

Legislative  
Assembly  
of Ontario



Assemblée  
législative  
de l'Ontario

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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

PH-17

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

PH-17

**Standing Committee  
on Procedure  
and House Affairs**

Honouring Our Veterans  
Act, 2023

1<sup>st</sup> Session  
43<sup>rd</sup> Parliament

Wednesday 12 July 2023

**Comité permanent  
de la procédure  
et des affaires de la Chambre**

Loi de 2023 visant à rendre  
hommage à nos anciens  
combattants

1<sup>re</sup> session  
43<sup>e</sup> législature

Mercredi 12 juillet 2023

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Chair: Jennifer K. French  
Clerk: Christopher Tyrell

Présidente : Jennifer K. French  
Greffier : Christopher Tyrell

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON PROCEDURE  
AND HOUSE AFFAIRS**

**COMITÉ PERMANENT  
DE LA PROCÉDURE  
ET DES AFFAIRES DE LA CHAMBRE**

Wednesday 12 July 2023

Mercredi 12 juillet 2023

*The committee met at 1002 in committee room 2.*

**HONOURING OUR VETERANS  
ACT, 2023**

**LOI DE 2023 VISANT À RENDRE  
HOMMAGE À NOS ANCIENS  
COMBATTANTS**

Consideration of the following bill:

Bill 65, An Act to amend the Remembrance Week Act, 2016 / Projet de loi 65, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2016 sur la semaine du Souvenir.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Christopher Tyrell):**

Good morning, honourable members. In the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair, it is my duty to call upon you to elect an Acting Chair. Are there any nominations? MPP Smith.

**Mr. Dave Smith:** I nominate MPP Oosterhoff.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Christopher Tyrell):**

Does the member accept the nomination?

**Mr. Sam Oosterhoff:** I accept the nomination.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Christopher Tyrell):**

Are there any further nominations? There being no further nominations, I declare the nominations closed and MPP Oosterhoff elected Acting Chair of the committee.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** Good morning, everyone. Thank you for electing me your Acting Chair.

Today, we're here to conduct public hearings on Bill 65, An Act to amend the Remembrance Week Act, 2016. We are joined by staff from legislative research, Hansard, and broadcast and recording.

Please wait until I recognize you before starting to speak. As always, all comments should go through the Chair.

Our first presenter today is MPP Lorne Coe, the sponsor of Bill 65.

You will have 20 minutes to make an opening statement, followed by 40 minutes for questions and answers, divided into two rounds of 7.5 minutes for the government members, two rounds of 7.5 minutes for the official opposition members, and two rounds of five minutes for the independent member.

Are there any questions?

You have 20 minutes for your presentation, MPP Coe. You may begin when ready.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Thank you very much, Chair, and good morning to you and the other members of the committee.

The proposed legislation before the committee amends the Remembrance Week Act, 2016. The short title of the act, for your reference, is Honouring Our Veterans Act, 2023.

The proposed legislation would require members of the Legislative Assembly, on the last sessional day before Remembrance Day in each year, to pause and observe two minutes of silence in honour of those who died serving their country in wars and in peacekeeping efforts. Following the two minutes of silence, members would be permitted to give speeches for 15 minutes, with five minutes allotted to the party recognized as the official opposition, five minutes allotted to the recognized party from which the government is chosen, and five minutes allotted to any other recognized parties and independent members as a group.

I'd like to acknowledge the support of this proposed legislation by my caucus colleagues, the members of the official opposition and the independent members who spoke on second reading in support of Bill 65.

At its core, the nobility and the majesty of Remembrance Day can be found in the story of ordinary Ontarians who become extraordinary for the most simple ways and reasons. They loved their province and country so deeply, so profoundly, that they were willing to give their lives to keep it safe and free.

The fallen we memorialize gave their last full measure of devotion not so that we might mourn them, though we do; not so that our province might honour their sacrifice, although it does. They gave their lives so that we might live ours; so that our sons and daughters—and granddaughters—might grow up to pursue their dreams; so that a wife might be able to live a long life, free and secure; so that a mother might raise her family in a province of peace and freedom.

Rightly, each year, on Remembrance Day, we say thank you to all those who gave their lives for our country and for our freedom. It's when we pay tribute to the names of those etched on the cenotaphs in the towns, cities and hamlets situated in the region of Durham and other parts of Ontario so the generations who follow remember the price of their duty. Our hearts also go out on Remembrance Day to the families left behind, young mothers who raised their children alone, and mothers and fathers who face perhaps life's greatest heartbreak. It's also when we honour all those who served in conflicts, past and current,

and have returned home to towns, villages and cities across our great province, their service complete.

As Ontarians, we have never looked for conflict, but we always rise to the occasion when asked to defend our ideals, our values.

