost every service the town provides and result in an inability to meet the needs of our growing community."

Municipalities are cancelling affordable housing projects. That's one of the most troubling parts of the position that the province has put them in. The city of Toronto said, "In the event that the province does not fully reimburse the city for revenue losses incurred as a result of impacts of Bill 23, the housing secretariat will need to stop delivery of all housing capital programs, projects and initiatives." And recently, they put out an emergency call to the federal government because the provincial government is not doing their job.

As I've mentioned, according to estimates that came out recently, this government is actually cutting the Streamline Development Approval Fund by 25% compared to last year's estimates, and cutting the Municipal Modernization Program by 75%. These are the very programs that are supposed to fund initiatives to speed up housing development approvals or pay for third-party audits to make sure municipal development charges are being used efficiently. When I asked the Premier about this, his response was, "When I went down to city hall, I heard the same song and dance. First meeting with the

CAO—'We've got to raise taxes 30%.' Well, guess what? We found a billion dollars, did a 0% tax increase, never went once to the province hat in hand." It has been pointed out to the Premier on multiple occasions that this claim of saving the city of Toronto \$1 billion has been fact-checked and is not true. Municipalities are not beggars asking for an endless stream of funds. They're asking for a reliable provincial partner that won't force them to cut services or raise taxes. Telling municipalities that they shouldn't be begging for money is like criticizing a mugging victim when they ask for their wallet back. If this top-down chaos approach is any indication of how this government plans to dissolve the region of Peel, we're in for some troubling times.

I want to talk briefly about the controversial proposed provincial policy statement in Bill 97. Ontario's agricultural organizations have called on the Ontario government to pause its recently released proposed provincial policy statement in Bill 97. This issue has a profound effect on Peel region, especially Caledon. The signatories include the Ontario Federation of Agriculture; National Farmers Union of Ontario; Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario; Ontario Broiler Hatching Egg and Chick Commission; Beef Farmers of Ontario; Ontario Pork; Egg Farmers of Ontario; Veal Farmers of Ontario; Chicken Farmers of Ontario; Ontario Farmland Trust; Turkey Farmers of Ontario; and Dairy Farmers of Ontario. We've been to many receptions here in the Legislature rubbing shoulders with these folks. Here's what they have to say: "Directing growth to settlement areas, urban and rural is better for both agriculture and municipalities. Housing needs can be met in serviced settlement areas on a much smaller land base. This reduces farmland loss and potential land use conflicts while encouraging ongoing investment in farm and farm-related businesses. It also ensures efficient use of municipal infrastructure investments and reduces costs to provide services. Responsible land use planning is critical to balancing the needs of our growing communities and to ensure that our agriculture and agri-food sector survives and thrives."

There is an additional reaction in a press release from the Alliance for a Liveable Ontario: "A broad coalition of civil society organizations and individuals are calling on the province to stop proposed changes to Ontario's planning laws that will fatally harm Ontario's agriculture sector and waste limited construction and development resources building houses in the wrong places."

This is what many folks are very concerned about with respect to the future of Caledon.

"This is a key takeaway in the five-page reports released by the Alliance for a Liveable Ontario that details what will happen if the provincial government proceeds with its proposed changes," which were announced just before last Easter weekend. "The report is endorsed by over 250 individuals and 73 organizations from the agriculture, land use planning, housing, tenants, environment, neighbourhood associations, labour, health care, academia and business sectors.

"If the province proceeds with its proposal to gut Ontario's planning laws, they will deliver a fatal blow to

Ontario's agricultural community"—that's from Mark Reusser, a turkey farmer in Waterloo region. "They will open up prime agricultural land to development and forever remove it from growing the food Ontarians need. This will be the end of agriculture in Ontario."

Another statement from David Crombie: "This is completely unnecessary.... Report after report shows there is more than enough land already set aside within existing towns and cities to build all the housing we need. There is no reason to build on the greenbelt and natural areas. There is no reason to build on prime agriculture lands."

"This is the absolutely wrong way to deal with the serious housing shortage that we face," said Anne Golden, who is the former chair of the task force on the future of the GTA. "We have a limited number of investment dollars, construction workers and building supplies. The province should be working with developers to make sure they succeed in building the housing we need where we already live, not on valuable farmland and the greenbelt."

1520

The report also notes that more than enough land has already been designated for development in existing towns and cities to build all the housing we need through to 2051.

"Opening up farmland to development will only get us expensive, big houses outside of our towns and cities where there is no bus service," said Alejandra Ruiz Vargas. "It will not help existing tenants nor get us the desperately needed affordable housing units built where people live."

The province has given the public until June 6 to comment on its proposed changes through the Environmental Registry of Ontario website, and I hope the province listens to that input.

