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Mercredi
7 juin 2023

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 7 June 2023

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 7 juin 2023

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

MEMBERS' EXPENDITURES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Before I ask for orders of the day, I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon table the individual members' expenditures for the fiscal year 2022-23.

HOUSE SITTINGS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order, the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Pursuant to standing order 7(e), I wish to inform the House that tonight's evening meeting is cancelled.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BETTER SCHOOLS AND STUDENT OUTCOMES ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 SUR L'AMÉLIORATION DES ÉCOLES ET DU RENDEMENT DES ÉLÈVES

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 6, 2023, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

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): When we last debated this bill, I understand the member for Ottawa West-Nepean had the floor. I recognize her again.

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Good morning to my fellow members on this apocalyptic-feeling morning in Toronto. I know it's much, much worse in Ottawa. I've been getting many panicked messages from the capital. I just want to take a moment before I begin to remind people to stay indoors as much as you can, wear a mask when you're outdoors, and if you're feeling symptoms of chest pain or difficulty breathing, please seek medical attention.

Yesterday, when we ran out of time, I was speaking about special education funding in Ontario, which we know is not even remotely close to actually meeting the

needs of children with disabilities and accessibility needs. The Toronto District School Board is spending \$67.6 million more on special education than what they are getting from the province. The Lambton Kent District School Board reported that they are only getting enough funding from the government to cover one quarter of the actual cost of special education. Most school boards are in that position, spending millions of dollars—many of them ten of millions of dollars—more on special education than what they are getting from the government, and yet we still don't have the supports necessary to enable the participation of all students in Ontario. What we're seeing as a result is the exclusion of children with disabilities from our system.

In 2018, ARCH disability law firm sent a survey to parents of children with disabilities; 45% of respondents confirmed that at one time or another they had to keep their child home from school as a result of a lack of accommodations or other services. More than half of the parents also reported that their children's day had been shortened, in many cases not because of the student's needs but because of the needs of the school system, such as staff shortages or transportation issues.

ARCH called on the ministry at that time to develop reporting requirements for all forms of exclusions: formal exclusions where children are permanently sent home until a safety plan is in place and informal exclusions where children are being excluded for all or part of the day, whether one time or ongoing, because the system doesn't have the resources to meet students' needs. This demand has been echoed by the Ontario Autism Coalition, who, like many parents of students with disabilities, are seeing an alarming rise in the number of exclusions taking place. For some parents, it's weekly or multiple times a week.

Since the government has ignored the demands to track and publicly report on all exclusions, we did it for them with an online form for parents to fill out every time their child was excluded from school. Our survey covers only a small snapshot of the number of children excluded from our schools, and yet we know that in a two-week period in May this year, there were at least 78 children who missed out on over 550 hours of school in Ontario—one third of those exclusions were for the full day. The most commonly cited reasons for the exclusion was a lack of staffing or a lack of staff trained to deal with complex behaviours.

One parent shared that their son was only allowed at school until 10:45 a.m. every day. Another parent with a son in the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board says that her son is only allowed at school for two hours every day. She has no idea how he's ever going to accumulate enough

credits to graduate when he only gets to go to school for two hours. A parent with the Toronto District School Board said his son is 100% asynchronous because the school can't meet his child's safety needs. He completes work at home and hands it in, but doesn't get to attend school at all.

The Ontario Autism Coalition calls exclusions "the dirty little secret of the education system," and as I've been speaking with parents in many different situations, this has become very apparent to me. Most parents have no idea that this is going on in our education system every single day. If your child is neurotypical and has no disability, you can send them off to school all day, every day, without a second thought, but when your child has a disability or autism, or needs support of any kind, suddenly this becomes your reality.

We need to address exclusions and make sure that children with accessibility needs are able to actually attend our schools. Every child has the right to a quality and substantive education, but you can only get that education if you can actually go to school. The minister has said that even children with disabilities will learn to read under the new curriculum, but you can only learn to read if you can actually be at school.

But this government isn't providing the funding necessary to allow all of our children to be at school with the supports they need to keep them safe and allow them to learn. Their funding falls so far short of what the costs of special education actually are, and on top of that, their increases have not kept up with inflation, so every single year their funding falls further behind.

And what we're seeing now is really unconscionable because the government's funding for our education system overall is not keeping pace with inflation and school boards need to implement cuts, and because school boards are spending tens of millions of dollars more than what they're getting from the government on special education, it makes special education and supports for children with accessibility needs a big target for cuts. So across the province we are seeing special class placements for children with disabilities being ended and children being put into mainstream classes, but without the supports that would allow them to succeed in that setting.

In Ottawa, as the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board is looking to eliminate a \$19-million deficit this year, they are looking at cutting a summer program for students with disabilities that allows these students to learn important life skills and prevent their learning loss over summer.

Two weeks ago, I had the opportunity to attend a sports day event in my riding at Sir Guy Carleton Secondary School, which brought together students from a number of special education programs at schools across the city for a day of games. I had a great time playing Moon Ball and bocchia ball with the kids. At the end of my visit, one of the teachers collared me and asked me to bring a message back here, that if we are doing things right, we would invest in kids with special needs first and foremost, knowing that if we are looking after their needs, we would have built a

system that looks after the needs of all children. But, instead, what we have in the province is the inverse, a situation where these students are treated as an afterthought.

We had an opportunity to change that with Bill 98, but the government voted against every single amendment that would have required the full inclusion of students with disabilities. What the committee meetings made clear was that, on every issue, this bill was a lost opportunity to listen to the voices of people in this sector and actually address the challenges that this sector is facing. The government's refusal to consult with trustees, teachers and education workers was deeply disrespectful, but it also means that we have a bill that doesn't take into account the realities of our education system on the ground.

As the Ontario Public School Boards' Association pointed out, along with school boards from around the province who sent in their own submissions, a one-size-fits-all model where everything can be dictated from Toronto does not reflect the different circumstances of communities around the province and ignores what local communities are identifying as priorities to their locally elected trustees. School boards need flexibility to be able to meet the needs of the population they serve.

0910

We see this in Ottawa all the time, when the government even remembers that we exist: assumptions that Ottawa is just like a mini-Toronto. But we have our own unique culture and very different needs, including the fact that Ottawa is far more bilingual than Toronto, that we have a very large urban Indigenous population and that our physical territory is incredibly large and includes rural areas.

The Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board is another example of how diverse circumstances can be. They are the only school board to have signed three education service agreements with local First Nations. Each of those service agreements is different because they reflect the unique circumstances of the First Nations. What happens now if Toronto is dictating one-size-fits-all requirements to Kawartha Pine Ridge?

Trustees also asked some good questions about accountability, because everyone gets to vote for their local school board trustee but only the Premier gets to select the Minister of Education. But this bill gives the Minister of Education the power to micromanage school boards without ever giving them the resources that are necessary for success. In fact, there's a real concern that Bill 98 could be setting up school boards to fail.

We also heard from teachers at the committee who expressed serious frustration at the government's repeated unwillingness to listen to the people who are actually working in our schools, in our classrooms every single day, about what is happening in our classrooms and what is needed to support our children. In fact, none of the teachers' unions were consulted on this legislation. It takes a lot of hubris to put forward legislation to provide better student outcomes and not even talk to the people in the province who have the most experience in pedagogy and are working with our children every single day.

What we heard from teachers at committee mirrors what I hear every day from teachers and education workers across the province. This government is refusing to acknowledge, let alone address, what the real challenges in our education system are.

As OSSTF said in their brief to the committee, “This government has overseen our public education system for five years. They have had the responsibility to focus on student success and achievement, on preparing students for life and work. How have they discharged that critical responsibility? By seeking to drastically increase class sizes, by forcing students to earn credits online away from classmates, teachers and other supports.”

We know what the solutions are, Speaker. We have known for a long time. The Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario, the Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation, the Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Association and the Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens all reminded us of these solutions yet again in committee.

We need to invest in lower class sizes in elementary and secondary schools to provide more supports and more one-on-one student-teacher interaction.

We need to provide the immediate and real funding necessary to truly provide extra math and literacy supports for students and address the teacher shortage and the fact that 40,000 teachers in Ontario are currently certified but don’t want to work in the system under this government.

We need a real, sustained investment into mental health resources and services, including making sure that every single school has regularly scheduled and sufficient access to at least one qualified mental health professional.

We need to stop underfunding special education.

We need to stop the expansion of online learning, which fails the overwhelming majority of students.

We need to address the epidemic of violence in our schools with mental health resources, additional staff and training on intervention and de-escalation.

And we need the government to start working collaboratively and respectfully with teachers and education workers instead of consistently undermining and disrespecting them, to listen to them and respect educators’ experience and expertise.

One of the things that we should listen to them about is that Right to Read has to be accompanied by necessary funding, by the necessary professional development, or it will not succeed. A ministerial priority is not like a magic wand that the minister can wave and suddenly it happens in schools across the province. The funding needs to be there. The supports need to be there. The teachers and education workers need the time to spend with children if we are really going to ensure that every child in Ontario learns to read.

The final concern that I want to highlight this morning is the changes this bill makes around technical apprenticeships. I don’t think there’s anyone here who disputes the importance of technical learning and of creating hands-on learning opportunities for students. But we have to get it right, Speaker, to make sure that it doesn’t end up putting the safety or the futures of students at risk. What we have

here is a policy proposal with no details attached. The government is asking us to rubber-stamp a high-level concept with no idea of how it will actually be put into practice, how it will impact students and who will be consulted in its development. Once again, the government is saying, “Just trust us.”

But the safety and education of students is too important to rubber-stamp a legislative proposal on the basis of “just trust us.” We can only support the idea if we know that the details are right for students. And here is what we know so far:

The government didn’t consult with a single union—not the teachers unions or the trades unions.

We don’t know what fields will be included and how students will select a field and what measures there will be to make sure that students will actually be able to advance in their chosen career if they choose this apprenticeship.

We don’t know what oversight there will be for safety, which should be paramount.

We don’t know whether these apprenticeships will be overseen by a teacher, which is necessary for a credit in Ontario.

And we don’t know whether the apprenticeship will count towards an Ontario secondary school diploma or if students will be expected to apply on their own for a GED as adult learners.

We know it makes a significant difference to futures whether or not people have an Ontario secondary school diploma. This could end up closing the door on many future employment opportunities. In fact, I’ve heard concerns from many stakeholders and the committee heard from parents of Black children that if we don’t do this carefully, it will end up being a reintroduction of streaming, taking away opportunities from Black and racialized children and closing doors for them instead of opening them. Francophone stakeholders have asked where the apprenticeship opportunities will be for French-language students or if this is only going to be available to English students in Ontario.

The government has not done their homework here, Speaker. They need to go away, do the work, have the consultations, put the meat on the bones and develop a real policy with safeguards in place to protect students before they ask for legislative approval. This is putting the cart before the horse and asking us to approve a policy that could end up being incredibly detrimental to students and their safety. We just can’t do that. That would be a dereliction of our duty as legislators.

Imagine if one of my voters in Ottawa West–Nepean asks me to explain why we have this program in place that is putting student safety at risk a year or two from now, and my answer is that I voted for it not knowing the details because it sounded like a good idea. I’m sure they would be asking themselves—and they would be right to—why they are even sending me here if I’m voting in favour of something without even knowing what the details will be. They didn’t elect a rubber stamp. They elected someone who would stand up for them and look out for their interests.

I would encourage members on the other side to be asking themselves if their constituents elected a rubber stamp and if they are prepared to be a rubber stamp on a proposal that could put student safety at risk, that tramples on the constitutional rights of Franco-Ontarians and that fails to respect the rights of students with disabilities in Ontario. Or if they were elected to actually listen to people, to listen to different perspectives, to work with people and to try to identify solutions that would ensure that we are putting student safety and student outcomes first and supporting the teachers, education workers, principals and administrators who are working with our children every single day, supporting the local school board trustees who fight hard every day to make sure that our children have the resources that they need, and whether they are prepared to listen to Ontarians, vote no to a proposal that will not support students, and actually stand up and support better funding, better resources and better outcomes for students in Ontario.

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

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you to the member opposite for her comments. I just wanted to ask the member opposite what she has against transparency, because this legislation is really trying to make the whole school board system more transparent, and I know my constituents, who I listen to every day, really want to know what the money is being used for that goes to school boards. For example, we've given \$100 million more each year in funding to school boards and a total of, I think, \$541 million to school boards to fund special needs, and it goes into a black hole. And special-needs teachers come to me and tell me they're the first people pulled so the money can be used for other initiatives.

0920

So my question really is, don't you want to know what the money for special-needs children, which you said is so important, is actually going for? Then, we'll see if it's sufficient, insufficient etc., but at least we'll have more information so we'll know what we're talking about.

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Thank you to the member from Eglinton–Lawrence for that question.

I'm thrilled to hear about the member from Eglinton–Lawrence's newfound interest in transparency and accountability, because I was at the social policy committee when the member for Eglinton–Lawrence defeated a motion that would have seen the Minister of Education come and answer questions on the estimates for 15 hours, which has been traditional in this place, and instead put forward a motion that only allowed the minister to come for three hours to answer questions.

The member for Eglinton–Lawrence was also there on Monday, when I questioned the minister about things like the school repair backlog and, yes, funding on special education, and the minister could not answer my questions and dodged questions.

I agree with the member that Ontarians are very interested in transparency and accountability. And what they would really like to see is some transparency and accountability from this government on what they are doing to education in this province.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member from London North Centre.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to thank the member from Ottawa West–Nepean for her excellent commentary on the state of education here within our province and how Bill 98 really misses the mark in terms of special education.

The former Liberal government patted themselves on the back for placing students with special needs inside of mainstream classrooms. They called it inclusion, but they didn't provide the supports; from where we sit, that is abandonment. The utter neglect of children with special needs really has been continued under this government.

My question to the member: If this government truly cared for students with special needs, what improvements could they make to the funding formula to ensure that these children have the supports they require?

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Thank you to the member for London North Centre for that excellent question.