Chair, now more than ever, I think it's important to listen to our veterans, to hear their stories, to remember.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, I regularly visited Whitby's long-term-care and retirement homes at Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter, as well as on Mother's Day and Father's Day. Those visits have started once more at places like Taunton Mills, Fairview Lodge and the Court at Brooklin. It provides me with an opportunity to meet with veterans and, yes, peacekeepers and, in some situations, sit at their bedsides and listen to their stories. I'm inspired not only by the bravery they showed all those years ago, but by how that bravery continues to shine in their eyes in their twilight years.

We know and appreciate what a special place we call home, where differences are settled with ballots, not bullets; where tolerance binds us together and fear does not tear us apart.

On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, we join together to pay tribute to those who sacrificed their lives and those who suffered the ravages of war on our behalf.

While the nature of war has changed over time, the values that drive our brave men and women in uniform remain constant, don't they? Honour, courage, selflessness—those values lived in the hearts of everyday heroes who risked everything for us, men and women who now rest forever. My uncle James is one of them, killed in a battle in France during World War I. In addition to his name, the words on James's dog tag were also those of Scripture: "Greater love has no other than this, than to lay down your life for your friends."

1010

It is a debt we can never fully repay, but it is a debt we will never stop trying to fully repay, by remaining a province worthy of their sacrifice, by living our lives the way the fallen lived theirs—a testament that greater love has no other than this, than to lay down your life for your friends.

Time may make the service of so many seem a distant memory—but that is their lasting gift, isn't it? It's a peace that endures, a belief in democracy, and a spirit that won't die.

Thank you, once again, for the opportunity to present this morning to the members of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

I'd like to thank—through you, Chair—the 12 other presenters who will be coming before the committee today in support of the short title of this proposed legislation: Honouring Our Veterans Act, 2023.

I look forward to the questions from the committee members as we move forward with the deliberation of this important piece of legislation.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** Thank you very much, MPP Coe, for appearing before the committee today. This now concludes the presentation.

It is now time for questions. We'll begin with the official opposition. You will have seven and a half minutes for any questions you might have. I recognize MPP Sandy Shaw.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Thank you, Chair. Congratulations on the power today.

I want to start by thanking the MPP from Whitby, Mr. Coe, for bringing this forward. It's an important bill. I have to say that, in some way, I'm not surprised, because in the Legislature we very often do minutes of silence and we make speeches a lot around Remembrance Day. I'm surprised that it hasn't been formalized, so the fact that you are doing this and formally recognizing this is long overdue. As we supported it in the Legislature at second reading, you can be assured that we will support this bill again.

We're looking forward to hearing from some of the guests or the deputants you have brought together here. It's important for us to have an opportunity to hear directly from them, as well. We hear from one another a lot in the Legislature, and as you had said, we all attend our Legions and our Remembrance Day celebrations in our own communities.

I have to share that there's never a time when I do that that I don't hear a remarkable story—and so I hope you will indulge me if I start by sharing the story of Leo Shaidle. He is the oldest veteran in Dundas. He's a member of Branch 36 of the Royal Canadian Legion—the Valley City Branch, originally called the Dundas Legion. He had his 100th birthday. He was in aircraft maintenance, and his job was to support the air force as they were doing aerial photos and reconnaissance.

As with all the veterans—they're very humble. They don't talk a lot about their bravery. They don't talk a lot about the people they have lost. They came back after serving in conditions that none of us could imagine, and they continue to serve their community.

Leo served the community for 73 years and continues to be a remarkable character in Hamilton. His kids, grandkids, great-grandkids—the room was packed for his birthday party with his extended family. I just have to say that he's known as "the candy man" in Hamilton because, if you meet him, he will give you a Werther's candy. That's his way of breaking the ice.

So I just want to get it on the record—in addition to all of the veterans—what a remarkable man Leo Shaidle is, and his family. Thank you for giving me the time to share that with you.

I wanted to ask you—you explained it quite a bit, and you talked a little bit about your uncle, but can you explain a little bit about your personal reasons for wanting to bring this forward to the Legislature?

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Thank you for sharing with the committee members the example you used of the person who is 100 years old.

I'm a member of Branch 112 in downtown Whitby.

My father was a veteran in the Royal Canadian Navy from 1939 to 1945, and I wear a part of his navy ring around my neck as a remembrance of that service; I have it on a gold pendant.

The motivation for me, apart from the conversations that I have regularly at my downtown Legion with the

veterans and peacekeepers—you'll note that in my presentation I talked about peacekeepers, but we also have younger members who served in Afghanistan who are now members of the Legion. In the conversations I have, not only at the Legion but also at the long-term-care and retirement homes and other settings across Whitby, the veterans and the peacekeepers have made it plain to me about the importance of telling the story of service, so that future generations understand the level of sacrifices that those individuals made, whether it was in World War II, World War I, Korea, Afghanistan, or in other theatres where our peacekeepers served.

I also believe it's important that other generations—like my granddaughters, who are 13 and 11—understand the level of sacrifices that were made and continue to be made as we sit here this morning. There are men and women in our Canadian Armed Forces who are in other parts of Europe, other parts of other theatres right now maintaining peace.