There have been a number of emails we've been receiving, as well, and I want to read a few of those out.

"I am writing to express my strong opposition to proposed changes to the provincial policy statement.... These changes would accelerate urban sprawl and the ongoing loss of farmland and natural areas in Ontario."

"A shortage of land is not the cause of Ontario's housing shortage, as noted by the Housing Affordability Task Force in 2022...."

"It is time to listen to the experts, who have shown that the amount of land already designated for development far exceeds what is needed to meet long-range housing targets."

What's needed is to concentrate on affordable housing initiatives in places like Mississauga and Brampton, not sprawl into farmland in places outside of the urban density areas. There is simply no need for the policy changes that were brought forward. And we're fearful that this is exactly where the province is going with respect to the dissolution of Peel. They would:

- eliminate mandatory intensification and greenfield density targets that were designed to rein in urban sprawl;
- allow municipalities to expand settlement areas at any time without a comprehensive review of infrastructure needs or potential impacts on farmland and natural areas;

- force municipalities to allow three lots to be severed from every farm, even in prime agricultural areas;

- exempt lands that are the subject of MZOs from complying with provincial policies and official plans;

- remove the requirement for municipalities to undertake watershed planning; and

- weaken and eliminate policies intended to address climate change.

Ontario is losing farmland at the shocking rate of 319 acres per day. The proposed new policies will make matters much worse and spell disaster for the lands and waters that sustain us.

Sprawl development will not solve current housing needs.

Speaker, I'd like to also spend a few minutes talking about Bill 3 and the strong-mayor legislation because that has interestingly been mentioned a number of times in the media by members of the government with respect to this legislation. It wasn't brought up during the housing task force last year. It was never mentioned in the election. So I found it interesting at the time the strong-mayor legislation was brought forward that in introducing a bill about governance, the government couldn't seem to bring itself to show good governance itself, which begs the question as to how that encourages trust in what the government is doing in relation to governance. And I would repeat that concern with respect to this government's record is already alarming. The Premier's previous government sliced the number of councillors in half just before the municipal elections in 2018, and his cabinet has had a field day issuing ministerial zoning orders since that legislation came in.

This Premier's history with local democracy, we all know about. Bill 5 was tabled to cancel regional chair elections and cut the size of Toronto city council with municipal election campaigns already under way. When a lower court found Bill 5 to be unconstitutional and granted a stay, the government passed Bill 31—which was another series of all-night sittings here in the Legislature—which invoked the "notwithstanding" clause to bypass charter rights. After an appeal, which was expensive for the people of Ontario, the court overturned the stay and Bill 5 went ahead.

Then, of course, we remember that the former government tabled Bill 218, a COVID recovery bill which included a clause that repealed the legislation allowing municipalities to use ranked ballots in municipal elections. The opposition, of course, questioned what that had to do with COVID.

These are the kinds of initiatives that have come up time and time again since this government was first elected in 2018.

In this term, the government's record in dealing with municipalities as real partners has been absolutely abysmal, from controversial MZOs being forced onto municipalities to Bill 23, which will leave many municipalities in financial ruin and will force them to either cut services or raise property taxes. Again, this was another missed opportunity for this government to fulfill their promises to

make municipalities whole or to indicate how they will be treated fairly in this process.

This government claims they're putting forward Bill 112 to help get more homes built faster; however, not once in this bill does it reference affordable housing or specific action plans to make that a reality.

As we've pointed out countless times, if the government would just incentivize developers to build what has already been approved, they would have reached 85% of their housing goal without carving up the greenbelt and destroying Ontario's prime agricultural land.

As mentioned by numerous presenters in recent committee hearings, this government's approach in bill after bill is to move fast and break things. We heard that over and over again in our committee hearings, and I've been hearing it in the last few days in response to this bill. This approach has led AMO and municipal planners to ask the government to slow down and realize the implications of these decisions, or we risk making things much worse, not better.

Speaker, these are the concerns that we've been hearing. It's the opposition's job to raise these concerns. I would encourage the government to take a look at the four things that we've mentioned in order to build public confidence in this bill.

Take a look at CUPE's request to be on the transition board, to represent workers. It will actually help this government move forward with this legislation.

Send the bill to committee. I don't know what the government's plans are. As has been mentioned many times, the government is not the most open group of folks when it comes to letting us know from day to day what their plans are. I guess we plan to be here all night in a sudden night sitting, ramming this legislation through. I hope they're not planning to bypass committee, because that is a way to get the consultation that they have failed to provide in the time leading up to this bill.