It really is heartbreaking and disappointing how we have treated children with disabilities and accessibility needs in this province. We have a funding formula that is not even based on what they actually need. It's based on some strange statistical model that has nothing to do with what is actually going on within our schools, and that's what's really robbing children of the opportunity to have the supports they need to learn within school safely.

So what we need to do is to actually fund based on the needs, make sure that children are receiving the supports they need, whether it's an educational assistant, whether it's a special class placement, so that every child in Ontario truly has the opportunity to be at school safely, but also to learn something while they are there and to benefit from that socialization and that opportunity to participate.

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

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Schedule 3 of the bill deals with teachers who have been ordered to take a sexual abuse prevention program course. Schedule 3 of the bill says that a registrar cannot give a certificate to that teacher unless that teacher completes the sexual abuse prevention program requirements.

My question to the member is this: With regard to that specific provision, does she support it? Yes or no?

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Thank you to the member for the question.

I hope I can say with some confidence that no member in this House supports in any way teachers who are assaulting or abusing children being present in the classroom and having certification in the province of Ontario.

But what I would say is deeply disappointing is that the College of Teachers has been asking for changes for some time that the government could have brought forward at any time, but as they so often do, they waited until they could include these changes in a bill that also tramples on the rights of francophone children to an equitable education in their own language, that also fails to respect the rights of children with disabilities in Ontario and tramples on the work being done by locally elected school board trustees

I would suggest that if the government was truly interested in protecting children as thoroughly and quickly as possible, they would have brought forward these changes a long time ago in a stand-alone bill.

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

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you very much to the member from Ottawa West–Nepean. Your understanding of this issue is unparalleled. Thank you so much for highlighting the failures of the bill. This bill is truly arranging deck chairs on the Titanic. There's a huge problem in our schools, and this government is focusing on blame when they're not looking themselves in the mirror to understand that they are underfunding these schools. Instead, they're going to strong-arm boards.

I received a message from Mr. Ed, who has been teaching in Hamilton for many, many years, who said, "Violence and safety of children and staff is an ongoing concern, with incidents occurring on a daily basis. Schools need more help for support for mental health and social-emotional needs, and we just don't have them. We need smaller classes, more boots on the ground to work with these students and parents, and the problem seems to be getting worse. COVID definitely exacerbated that, and we need to get ahead of this before schools are in further crisis."

I would add the schools are left holding the bag for COVID funding that the province is not making them whole for.

Can you say further to how this government has failed students in our schools in Ontario?

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Thank you to the member for Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas for that excellent question. We are definitely seeing an epidemic of violence and mental health crises in our schools that this government is refusing to address, despite the many pleas from parents, from teachers, from education workers and from principals to take actions and make sure that our kids have the resources that they need in schools. Not an online portal, but a professional who they can turn to; more teachers and education workers who are trained to intervene before a situation becomes violent.

We can't have that unless we are actually prepared to invest the funding in our education system that our education system needs, and what we see time and time again is that this government is just not prepared to do that. Their funding during the five years they have been in government has decline by \$1,200 per student, when you account for inflation, and they are spending 27 cents per day per child on mental health after a global pandemic and unprecedented disruptions in our schools. It is simply not enough.

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

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you to the member opposite for her remarks. I just want to correct some misnomers I've been hearing this morning. Our government increased the Grants for Student Needs this year in the budget—which the members opposite voted against—by over \$600 million. We also built upon our historic investments in

mental health by—the last budget prior to the election was a 400% increase since we formed government in 2018. We added to that again this year.

My question to the members opposite is when will they join this government in supporting students and vote for this bill?

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Thank you to the member for the question. What this government is providing is kind of a joke. Inflation in April of this year is 4.4%. Do you know how much the Grants for Student Needs increased this year? Some 1.4%. I have not been able to benefit from the new back-to-basics math curriculum, but I am quite sure that 4.4% is higher than 1.4%. That's a significant cut when you take into account inflation. You would think that a government that is forcing financial literacy courses on students would actually know that the value of money declines over time and, that as the value of money declines over time, you are providing less.

Similarly, what we see with mental health is that there are fewer mental health professionals in schools now than there were a decade ago. This government is only spending 27 cents per day per child. It is clearly not enough, because 91% of our schools are saying they need more help with mental health—that's 91%, which again, I did not get the basic math curriculum—

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

Further debate?

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Madam Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to rise in this chamber and offer my strong support for Bill 98, also known as the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act. I also want to thank the Minister of Education and his parliamentary assistant for the incredible work they're doing to ensure our schools are inclusive and welcoming learning centres and the curriculum is relevant to the challenges of tomorrow.

0930

Ontario's curriculum, Madam Speaker, now includes a stronger focus on STEM learning and math, as well as instruction in financial literacy and greater access to training and work in the skilled trades.

After a decade when the previous Liberal government closed over 600 schools across the province and refused to listen to the concerns of parents, our government is investing approximately \$15 billion over 10 years to build new schools, improve existing facilities and create new child care spaces. Since 2018, Speaker, our government has invested over \$2.2 billion in education capital projects, including 100 new schools, 80 school additions and nearly 6,500 new licensed child care spaces.

I want to applaud the minister, who just this past May, for Asian Heritage Month, announced partnerships with the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto and the Tribute to Early Chinese Immigrants Canada Foundation for providing teachers and students with supplementary resources to encourage and facilitate a better understanding of Asian heritage, as well as the shameful Chinese exclusion act of 1923 and the Chinese head tax.

Speaker, it's incredibly important that young people learn more about the incredible contributions of Asian Canadians, that we combat the anti-Asian racism in our schools. I'm proud of the Minister of Education for taking action.

Parents in Richmond Hill have told me that they strongly support public education because they want their kids to succeed in life, but Richmond Hill parents also believe that school boards have to be a lot more accountable and have to be a lot more transparent about the money that they spend and the results that they receive. I believe this is a very reasonable request, Speaker. I also believe it is fair to say that most school boards are doing a very good job managing their resources and educating our young people.

I say that, Speaker, for a simple reason: 89% of high school students graduate within five years. That's an impressive figure. Speaker, it's up from 85% just a few years ago. Unfortunately, there are about 15,000 students every year who do not graduate within five years.

Here's the situation in a nutshell: Some boards are having trouble managing their resources and are even cutting front-line staff, despite the fact that we are providing them with record funding. That's a significant problem, Speaker, but what's worse, some boards are consistently underperforming when it comes to getting students to graduate high school within five years.

Speaker, I also want to add that I will be sharing my time with the member from Perth–Wellington.

The minister has been doing an incredible job of updating the curriculum, but the Ministry of Education is limited in its ability to drive and enforce provincial priorities through the schools. Moreover, many parents are rightfully frustrated because information about school board performance and the relationship between education spending and its ability to support education outcomes is not easily accessible to the public at large.

I have a lot of respect for elected school board trustees. They volunteer their time to ensure that school boards are focused on the students' achievement and that resources are managed competently. Across the province, Speaker, about 700 elected trustees provide local government over a \$27-billion education system. Yet trustees lack a consistent set of skills, training or a standard code of conduct, and the public has at times been distracted by disputes among trustees that are costly and time-consuming.

Back when he was a school board trustee with the Toronto District School Board in 2015, my honourable colleague the member for Spadina–Fort York had much to say on this subject to the Toronto Star: "I'm angry with trustees who, for the past year and a half engaged in feuds with each other, lobbing missiles through the media, thinking they were hurting only their opponents, but who were destroying the board's reputation."

Even worse, Speaker, many parents see their local school boards as big and impersonal bureaucracies and feel powerless to effect change when they aren't satisfied with the education their kids are receiving. This is especially the case with new Canadians whose first

language is not English. Some of them even worry that they might get into trouble if they voice an objection.

Clearly, Speaker, parents, students, taxpayers and everyone deserve some better accountability from their school boards, and that's what the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act is all about.

I'm quite enthusiastic about the proposed handbook for parents that will spell out their rights and responsibilities regarding their children's education. Our government strongly believes in empowering parents, and I'm sure that such a handbook will prove to be incredibly useful during parent-teacher conferences.

Speaker, this is what the Ontario Human Rights Commission recently had to say in a written submission regarding our legislation: "The commission supports the proposed improvements to transparency, communication and reporting through publicly posted board improvement plans, updated to parents twice a year." I will add, Madam Speaker, that Bill 98, the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, goes much further than mandating a handbook for parents.

School boards sit on the largest vertical real estate portfolio in the broader public school sector, with over 4,600 open or operating schools. Our legislation, if passed, would strengthen the ministry's oversight over the use, sale and development of school board real estate, including the power to direct boards to establish a framework for surplus properties, along with the ability to direct a sale or sever a property.

Maximizing capital assets will help board student achievement as well achieve the effective, efficient and sustainable use of school board funding and property. In fact, Madam Speaker, this was one of the recommendations of the Drummond report that was commissioned by former Premier Dalton McGuinty: "Efficiency can also be found by maximizing the value of school board capital assets.... The minister should have the power to order the sale of unused properties, especially when such dispositions could meet other needs."

Our legislation would also strengthen accountability over school board spending, including additional resources for financial investigations when needed, and require transparent reporting on school board spending and how it supports student outcomes.

The act will enable the minister to require school boards to report publicly against standardized categories of spending twice annually. It will strengthen the minister's authority to direct and prohibit board participation in prescribed activities that could place the board at financial risk.

This act will allow for the appointment of professional corporations as investigators in board financial affairs when there's distress.

Speaker, I have a lot more to share, but I would like to share this time with the member from Perth–Wellington. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member from Perth–Wellington.

0940

Mr. Matthew Rae: It's a pleasure for me to rise in this chamber to provide my full support for Bill 98, Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act.

Speaker, there's nothing more important than preparing our young people for lifelong success, and if we want to get the education system working the way that it should, we need to pass this legislation. It is really that simple. In my riding of Perth–Wellington, parents have made it clear that while they believe in the promise of public education, they also want an education system to do a much better job of getting their kids ready for the workforce. That means more reading, more math, more science and an introduction to the skilled trades.

Before I get to the merits of the bill, I want to take this opportunity to thank the Minister of Education and the parliamentary assistant for everything they have done. I had the pleasure of working alongside both the minister and PA Barnes for several months after the last election before I was moved to municipal affairs and housing. I can tell this chamber that the minister is incredibly passionate about reforming the education system and has accomplished a great deal so far. And as both a mom and a former trustee for the Durham District School Board, the parliamentary assistant and the member for Ajax, Patrice Barnes, is incredibly knowledgeable about both the internal workings of our school boards and the state of the education system at the grassroots level. Both are driving transformational change in our education system, and I applaud them on their progress so far and everything they have accomplished. The province's students are in good hands.

This province's education system needs some transformational change, because the stakes could not be higher in these times. Ontario is facing the largest shortage of skilled labour in a generation. Right now, there are more than 100,000 unfilled skilled trades jobs across the province. It's projected that by 2026, approximately one in five job openings in Ontario will be in skilled-trades-related fields. It is estimated that more than 40% of jobs in Canada are at high risk of getting disrupted by technology. So it's crucial that we prepare students for the jobs of tomorrow.

We're taking decisive action, and we're getting it done. Ever since our government was first elected five years ago, we have been busy updating the province's curriculum to ensure it does a better job of reflecting the changing needs in our labour market. More specifically, that has meant making financial literacy and digital fluency key priorities; investing \$200 million to support a four-year math strategy; teaching valuable transferable skills such as leadership, communication, collaboration and critical thinking; promoting the skilled trades as a top choice for a career path for young people; increasing awareness and access to apprenticeship programs; and, obviously, improving science, technology, engineering and math, or STEM, learning across Ontario and our public school system.

In addition to the \$200 million for the math strategy, we're also investing more than \$71 million in 2023-24 in a new math plan that doubles the number of school math

coaches in the classroom and expands access to digital math tools that students and parents can access at any time.

I'm proud to add that the government of Ontario is once again building new schools, after a decade under the previous Liberal government when we saw the closure of 600 schools across Ontario, many in rural communities. More specifically, our government is investing approximately \$15 billion over 10 years to build new schools, improve existing educational facilities and create new child care spaces for hard-working families.

These are pretty significant investments, which is why I'm confident that our government is on the right track. But there's only so much we can do and accomplish without drafting new legislation. If passed, the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act will increase accountability by giving parents new tools to navigate and understand the education system and establish basic qualifications for directors of education.

Bill 98 will allow the minister to establish key priorities to ensure students have the skills and knowledge they need, especially in areas such as reading, writing and math. As a matter of fact, the Ontario Human Rights Commission recently provided written submissions on Bill 98. I just want to have a brief quote: "The OHRC is pleased in see that Bill 98 lays the groundwork for an education system unified with a focus on improving student outcomes in the important lifelong skill of reading."

Just as an aside, Speaker, I have to wonder how my honourable colleagues in the New Democratic, Liberal and Green parties feel about opposing a bill that enjoys the full support of the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

In any case, my colleagues and I are incredibly excited about the actions our government is taking to improve our education system and outcomes for young people, but I think we need to talk a little bit about resources.

Speaker, our government has increased the Ministry of Education's investments every year since we took office. In fact, we have announced more than \$27.6 billion in total education funding to school boards for this fiscal year, 2023-24—the highest investment in public education in the province's history. We're doing our part, and we're providing school boards with valuable resources, but some school boards are claiming they can't make do, even with record investments in education. Something doesn't add up.

What many Ontarians don't realize is that the education sector is sitting on the largest vertical real estate portfolio within the broader public sector, with over 4,600 open or operating schools. But there's a lack of standardization on how school boards should manage this considerable number of assets.

Additionally, we have seen across the province that boards will not rent or sell unused schools to competing boards, or when there are underused schools in some areas of the board's jurisdiction while other areas require new schools.

The Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act will maximize the capital assets held by school boards by:

- strengthening the province’s oversight over the use, sale and development of school board real estate, including surplus properties;

- setting authority to direct the joint use of schools;

- streamlining approvals in high-growth areas;

- requiring school boards to work with municipalities on urban planning—and as the now-parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, I know we’re also working with the Ministry of Education to ensure that we are planning growth in the right areas and ensuring that schools are built in high-growth areas, and innovative solutions, whether that is a school in a new condo building or a school in a new community;

- setting authority to direct school boards to utilize standardized designs.