It's important for me that I am a storyteller and that each of you are a storyteller on Remembrance Day—to tell the story to future generations, because the future generations are the future leaders of our communities, future leaders of our province, the people who will be able to instill and understand and support the values that we commit to every day, every month in our lives. That's my commitment—and it has been my commitment to the veterans not only in my community but other parts of the region of Durham, and my commitment to the peacekeepers.

Later today, you'll be hearing from the Durham chapter of the NATO peacekeepers, and they'll speak about the importance that they see in what this proposed legislation will do in supporting what I've just described earlier.

But, MPP Shaw, that's the motivation for me.

Later this month, I'll be presenting a birthday scroll to one of the veterans in a retirement home, the Court at Brooklin, in the north part of my riding. He served in World War II. Each November, when I stand outside the cenotaph in downtown Whitby, regrettably I note the dwindling number of veterans who did serve in World War II, but this gentleman is one of them. I make a point—not only when I'm presenting a birthday scroll; I go up and speak to him and others across Whitby, but him in particular—of listening very carefully. And as you said, MPP Shaw, he doesn't talk about—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** You have 30 seconds.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** —the battles that he served in; he speaks specifically to the level of support that he had from his family when he did serve.

So in response to other questions, I want to talk a little bit about the role of families in supporting those who served, because that's an important aspect to why I'm here today as well.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** That concludes the time for the official opposition.

We'll move to the government for questions. MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy.

**M<sup>me</sup> Dawn Gallagher Murphy:** This is a very moving bill. I'm fully supportive. Perhaps you can continue what you were going to talk about with the role of the families.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** I'll give you an example of my father. You'll notice that the middle initial is E; my dad's name was Earle. He entered the Royal Canadian Navy when he was 18 years old, and he served on frigates escorting convoys across the North Atlantic to parts of England—Southampton—but also Ireland. He grew up, became a man during his service going forward. I remember on those occasions—those quiet moments when a son and a father are walking down a street—he didn't talk about the war a whole lot, but he did talk about the level of support from his family while he was away.

**1020**

I'm from Montreal. That's where I grew up. That's where my father grew up. We lived in the downtown core. My grandmother lived just below the old Montreal Forum, on Saint Antoine Street in Montreal. He spoke often about the letters that his mother used to write to him and how important it was and how it sustained him when he was really young, having him understand, through his mother's letters, what an important role he was playing individually in maintaining freedom and democracy. My grandmother often—I have some of these letters that she wrote to him—spoke about the neighbours on Saint Antoine Street. She lived in a flat three flights up. She spoke about how his contribution on a frigate escorting convoys across was ensuring that the neighbours living below my grandmother and along my grandmother would have the type of life that they aspired to have, and that their children would as well. She would regularly provide examples in those letters to him going forward.

I've also heard this from some of the other veterans in Whitby and some of the other Legions that I attend in Ajax and in Pickering and, to some extent, up in Uxbridge and in Oshawa—Branch 637 in Oshawa is not too far from my home in Whitby. The men and women there also talk about the level of support that they had during their service, from their families. They often say that they don't know how they could have done it without knowing that that level of support was there after they fulfilled their service requirements. It provided a sense of, in some ways, reality beyond bobbing up and down on a frigate and also trying to defend the convoys, as you crossed the North Atlantic, from submarines in particular.

Sending small gifts from the families to those in service, particularly peacekeepers, made such a difference. It reminded the peacekeepers of home, just something familiar. It's not jewelry. It's related to a picture—your home and the street that you live on; also, in the case of those with family members, sending a soccer medal that someone had won. Bringing you back to a different reality made so much of a difference. Families play a significant role, as each of you know, in our lives. They played an even more significant role in the case of those serving during World War II, Korea and Afghanistan, but also for peacekeepers going forward.

So it's a good question to pose, because taken together, there was a number of levels of supports for people serving but also for peacekeepers that ensured that they were able to continue to fulfill their duties in the way that they were being asked to do in very difficult circumstances, particularly in war theatres. Thank you for that question.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** Any additional questions from the government? We have two minutes left. Yes, we have a question from MPP Smith.

**Mr. David Smith:** Yes, I'd like to speak to this bill.

MPP Coe, I want to thank you very much for bringing this bill forward to this committee. I'm very appreciative of what you've done.

Listening to your story brings back my own memories. I don't like to talk quite a bit about my military life—but everything that can shine a light on the work veterans have done to make it possible for us to be here.

The question I want to ask to the member over here, Ms. Shaw, speaking about why it took so long for us to—we circle around Remembrance Day, but Remembrance Day should be—I think it should be a couple more layers up in terms of the work. For us to have a peaceful place like Canada that we live in and don't know the history—we need to work on maybe putting part of that in the education of schools, so students can understand that Toronto wasn't always Toronto, Scarborough wasn't always Scarborough, Cornwall wasn't always Cornwall—and many other parts of Ontario where military personnel were busy doing work at home and participating overseas and making certain that we have a safe place called the world that we're living in. It's very troubling to even think about what is happening in Ukraine. I know a lot of our soldiers are over there doing the same work.