I think there is an obligation, since the government has come out and said that this is a bill that is going to lead to more housing, for the government to explain exactly how that is. They haven't done that. I listened very carefully today. I didn't hear it. I think there's an obligation to explain themselves in that regard.

And if they really want to put people's minds at ease, give some assurances to the residents of these municipalities and the thousands of workers who work for Peel region that their jobs are not going to be privatized and contracted out. Simply saying that there is going to be no disruption of service is not the same thing as saying, "We're not going to contract out or privatize your jobs."

As I mentioned, when I talked to the CUPE president this morning, it was discouraging to hear that the government had not reached out to the workers before they came forward with this legislation. They could have saved themselves a lot of trouble by doing that and, with a few simple things added to this bill, could have increased the level of public trust that folks feel. So I hope they will reach out to CUPE and to the thousands of employees who worked through the COVID-19 pandemic, whom the Premier called "heroes," because over the last few days they haven't felt like heroes. They've been telling their union

leaders how disappointed they are in this government, in the way that they brought this legislation forward.

I look forward to questions.

1530

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutila Karpoche): Thank you. Questions?

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Thank you to the member opposite. I enjoyed listening to his comments. I know he focused to a great extent on democracy, representation and consultation. When Minister Clark stood up in the House to announce this bill, we had all three mayors as well as the regional chair present, and this is all something that they support. So I'm wondering if the member opposite will also support this if he's prepared to listen to the duly elected mayors from each of the municipalities, the regional chair as well as the will of this House. Will he support this bill to help our lower-tier municipalities take control of their destiny and forge ahead to help us meet our housing supply crisis?

Mr. Jeff Burch: I know that the mayors have spoken in support of this bill. I used to be a municipal councillor, so I know how you talk to provincial government when you're a municipality, regardless of what the legislation is. So I'm not sure they had much of a choice in supporting it. I know there are a lot of concerns. I can commit that we will do one of three things: We'll either support it, oppose it or abstain.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutila Karpoche): Questions?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you to the member for his excellent one-hour presentation on very complicated subject matter, which doesn't have a lot of details. This debate reminds me of the time that, at that point in time, Premier Mike Harris was forcing six former municipalities to merge to now create this new mega-city that we have in the city of Toronto. Toronto today, of course, has a population of three million people. We have a GDP over—I think it's almost \$400 billion.

Interestingly enough, I remember at that time in 1997, there was a pre-amalgamation report that this House had produced talking about the potential savings of \$82 million by forcing those cities into a marriage. By 1999, the city of Toronto commissioned their own report and they found that there were no promised cost-savings whatsoever. So my question to the member is: Without deep analysis and serious, robust consultation, how can we be guaranteed that the promises that the Premier is making will come true?

Mr. Jeff Burch: Thank you to my friend, who has all kinds of municipal experience, obviously, in the city of Toronto, for that question. I think that all of the facts show that amalgamations never save money. I'm not aware of any amalgamation—forced amalgamation—that ever saved money. As a matter of fact, they end up costing a lot more money, and so I've always been opposed to any kind of forced amalgamation.

This is a rare situation, a dissolution of a region, and as I said in my speaking, there's very little detail in this bill to protect residents, certainly not anything to protect workers. I think that's what is concerning people and

that's what's leading to issues with public trust in this government.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Graham McGregor: I want to thank my colleague for his thoughtful, in-depth hour-long speech on the bill that we have at hand. Being a Brampton boy, we always thought that when you have somebody coming to your home, you want to do everything you can to make them feel welcome, and from a provincial perspective, this means that we've got to build roads for people to drive on when they move here. That means we've got to build homes for them to live in and make sure that they have an opportunity, that when they come to Canada for a better life, they're actually able to work towards and have that better life.

We know we have half a million new Canadians coming in 2025, as the federal government targets, many coming to Brampton. The city of Brampton signed on 113,000 new units as a housing pledge, and we think Brampton can control its own destiny. Does the member have any thoughts on whether the city of Brampton should be responsible for its own planning and its own destiny?

Mr. Jeff Burch: Thank you to my friend for the question. Yes, I think I generally agree with his comments. I will say that I spent a decade before I was elected to this place running a settlement agency, and so I worked with newcomer and refugee families. I didn't know an awful lot of them who were buying great big houses that were built out on the greenbelt. Most of them needed affordable places to live, and those are usually found within urban boundaries. So I hope, as I'm sure my friend does, that as this moves forward, the city of Brampton will concentrate on using the land and the approvals that already exist as well as the levers that are at the government's disposal to create affordable housing. Some of that is going to have to be public housing and co-operative housing as well.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to thank the member from Niagara Centre for his excellent presentation, speaking about how this government likes to move fast and break things. We have seen a Premier that calls the greenbelt a myth, and maybe it's a matter that the government has sort of missed the mark. They want Ontarians to think that making taxpayers pay more because of their decisions while they're lining the pockets of insider developers—they want people to think that that is a myth when the facts are clearly in the way of that.