Speaker, I believe that parents and the public will support a more effective use of public resources, especially if our reforms make it easier to get schools built—and faster—when their children are ready to attend them. We must get more classrooms into the communities that need them ASAP.

Overall, the big picture is this: Ontario school boards receive over \$27 billion in provincial funding and operate over 4,800 school facilities and a complex system of student transportation. Parents, families and taxpayers demand and deserve greater transparency and accountability into how their education system is managed and how the system’s resources are managed.

Our reforms are very much in line with the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Learning that was chaired by former Liberal cabinet minister Monique Begin and long-time New Democrat Gerald Caplan in the mid-1990s. To quote the 1994 report: “We recommend the transfer of several key responsibilities away from boards. We believe that determining the level of each board’s expenditures, for example, should be the ministry’s job.” The fact that this report was tabled when I was four years old and we still have not moved on it—I’m glad to see that our government is finally taking action and moving forward with some of the recommendations outlined in it.

I can also cite the 2012 Drummond report that my colleague also mentioned in her remarks, commissioned by former Premier Dalton McGuinty. In the words of the Drummond report, “Efficiency can also be found by maximizing the value of school board capital assets. Where schools have been closed or consolidated because of declining enrolment, school boards have surplus properties. The minister should have the power to order the sale of unused properties, especially when such dispositions could meet other needs in the BPS.”

Speaker, to summarize, we’re getting the job done. We’re providing schools and school boards with the resources they need to educate our children. We are once again building and improving schools after a decade of school closures under the previous Liberal government. We are taking action to ensure that our precious tax dollars are supporting our youth.

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

Mr. Jeff Burch: Thank you to the members from Richmond Hill and Perth–Wellington for their comments.

A question about children’s mental health: There has been mental health counselling made available in schools, but the problem in my community and in other communities across Ontario is that it’s not connected to children’s mental health agencies. The mental health workers in schools are unsupervised, largely, and at the end of the school year, when the school year wraps up, the children who are receiving help have to be released back into the children’s mental health agency, so there is not a continuity there.

0950

Why did the government not consult with local children’s mental health agencies to make sure that help was being provided efficiently?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member for Perth–Wellington.

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you to the member opposite for the important question—a very important question. As we all know, especially coming out of the pandemic, mental health is more of a need and a priority as well. Under the Minister of Education, as I mentioned earlier in the debate, we’ve increased to historic levels of mental health funding. It also is a government-wide approach. I know that the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and the Minister of Health herself are looking at mental health, those aspects, within our school system. I know in some areas of the province the family health teams will go into the schools with a mental health practitioner they may have on their team to ensure that there is that oversight and that support within our larger health care system and within the community.

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

Ms. Natalie Pierre: My question is for the member from Richmond Hill. Student success is important to all Ontarians. I know all members agree that students need to be given every opportunity to learn so they can enter the workforce ready to succeed, whether they choose university, college, a trade or another path.

Recently, our government announced that, starting with students entering grade 9 in September of 2024, all students will now be required to earn a grade 9 or 10 technical education credit as part of their Ontario secondary school diploma. This is just one example of how our government supports students. I’m wondering if the member can tell us how this bill goes further to support student learning.

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Thank you to my colleague for this question. It is important and you are correct that a student’s education can provide a solid foundation for their future success.

Our government is making historic investments in Ontario schools by providing \$27.6 million for public education in 2023-24. In addition, the Ministry of Education is also providing \$180 million in 2023-24 for math and reading supports for Ontario students in our classrooms and at home. We also have the previous \$200-million

investment—we supported students—for a four-year math strategy.

It is important that boards have a unified focus on student success. That is why we see and we stress the achievement of the students, and prioritizing development in reading, writing and math is so important. We will work together with them to strengthen this.

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

Ms. Sandy Shaw: My question to the government members: Let's be clear, this bill is a straight-up power grab. You're bigfooting local school boards and parents and concentrating power here at Queen's Park. Clearly, Conservatives love big government when you're in power.

It's also a land grab. Who would be surprised that this government that sold off our greenbelt would be grabbing all of the assets of local school boards?

What this bill is not about is empowering parents. Speaker, you will know this, as a member of the committee: The two members from Richmond Hill and Perth-Wellington who spoke here today voted against every amendment at committee, including amendments that would ensure Franco-Ontarians had rights under the charter.

Interjection.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: The member from Essex may think that that's great, to override people's charter rights. We on this side think that that's an abysmal action on the part of this government.

You also voted against every amendment to ensure disability rights for kids in our schools. Why did you do this?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member for Perth-Wellington.

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you to my colleague for the question. My first response is: Maybe the opposition should put forward better amendments.

Speaker, our government is focused on getting schools built and updated. Some \$15 billion over 10 years, as I mentioned earlier in the debate, for school capital development. One of the first things going into my role as PA to education after the last election was learning how much—I didn't realize, as a layman—education oversees the real estate portfolio it oversees.

And it's getting more schools built, which is a change from the previous Liberal government, and ensuring that those schools are built quickly as well and ensuring that those resources are used to the maximum efficiency.

Speaker, I find it very rich from the members opposite, talking about big government when that party supports, essentially, communism.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Question? The member from Newmarket-Aurora.

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: Thank you—

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Point of order.

Interjection.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I'm sure the member doesn't even understand the definition of communism and is imputing motive, and I object to that strenuously.

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

The member for Newmarket-Aurora.

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: Thank you, Madam Speaker. This question will be for the member for Richmond Hill—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): One second, one second.

Interjections.

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: [*Inaudible*] classmate who was struggling, and/or we might have had a sibling—those of us who had siblings. I know in my case, I had two siblings who struggled during school. It was extremely difficult for parents—I'm sure all parents and my parents when it happened to them—to hear that their child was going to have to stay back a grade. At the same time, there are many parents who do believe their child needs to be moved up and skip a grade, and it's very disappointing when the school and the board say, no, they don't agree.

My question to the member is, what happens if parents disagree with a school or school board's proposal on a grade retention, promotion and acceleration of their child? And how does this legislation help with these sometimes extremely difficult conversations?

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Thank you to the member from Newmarket-Aurora. I just want to say, yes, our government sees that. We also believe that the parents and the teachers know best about the students. If they see that it is for their future, it is really for them—that it's better if they either stay another year or advance their learning, we'll leave that to the teachers and the parents because they know best. That is what is best for the student as well. We support this, and this is something that we want to support and give the better future for the students.

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

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to thank the members from Perth-Wellington and Richmond Hill for their presentation.

Learning disruptions and violence are becoming normalized across Ontario schools because the Ford government blatantly refuses to address this issue. School violence was not mentioned in their 2023 budget. School violence was not addressed in Bill 98. Students have been pleading for support. Educators have brought these concerns forward. In fact, one in two educators—more than 50% of educators—have reported violence that they have witnessed in the classroom.

When will this government address the violence that is holding children back and holding their education hostage?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member for Perth-Wellington.

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you to the member from London North Centre for his question. It's a very important question. As the Minister of Education has said repeatedly in this House, every student should feel safe when they go to school. Every educator should feel safe

when they go to school. I know it's a government approach—safety in our communities, ensuring that we support our front-line service men and women, our police forces. I know the Minister of Education has made it very clear that we should ensure that our police forces and our police officers who go above and beyond every day should be allowed to come to the schools and interact with our students and explain the important work they do to keep us safe.

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

Further debate?

Ms. Jessica Bell: I'm pleased to be here today to rise and speak about Bill 98, the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, 2023. I also want to thank the member for Ottawa West—Nepean for her exceptional and hard work on this bill.

It was very enlightening listening to the member speak today and demonstrate her significant expertise on this file. Her knowledge is also based on the fact that she has children in the school board system, so she can share her expertise and her personal experience with our school board system.

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This bill was introduced at the same time as the Grants for Student Needs funding envelope was released for the year, and that's deliberate. It is pretty typical for the government to present a bill with some ugly things and some good things in it at the same time as they're presenting an announcement which has far bigger implications on the quality of the schooling that the children in Ontario receive. That's what happened with Bill 97, a bill that I've been working on for some time, and it also happened with Bill 98.

The reason I want to talk about not just Bill 98 but also the larger issues with our school system is, when we're thinking about how we want to improve the quality of education our kids receive, we need to talk about funding and we need to talk about what is actually happening in the classroom. There's a big difference between what this government says—its rhetoric—and what is actually happening on the ground in schools and in classrooms across Ontario.

I think about what is happening with the Toronto District School Board, because that is an area I represent. I very carefully read the Toronto District School Board's announcements. I've read their long-term growth and accommodation strategy that looks at where we are going to put our schools and whether our schools have the capacity to deal with the 30,000-plus students who will be enrolled. There will be an increase in enrolment of that amount in the coming years. I also look at how they're preparing for the 2023-24 year, and from the school board's perspective, from the parents' perspective, from the teachers' perspective, from the education workers' perspective, it doesn't look good. What we are hearing is that the TDSB is looking at cutting 522 staffing positions. At a time when we have had year after year after year after year of cuts, it's another round of staffing position cuts.

Interjection.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Yes. And there's inflation too. Your budget went up. Your global budget went up, didn't it? It's inflation too.

Interjection.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Yes. You should talk to the House leader about that, mister.

There were 522 staffing positions that were cut. I get calls from parents, from vice-principals, from principals, from education workers about what these cuts actually mean on the ground. We're hearing from schools like Palmerston, Clinton, Lord Lansdowne and da Vinci, and they're losing vice-principals; they're losing teachers who are specifically dedicated to do one-on-one reading help with kids who are falling behind in grades 1 and 2 and 3—those critical years when you need kids to catch up. We are also hearing from parents whose kids have special needs—kids who have autism; kids who need an extra educational assistant in the classroom to ensure that they can focus, that they can learn, that their behaviour is managed so that they're not a big disruption in the classroom, so that every child can learn. What they're also finding is that there are not enough educational assistants available in schools to provide that one-on-one support, that extra support in a classroom so that a teacher can do their job, kids can learn and the classroom functions well. They're not there.

The Ontario Autism Coalition just did a survey which asked parents, "How many times is your kid denied access to school because there's no educational assistant or extra support available to help your kid in the classroom?" The unfortunate reality today is that there are parents who wake up in the morning at 8 o'clock and they get a call from their school saying, "There's not enough staffing supports in the school for your kid to go to school today, so you're going to have to rearrange your schedule, because there's no school available for your kid." That's what's happening in Ontario in 2023, and it's a direct result of funding cuts that have been brought on by the Conservative government. I think that's a real shame.

If I had to describe this bill, I would call it meek. It is really smoke and mirrors. It doesn't address the urgent needs in our educational system. It really doubles down on the Conservatives' chronic underinvestment in our education system. It does nothing to address the overcrowded classrooms, the lack of specialized learning programs and the mental health needs of our students. It does nothing to address that, which I think is a real shame.

And what it does seem be very interested in, this bill, is taking power away from school boards to control properties and putting it in the hands of the Conservative government, specific ministries, who can then sell off lands to whoever they wish. Sure, there is a process; it must go to another school board first or be offered to them, but then it's really opaque what the rules are, essentially, after that, and this is happening at a time when the Conservatives are selling off public land to the highest bidder in secret deals where there's no requirement for that land to be developed

in a way that would help the public. There's no requirement to build affordable housing. There's no community benefit. There's no requirement to have good union jobs on-site so we can provide good jobs to people in Ontario. There's no requirement for that.

And when I read Bill 98, what makes me worried is the Conservatives are potentially opening the door to allow the sale of school board properties to for-profit developers to build housing. And who's going to be impacted by that, and who's going to be neglected by that decision is our future students. The reason why our future students are going to be negatively impacted by that is because all school boards, including the Toronto District School Board, have been sounding the alarm right now and they're saying very clearly, "We're worried about our school board's capacity to provide the classroom space that is needed to meet the growing enrolment projections—we're worried about it." The TDSB is worried about it. Other school boards are worried about it, and they fear, understandably, that school properties are going to be sold off without adequate consideration about what is needed to meet our school capacity in our future.

The reason why I say this is because our province is expected to grow. Ontario is expected to build 1.5 million new homes over the next 10 years; that's the target. In Toronto, we have a target of building 285,000 new homes, which will lead to a projected increase of 30,000 new kids into the school board system, and the TDSB already has an issue right now with overcrowding.

The member for Eglinton–Lawrence should know that around the area of Eglinton and Yonge, there are schools that don't have the capacity to meet enrolment right now, and unfortunately, that's largely to do with the Conservatives having a very Wild West approach to development, where development occurs based on where developers want to build and where they can get approvals. There's no serious thought given into what kind of services current and new residents need in order to meet the needs and grow our city and make it a livable city. So what we're seeing is highly concentrated growth in some areas and no schools, or inadequate schools, available to accommodate the new kids that are coming in. This is happening in my riding of University–Rosedale. It's happening in Toronto–St. Paul's. It's happening in Parkdale–High Park, and it's happening in a very acute way in the member for Spadina–Fort York's riding where his riding has 140,000 people, one of the largest ridings in Ontario, and it's growing extremely rapidly, yet the riding only has three schools—only three schools, for 140,000 people. It's unregulated, it's the Wild West, it's disorganized, and I fear that Bill 98 is going to make it even easier for the Conservatives to say, "Oh, we're under capacity over here. We're just going to sell off those schools, build big on them and not think about what we need around future capacity." I have some concerns about that.

1010

I also have a lot of concerns around the failure of the Conservatives to address some of the biggest issues that we are experiencing in our schools today. One of the biggest issues that we're hearing about is the pervasiveness of violence in our school system. A recent report came out

from the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario. It was disturbing to read, and it showed that "an alarming ... 77%" of members, 77% of teachers who filled in this survey, "say they have personally experienced violence or witnessed violence against another staff member."