To recognize this day and to recognize this act is something that—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** I'm so sorry; that concludes our time, MPP Smith, for the government.

We'll move to the opposition. MPP Shaw.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I wanted to pick up on what you were saying, MPP Smith. There's a lot of MPP Smiths, and some I like better than others—can I just be clear; can I get that on the record?

This is an important bill, and I was clear that we're going to support it. I think, though, that it may be a unique opportunity, an important opportunity in the House to start considering ways that we can expand and enhance our support to veterans.

As you will know, MPP Stevens spoke eloquently, in my opinion, to this bill at second reading. She's also a mom of an active duty member serving in the military. One of the things that she had done when she was a city councillor is, she made it so that there was free parking for veterans in St. Catharines. It's a small gesture, but it's an important gesture.

You talked about veterans who are living in long-term-care facilities. I know we've come a long way. I will share that my great-grandfather, who lost his leg in World War I, was at Sunnybrook military hospital, and I remember, as

a kid, visiting him there. And I remember, subsequent to that, visiting my uncle Red, who served in Anzio. If you're a military guy, you'll know he was one of the Devil's Brigade in Anzio—it was really tough hand-to-hand combat. When he ended up in Sunnybrook in later years, his PTSD came then, many, many years later, after raising his family.

Everyone wants to put in their stories, I suppose, and that's what I'm trying to do, but I'm also saying that maybe this is the opportunity where we can begin to consider ways that the Legislature can recognize veterans and people who have died in service, but recognize, young and old, the veterans who continue to live in our community and could use our support.

Do you have any ideas in that regard—other ways that we can change legislation or enhance legislation to support veterans who are living with us now in our community?

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Thank you for your question. I think part of the answer to that is a collaboration, and that starts, in our instance, with the Ontario Command of the Royal Canadian Legion—as you know and others will know, they have the jurisdictional purview of what might occur with Royal Canadian Legions across the province. They have been very active over the years in reaching out to all levels of government, including the provincial government, and providing suggestions of what potentially could occur in settings to support veterans as they advance in their years—for example, Sunnybrook. Some of the innovative approaches that are currently in place for those who have had the opportunity to go through Sunnybrook originate in part with the Ontario Command, but they also originate with action that is taking place within not only our government but also with previous governments, going forward.

#### 1030

There have been requests over the years from some veterans' groups, one of which will appear before you today—the NATO group—concerning reduction of fees for licence plates, for example. That is under consideration with the Ministry of Transportation as we meet here today. But going forward, other actions, some of which MPP Stevens alluded to in her remarks in support of Bill 65, I certainly noted and will be taking them forward to the executive of the Ontario Command of the Royal Canadian Legion, as a member of Branch 112 in Whitby. I'm not part of the executive. You'll have the president speaking today, Bobbie Simmons. She'll be supported by the past president of Branch 112, Bernie Bucking, as well, going forward.

I think another opportunity that we have, MPP Shaw, is education, as MPP Smith alluded to in his question to me. That education is really a partnership, not only of what we can do individually as MPPs, but I think it's a partnership with the Ontario Command. It's also a partnership with the boards of education. Bobbie might allude to this in her presentation today, but I know that she and others within the executive of Branch 112 have a collaborative approach with the public school board, the Catholic board and the francophone board in telling the story—and I'm using that



term generically—about service and what that service means and what its effect was, not on individuals alone, but on families during those periods. It's the effect, as we speak here today, on peacekeepers, because families are without a husband, a wife and other family members as they serve their duty in other theatres like we've alluded to—Ukraine and Afghanistan—going forward.

There are lots of opportunities, MPP Shaw, and I think that, again, it's a collaboration of a number of groups—it's a continuous collaboration. I mentioned before that my focus in doing this was ensuring that future generations understand the level of sacrifice that was made and continues to be made and what that effect has been on families and how, collaboratively, each of us has a role to tell the story.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** How much time do we have, Chair?

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** One minute.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Thank you very much. I'll be brief in the one minute that we have left. I'll try to do 30 and 30.

You've touched on it, but maybe you can again focus on the impact of families. You told us poignant stories about families who supported their people serving overseas.

Again, I'm going to tell you my father-in-law was war blinded. He was a tail gunner in a Lancaster, and he was war blinded. Without the support of my mother-in-law when they came back—that's how they formed the CNIB, for the war blinded. But without the support of her, he would struggle with many, many challenges. That continues today.

If you could just very quickly—I'm sorry I took too much time—talk about how there was no recognition then for the supportive families generally, but now, we need to recognize young families particularly.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** I'm so sorry; that does conclude our time.