This government also would like to position themselves as pro-worker when, again, those pesky facts keep standing in the way of what they would claim is the truth.

My question to the member: Why has this government not reached out to workers, and what changes would you like to see to make sure that this legislation does take into account the voices of people like CUPE workers?

Mr. Jeff Burch: Thank you to my friend from London for the question. It's a really good question. I think I spoke a fair bit about my conversations with workers and the folks who represent them in Peel region. There are some really practical things the government could do. One of

them, obviously, is to put, as Fred Hahn from CUPE requested, someone from CUPE on the transition board to represent workers. A labour relations person isn't good enough. Workers know what happens in Peel region, and they should have a representative on that board to represent the concerns of the workers. And they could also commit not to privatize or contract out services because keeping up service levels is not the same thing as keeping our services public. I think doing those two things would go a long way to restoring some of the public trust that has been damaged by the way that this bill has been brought forward.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I just had a quick question for the member. I know this bill also affects my particular area. I talk to a lot of folks in Simcoe county. It's becoming a very mature region. Certainly, Simcoe county was formed when we had a lot of little, small municipalities and a lot of folks in my region opt in to the county. For example, the city of Barrie isn't in the county. So they understand that as populations grow, all governments need to be nimble with change.

My question to the member opposite is, would they not be receptive to other areas that are included in this bill that may need to change and get with the times because their population is growing and this is the need that they see may be better for their residents?

Mr. Jeff Burch: I think it is important to let folks in those regions speak. I come from Niagara, so I think I got involved in politics a little over 30 years ago, when I was quite young, and we'd been talking about regional governments since long before that. It's almost like a hobby in Niagara, talking about what it would look like. I've sat on municipal committees where I've watched consultants come in and come out, reports that some of them publish and some haven't. At some point, you have to wonder whether all of the navel-gazing is really going to get anything done or whether we should really be concentrating on things like making sure we keep emergency rooms and making sure we look at issues like affordability, which is what people are really concerned about.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Quick question.

Mr. Joel Harden: Thanks to my friend from Niagara Centre. Public transit, particularly in Brampton, biggest and busiest: 115% capacity right now. What is this change going to mean for the good people of Brampton who want well-funded, operationally sound public transit?

Mr. Jeff Burch: I hope it's going to be positive. I think we all hope that it would be. As I said at the beginning of my speech, we're not suggesting that a dissolution of a region is necessarily good or bad. It's different in every area. What I think is really important is that we're transparent and accountable through the process, and that's what we're concerned about. This legislation has been kind of sprung on us. I know it's been talked about for a long time, but this is really a rather quick, sudden proposal of legislation that's going to go into night sittings tonight, and I don't know what the government's plans are, because they haven't been transparent.

1540

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

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: It's an honour to rise this afternoon to speak in support of Bill 112, the Hazel McCallion Act (Peel Dissolution), introduced by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. I'd like to thank him and his team, including the associate minister from Mississauga—Streetsville and the parliamentary assistant from Perth—Wellington, for moving forward with this bill which, if passed, would begin the process of dissolving the region of Peel and make Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon into independent, single-tier municipalities. As the minister said, this will reduce waste and duplication, make our local government more efficient and help save taxpayers time and money. This is the right-of-centre approach to governing that I know Mayor Crombie supports.

The process would be fair for all three municipalities, and it will ensure that front-line services, including police, paramedics, public health, housing, water and waste water and all other important local services will not be affected. As the minister said, if Bill 112 is passed, protecting these services will be a top priority for our government. But most importantly, Bill 112 will give our local governments the tools they need to deliver on their commitments to build the homes we need for our growing population, including 120,000 homes in Mississauga, 113,000 homes in Brampton and 13,000 homes in Caledon.

As the minister said, the name of this bill is another great tribute to the incredible legacy of Hazel McCallion, who served as our mayor for 36 years, helping to guide Mississauga, as the minister said, from a partly rural community of 281,000 people in 1978 into one of the largest cities in Canada with over 713,000 people when she retired in 2014. Speaker, that is an average growth of 12,000 people, or about 4,000 families, every year for 36 years.

I've been able to speak many times here about my friend and mentor, about how she's been an inspiration to me and about the impact she had on every part of life in the city. To give just one example, this Sunday, we're looking forward to the annual Hazel McCallion Walk for Health along the waterfront trail in Port Credit. Last year, this event raised over \$500,000 to help build the new Mississauga Hospital, which will be the largest and most advanced hospital in Canadian history, and I know we'll be raising even more this year. Mayor McCallion was a great champion for this project, and being able to announce it with her and with the Premier was my proudest moment as an MPP.