I'm going to quote: "Learning is being disrupted and violence is being normalized in schools because the" Conservatives refuse "to adequately invest in public education." I see nothing in Bill 98 that is going to deal with this issue—nothing in it. "The system is suffering from chronic underfunding, under-resourcing, and understaffing, creating environments where student needs are going unmet." That's the reality of it, and I'm not seeing much in Bill 98 that addresses those fundamental issues.

When a kid is dropped off by their parents in the morning, they go in through the front door and they go into their classroom, there's really not a lot in Bill 98 that is going to ensure they have a good day, a safe day, where they're not going to be bullied or harassed; where the teacher and the educational assistant have time for them; where they meet their learning outcomes; where they have a good day where they're safe, loved, well cared for and they can reach their full potential. I'm not seeing a lot in Bill 98 that's going to allow us to achieve those goals and help the million-plus kids in Ontario have a good day at school. I'm just not.

I'm going to go back to what ETFO said, because this is really about what's happening in the classroom. What this survey found is that:

"—Educators working with younger students are more likely to experience violence.

"—Eighty-six per cent of ETFO members who work in special education have personally experienced violence or witnessed it against another staff person."

The reason why I bring up that issue is because it really gets to the failure of this government to address the huge staffing shortages we are experiencing in classrooms that need extra educational assistants, that need extra support workers, because they're dealing with kids who have mental health challenges, who have a tough time, who have learning needs and need that extra support. They're not setting teachers or a classroom up for success.

From the survey:

"—More than 80 per cent agree that violence in schools is making working with students more difficult and that it interferes with classroom management"—also not addressed with Bill 98.

"—Administrators know that violence is a problem, but do not always act on reports of violence.

"—Forty-two per cent of members have suffered a physical injury, illness or psychological injury/illness as a result of workplace violence against them this school year."

These are really troubling statistics—very troubling statistics.

I want to look at what the TDSB had to say about Bill 98. The member for Ottawa West–Nepean reached out to unions, stakeholders, education workers to find out who the Conservatives consulted before introducing this bill. They didn't consult with teachers. They didn't consult

with parents. They just came out with a bill; no consultation in advance.

This is what the Toronto school board had to say: “With regard to the ministry’s move to gain greater control over TDSB property through the ability to direct the sale, lease or disposal of school sites”—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): My apologies. I must interrupt the member from University–Rose-dale.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): It is now time for members’ statements. I just want to remind the House, when we’re having members’ statements, to be mindful of the members who are speaking.

MEMBERS’ STATEMENTS

JEWISH HERITAGE MONTH

FILIPINO HERITAGE MONTH

Mrs. Robin Martin: Last Thursday, I had the privilege of speaking at a joint celebration of Jewish and Filipino heritage months held by B’nai Brith Canada and the Filipino Heritage Month Society. The event was held on June 1 to mark the transition from Jewish Heritage Month, which is held in May, to Filipino Heritage Month, which is held in June. Attendees included the Philippines’s ambassador to Canada, the former Philippine ambassador to Israel, members of various levels of government, senators and Irwin Cotler, who works to oppose anti-Semitism and human rights violations of all kinds.

I gained new insight into the actions of former Filipino President Manuel L. Quezon, whose open-door policy in 1937 allowed 1,200 Jews who were fleeing the Holocaust to seek refuge in the Philippines. President Quezon made this heroic decision at a time when Canada and other nations had closed their doors to Jewish refugees.

Several speakers described the Jewish community in the Philippines—they still have this Jewish community based on the ones who came during the Holocaust. This is a lesson to all of us on the importance of compassion and respect for others.

My riding of Eglinton–Lawrence is home to large Jewish and Filipino communities. The event celebrated their joint heritage and emphasis on family, community and faith.

So let me say, mabuhay shalom to all celebrating Jewish Heritage Month, which has just passed, and Filipino Heritage Month, which is coming.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION ACTIVITIES

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I rise today with a singular message of love and support for all of our 2SLGBTQ+ community, deeply disturbed by the recent surge in hate crimes and messages of intolerance.

During Pride Month, schools in Niagara and Pride flags have become targets of intolerance, trustees have used hate

language, and bigotry has been spray-painted on our schools.

We must protect our queer and trans youth, fostering safe spaces for them to thrive. Here is the message: You are safe; you are loved. We will do everything in our power to make that clear.

However, when reaching out to advocates and the community, they expressed that words are not enough; we need action. It is no longer enough for politicians in the month of June to just condemn violence with words only.

They are right. It needs to be every month, and it needs to be with action. I am proud to be part of a caucus with the member for Toronto Centre, who has demanded action, not only words of condemnation.

Today, let us remember we are calling on the minister, under the Education Act, to use a variety of powers to promote safety and inclusion, with the rise of hate.

Prejudice has no home in Niagara. To my 2SLGBTQ+ community in Niagara, you have my unwavering support; however, more than that, my commitment to action, action for an inclusive, safe—

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

PARAMEDIC SERVICES

Ms. Natalie Pierre: Good morning, Speaker. I’d like to start my member statement today by welcoming three paramedics from Halton paramedic services, who are with us today in the members’ gallery: Tom Stirling, deputy chief and manager of operations; Cassandra Lee; and Marlee Weinerman.

Recently, I had the pleasure of attending Halton region’s Paramedic Day. Each year, Halton paramedic services responds to over 55,000 calls and transports 35,000 patients through 15 strategically placed ambulance stations. Paramedics are truly unsung heroes in times of crisis, making split-second decisions that can save lives. They are often the first to arrive at the scene, risking their own safety to provide immediate care to those in need.

In recognition of their bravery, the Ontario government recently introduced the Ontario Medal for Paramedic Bravery to recognize paramedics who have demonstrated great bravery in the line of duty.

Recognizing the importance of paramedics in our health care system, our government recently expanded the Learn and Stay grant to include paramedic programs in priority communities. Eligible students will now receive full, upfront funding for tuition, books and other direct educational costs in return for working and caring for people in the region where they studied for a term of service after they graduate.

1020

Thank you to all paramedics for your service, and thank you to Halton paramedic services for coming out today.

TVO FUNDING

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, there are a lot of questions for the Minister of Education. His ministry is responsible for TVO, which has done high-quality programming work

for years on public affairs and children's programming. In the last four years, funding to TVO has been frozen or dropped while inflation has relentlessly driven costs upwards. The budget for content and programming at TVO dropped by well over 10% between 2021 and 2022, and this year's estimates from the Minister of Education are certainly nothing to be happy about.

I have to ask, why is TVO management trying to starve TVO programming? TVO public affairs programming and children's programming are literally award winners in this country. And yet, both the ministry and TVO management seem to be committed to slowly—maybe not so slowly—making it more and more difficult for programming to be made here in Ontario. What do they have against high-quality programming being made in this province?

GRAND RIVER CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS POWWOW

Mr. Will Bouma: As we all know, June is Aboriginal History Month, and it is my pleasure to rise in the House today and talk about an amazing event that will be happening in my riding of Brantford—Brant, from July 21 to 23: the 43rd annual Champion of Champions powwow.

This event began as an idea back in 1979, when a group of dancers who had been performing at powwows throughout Ontario thought how wonderful it would be to be able to have their very own competition at home. In 1980, with tremendous support from the community, the first-ever Champion of Champions powwow was held on the Six Nations of the Grand River territory.

Over the years, the powwow has become a major tourist attraction locally, nationally and internationally. With over 30 categories to compete in, there is something for everyone to enjoy. Not only can you be treated to exceptional traditional dancing and drumming, but you can also find over 100 craft vendors selling jewellery, moccasins, shirts and many other unique items only found in this region.

The best path to true reconciliation with Ontario's First Nations is to spend time sharing in the cultural experience and warmth of the Haudenosaunee people. So if you are looking for a family-friendly, engaging activity, head over to 1987 Chiefswood Road, Ohsweken, from July 21 to 23. You will love it.

DENISE ARKELL

Miss Monique Taylor: After 30 years of service, Denise Arkell is celebrating her retirement from the role of executive director at Neighbour to Neighbour in our community of Hamilton Mountain. Today I want to take a moment to recognize Denise and to tell you more about her, because she truly is a pillar of the Hamilton community and she has made a lasting impact.

Denise is a person who never stops. She is the kind of person who works tirelessly, day in and day out, so she can help support people and meet the needs of our community where they are.

When Denise started back in 1993, Neighbour to Neighbour was serving around 600 households a month.

Now they are serving 1,400 households each and every month. Her passion and her drive led her to expanding the various programs at Neighbour to Neighbour, because Denise has consistently recognized the need where she sees it.

I have known Denise for several years, and I am truly honoured to call her a friend. I've been lucky enough to work with her on several projects, including Coldest Night of the Year. If you've ever participated in this event in Hamilton Mountain, chances are you've met Denise. In true fashion, she works hard to lead this event each and every year to support people in need in our community.

Our community has been positively influenced by Denise's work, and her efforts have created a living legacy that has spread across Hamilton.

Denise, I want to say thank you for everything. I am a better person for knowing you. You've inspired me each and every day for the hard work we do in our community. Enjoy your well-deserved retirement. While this is an end to one era, I know this is the beginning of a beautiful chapter for you. Congratulations.

ÉVÉNEMENTS DIVERS À GLENGARRY– PRESCOTT–RUSSELL

M. Stéphane Sarrazin: Comme beaucoup de mes collègues l'ont mentionné dans les derniers jours, ça fait déjà un an que nous avons été élus pour représenter les citoyens de la province de l'Ontario. Je veux remercier les citoyens de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell pour leur confiance, et je veux les assurer que j'en suis reconnaissant et que je continuerai à les représenter au meilleur de mes capacités.

Il ne reste que quelques jours à cette session ici à Queen's Park. Nous allons apprécier le temps que nous passerons dans nos circonscriptions respectives. J'espère que je ne manquerai pas trop mes collègues pendant les prochains mois. J'aimerais profiter de cette occasion pour souhaiter un bel été à mes collègues députés. Ils seront dans leurs circonscriptions durant les deux prochains mois pour participer à plein d'événements; rencontrer des organismes, des entreprises, des citoyens; et passer un peu plus de temps avec leur famille.

Nous serons tous très occupés à rencontrer des gens, en participant à des foires agricoles, des événements de levées de fonds d'organismes à but non lucratif, des célébrations communautaires, festivals, et j'en passe. Les événements estivaux sont déjà en cours dans ma circonscription et à travers la province, monsieur le Président. J'ai déjà participé à quelques événements de ma région, et je peux vous dire que les gens sont très contents de participer à ces rassemblements.

Pour moi, les prochains mois seront des occasions extraordinaires pour entreprendre de belles discussions avec les citoyens et de leur expliquer ce que notre gouvernement fait pour améliorer la vie de tous les Ontariens. J'ai bien hâte de parcourir ma circonscription pour rencontrer les gens de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

MANITOULIN SECONDARY SCHOOL
ROBOTICS TEAM

Mr. Michael Mantha: Today I want to recognize champions from Algoma–Manitoulin. So, let's get ready to rumble! The Manitoulin Secondary School robotics team not only took two dean's list semi-finalists, the North Bay event Engineering Inspiration Award, the McMaster event FIRST Impact Award and the provincial FIRST Impact Award, but they delivered a knockout blow, winning the Robotics World Championship FIRST Impact Award in Houston, Texas, with their robot, Bumblebee.

The Impact Award is the most prestigious award that a team can win. It best embodies the goals and ideals of the competition. Because of their outstanding performance, they have qualified to compete again at the 2024 championships. Manitoulin Metal 6865 stood out amongst the 630 teams because of their focus on sustainability and their work to becoming carbon-neutral.

Stepping into the ring: Ben Willis, Jocelyn Kuntsi, Nevaeh Harper, Alexis McVey, Samuel Pennings, Xavi Mara, Ryan Kuntsi, Addy Gray, Alex Wilson-Zegil, Robyn Ashlyn-McNaughton, Daphne Carr, Garrett Charbonneau, Patrick McCann and Alan Wilkin.

I want to congratulate all the students, educators and parents who went out to the competitions, as well as thank the over 300 Manitoulin sponsors, businesses, residents, supporters and students who made it possible for them to compete. Speaker, Bee-sustainable, 6865 Bumblebee logging out.

HAVELOCK LIONS CLUB

Mr. Dave Smith: It's going to be difficult following that. One of the great things about being an MPP is we have the opportunity to be part of some truly great celebrations. This past week was one of those opportunities for me. Lions International has a motto of "We Serve." It's estimated that each Lion makes a difference in 70 people's lives each year that they serve.

The Havelock Lions just celebrated their 65th year of service, which in itself is an accomplishment. But, Speaker, there's one individual Lion I have to centre out. Alfred Charles Cooper, commonly referred to as Alf, was one of the charter members of the Havelock Lions Club way back in 1958. For 65 years, Alf has been serving his community. The lives of 4,550 people have been made better by the things that Alf has done for his community.

1030

I've known Alf for longer than I've been the MPP. Alf has reminded me many times that the Lions are not political. Although he welcomes me volunteering at Lions events, I can't even wear a blue T-shirt, and if I do, he hands me a yellow Lions vest to put on over top of it.

Integrity and service have defined Alf's actions as a Lion for 65 years.

Thank you for your service, Alf. The world is a much better place because of the service you have given.

BARRIE TROJAN SWIM CLUB

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: In September 2021, I was pleased to announce a \$100,000 Community Building Fund grant for the Barrie Trojan Swim Club. The grant was used to help the club with staff salaries to support success through and beyond a pandemic rebuild. Funds from the grant also contributed directly towards the club's ability to continue offering quality programming for local athletes.

Not only did this grant help secure job opportunities as well as improve the mental and physical health of people of all ages in Barrie, but it also has led to a personal best for the team. The Barrie Trojan Swim Club had five swimmers participate at the 2023 Bell Canadian Swimming Trials at the Toronto Pan Am Sports Centre, which set an impressive record for the club. The Barrie Trojan Swim Club athletes did fantastic, and as a result of their performances, two of their swimmers and the head coach have been named to represent Canada at upcoming international events. Laila Oravsky has been named to the Pan American Games team that will compete in Chile in October. Jordi Vilchez and Endi Babi, head coach, will be part of the Canadian team competing at the World Aquatics Junior Swimming Championships taking place in Israel this September. I want to congratulate them on their grit and their stamina and wish Laila, Jordi and coach Endi the best of luck as they take on the global stage.