We'll go over to the government side to see if there are any government member questions. MPP Dixon.

**Ms. Jess Dixon:** I'll pick up a little bit on what MPP Smith was saying about the place of education in schools.

In Cambridge, we have something called the Portraits of Honour, which was painted by Dave Sopha, which is individual portraits of every member of the Canadian military who fell in Afghanistan. They used to do something where students at schools would march holding a poster of the individual, and they would do projects about who that person was. There have been a number of schools that have declined to participate now on the grounds that learning about the death of these soldiers is too traumatic for children. I wonder if you can speak a little bit about how important this is in keeping that history alive.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Well, it is critically important, in my view, and to that extent—I'll use the example of Branch 112, which is my home Legion in downtown Whitby. I'm an affiliate of Branch 152 in the hamlet of Brooklin, which is in the north part of my riding. Both of those branches have community outreach committees that, over the years, have established, in collaboration with the trustees of all three boards, regular opportunities, not only on Remembrance Day, to go in and talk about their experiences and

what those experiences were like, the role of families, and to also talk about the why, to talk about the values that underpin what they did and, in some cases—and you will hear this today, I hope, from the NATO group from Durham region—the continuum of education. That goes beyond just the boards of education. It includes the cadets that we have in the region of Durham—the navy cadets, the air force cadets and the military army cadets. There's an opportunity for the cadets, within their own schools, to speak about the importance of education and the importance of service and how you quantitate that service, and the importance of those outcomes and the importance of democracy and freedom and human rights—the values that each of us subscribe to as Canadians but also as Ontarians.

Those types of relationships need to be nurtured, and they need to be nurtured regularly. That's why it's important that you have subcommittees of the executive of Legions that are reaching out regularly to the trustees of the boards. We've had a lot of success with that. We've not had instances like you describe going forward. I'm not familiar with the efforts that are taking place in other parts of the province. I can only speak to my knowledgeability about the region of Durham, where I've had the privilege of serving for 20 years. Notwithstanding that, I want to compliment the work of the Royal Canadian Legions across the region of Durham in the area of education. I think the other part of that is the partnership that they have with, as I mentioned earlier, the cadets and, from time to time, with other organizations, which will present to you today—from Wounded Warriors Canada.

Wounded Warriors Canada—and I know you know this—has a big role in sustaining the health of families and members who have served and who come back with challenges going forward. I'll let them tell their story—and I'm using that term generically, but I think it's important to the question you just asked, because it takes a level of partnerships to tell the story, but it also takes a level of partnerships to address from time to time encumbrances to doing it.

I'm always available as a resource because of my involvement not only with my own Legion, but also an involvement with the region of Durham, which has eight different municipalities. Within those eight municipalities—especially as you get further north to the border of the region of Durham, it introduces another board of education, the Kawartha Lakes board, where, from time to time, there are different perspectives on how the education can ensue. I've been able to address that as well.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** Any other questions from the government members?

**Mr. David Smith:** Yes, I'd just like to get back to that because MPP Dixon has made a good point on the trauma of students being educated about veterans. I think we could take some of the traumatic stuff out of that, in terms of what is a Legion, and soften it instead of talking about maybe the battle of Normandy and how many people were killed. We just have to find dynamics around how we convey that message. So my question to you, MPP Coe, is

from the education standpoint. How would you want to frame that to make certain that we are getting the message to these young cadets, military, in terms of militias—or you mentioned the cadets, which is an extension. How can we package that educational piece that would not allow more to fear—submarines, bombs or whatever, legs or limbs lost or something—to make certain the message of what veteran day is about, but extracting some of those heavy pieces that can be traumatic? And I understand, from the education standpoint, how that could be impactful.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** You have 35 seconds.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Thank you, Chair.

I know that in the case of the region of Durham, it's done in a very collaborative way. It's done through the work of the trustees of all three boards. It's done with the advice in council—the trustees, in their engagement on the education part, are collaborating with the directors—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** I'm so sorry, MPP Coe; that does conclude our time this morning.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** I heard the bell go off. It's a useful reminder.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** Very good. Thank you so much, MPP Coe, for appearing before the committee this morning and sharing your insight into this legislation.

That concludes the time for questions with this presenter. We will take a brief recess and be back at 11 for the next set of presenters.

*The committee recessed from 1043 to 1100.*

## WOUNDED WARRIORS CANADA

MS. PENELOPE WILLIAMS

MR. THOMAS WALL

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** Welcome back, everybody.

Today's remaining presenters have been scheduled in groups of three for each one-hour time slot, with each presenter allocated seven minutes for an opening statement, followed by 39 minutes of questioning for all three witnesses, divided into two rounds of 7.5 minutes for the government members, two rounds of 7.5 minutes for the official opposition members, and two rounds of 4.5 minutes for the independent members of the committee.

Welcome to the presenters. Please state your names for the record before you begin your presentation.

First up, we have Captain (Retired) Philip C. Ralph. You may begin.