Hazel was also a long-time supporter of independence for Mississauga. I had the privilege to serve on the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, and 18 years ago, in May 2005, this committee met in Brampton and Mayor McCallion was one of the presenters. She spoke about overlap and duplications between the city and the region in many different areas. This begins on the council itself. Many residents don't know this, but Mississauga councillors earn at least two different salaries: \$95,000 at the city and \$70,000 at the region. And I hope

that the transition board will take a look at this. But 18 years ago, Mayor Hazel McCallion spoke about organizing a Khalsa Day parade, and about how she had to meet many times with regional staff because the parade was going on regional roads and with city staff because the parade was going on city roads. Hazel said, "What a waste of time."

The same is true in the planning department. As the minister said, complex land-use policy with duplications and overlaps between the two levels of planning authority—the city's planning department and the region's planning department, each with their own priorities—has delayed the approvals for new housing needed in Mississauga and across the region. As the minister said, these delays are added costs to new housing, which are passed on to the home buyers and renters. According to the Altus Group, each month of delay adds about \$2,600 to the cost of an 800-square-foot apartment and double that for a single family home.

Last year we passed Bill 39, the Better Municipal Governance Act, which extends strong-mayor powers, beginning with Toronto and Ottawa, to give mayors new tools to build the housing supply we need. But as Mayor Hazel McCallion said 18 years ago at the committee, mayors of single-tier cities like Barrie, Windsor and London had more authority than she had as mayor of the third-largest city in Ontario, or the sixth-largest city in Canada. The only way forward towards a stronger mayor in Peel region is to allow Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon to become single-tier cities.

But Speaker, at this point, I need to reiterate a point that the minister made: By themselves, Bill 39 and Bill 112 are not enough. We're counting on all levels of government, including the municipal partners, to do their part to fix the housing supply, and yes, that includes transit-oriented developments and includes towers along transit routes like the new Hazel McCallion LRT on Hurontario.

Mississauga is Ontario's third-largest city, but over the last 10 years, the city built an average of only 2,100 new homes each year, far below the 12,000 that we need. In the past few months alone, the city rejected applications for two residential towers with over 1,100 units, right next door to the Port Credit GO station, a major inter-regional transit hub that will connect to the Hazel McCallion LRT and bus rapid transit on Lakeshore. Less than 500 metres south, they rejected an application to develop the old funeral home in Port Credit into an 11-storey, 42-unit condo building because the city height limit was just three storeys—again, right next door to a major transit hub. Our councillor said the funeral home "is very much a part of what" we want and "what we've come to know and like about Port Credit." He's talking about a funeral home.

Earlier this month, the city rejected a proposal to build nine towers and townhouses, a total of 4,700 units, on vacant land right next to the future Hurontario LRT station because of the concerns about shadows on single-family homes.

I could go on with many other examples. When the minister granted an MZO earlier this month for more housing in Lakeview Village, some at the city were outraged. Rob Trewartha, the mayor's former chief of

staff, tweeted that “13 years of work by council” was “erased with the stroke of a pen.” But 13 years of planning work by two layers of bureaucrats at the city and the region without a single shovel in the ground while housing costs in Mississauga increased by 200% is not something to be proud of.

Speaker, earlier this year, we passed Bill 71 because we recognized it shouldn’t take 15 years to get a mining permit in Ontario. It shouldn’t take 15 years to get approvals for new homes, especially in a housing supply crisis. Earlier, I mentioned that under the leadership of Mayor Hazel McCallion, Mississauga grew by 12,000 people, or about 4,000 families, each year for 36 years. But the numbers since she retired in 2014 are very different. For the first time in Mississauga’s history, the city’s population actually declined, from the 2016 census to the 2021 census from 722,000 to 718,000. That’s a loss of about half a per cent of our population over five years. So while Mississauga grew by 12,000 people each year under Mayor McCallion, we lost almost 1,000 people each year under Crombie. Speaker, that can’t continue. In order to grow by 995,000 people by 2051, as the minister said, Mississauga needs to add at least 9,000 people each year for the next 30 years, which is actually less than our growth rate under Mayor Hazel McCallion.

1550

With Bill 112, we’re granting the city’s request for independence, only with the expectation that they will approve and build homes they agree to—at least 120,000 new homes over 10 years, or 1,000 new homes every month. The mayor suggests that the city is on track, but her chief building officer told me recently that the city would have trouble meeting this target. A recent analysis by professor Mike Moffatt at Western University in London, who tracks the progress of each city towards their housing targets, ranks Mississauga only 27th out of 29 cities. Speaker, 15 months into the 10-year pledge, only 2,000 new homes have been completed in Mississauga—only 13% of the 15,000 we need. And yet when the minister approved an MZO in Lakeview Village, the mayor and councillors asked residents to call my office and complain.