Through your sportsmanship, you inspire a whole community and a generation of future athletes in swimming. Keep swimming, Barrie Trojans. Congratulations.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm very pleased to inform the House that we have a former member in the House with us today, the representative for Essex in the 40th, 41st and 42nd Parliaments. Taras Natyshak is here.

Welcome back.

Also with us today in the Speaker's gallery are some very special guests: Mr. David Warner, who was the Speaker of the 35th Parliament, accompanied by his wife, Pat, and Mr. Alvin Curling, who was Speaker during the 38th Parliament.

I also want to welcome the guests of Mr. Claude DesRosiers: Suzanne Labbé; his sons, Louis and Jean DesRosiers; his daughter, Lucie DesRosiers; his son-in-law, Sean Taylor; and his granddaughter Lily Taylor.

And the guests of Ms. Deborah Deller are her husband, Garry Deller; and Denise Weeks, who was the former Principal Clerk of the North Carolina House of Representatives.

Finally, a warm welcome back to former staff of the Office of the Assembly: Zina Decker, former executive assistant to Mr. DesRosiers and Ms. Deller; Sylvia Nemanic, former executive director, administrative services; and Vicki Whitmell, former executive director, information and technology services, and legislative librarian.

Please join me in welcoming our guests to the Legislature today.

Mr. Chris Glover: I'd like to welcome to the House Patrick and Laura Porzuczek from Save the Minden ER; Ashley Fox, a registered practical nurse and member of the Guelph-Wellington health coalition; Hazel Pratt-Paige, a member of the Chesley hospital support group; and Brenda Scott, a fellow member of the Chesley hospital support group and with the Grey Bruce Health Coalition.

Welcome to your House.

Mr. Will Bouma: I'd like to welcome three friends to the House: Kenneth Kranendonk and retiring cadets Benny Liverance-Edwards and Nic VanNieuwenhuizen.

Welcome to your House.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I'd like to recognize, from BUSU, Brock University Students' Union: Alyssa Hall, Carleigh Charlton, Aishah Sonekan, James Maxwell-Barillas. Welcome to your House.

But also, Speaker, on Saturday I had the opportunity to walk in the ALS walk in Niagara—and I'm proud to announce Niagara was third overall in Ontario for raising funds—and that's where I had the opportunity to meet Kris Noakes and her daughter, Fallon, who were on the walk. Welcome to your House and thank you for coming.

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: I'd like to introduce my wonderful constituency staff who are with me here today: Joanne Beatty, my constituency manager; Jennie Yeung; Matthew Fieg, Daniel Goutevets, James Madore—all three of whom are my full-time summer intern students; as well as Téah U-Ming, my OLIP intern who's with me for only a couple more weeks. I just want to thank them for all they do to support me. Welcome to the Legislature.

Mr. Jeff Burch: I'd like to welcome my good friend Chantal McCollum to Queen's Park.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I would like to welcome my friend, Mr. Amir Shamsi, chairman of Universal Promotions and founder of Mississauga Halal Food Festival, which marks its 10-year anniversary this year. This year's Halal Food Festival will be held on June 16 and 17 at Celebration Square in Mississauga. I welcome everyone there.

Ms. Chandra Pasma: I'd like to welcome Kate Laing, Heather Hanwell, Suzanne Burke, Mary Jo Nabuurs, Farheen Mahmood and Louise Hidinger—all from Ontario School Safety—and supporting them this morning, Neeya Abidi, Carolyn Marshall, Amanda Mohammed, Kari Raymer-Bishop, Henry Bishop and Jane Hanwell. Thank you so much for coming this morning and advocating for safer schools, and welcome to your House.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: It is my pleasure to welcome Dua Boztas and Mévlutte Boztas. They are the parents of my incredible OLIP intern, Esmá Boztas, who I want to thank for her hard work.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: This morning, I'd like to welcome a very good friend of mine Gianrobert Santagato. It's the first time that he has coming to the Legislature.

I'd also like to welcome a delegation that's here at Queen's Park this morning from Lazio, Italy—over 20 of

them are here. I especially would like to welcome Luca Di Stefano, the mayor of Sora, and Fiorella Gazzellone, the mayor of Terelle.

Remarks in Italian.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I too would like to welcome back our former caucus colleague and friend to this very peaceful place: Welcome to your House, Taras.

Mr. Stephen Blais: I'd like to welcome Momina Malik, Quinn LeFort, Soobin Sung and Joubin Seyrafián. They are the four newest members of the Ontario Liberal summer internship program.

Hon. Neil Lumsden: I'd like to welcome Jaide Kassam, our ministry intern and a student at Carleton University, and as tough as it is for me to say this: Go, Ravens!

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): If there are no objections, I'd like to continue.

The member for Hamilton Mountain.

Miss Monique Taylor: I'd like to welcome Michau van Speyk from the Ontario Autism Coalition back to the House again today.

And, of course, I would be remiss not to mention, thanks to this lovely, amazing place, my very best friend, Taras Natyshak.

Mr. Brian Riddell: I'd just like to introduce, from my favourite city, Cambridge, the mayor of Cambridge, Jan Liggett, and her husband, Les Kadar.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: I'd like to welcome Stephanie Ramsay and her son Lukasz Ramsay. Stephanie's daughter, Lauren, is an usher here in the Leg.

1040

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I want to give a quick shout-out to Alessia Iafano who is with us today, a Queen's University student and one of the leaders of the Ontario PC youth association. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: I'm delighted to welcome leaders in our Filipino community in York Centre: Teresa Torralba and her husband Ramon Torralba; retired Toronto police sergeant Philip Mendoza and his wife Maritonne; and a special welcome to Nathan Cortes, son of the Philippine undersecretary of foreign affairs Paul Cortes, who is a student right here at Toronto Metropolitan University. Welcome to the Ontario Legislature.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I'm pleased to welcome to Queen's Park today, on behalf of the member from Sarnia-Lambton, former legislative page Annabelle Rayson who is here with her parents.

And I, too, want to welcome former Ontario Speaker David Warner to the Legislature. He was the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly when I was a legislative page back in 1991. Welcome back to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We also have another former member with us this morning: the member for Thornhill from the 38th Parliament, Mario Racco. Welcome back. It's good to have you here.

That concludes our introduction of visitors.

HON. CLAUDE L. DESROSIERS

HON. DEBORAH DELLER

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to the order of the House adopted May 29, 2023, I will now ask the Sergeant-at-Arms to escort Mr. Claude DesRosiers and Ms. Deborah Deller into the chamber.

Applause.

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

The government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Speaker, may it please the House, Her Honour the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, by and with the advice and concurrence of the Executive Council of Ontario and in the name of His Majesty the King, has made orders pursuant to section 77.4 of the Legislative Assembly Act. These orders grant Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers and Ms. Deborah Deller, presently before the House, the right to use the honorific title “The Honourable” as former Clerks of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. I am pleased to lay copies of these orders upon the table.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): On the recommendation of the undersigned, the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario by and with the advice and concurrence of the Executive Council of Ontario orders that:

Whereas in the year 2022, the assembly has amended the Legislative Assembly Act to authorize the Lieutenant Governor in Council to grant former Clerks of the Assembly the right to use the honorific title “The Honourable,” and

Whereas the government of Ontario desires to honour Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers and recognize his lifetime of public service, including service to the people of Ontario as Clerk of its Legislative Assembly from 1986 until 2006, and

Therefore, pursuant to section 77.4 of the Legislative Assembly Act, Claude L. DesRosiers of Ottawa is hereby granted the right to use the honorific title “The Honourable” or “l’honorable” effective the later of June 7, 2023, and the date this order in council is made.

And on the recommendation of the undersigned, the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, by and with the advice and concurrence of the Executive Council of Ontario, orders that:

Whereas in the year 2022, the assembly has amended the Legislative Assembly Act to authorize the Lieutenant Governor in Council to grant former Clerks of the Assembly the right to use the honorific title “The Honourable”; and

Whereas the government of Ontario desires to honour Ms. Deborah Deller and to recognize her lifetime of public service, including service to the people of Ontario as Clerk of its Legislative Assembly from 2007 until 2016;

Therefore, pursuant to section 77.4 of the Legislative Assembly Act, Deborah Deller of Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, is hereby granted the right to use the honorific title “The Honourable,” effective the later of June 7, 2023 and the date that this order in council is made.

And both of these documents are signed by the Premier of Ontario and the Chair of the Cabinet, as well as the Administrator.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I want to thank the House for extending me the honour of speaking this morning on behalf of all members, but you might regret it, because as long as I have the floor, no one is watching the clock and no points of order will be considered at any point.

Today, we welcome in our midst two very dear friends who, while serving as Clerk, were keystones in the arch of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. May I say how delighted we are to have them back with us today. Members and invited guests, please welcome Claude DesRosiers, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly from 1986 to 2006, and Deborah Deller, our Clerk from 2007 to 2016.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): As was said, recent legislation passed by this House allows the Lieutenant Governor in Council to grant the title of “Honourable” to past Clerks of this Legislative Assembly. A few weeks ago, on May 18, orders in council were signed granting this honorific title to Mr. DesRosiers and Ms. Deller effective today, June 7, 2023. We congratulate them upon receiving this recognition for their contributions to the House.

It is an honour that is truly well deserved. It is safe to say that all members have some idea of the complexities and challenges facing a Clerk, but only the very few who have actually sat in that chair really know. The Clerk is responsible not only to provide procedural advice in our historic Parliament to over 100 individuals with many differing opinions and points of view but also to administer the offices and provide leadership to the staff to help to keep things running smoothly and operational for the members, the media and the public alike. It is a job like no other.

Clerks must be absolutely, resolutely and categorically neutral. They are constantly challenged with problems which require decisions that uphold the overall best interests of the Legislature and those who serve here, whether based on parliamentary procedure and precedent or, as the situation warrants, based on in-depth knowledge and immediate recall of the standing orders about the rules of this place.

Many of us wonder, when things get heated here, how a Clerk or a table Clerk can maintain their composure and not give any sense of reaction to surrounding circumstances. When this place is erupting, how do they maintain their unfazed composure? How do they stay so calm? What is in their water?

It is because of these qualities, along with the outstanding service that the Clerk is expected to achieve, that the title “Honourable” is so fitting. And it’s worth noting that this honour is rare. Thus far, only eight people, including the current Clerk, have served in the role permanently since Ontario’s founding in 1867—an untold number of members since 1867 and just eight Clerks during that same period.

As I’ve mentioned, our modern-era Clerks have also had the responsibility of being the chief administrative

officer of the assembly. For more than a century after Confederation, the government appointed the five Clerks who served here. Claude DesRosiers was the first Clerk selected by the Legislature. Claude, you were the Clerk who began the modernization of the House and, in turn, the evolution of our current organization. You were also the Clerk who welcomed me when I first arrived here as a member in 1990 and the Clerk who witnessed by first oath of allegiance to Her Majesty the Queen.

1050

Claude came to us from the House of Commons in Ottawa with extraordinary expertise and knowledge of parliamentary procedure, thanks to his experience at our federal Parliament. There, Claude served in a variety of positions, many in a capacity supporting francophone activities—something that proved very advantageous here, especially with respect to interparliamentary and diplomatic activities.

With his love of history and heritage buildings, our setting at Queen's Park turned out to be the perfect workplace for someone with Claude's background and interests. During his time in office, our building celebrated its 100th anniversary and underwent a restoration that saw the replacement and refurbishment of original materials and the uncovering of long-hidden features that had been hidden for decades. This chamber was also transformed from the blue chairs and red carpet—colours that occasionally clashed, literally and figuratively—to the green that you see today, bringing us in line with Westminster tradition.

The sense of the significance of this place also resonated for Claude when he met new Assembly staff during orientation sessions. He enjoyed pointing out his office window and comparing Toronto's modern skyline with the longevity of Parliament. He would explain that styles could change and those buildings could come and go, but that this one would still be here. Democracy would always prevail and Parliament would always endure.

This building is a symbol of democracy, which is surely our most precious legacy passed on to us by previous generations. Claude's career helped to sustain it and strengthen it. Thank you again, Claude.

And to Deb Deller, along with Claude, you were another warm and welcoming face at this table when I first arrived here. Deb, we owe you the same depth of gratitude for your advice over the years. How reassuring it was, knowing that you had been seated next to Claude at the table for a considerable period of time before you became Clerk.

You've told a lot of people about how you got your first job in this place. It seems that while you were in university you applied to be a tour guide here, and along with your suitability for the job it also turned out that you were the perfect fit for the uniform of the guide who had just vacated the position. That made your selection that much easier, proving the old adage "if the suit fits" to be true.

Even as a tour guide, Deb always had a passion for learning about the workings of our Legislature and took a strong interest in procedural processes, sitting in on meetings of the House and committees when she could to become more familiar with how things work here when

she returned to the Legislature to serve as a guide following university.

Deb then gained a position as a Legislative Attendant, reporting to the Clerk's office. From there, her next steps included positions as Committee Clerk, Clerk Assistant, Deputy Clerk and Director of Legislative Services. Finally, on March 21, 2007, she became the first female to be Clerk of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

During her time in this role, Deb built on Claude's strong foundation of modernizing and improving the Legislature. Among her projects were the introduction of a new Legislative Assembly website, as well as improved internal communications initiatives and technology services for members and staff, including a redesigned intranet. Better orientation services for new members, as well as enhanced training and skills development opportunities for staff, were also among her initiatives.

Thank you again, Deb, not only for being a great mentor and support to so many of us here, but also an inspiration to young women from across this province to make sure, as I quote in your own words, "they don't feel there's any barrier to doing something just because women haven't done it before."

In closing, thanks to both of you for devoting your professional lives to the functioning of our Ontario Parliament and the service of the people of this province.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I will now invite the Honourable Claude DesRosiers and the Honourable Deb Deller to take their seats once again at the table.

It is now time for oral questions.