**Captain Phil Ralph:** Good morning. It's a privilege to address the committee on this important matter. As stated, my name is Phil Ralph. I have the privilege of serving as the director of health services for Wounded Warriors Canada, our national mental health service provider for veterans, first responders and their families, and I retired from the Canadian Forces in 2016, after 25 years as the chaplain to 32 Combat Engineer Regiment right here in the city of

Toronto—and it's with both those hats that I'm going to address the committee.

At Wounded Warriors Canada, we have a very simple ethos that goes to the centre of everything we do: "Honour the Fallen, Help the Living." The "honour the fallen" part is really what we're talking about today at this committee.

I've had the privilege, both in uniform and as director of health services, of touring and leading tours throughout the battlefields in Europe—throughout World War I sites, World War II sites, and into Bosnia and Croatia. Sometimes I've even had the privilege—we had a 95-year-old veteran who had landed on Juno Beach come with us and visit the beach for the first time since he landed, when we were there. On our trip to Bosnia and Croatia, we had 40 veterans, on bicycles, who had served there during the time of the conflict, and if you know a bit about Canadian history—we had the sergeant major who was in charge in the Medak Pocket on that ride, and it was a very moving experience, indeed.

Canadians are, sadly, generally unaware of the greatness of Canadian history, particularly when it comes to the service of those in uniform throughout our history. Indeed, as we go back and we look at Canada, even before Confederation, our military has always been at the forefront, and the beacon of hope, and projecting Canadian values everywhere we've served. We've always done over and above what people thought we could do. I would love to tell you the story of what the Canadian Corps did in the last 100 days of World War I, but I only have seven minutes. It has been a beacon of hope, doing what others said it couldn't or it would not do—or they said it was impossible. Think of Vimy Ridge and Passchendaele and a number of the things in World War II.

Our nation pauses and remembers each year, on Remembrance Day, the service and the sacrifice of the members of our Canadian Armed Forces, who stood and have served our nation from its very beginning and even before Confederation—from Lundy's Lane to Queenston Heights, from Paardeberg to Passchendaele, from the mud at Ypres to the heights of Vimy, from the Battle of Britain to the victory at the Battle of the Atlantic, from Dieppe to Ortona, to Juno to Kapyong, and to a multitude of UN missions, on into Afghanistan and extending today, as our troops are even now serving in countries that border Ukraine, training those who are fighting for the freedom of that nation that has been unjustly invaded.

Canada is a unique nation in that we have never fought to gain territorial advantage; we have fought to defend the rights of Canada and the rights of others. We should be proud of that history.

This Legislature has a wonderful history of honouring Canadian Forces members.

My service extends through the service in Rwanda, Somalia, Bosnia and on into Afghanistan and beyond. During that time, as a chaplain, it was my duty on far too many occasions to go to the doors of those who had lost loved ones and inform them that their loved one was not coming home. And then, sadly, towards the end of my career, more and more, I went to the doors of those—not

because they had been killed at the hands of the enemies, but because they'd lost their lives to suicide. That's why I'm in the role I'm in now, doing what I do now.

This Legislature had a wonderful, wonderful, wonderful practice during our time of Afghanistan, and I had the privilege of being part of that. I don't know how many of you know that during our time in Afghanistan, just before Remembrance Day, every member of the family of a fallen who was from the province of Ontario was invited to downtown Toronto, had an evening together so they could meet other families and share in their grief, their loss, their sacrifice and honour the service of their fallen members. Then we would come to the entrance of Queen's Park, on the wonderful stairway, and I had the opportunity of standing in the anteroom and being with the Premier, his staff, the opposition members, the opposition leaders, and meeting those families and greeting them. And then we had a service where we thanked every single member who had lost someone in Afghanistan.

I commend the province of Ontario for continuing to remember with the dedication of the Afghan memorial, recently, and the wonderful Ontario Veterans' Memorial, both of which I've had the opportunity as a chaplain to lead services at. So those are wonderful things.

I'm of the age, and have had the privilege, that I have interacted with veterans from the First World War—we have none of them left—veterans from the Second World War—we have precious few of them left—and veterans from Korea. We need to continue to honour their service and sacrifice so the next generation would remember, as I did, that it was my privilege to serve and it's your privilege to serve because of what they did.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** Next, we will go to Penelope Williams.

**Ms. Penelope Williams:** My name is Penelope Williams. I live in Whitby. It's a privilege to be here today.

I served with the Canadian Armed Forces Primary Reserve's 734 Communication Squadron. I'm an ordinary member of the Royal Canadian Legion and a member of the NATO Veterans Organization of Canada, Durham chapter, number 7. I'm speaking today as a veteran who has served our country.

I lend my unwavering support to Bill 65. This bill proposes that the members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, on the last sessional day before Remembrance Day in each year, pause and observe two minutes of silence in honour of those who died serving their country in wars and in peacekeeping efforts. My personal perspective as a Canadian veteran will be shared, highlighting the importance of this bill, its impact on those who have served their country, the impact on those left behind, and its significance in preserving the legacy of those who died serving their country in wars and in peacekeeping.