Speaker, I actually did get a few calls and emails. I would like to read one now that I just received:

“Hello, Rudy. I’m reaching out to you with hope that our voices will be heard, and other actions will be taken by the government to make housing more affordable.

“Me and my husband (both 30 years old) are both working professionals. I’m a professional engineer and my husband is a technician. We came to Canada as students (10 years ago) and since we graduated in 2016, we have been working continuously trying to save money for the down payment so we can buy a house, where we can live (with) our baby.

“But it has been almost impossible to buy anything in the GTA, and we have lost all hope. Even with good incomes, we are not able to save because of high rent: 35% of our income goes to just the rent! This is crazy and so” unbelievable “for young families like us.

“We have friends who have already moved out of Mississauga, and went as far as moving outside of Ontario or moving to the US.

“We have decided to leave Ontario next year in the spring to purchase affordable housing. And I wanted to let the government know that they will lose out on many talented and skilled people very soon if no actions are taken.”

I’ve received many more like this—not just from young Ontarians. Last week, a senior called my office. She didn’t complain about the building height or the shadows or impact studies. She didn’t complain about the province throwing out 13 years of planning work. She didn’t say the Skinner and Middlebrook Funeral Home is what she loves about Port Credit. She was upset because her only daughter, a nurse, is planning to move to Alberta—and not because of Bill 124. She’s planning to move to Alberta because the cost of a home in Calgary is less than half of it here in Mississauga. In part, that’s because the city’s development fees add about \$126,000 to the cost of a single-family home, and that’s \$1,000 added to the average homebuyer’s mortgage payment over the next 20 years. That’s why last year we passed Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act, to freeze, reduce or exempt some of these fees to support new construction.

Speaker, we disagree on many things here, but I think it’s clear to all members that the status quo on housing isn’t working.

I listened to one of the city’s meetings on Bill 23, and I was shocked to hear a member of the Mississauga planning and building department question whether Ontario really has a housing crisis and question whether 120,000 new homes are needed in Mississauga. One of the residents, Jonathan Giggs, said that he did not think he ever would hear something like that coming from a city planner.

Speaker, as I said, we’re moving forward with Bill 112, granting the city’s request for independence, with the expectation that they will work together, in good faith, towards meeting their target of at least 120,000 homes over the next 10 years. As well, we expect that they will work together with their transition board to protect the public interest throughout this process, as section 5 of Bill 112 requests.

As Mayor Hazel McCallion reminded us in one of her final letters, back in January, which supported Bill 39 and our recent changes to the greenbelt, acting in the best interest of the people isn’t always popular. She wrote: “To meet our current challenges, we need to allow more homes to be built where it makes sense and where there’s existing services, infrastructure and transit. And I hope that the mayor and council will consider this.”

As the minister said, the transition board would be appointed quickly, including experts with a wide range of experience in municipal government, finance and operations, labour and service delivery, and, of course, housing. The board will provide advice on all of these issues, and it will help ensure fair outcomes and respect for taxpayers in Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon.

As the parliamentary assistant said, the region of Peel’s infrastructure has a net book value of \$11 billion. As the

region is dissolved, the board will help to ensure that these shared assets and revenues will be treated fairly for all three municipalities, and it will help to ensure there is no disruption to front-line services and workers. In fact, I expect this process will actually improve front-line services. As the minister said, the board will rely on the results of the third-party audits that were announced earlier this month. If the audit finds duplication and overlap—and I expect they will—in, for example, back-office supports at the city and the region, the board may recommend that this funding would be better used to expand front-line services to support growth. At the same time, we expect that the experienced region of Peel employees can help to meet the growing needs of the cities of Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon.

The board's recommendations, which will be due next year, will help the government to move forward with another bill to ensure the transition can proceed by January 2025.

In closing, I want to thank the minister and his team for all the work they're doing to help position Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon for future growth and to help ensure that everyone in Ontario can realize the dream of home ownership, with access to safe and affordable housing that meets their needs in the communities they want to live in.

Again, I urge all members to support this bill. I know today Hazel McCallion is looking over us and listening and supporting this bill, Bill 112. So I hope all of you will support it for her, as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lorne Coe): Questions?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, the word "consultant" is missing from this bill, and there's nothing requiring this government or the transition board to consult with Peel residents or businesses about a restructuring process that will have a huge and lasting unknown impact on their taxes and services.