QUESTION PERIOD

FOREST FIREFIGHTING

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Marit Stiles: This question is for the Premier. Speaker, I think I speak for all of us here when I say that our thoughts, again, are with the people and communities that are directly impacted by the forest fires that are blazing across this province, and also with, of course, the courageous firefighters, pilots and local teams working to get them under control.

While that work is under way, millions of people across Ontario are experiencing the impacts to air quality. We are in for probably the most severe fire season our province has ever experienced, and people are quite rightly worried for their immediate future and whether this is the new reality. Does the Premier acknowledge that the climate emergency is making this fire season significantly worse?

Hon. Doug Ford: I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. Mr. Speaker, I want to start off by thanking all the firefighters and crews working around the clock to keep our community safe. They're literally the best in the world. Again, I want them to know that I'm sure all of us, of all political stripes, have their backs 100%.

I know that many towns and cities across our province are being impacted by smoke, not just Ontario but smoke coming from other provinces. We're seeing this right across the country, unfortunately. This is having a major impact on many residents in these areas, particularly in the Ottawa area and in northern Ontario. It's hurting those who are already at risk, like our young people and our seniors.

While it's taking place right now, I want them to know that our own fire ranger crews, helicopters and water bombers are responding in full force to manage the fires.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: I appreciate that. I will point out that my question was whether the Premier would acknowledge that the climate emergency is making the fire season worse.

Yesterday the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry refused to acknowledge a connection between the climate crisis and these forest fires, all while this government is doubling down on costly and carbon-intensive gas-fired power. They're doubling down on sprawl, they failed to deliver badly needed transit, and the Conservatives also, let's not forget, weakened their own climate targets.

I want to ask the Premier: Will the Premier show some leadership today and act on the climate emergency?

Hon. Doug Ford: I'm actually in shock that the Leader of the Opposition is politicizing wildfires. It's staggering, really. But nothing surprises me with the opposition.

We're taking steps to make sure we're prepared. Since 2017, we've increased spending on emergency fire preparedness by more than 37%. We have 142 fire ranger crews, which are the best in the world, ready to go right across our province, and we have a fleet of 28 aircraft that fight these fires, including nine heavy water bombers.

My number one goal is to make sure the communities and the people are safe here in Ontario. We will spare no expense to make sure that we support our firefighters and our communities.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: You know what, Speaker? It's science. This is no ordinary fire season. People are worried that this is our new normal and they are scared. In the GTHA last night, the air quality index was among the worst worldwide, and in the Ottawa region the index was above a level 10, which is about as high as it gets. While people closest to the fires are being evacuated, schoolchildren in our largest cities are being kept inside and people with medical conditions are being told not to go out. This is not normal.

Speaker, with the very real impacts of climate change being felt by millions of Ontarians today, will the Premier reverse course on his plans to pave over the province's largest carbon sink, the greenbelt?

Interjections.

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

The Premier can reply.

Hon. Doug Ford: We're in a crisis, and you want to politicize it.

Let me tell you the report that I've heard. The report that I have heard: Approximately 50% of the fires are started by lightning strikes; the other 50% are people starting campfires and not putting out the campfires properly.

1100

So I'm asking every Ontarian: Please do not light any campfires.

All the firefighters are out there fighting against these wildfires. And yes, they happen every single year. Similar to the floods, the wildfires start every single year.

We will throw every resource we can to make sure we put these fires out.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

The next question. The Leader of the Opposition.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I'm hoping for a little leadership here. Maybe take a little responsibility? You're facing one of the—

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. The government side will come to order so that I can hear the member asking the question.

Restart the clock.

The Leader of the Opposition.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, as we all know now, insiders with connections to private health care companies have donated over \$35,000 to the Conservatives since the 2018 election. Donations from private clinic owners, developers looking to build private hospitals—all while the Conservatives are funneling public money out of our public system and into private health facilities.

To the Premier: Will the government prioritize sick Ontarians over their insider friends looking to make a buck?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Speaker, what we will do is we will continue to prioritize making sure that we eliminate and decrease the wait times. People do not want to wait for their surgeries. How do we do that? We do that through the passage of Bill 60. That means individuals—a physician who practises in British Columbia—can come to Ontario, cut through the red tape and begin serving their communities here in Ontario. How do we do that? We do that through Learn and Stay programs that, as of yesterday, had 4,000 nurses—part of that program to ensure that as they get their tuition and education costs covered, they are prepared to serve in underserved communities. We're doing the work. We're making those commitments. And absolutely, Bill 60 will expand the surgical and diagnostic centres across Ontario. Why? Because people are sick and tired of the status quo and are sick and tired of waiting for their surgeries.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Supplementary question?

Ms. Marit Stiles: That's a no. That's a no, then, is it?

Speaker, there are new reports about a growing number of registered private health care lobbyists with ties to the Conservative Party—more insiders lobbying their friends and their former colleagues. Case in point: A former staffer for the Premier is now lobbying for “publicly funded, privately delivered” care, only he registered as a lobbyist before this government announced they were starting to issue private surgical contracts. How convenient.

To the Premier: Were these insiders given a heads-up about the expansion of private surgery delivery in Ontario?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: The member opposite does know that there are over 600 independent surgical and diagnostic centres operating today in the province of Ontario, right? This is an expansion of a program that has served the people of Ontario well for decades. They don't want to have to go to a community an hour or two hours away to get their CT scan, to get their MRI, to get their cataract surgery; they want to have that opportunity in community. We are expanding a program that has served us well. We need to make sure that we have capacity as Ontario grows, as our population increases and, frankly, the need for these services increases.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: I don't buy it for a second, and neither do Ontarians, because they know this government's track record of helping their friends at the expense of everybody else.

Speaker, the Office of the Integrity Commissioner reports that there are nearly 1,200 lobbyists registered to influence this government on health policy; that's more than on nearly every other issue combined. Many are lobbyists for for-profit, private health care companies that offer nearly identical services to those covered by OHIP, only they let the richest pay out of pocket to cut the line and access services faster. They're swirling like vultures over what's left of our health care system, and they're looking to cash in on Ontarians' health.

I'm going to ask again: When will this government prioritize sick Ontarians over their insider friends looking to make a buck?

Interjections.

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

The Minister of Health.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Speaker, I would ask the leader of the NDP to turn around and ask her caucus how many of those caucus members are lobbying me every week on, “I have constituents who are waiting for surgery. I have constituents who waiting for cataracts. Will you do something as the government?” I can assure her members that we are, and we do.

In January, it was a great honour to be able to expand surgical diagnostic centres specifically for cataracts in Windsor, Kitchener-Waterloo and Ottawa. That means that individuals who are waiting for cataract surgery in the

province of Ontario have their wait times shortened. What does that mean? It means they get back to their families. They get back to their community. They get back to work. It is exactly what your members lobby me for on a weekly basis and what the people of Ontario deserve.

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

I've stopped the clock as our honoured guests have to prepare for a reception and some official photographs, and they may have had enough already. They now need to leave the proceedings at this time. Congratulations and thank you again to Mr. DesRosiers and Ms. Deller for your service to the assembly and the people of Ontario.

We'll restart the clock. The next question.

HEALTH CARE

Mme France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le premier ministre. Last week, health coalitions from all over the province brought 400,000 Ontarian voices opposed to private health care to this Legislature. Today, Brock University students are here to show their opposition to Bill 60, the government health privatization agenda. People representing Minden, Mount Forest, Palmerston, Listowel, Wingham, Seaforth, Clinton, Grey Bruce, Chesley—the list goes on—are here, asking the Premier to either re-open their ER or keep them open.

We live in a democracy, Speaker. All those people are coming to Queen's Park because they are scared. They're anxious. They're worried. They want to be heard. Why won't the Premier listen to them?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: As the member opposite knows, Bill 60 had fulsome public hearings where individuals could come forward and share their concerns, questions and, frankly, platitudes for Bill 60. I'm going to highlight a couple of things that came out of those committee hearings:

“I'm here to say that Bill 60 is a good start in eliminating Ontario's surgical backlogs. We are pleased to see this government introduce significant changes to our system that will better serve Ontarians within a publicly funded system. Overall, this bill sets up a good framework to create a system of surgical care that is patient-centred and promotes patient choice.” That comes from the president and CEO of SE Health.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary question: the member from St. Catharines.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Back to the Premier: In my discussions with Brock University Students' Union executives, they voiced serious, serious apprehensions about your government's health care privatization direction, especially concerning accessibility. Reduced health care impacts are evident in Niagara, where two urgent care centres confront diminishing access. When asked, 85% of Brock University students are concerned over Bill 60, a sentiment shared by 400,000 referendum Ontario voters. Health care in Niagara is bearing the staff crisis magnified by Bill 124 and your privatization agenda.

Premier, when will your government stop shrugging responsibility and commit to enhancing health care accessibility in Niagara through public investment?

1110

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I hope when you were speaking to those Brock students that you talked about the investments that we are making, increasing the number of student seats for both post-secondary and residency physicians. This means that there are more opportunities for young people who wish to practise medicine in the province of Ontario. They have that opportunity as a result of our government's investment.

I hope you also highlighted the fact that in the region of Niagara, we are investing and building with that hospital corporation a brand new hospital in the amount of \$4.1 billion in your community.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: My question is to the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. With our government's policies, Ontario's reputation as a hub for cutting-edge innovation continues to grow. With its robust manufacturing sector, it's crucial that our government attract investments to take advantage of this fact as it drives towards creating an end-to-end economy and ending our reliance on other jurisdictions for critical goods.

Speaker, can the minister please highlight a recent investment that showcases the province's commitment to fostering innovation and simultaneously supporting our manufacturing industry?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, Ontario is now the innovation and manufacturing gateway to North America, and that is the result of reducing the cost of doing business by \$8 billion every year.

Hydrogen Optimized recently announced a \$4.6-million investment in Owen Sound. They specialize in the production of green hydrogen through an exciting new manufacturing technology. This will replace fossil fuels in energy-intensive industries like cement and fertilizer production. They're doing this cutting-edge work while creating new jobs and acquiring state-of-the-art equipment for Ontario. With a \$500,000 investment from our government, Speaker, this is how we're supporting our innovation and manufacturing sectors.

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

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Thank you to the minister for his answer and the great work that he does bringing new jobs to our great province of Ontario. It's evident that investments like these happen when government creates the right conditions for businesses to thrive. Now more than ever, it's important that the innovation economy works hand in hand with the manufacturing sector.

Speaker, with this recent announcement from Hydrogen Optimized, can the minister elaborate on why companies like them are increasingly looking to invest in Ontario and grow in Ontario?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Yesterday, my ministry was called into estimates. I have to confess, the last time I was in that committee room was for the Liberal gas plant scandal, where senior Liberal officials actually went to prison. But being in that room reminded me of the state of Ontario under the previous government, supported by the NDP: 300,000 manufacturing jobs were lost; companies were fleeing Ontario. We all remember those very horrible years.

Well, that all changed under Premier Ford. Ontario is now one of the world's leaders in EVs, with an unprecedented \$25 billion in new business, \$3 billion in new life sciences, \$100 billion in tech, over 660,000 new jobs created. Speaker, that's the difference when you put in a government that gets it done.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: My question is for the Premier. Members of my community are anxiously awaiting the completion and opening of the Finch West LRT line. The construction phase hasn't been easy, with massive traffic disruptions, vehicular and pedestrian accidents, property damage complaints, a collapsed underground garage of a high-rise condo, a day care flooded with sewage, displacing over 100 children for months, and more. My community has been patient but understandably frustrated.

In light of all of the issues on the Eglinton LRT, what assurances can you provide my community that the Finch West LRT will be completed on budget and on time at this year's end?

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

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I thank the member for his question. It's an important question, because the Finch West LRT will give people in the northwest part of the city of Toronto what they've been waiting for for a long time, which is a transit system that will offer more choices to travel on their own schedule.

Mr. Speaker, the Finch West LRT will connect the new Finch West subway station, on the Toronto-York Spadina subway extension, to Humber College. We're talking about 11 kilometres of new, dedicated LRT, with 16 new surface stops, a below-grade stop at Humber College north campus and an underground interchange station at the TTC's Finch West subway station. This also includes a brand new maintenance and storage facility for light rail transit vehicles.

This system will transform the community. Shovels went in the ground in 2018. The constructors are working diligently to deliver the system, and we look forward to having—

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

Supplementary question? The member for Scarborough Southwest.

Ms. Doly Begum: Back to the Premier: Residents in my community have contacted my office to express their frustration, their distress over the incessant overnight construction carried out by Metrolinx. The disruptive noise has become so unbearable that constituents are complaining—just imagine someone drilling in your backyard

all night long, for a whole year. The disruptive noise has become so unbearable that constituents are complaining that children and pets are abruptly awakened from their sleep all throughout the night. However, Metrolinx has informed the residents that they possess a permit allowing them to continue these overnight operations until the end of the year because it's related to the transit system. Whether it's the Eglinton LRT, Scarborough RT or the Lakeshore East line, Scarborough residents are the ones, always, to suffer.

Speaker, while critical transit work is being done, what will this government do to protect local residents and mitigate the ongoing disruptions to their lives and their well-being?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Doug Ford: I want to thank you for your question. Do the Scarborough residents know you voted against that subway line? Do the Scarborough residents know that you had no interest in delivering the first subway in the history of Scarborough? When I was at city hall, we were fighting for the residents of Scarborough, where you never even existed. You weren't up there cheering for Scarborough. You didn't vote against your party. You should have voted against your party.

Do you know something? I'll tell you, the reason we have the majority of the seats in Scarborough—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Doug Ford: —is because they know we're getting things done. We're building a subway for the first time in the history of Scarborough. We're making sure they're getting a new hospital. We're getting a university—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Premier will please take his seat.

A few reminders: We make our comments through the Chair, not directly across the floor of the House. Secondly, once the Speaker stands, you sit. Your microphone goes off. When I can't hear whoever has the floor because of a loud ovation, we stop the clock because there's no point in carrying on.

So, we'll start the clock. Next question.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. David Smith: My question is for the Associate Minister of Transportation.