As recently as last month, I went on a road trip with NATO veterans of Canada unit 7 to CFB Trenton for a tour, a visit to the war museum and a visit to the Afghan Repatriation Memorial in Trenton. The war memorial had the names of 162 brave members of the Canadian Forces who lost their lives in the Afghanistan conflict inscribed

into the cenotaph. During the act of sombre reflection, in the company of my fellow NATO veterans of Canada, we stood in mournful tribute and felt a shared sense of support, pride and gratitude to our fallen soldiers for the values they defended and for which we are forever indebted.

In 2022, I was honoured to stand with our veterans at the first Remembrance Day ceremony held at the National War Memorial in two years since the pandemic began. Military members serving, both past and present, from across Canada attended with a crowd of thousands. I laid a wreath in remembrance during the ceremonies, along with others in attendance. This was a moment of great pride and respect for our servicemen and servicewomen.

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Our time in service has shaped us in profound ways, and being able to share those experiences and stories with those who truly understand was invaluable.

The opportunity to share our stories in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario is also an important act of remembrance, so we can all know and appreciate what a special place we call home. Let not those memories die. Let us hear the stories. Let us remember the lasting gift of enduring peace, democracy and freedom that we received from those who served—those who loved our country so much they were prepared to give their lives so we could be safe and free.

The act of remembrance by honouring those who died serving their country through a two-minute silence in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario is a powerful act of inclusion and recognition. The commitment of Canadians who died to preserve peace and security extends beyond our borders. Their efforts not only embody Canada's commitment to international diplomacy, but they also demonstrate our commitment to humanity and justice.

By pausing legislative activities and observing two minutes of silence, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario not only pays tribute to fallen servicemen and servicewomen, but it also educates and inspires future generations. This act serves as a powerful teaching moment, instilling in young minds the importance of remembrance and the sacrifices made by those who served our country. It fosters a sense of gratitude, empathy and understanding, ensuring that the legacy of our fallen servicemen and servicewomen is passed down through the generations.

My grandfather fought in World War I. I don't know the fate of my family left behind. I don't know what became of my grandfather's parents, brothers and sisters and their children. My grandmother's parents, brothers, sisters and their children—I don't know the fate of them either.

During World War II, my father and his parents endured German occupation in Belgium until they were liberated by the Western Allies. Living standards in occupied Belgium decreased, wages stagnated, the occupying authorities tripled the amount of money in circulation leading to rampant inflation. The amount of food permitted to Belgian citizens was roughly two thirds of that allowed to comparable German citizens and was among the lowest in occupied Europe. They lost freedom of speech, freedom to make decisions and freedom to travel freely. Once the Western

Allies liberated Belgium, my father and his parents immigrated to Canada, where I have lived my life in peace and freedom.

During my service with the Canadian Armed Forces, I gladly accepted the call to serve with a regular Canadian Armed Forces in Lahr, Germany, under NATO command. I took the time to travel to Brussels, Belgium, where my father and grandparents endured German occupation during World War II. I also took the time to visit the Dachau concentration camp memorial, where I viewed the unforgivable horrors of World War II.

I am so grateful for the sacrifices of those before me. We must remember and thank them at every opportunity.

By passing this bill, we send a powerful message to our fallen servicemen and servicewomen that their service and contributions are valued and appreciated regardless of their specific roles. It is an act of inclusivity and recognition that every individual who has served in the Canadian Armed Forces in any capacity deserves our utmost respect and gratitude. In honouring our fallen servicemen and servicewomen—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** I'm sorry; that is time. Thank you very much.

We'll now go to Thomas Wall.

**Mr. Thomas Wall:** Good morning, Chair Oosterhoff, and members of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. I am pleased and proud to have the opportunity to be able to speak in support of Bill 65, Honouring Our Veterans Act, brought forward by my member of provincial Parliament, Lorne Coe, the parliamentary assistant to Premier Doug Ford.

As a long-time educator in the Durham District School Board and supporter of veterans in the region of Durham, I've always been passionate about public service. I am in awe of the patriotism demonstrated by previous generations who fought to protect our liberty. So, naturally, I have never hesitated to take the lead at Remembrance Day ceremonies at various schools where I have taught. I regularly brought students down to the cenotaph to commemorate Remembrance Day. I felt it was important to recognize not only the traditions of the past but to honour the contributions made by so many courageous Canadians. We must never forget the sacrifices made by previous generations. I happen to believe that it is vitally important that young people recognize the tremendous hardships endured by these brave souls who protected not only our freedoms but, ultimately, our democracy and the way we live, which is why taking this opportunity to speak to you today is so poignant and so meaningful for me and my family.