There's a schedule 8, which is actually an enforcement piece that this government found necessary to put in. It's enabling the minister to apply to the Superior Court of Justice for an order requiring a person or entity to comply with the provisions of the act or regulations made under this direction. If this has been so widely supported by the Peel municipalities, why is this section needed, enforcing them legally to comply?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank the member for that question.

As the member alluded to, we are going to be putting in a transition team as soon as this bill does pass—and I hope it will pass.

We had the three mayors here last week. We had the mayor from Caledon, the mayor from Brampton and the mayor from Mississauga, as well as the regional council here in support of this bill. So, together, we will do what the people of our municipalities would like.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lorne Coe): Questions, please?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I want to thank my seatmate for his excellent remarks. I know this bill is very near and dear to his heart, not only because of who the bill represents, but what it does for his constituents. He did a really great

job in his speech to actually articulate what his constituents are telling him—even seniors who are saying they're really going to miss their loved ones who are travelling to other provinces because that's where they can afford homes. I certainly hear that in Simcoe county, as well, which is part of this review. So I'm going to ask him, what else is he hearing from members in his riding about how this bill is going to help some of that ability to develop more land so that we can build more homes and certainly are able to retain more of those people so they can live and work here, as opposed to living in other provinces?

1600

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank the member from Barrie–Innisfil for that question.

Yes, it is difficult now to buy a home in the city of Mississauga. My family immigrated to the city of Mississauga—at the time, it was Port Credit, and then it ended up becoming the city of Mississauga in 1974. My parents paid \$15,000 for their home, and today, that same home is worth \$1.7 million. Young families cannot afford that. That's why we have to build more supply.

Supply and demand has always been my thing. I come out of the automotive industry, and we always talk about supply and demand. The more supply you have, the prices do come down.

For young families, I know there's hope for them as we're building supply in the city of Mississauga for them to hit our goal of 120,000 homes that we do need in the city of Mississauga for them.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lorne Coe): Questions, please?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: To the member from Mississauga–Lakeshore: Thank you for your presentation.

I mentioned that in 1998, then-Premier Mike Harris forced six municipalities and the city of Toronto—which included Scarborough, York, Etobicoke, East York and North York—into an amalgamated city. This city is now three million people in size, with almost \$400 billion of GDP. When I compare that to what Mississauga is—it's about 800,000 people, I believe, by 2019 numbers, and about \$97 billion in GDP. I also recognize that we were not necessarily consulted, and neither were any of those five other municipalities, when the amalgamation happened.

Because dissolution was not sought by Brampton or Caledon, how can your government ensure that this dissolution will benefit all three local municipalities?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank the speaker across.

In 1974, we had Port Credit, we had Cooksville, we had Huron Park, and we made it the city of Mississauga, under the region of Peel. Today we are going alone without the region of Peel. It's like a parent with their children—it's time for the child to move on, and Mississauga is a grown adult so they have to be on their own—

Miss Monique Taylor: And so is Caledon.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: And so is Brampton, and so is Caledon. I have connections with all those municipalities. Like I said, the three mayors were all here in support of that, as well as the regional chair, Nando Iannicca. They're all in support of the municipality being broken up to run

their own destiny and build what they want to build in their own city.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lorne Coe): Questions, please?

Mr. Brian Saunderson: I want to thank my colleague for his thoughtful comments on this important legislation.

Coming from the municipal sector, I certainly know that, as communities grow and morph, governance changes are also required to evolve and grow with the municipalities.

As you indicated, when Minister Clark made the announcement, we had the three individual mayors, as well as the regional chair.

The conversation about making Peel region separate single-tier municipalities has been ongoing for a long time. I'm wondering if you could speak to why we chose Peel region first and what that might mean for successive regional examinations.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank the member for that question.

I think we chose Peel because we looked at the three municipalities therein, Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon—that they would be able to go on their own and be able to sustain what we have right now, with all the services that we have. It's not going to be easy. That's why we need three mayors who will be there working constantly to do this. I hope all three mayors will work together and be able to deliver this, and I think they will. But it's going to take time. I know January 2025 will be the time when all cities will be on their own. I just recommend that they work together and be able to separate and do the right thing for the people of Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lorne Coe): Questions, please?

MPP Jamie West: I think of this in terms of Sudbury—Sudbury was amalgamated, as well, during Mike Harris. If it was going to be reopened again, you would want to ensure that there's transparency and be able to hear from the people who are going to be affected—not just the councillors, not just the mayors, but the people who actually live there. When I read this, what I read into it is that the minister is going to appoint five members, and they'll be paid, and their expenses will be covered by those municipalities. They will have very broad powers to do what they want. They don't have a requirement to consult, and they don't have a requirement to publish their findings. So I'm concerned the government may have overlooked the requirement for this—to have this transparency so that municipalities know what's happening and what's going on. Am I misreading this? Is this missing in here? It seems like they have very broad powers and they have a slush fund bank account they can do anything they want with, but no accountability to the places where they're going to be making these decisions.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank the member from Sudbury for that question.