When it comes to communities around the greater Golden Horseshoe, investment is critical. Transportation infrastructure needs to happen now. I'm fortunate to have the GO train station in my riding, but more GO rail services are needed across the region. Unfortunately, the previous Liberal government did not plan ahead to address the future transit needs for people in Ontario. Our government must continue to take action and to do more to provide GO train expansion.

1120

Can the associate minister please explain how our government is expanding GO rail services?

Hon. Stan Cho: Speaker, I am very happy to keep talking about Scarborough, and let's get to it, because there's a lot happening in that member's riding.

Let's talk about crews widening the Sheppard Avenue West bridge between Bakersfield Street and Chesswood Drive, for the increased future service that GO expansion is bringing to the Barrie line. In fact, construction is well under way and slated to continue until September this year, with bridge installation set to begin shortly thereafter. This is another vital infrastructure upgrade for our government that we are delivering: game-changing transit, Speaker, that includes GO expansion that will see riders benefit from more than 6,500 weekly trips on the GO network. When you break it down Speaker, what this really means is that we're ensuring that more people can connect to local transit, work, health care, education and other critical services across the entire region.

Speaker, the Premier said it best: The members opposite did nothing to build transit in this province. That includes the fine people of Scarborough. We're doing things differently. We're getting it done for commuters.

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

Mr. David Smith: Thank you to the associate minister for the update on this important project. This is encouraging news for many people across the GTA. Transit infrastructure expansion is vital to help growth in Ontario's economy so that goods can get to market and so that hard-working Ontarians can get to their jobs. Our government must continue to invest in expansion of transit services. Can the associate minister please explain how our government is delivering on transit services for the people of Ontario?

Hon. Stan Cho: I sure can expand, and that's exactly what I'm going to do, because we've been making some terrific progress on building transit since we were re-elected a year ago. GO expansion milestones include completion of major construction on the Davenport Diamond and terrific new upgrades in Bramalea, Maple, Milliken, King City and Aurora GO stations. For our historic GTA transit projects, we've awarded multiple contracts for the game-changing Ontario Line and we've tunnelled well over half the Eglinton West extension more than a month ahead of schedule. We're also modernizing transit fare systems by introducing credit and debit tap fee payment features on GO Transit and agencies in the 905, with over one and a half million taps and counting. And let's not forget, after the Liberals cancelled the Northlander, our government brought it back with a \$140-million purchase to buy three terrific new trains, because we're bringing the Northlander back.

The opposition left a giant transit deficit in this province. We're filling that gap and we're building record transit—

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

ONTARIO LOTTERY AND GAMING CORP.

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

A core mandate of the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. is to generate revenue for the province. By this metric, the government's ongoing plan to privatize operation of Ontario's casinos is a failure. Even before all of the contracts have been awarded, fully one third of the contracts were renegotiated, resulting in an estimated loss of \$3.3 billion to the province. These renegotiations were done voluntarily—there was no legal obligation for the province to do this—and they amount to a subsidy. These subsidies have been used in the construction of these private casinos. We are subsidizing the construction of casinos in the province of Ontario.

Why is this government continuing down this path and losing billions of dollars that are needed for health care, education, housing and, yes, the environment? Please tell the people of this province why the finance minister is overseeing and condoning this conduct.

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

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member opposite: Many in this room are students of history, and let's go back to when the modernization plan was put together in 2012. Does anyone remember who was in power at that time?

Hon. Todd Smith: It was the Liberals.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Oh yes, it was the Liberals. Does anyone remember who supported the Liberals?

Interjection: The NDP.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: That's right, that's right: 2012, they put this framework in place. So think about this, Mr. Speaker: We have to clean up the—

Interjection: Mess.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you—of the previous government.

I have full confidence in the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. We are in regular contact with them. They are good people there managing the taxpayers' money. To date, modernization has resulted in about \$2 billion in capital investment from the private sector. You know what that means, Mr. Speaker? Good jobs and bigger paycheques for the workers of Ontario.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: Does anybody remember when we had a government that put the people we're elected to serve ahead of private interests?

The OLG, with the permission of the finance ministry, was not required to renegotiate these contracts, and they didn't need our help, either. In one case, a private casino operator, with over \$3 billion in assets and a net revenue of nearly \$300 million annually, was given a sweetheart deal to reduce their revenue-sharing with the province by 25%. Apparently, this government is more concerned about the financial viability of casino corporations than with the needed revenue for education, health, housing and, yes, fighting forest fires.

Was this renegotiation really intended as a gift to friends? Or is the government truly so out of touch with the needs of Ontarians that they prioritize casinos over housing? This is unethical behaviour. I'm asking the finance minister simply to do his job.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: I'm going to take the high road. She talks about a pattern; she talks about remembering. Does anyone remember the events of June 2, 2022, when the people spoke and delivered a bigger majority to this side of the House and the great middle over there?

We have an obligation to the workers, to the people of this great province, the jobs that they create, the private sector that—we don't create the jobs; the private sector creates the jobs. Let me talk about my own riding, Pickering. You know what we have in Pickering now? A new casino, the Pickering casino, which is creating literally hundreds and hundreds of new, good-paying jobs, right next door to Ajax, right next door to Whitby and, yes, right next door to Scarborough.

This is what the government is about. It's about creating the conditions so that jobs and people can work in this province and support their families.

ONTARIO SCIENCE CENTRE

Mr. Adil Shamji: My question today is for the Minister of Infrastructure. In 1969, the Premier of Ontario at the time, the Honourable John Robarts, spoke at the opening of the Ontario Science Centre and shared the following statement: "I am confident that during the next 100 years, it will have an impact on far more people than any other single centennial project." One hundred years, and that's from a Progressive Conservative Premier.

How emblematic of this government's general approach to doing things that they are choosing to demolish it in less than half that time. First, they take apart health care, then the greenbelt, then the science centre. There's clearly a theme here.

Yesterday, I was joined by OPSEU and community members to reject the government's decision to demolish and relocate the science centre, a decision, I want to remind everyone, made without any public consultation. My question is, when will this government commit to genuine consultation with the public on the science centre before making community-destroying decisions like this one?

Hon. Kinga Surma: Thank you very much to the member for the question. We made a commitment. We've been fully transparent with the public that we will be building a brand new science centre with additional, more exhibition space at Ontario Place. The former science centre lands are an opportunity for the province to continue discussions with the city of Toronto. There are opportunities for community amenities and for housing and we will have those discussions with the city of Toronto. But, Mr. Speaker, we are bringing Ontario Place back to life with a brand new science centre with more exhibition space.

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

Mr. Adil Shamji: I'll address the folly of that argument in just a moment. This government claims it consults with stakeholders and purports to listen to the public. If it did so, it would hear the following things: This afternoon I will deliver petitions from well over 30,000 people, all calling for a halt to the demolition of the science centre—nearly 900 pages of people offering their opinion, if this government would just pause and listen to them.

Instead, as we just heard, what we're hearing is a series of nonsensical justifications for this decision. For example, while this government argues that the new location will attract more visitors, the new centre will be 50% smaller in size. Many Ontarians won't be able to afford visiting the new centre, and are only able to visit the one we have now because it is centrally located. Not to mention, the current site is situated at the intersection of the Eglinton Crosstown and Ontario Line, which will open up the science centre to even more of the public.

1130

To the Minister of Infrastructure again: Given this public outcry and these arguments, will they re-evaluate the decision to demolish the science centre?

Hon. Kinga Surma: The new location at Ontario Place will also be connected by the Ontario Line, which is a brand new subway line that our government is building to provide greater public access to Ontario Place and to make sure that it's accessible to the public.

Mr. Speaker, we are building a brand new science centre, an innovative place with new and additional exhibition space. We are bringing Ontario Place back to life. We anticipate four to six million visitors a year, and we are all excited for the site-servicing work to start. We will continue working in a collaborative way with the city of Toronto.

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: My question is to the great Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development. Our government believes that anyone who wants to work should have the opportunity to work; however, individuals with developmental disabilities often face barriers in securing stable and fulfilling employment.

Speaker, the statistics are clear: There are approximately 2.6 million people in Ontario who live with disabilities. Sadly, only 55% of these people are employed.

Individuals with disabilities deserve opportunities to master in-demand skills, gain valuable experiences and build the confidence they need to thrive in their communities. That's why our government must continue to make investments that would build up Ontario's workforce.

Speaker, can the minister explain how our government is supporting employment opportunities for all Ontarians?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I want to thank the member from Brampton East for this really important question. Speaker, giving people with disabilities a hand up to a better life isn't just the right thing to do, it's also good for the bottom line.

We owe it to all of them to build an Ontario that truly leaves no one behind. That's why I was pleased to join everyone's favourite minister, the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility, at Community Living Toronto. We were at Community Living Toronto to announce that our government is investing \$6.5 million to support five innovative training projects to help nearly 4,000 people with disabilities find meaningful employment.

Under the leadership of our Premier, our government believes everyone deserves a fair shot at a purpose-driven life.

Through these projects, participants will get tailored supports to learn new skills, set goals and be matched with mentors who can help them succeed.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to talking about these projects more.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Thank you to the minister for that great answer.

Ontario continues to face a historic labour shortage, with nearly 300,000 jobs going unfilled every day, costing our economy billions in lost productivity.

While our government is investing in training programs and providing support, there must also be accessible and inclusive employment opportunities. As the minister states, "We need all hands on deck" in order to build a stronger Ontario for the next generation. That means that we must ensure that all Ontarians have access to the skills they need to find rewarding jobs.

Speaker, can the minister please explain how investments by our government will open pathways for more inclusive workplaces?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Thank you again for that question. Speaker, creating an accessible world requires a commitment from everyone. Since day one, our government has been working with workers, unions, industry associations and all of our other partners to help people get better jobs and bigger paycheques. We have been on a mission to help individuals with disabilities secure meaningful and rewarding careers with employers in their own communities.

Through the projects we announced during National AccessAbility Week, we're helping those who need us the most get started with paid job placements in in-demand sectors like health care, information technology and hospitality.

By working with all of our partners, and continued investment to help people with disabilities find careers, we are continuing our mission to make Ontario the best place to live, work and raise a family.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question is to the Premier. In Niagara, I met with unionized front-line workers from long-term-care homes who are concerned about the use of agency employees and the effects on the quality of care for residents. Permanent employees in long-term care are not paid fair wages for their work, which often leads to them

leaving the jobs they love, worsening the staffing crisis. Meanwhile, temporary employment agencies are charging \$150 an hour or more, and Ontarians are footing the bill.

Will the Premier rein in temporary staffing agencies and ensure permanent employees are paid fairly to address the staffing crisis?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Speaker, while the member opposite is going to disparage individuals who are regulated under the same regulated health profession as nurses working in hospitals, in long-term-care homes, we are going to embark on and continue to expand upon the largest health human resource expansion in Ontario's history.

Last summer, when we directed the College of Nurses to quickly expedite, review and ultimately license appropriate nurses who have been trained in other jurisdictions, they had a historic high: In 2022, over 12,000 nurses—over 6,000 of which were educated outside of Ontario and Canada—have now been given the opportunity to register and practise in the province of Ontario.

Those types of initiatives are going to expand our health human resources so that everyone, whether they are in community, long-term care, hospital, in our surgical and diagnostic centres have appropriate care.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Wayne Gates: This will be back to the Premier, but I will say to the health minister that 5,600 have died in long-term-care facilities, so this is really a concern.

Many of the temporary agency workers have no training or experience in long-term care. This is leading to reduced quality of care for residents and potential concerns around the safety and well-being of the people in our long-term-care facilities. These are our mothers, our fathers, our grandparents, our aunts and our uncles. It's all about respect and dignity for long-term-care residents and for the permanent employees in these homes.

When is the Premier going to ensure fair standards are in place at every long-term-care home across the province of Ontario for workers and their patients?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: The member knows that we did bring in North America-leading standards with the Fixing Long-Term Care Act. The member also knows that he voted against that.

The member should remember that we did increase wages for our PSWs. He will recall that he also voted against that.

The member probably recalls that we also decided that we would hit a North America-leading standard of four hours of care per day. He voted against that.

Moreover, he voted against an additional \$25 million for the long-term-care homes in his own riding, to increase the level of care in his own community. He voted against the additional homes that we're building in his riding and across Niagara. He has talked against the long-term-care expansion that we are doing. He has talked against and

voted against the increase in inspections that we're doing in long-term care.

By every single measure, Ontario has the largest investment in long-term care in North American history—not just in Canada, but in North America—and on every single time he had to support that, he and his party voted against.

HEALTH CARE POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. Trevor Jones: Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Colleges and Universities.

Under the leadership of our Premier, this government has made record-setting investments in health care infrastructure, more support for health care workers, and unprecedented supports to accessing care. Our government believes that everyone deserves to have equal access to health care close to home.

We know there's more that needs to be done when it comes to connecting Ontarians to care in their local communities. This means that more staff are required to better serve our communities with the greatest need for health care professionals. However, filling these critical roles requires educated and skilled health care professionals.

The minister had previously spoken about the Ontario Learn and Stay Grant program, which incentivizes students to pursue careers in the health care sector.

Can the minister please provide an update on the success of the Ontario Learn and Stay grant program?

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

Yes, I would love to provide an update on the Learn and Stay program. I've had the opportunity to speak about this exciting grant on several occasions in the House and how it will directly address the health care challenges Ontario is facing.

1140

On May 16, at Georgian College in Owen Sound, alongside Minister Jones and MPP Byers, we announced the launch of applications for the new Ontario Learn and Stay Grant. Incentivizing students to study and work in the sector will not only alleviate the health care strain and bring stability to underserved communities, but it will also steer students in the direction of meaningful careers.

Speaker, I am pleased to report that to date, as of 9 a.m. this morning, we have had 4,135 students start or complete the application to the Learn and Stay program. This outstanding number proves that students are eager to begin lifelong careers in the health care sector.

Unlike previous governments, this government is taking an all-hands-on-deck approach to supporting students in every way possible, to support our—

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

The supplementary question.

Mr. Trevor Jones: It's so encouraging to hear the Ontario Learn and Stay Grant program has been so well received by students looking to pursue meaningful careers

in health care. We know that some regions in our province face urgent staffing shortages. This uptake in applications will greatly assist in filling these local health care staffing needs.

While the Learn and Stay grant program is a positive step in addressing staffing shortages across Ontario, our government must continue to be proactive by implementing programs to produce results. People in communities like Chatham-Kent–Leamington and across the province are looking for assurance that when they need access to health care, the professionals will be there to care for them.

Speaker, can the minister please provide an update on how local communities will benefit from students enrolled in programs through the Learn and Stay Grant program?

Hon. Jill Dunlop: Thank you again to the member for that question. Yes, I'd love to provide more specific details on this grant.

In northern Ontario, for the member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan, 237 students have applied to programs at Lakehead University and Confederation College. These are students who will go on to work at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre, St. Joseph's Care Group and more within the region.

In the east, the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke: 106 students are eager to attend programs offered at Algonquin College that will support health care needs for Pembroke Regional Hospital and Deep River and District Hospital.

In the southwest, the member for Windsor–Tecumseh: 387 students will go on to support the local health care needs across the entire region, including at the Windsor Regional Hospital.

Speaker, that is obviously only a handful of the ridings represented. The number of applicants increases every day. When our Premier promises to get it done for the people of Ontario, we get it done.

EDUCATION FUNDING AIR QUALITY IN SCHOOLS

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: My question is to the Minister of Education. The Ford Conservative government is refusing to reimburse the \$61 million the TDSB was forced to spend from their reserves during the pandemic. The government knows that school boards cannot run deficits, which means the TDSB is being forced to make cuts. Now, across Toronto, schools are learning that staff positions will be cut: teachers, education assistants, counsellors, vice-principals—522 staff positions cut. This government is starving the public education system.

Speaker, we know Conservatives don't like public health care. Are they now after our public education system too?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Mr. Speaker, we have increased funding for school boards by 14% when compared to the former Liberals. We have increased funding by \$78 million for the Toronto District School Board, even though, to the member opposite—we can disagree often on opinions but not on facts—there are literally 8,000

fewer students, yet they have \$78 million more than they did when we started.

As the member opposite will know, as a parent and a parliamentarian, the per-pupil funding—when student enrolment rises, funding rises. When enrolment declines, as does the funding; it's commensurate with the amount of kids in the system. Yet even with fewer kids, funding is up. That's such an important point for people in Toronto to know. We are stepping up with investments in Toronto. We're building modern schools in Toronto. We're expediting the delivery of schools in the city of Toronto. We're building in all of your communities, because we appreciate there's more to do.

The best way we can help Toronto is to vote for our budget, vote for our plan, vote for a responsible course of action that lifts standards, elevates the expectations of the system and stands up for—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Member for Ottawa West–Nepean.

Ms. Chandra Pasma: The only record here is how often the minister can repeat the same talking points while per-student funding is down \$1,200.

Our kids deserve the caring adults they need in classrooms, and they also deserve safe, healthy learning environments. We know that clean air improves health, reduces absences and results in better learning outcomes and test scores, yet this government isn't bothering to monitor, report on and improve indoor air quality in schools. For a government that talks a lot about accountability, they sure have problems showing it.

Ontario School Safety is here today calling for action. Will the minister meet with them and will the government fund an expert air quality committee to oversee air quality in schools?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Mr. Speaker, we invested \$665 million over the pandemic to raise ventilation standards in Ontario. There are more HEPA filters in this province than in every province combined—100,000.

The member opposite has the gall to speak about transparency. We are the only jurisdiction in the nation that required every school, 4,800 schools, to publicly report on the state of ventilation at the school level—the rate of ventilation, the use of filtration. We require every school to have a MERV 13 for the schools that have mechanical ventilation. We have a standard that no province has. If a school does not have mechanical ventilation, we require a HEPA filter in every single learning space: the classes, the gyms, the libraries, the learning commons. That is the gold standard when it comes to elevating expectations on ventilation.

If the member opposite was so concerned about this, then you should explain to the parents here why you voted against the measures that improved the air quality in Ontario's publicly funded schools.

Interjections.

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

One more time, I'll remind the members to make their comments through the Chair, not directly across the House at each other.

Start the clock. The next question.

HOUSING

Mr. Will Bouma: My question is for the Associate Minister of Housing. For too many Ontarians, including young people, newcomers and seniors, finding the right home is still too challenging. The housing shortage is affecting all Ontarians, including rural, urban and suburban communities across our province, and it has unfortunately reached crisis levels.

Our government has been working on behalf of the people of Ontario to address the shortage of housing in our province and has passed several pieces of legislation to significantly increase the supply of housing. However, our government must do more to find solutions to address the housing crisis and to speed up the pace of housing construction.

Speaker, can the associate minister please explain how our government is removing barriers to getting more homes built in Ontario?

Hon. Nina Tangri: I really do want to thank the member from Brantford–Brant for this great question. Speaker, we are undertaking thoughtful, impactful actions to address housing affordability and supply for all Ontarians. Our latest action plan allows our government to boost construction while supporting current and future homeowners and renters. It is this government that is protecting tenants from unfair practices. We're reducing red tape, and we're assisting first-time buyers, something the NDP once again voted against.

We've laid the foundation to increase the supply of market housing so that affordability is within reach for every single community across this province. And, Speaker, I've been to Ottawa, Perth county, Wellington and London—right across many communities—and we've heard the same about the need and the appreciation for the bold measures our government is taking to combat the housing supply right across this province.

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

Mr. Will Bouma: Thank you, Minister. Everyone in Ontario should be able to find housing that meets their family's needs. And while it is encouraging to hear about the progress our government is making to remove barriers to construction, I will say it again: There is much more that needs to be done to increase the housing supply all across Ontario.

It is positive to see that several municipalities have committed to achieving our province's housing targets, and their support is vital to accomplish this goal. The commitment by municipalities to work collaboratively with our government in developing strategies that will provide real and long-term housing solutions is important and essential.

Speaker, can the associate minister please explain how our government is supporting municipalities across our province so they can deliver on their housing commitments?

1150

Hon. Nina Tangri: Once again, thank you to the great member for the question. Municipalities across Ontario are getting on board, helping to deliver on their housing pledges and to increase supply. But once again, the opposition continues to vote against the best interests of the people across this province. They acknowledged we were in a housing supply crisis, although they can't seem to agree if it's real or not, but then voted against our latest housing supply action plan to get more housing supply built. They take to the streets with signs saying they support tenants' rights, but then they voted no to the single largest renter protection legislation we've introduced so far.

It's our government that's reducing red tape, we're freezing costs, we're giving municipalities the tools needed to build the communities of tomorrow, because we know the NDP—that, once again, no development party—are against getting anything done.

TENANT PROTECTION

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: My question is to the Premier. Tenants at 1276 Webster Street and 1280 Webster Street, many of whom are elderly and on a fixed income, need provincial intervention immediately. Members of London city council wrote a letter urging Minister Clark to take immediate action to prevent the owners from renovicting vulnerable tenants and pushing them into precarious situations and homelessness. Talking points about ineffective, reactive Conservative legislation about fines won't keep these good people housed.

It's simple: You have proactive legislation—rent control and tenant protection legislation—on the table that we could pass today. Will this government stand up for seniors and others on Webster Street and pass NDP legislation to reinstate rent control immediately?

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

Hon. Nina Tangri: I do want to thank the member for the question. Our government's top priority is supporting Ontario families. This includes not only helping first-time homebuyers get into the market, but also protecting the rights of tenants. We have introduced the largest set of tenant protection reforms in Ontario's history as part of our Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants plan. We've doubled the maximum fines for breaking the law and strengthened protections against frivolous evictions like renovictions.

We're going to continue to work closely with municipalities to address their unique challenges, but we're going to maintain our laser focus on supporting families and job creators across this province. And I'll have more to say in supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: The Conservatives' answer to the housing affordability crisis is to get rid of rent control and sit back while tenants lose their homes. Waiting until they're evicted or living in their car is not a

solution. The landlord, Michael Klein and Family Properties, have a troubling history in their treatment of tenants. That's why London city council is asking you to act now. They're telling residents that they can't have air conditioners, deliberately thumbing their nose at the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal and this government. If that weren't bad enough, they now want to charge tenants \$200 per month for previously free parking. Elderly, vulnerable people on fixed income are being gouged. They need your action today.

Will this government pass legislation to re-establish rent control and plug the hole of vacancy decontrol? Yes or no?

Hon. Nina Tangri: Let me be clear: This government is standing with tenants and has taken the strongest action in Ontario's history to protect tenants from unfair rent increases. That's why we capped the rent increase guideline at 2.5% this year, well below inflation. For tenants who do face improper increases above the guideline, they can recover those funds through the Landlord and Tenant Board, and we just doubled the adjudicators on there.

Our "helping tenants" package is going to double penalties for unlawfully hiking rents. We're strengthening those protections against renovations and we're giving tenants more rights, including the ability to have air conditioners in their units.

However, if it was up to the NDP, we would have no housing supply, no rental property. It's this government that's getting housing built, with the highest yet purpose-built rentals this year. We're going to continue to do that for the people of Ontario so that we can all benefit.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Will Bouma: My question is for the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery. Ontario is welcoming a record number of newcomers from around the world, including to my riding of Brantford–Brant. It is important that these individuals and families have access to the services they need as they settle into communities across our province.

I hear about concerns from individuals who are arriving, particularly those from Ukraine, as they have difficulty navigating the registration process for critical government programs. The challenges that they are experiencing are due to the limited services that certain local centres can provide.

Everyone deserves to have convenient and seamless access to government services. Can the minister please explain how our government is ensuring access to government services for all Ontarians?

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: I thank the member from Brantford–Brant for his question. I'm pleased to share with him that on June 14 we are launching the new health card transaction harmonization pilot project to enhance the Ontario experience by better aligning public and private service centres.

Speaker, ServiceOntario is focusing on delivering essential government services for not only refugees and

newcomers from Ukraine, but also residents returning to the province and the homeless population, who currently cannot be registered at our local private service provider locations.

This ServiceOntario pilot project launching in our great member's riding of Brantford–Brant will provide, through appointments, outreach services that meet the demands of new OHIP registrants and ensure that residents are able to access the services they need conveniently and accessibly.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Will Bouma: Thank you to the minister and to his staff. I really appreciate his response. I've raised this issue with him just recently, and we're finding a solution today.

Across our province, the demand for different types of services varies according to each community's needs and population. Whether it's long wait times or having the necessary requirements to obtain a service, we know that this can lead to frustration and delays.

Ontarians should be able to resolve their issues and concerns at their first point of interaction with the government. The people of Ontario expect that our government will find solutions to fix the problems and challenges that they encounter.

Can the minister please elaborate on the specific actions that our government is taking to improve the delivery of government services for the people of Ontario?

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: Speaker, under the Premier's leadership, we made a promise to make life easier for Ontarians by improving access to our government services across the province. This new initiative is another new way we are delivering on that promise of better and more reliable services.

In addition to the harmonization of services at existing service centres, my ministry is establishing ServiceOntario express locations to provide accessible core services and build a more sustainable in-person presence, with streamlined processing and minimized wait times. The health card transaction harmonization project is already supporting approximately 26,000 people through seven private service centres for health card services for international agri-food workers.

With the help of great members like the one from Brantford–Brant, who advocate for their communities, we are not stopping the work to make a trip to ServiceOntario easy, accessible and, of course, quick.

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

ANNUAL REPORT AND STATISTICAL REPORT, INFORMATION AND PRIVACY COMMISSIONER

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that the following document has been tabled: a report entitled 2022 Annual Report and Statistical Report, from the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario.

DEFERRED VOTES

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We have a deferred vote on private member's notice of motion number 50.

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

The division bells rang from 1159 to 1204.

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

Ms. Hogarth has moved private member's notice of motion number 50.

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

Crawford, Stephen	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Todd
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Lumsden, Neil	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Dixon, Jess	Mantha, Michael	Stiles, Marit
Dowie, Andrew	Martin, Robin	Surma, Kinga
Downey, Doug	McCarthy, Todd J.	Tabuns, Peter
Dunlop, Jill	McNaughton, Monte	Tangri, Nina
Fedeli, Victor	Mulroney, Caroline	Taylor, Monique
Fife, Catherine	Oosterhoff, Sam	Thompson, Lisa M.
Flack, Rob	Pang, Billy	Tibollo, Michael A.
Ford, Doug	Parsa, Michael	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
French, Jennifer K.	Pasma, Chandra	Vanthof, John
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Pierre, Natalie	Vaugeois, Lise
Gates, Wayne	Quinn, Nolan	Wai, Daisy
Gélinas, France	Rae, Matthew	West, Jamie
Ghamari, Goldie	Rakocevic, Tom	Williams, Charmaine A.
Gill, Parm	Rasheed, Kaleed	Yakabuski, John
Glover, Chris	Rickford, Greg	
Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Riddell, Brian	

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Hardeman, Ernie	Romano, Ross
Babikian, Aris	Harden, Joel	Sabawy, Sheref
Barnes, Patrice	Harris, Mike	Sandhu, Amarjot
Begum, Doly	Hogarth, Christine	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Holland, Kevin	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Blais, Stephen	Jones, Sylvia	Sattler, Peggy
Bouma, Will	Jones, Trevor	Saunderson, Brian
Bresee, Ric	Jordan, John	Schreiner, Mike
Burch, Jeff	Kanapathi, Logan	Scott, Laurie
Byers, Rick	Karpoche, Bhutila	Shaw, Sandy
Calandra, Paul	Kernaghan, Terence	Skelly, Donna
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Kerzner, Michael S.	Smith, Dave
Cho, Stan	Khanjin, Andrea	Smith, David
Coe, Lorne	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Smith, Graydon
Collard, Lucille	Leardi, Anthony	Smith, Laura

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 97; the nays are 0.

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

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): There being no further business at this time, this House stands in recess until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1208 to 1500.

Afternoon meeting reported 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	