Like I said, we have the transition team that will be set up after this bill is passed, if it is passed in the House.

I've consulted with my constituents, as well, in Mississauga on this bill, and a high percentage of them are in favour of Mississauga going alone.

As well, I spoke to people in Brampton and Caledon, and having their own city is what they want.

It's not going to be easy. I'm not saying it will be easy, because there is a transition. But like we said, we guaranteed that the services will remain until 2025 and then every city will be going on their own.

Like I said, I spoke to constituents, and they are happy about this move going forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lorne Coe): Questions, please? The member from Perth–Wellington.

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you, Speaker. It's nice to see you in the chair this afternoon.

Thank you to my colleague from Mississauga–Lake-shore for his remarks. I was just wondering if he could expand a little on some components I raised in my remarks—and he alluded to it in his previous answer. Our government is taking the tough but necessary decisions to get more housing built, and I would classify this bill as one of those options. So I was wondering if he could expand, being a member from Mississauga, on how this will help.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank the member for that question.

Housing has been an issue in Mississauga. Like I said, if you notice the numbers, when Hazel was there, she was building 12,000 homes a year, and now it has declined since she left office in 2014. We need homes. We need homes for our children, for the future and all these immigrants who are coming to the province of Ontario. We have 450,000 people arriving at our door every year, and these people are going to need homes.

In my speech, I was reading about a family who is leaving Ontario because they cannot find an affordable home in this province.

I look at our own development in Lakeview, where we just did our MZO—that 16,000 new homes will be built in that area. Out of those 16,000 homes, 1,600 will be affordable and attainable homes for the people. I want to thank our minister for putting that bill forward, as well, to pass an MZO for that community—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Thank you very much.

SUPERIOR CORPORATE SERVICES LIMITED ACT, 2023

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): I beg to inform the House that the Clerk has received a submission related to Bill Pr25, An Act to revive Superior Corporate Services Limited. Pursuant to standing order 93(a), the submission stands referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

Report continues in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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

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

Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day

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

Meghan Stenson, Christopher Tyrell

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

| Member and Party / Député(e) et parti | Constituency / Circonscription | Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités |
|--|--|---|
| Anand, Deepak (PC) | Mississauga—Malton | |
| Andrew, Jill (NDP) | Toronto—St. Paul's | |
| Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP) | London—Fanshawe | |
| Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC) | Wellington—Halton Hills | Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative |
| Babikian, Aris (PC) | Scarborough—Agincourt | |
| Bailey, Robert (PC) | Sarnia—Lambton | |
| Barnes, Patrice (PC) | Ajax | Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative |
| Begum, Doly (NDP) | Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough- Sud-Ouest | Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle |
| Bell, Jessica (NDP) | University—Rosedale | |
| 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 |
| Coe, Lorne (PC) | Whitby | |
| Collard, Lucille (LIB) | Ottawa—Vanier | Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative |
| Crawford, Stephen (PC) | Oakville | |
| Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC) | Mississauga—Lakeshore | |
| Dixon, Jess (PC) | Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler | |
| Dowie, Andrew (PC) | Windsor—Tecumseh | |
| 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 | |
| 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 | |
| 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 | |
| Jama, Sarah (NDP) | Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre | |
| 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 |
| Khanjini, 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 (IND) | 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 |
| Oosterhoff, Sam (PC) | Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest | |
| Pang, Billy (PC) | Markham—Unionville | |

| Member and Party / Député(e) et parti | Constituency / Circonscription | Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités |
|--|---|--|
| Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC) | Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill | Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires |
| 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. Kaled (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 | |
| Skelly, Donna (PC) | Flamborough—Glanbrook | Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-présidente et présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente |
| Smith, Dave (PC) | Peterborough—Kawartha | |
| Smith, David (PC) | Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre | |
| Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC) | Parry Sound—Muskoka | Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts |
| Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC) | Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte | Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie |
| Smith, Laura (PC) | Thornhill | |
| Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP) | St. Catharines | |
| Stiles, Marit (NDP) | Davenport | 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, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC) | Mississauga—Streetsville | Associate Minister of Housing / Ministre associée du Logement |
| 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 | |
| West, Jamie (NDP) | Sudbury | |

| Member and Party / Député(e) et parti | Constituency / Circonscription | Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités |
|--|---|--|
| 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 | Kanata—Carleton | |
| Vacant | Scarborough—Guildwood | |