Those who fought so valiantly on the battlefields of both world wars, Afghanistan, Korea and many other military operations are still honoured and remembered in places such as Vimy Ridge, Ypres, Normandy, Sicily, Hill 355 in Korea and Kandahar, to name a few. Bill 65 allows us to recognize and pay tribute to our proud history.

Chair, the Honouring Our Veterans legislation also provides an opportunity to underscore some of the tremendous sacrifices made by Canadian families who were left behind and forced to endure their loved ones being away

from them at war on dangerous missions abroad. I am proud to say that my father, Dr. Charles Banting Wall, served in World War II as a member of the Royal Canadian Air Force from 1944 to 1945.

My grandfather Richard James Mallett also served. A dockworker and packer by trade at the port of Montreal, he was not your prototypical hero. Standing 5 foot 5 and weighing just 120 pounds, he was originally rejected by the military due to poor eyesight. Through sheer persistence and determination and force of will, he was finally accepted into the 87th Battalion, Canadian Grenadier Guards. During his service with the Canadian Expeditionary Force, he was wounded on three separate occasions, requiring hospitalization in the UK. The first was a gunshot wound to his right arm in March 1917 during the battle of Arras. He was healing in England while his unit suffered heavy casualties during the assault on Hill 145 in the Battle of Vimy Ridge in April 1917. In April 1918, he had a gunshot wound to the right thigh. He was wounded for a third time in October 1918—a gunshot wound to the right arm—and was exposed to a near-lethal dose of mustard gas which caused permanent scarring and damage to his lungs.

Private Mallett was then discharged and sent back to Canada, where he would never recover. He later succumbed to his injuries. His passing left my grandmother Azline Mallett and two preschoolers, my aunt Vonnie and my mother, Phyllis, without a husband and a father. In the days before any kind of survivor's pension, they were forced to fend for themselves. They paid a heartbreaking price, as did many Canadian families who lost loved ones.

But my grandpa did not die in vain. His sacrifice, and those of other service members who fought for Canada with pride and distinction, will never be forgotten. Richard Mallett made the ultimate sacrifice for his country, and the pain of his death has been felt for decades. But our family is by no means isolated or exclusive in the suffering and hardships they endured. Millions of Canadians were profiles in courage, answering the call to fight without question. They fought against tyranny and evil around the world.

Tens of thousands of soldiers were killed or wounded in the First World War and Second World War alone; for each one, there was a grieving family left behind who paid dearly for their costs.

To this day, there are soldiers in the Canadian Armed Forces like my grandfather who face their fears every day with grit and resolve; only instead of the Red Ensign, which was worn in both world wars, members of the Canadian Armed Forces today have the honour to wear the maple leaf on their uniforms, a symbol of Canada that is recognized around the world.

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Canada has always been a beacon of democracy and liberty—a tradition that we must preserve and protect.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** You have one minute.

**Mr. Thomas Wall:** We can never repay those who gave their lives for our freedom, but we can carry the torch that has been passed to us and hold it high, lest we forget. We

owe it to our veterans and their families to honour them for their sacrifices and pay tribute to their bravery and patriotism. Bill 65 helps us to do this. May we never forget to show our gratitude by honouring their great legacy. I salute Mr. Coe for sponsoring this bill.

To the veterans and their families I say, may God bless you. Your sacrifices will never be forgotten.

On behalf of the Wall family, thank you for this opportunity to speak in support of Bill 65, the Honouring Our Veterans Act.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** Thank you to all the presenters.

We'll now begin our next round of questions with the government. MPP Dave Smith.

**Mr. Dave Smith:** Penelope—do you mind if I call you Penelope? You weren't finished. Do you mind finishing your speech for us, please?

**Ms. Penelope Williams:** Thank you very much.

In honouring our fallen servicemen and servicewomen, we honour the values that they fought to defend: peace, freedom and democracy. Let us remember the fallen and express our gratitude to those who served our country with unwavering dedication.

I urge all members of the Legislative Assembly to support this important bill and show our commitment to honouring those who died serving their country in wars and in peacekeeping efforts. By doing so, we demonstrate our deep respect for their service, sacrifice and unwavering commitment to protecting our province and our country. Lest we forget, let us honour our fallen and ensure that their legacy lives on in our hearts and in the legislative actions we take. Thank you.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** Follow-up question: MPP Dave Smith.

**Mr. Dave Smith:** This one is for Captain Ralph.

You made a comment about how our Canadian Armed Forces have been involved in peacekeeping and war actions and that we haven't tried to expand the borders of Canada.

The reality is that we haven't had a war on this soil in 209 years. I think that poses a challenge, then, when we're trying to provide some education for some of our younger members of society—that they don't appreciate some of the struggles and don't appreciate some of the challenges that were faced by veterans. The standard of living today is significantly higher than it was in the First World War and Second World War, or even in the Korean War.

I was born in 1970. I remember stories of Vietnam. I remember stories of Desert Storm—I don't recall as much being talked about Afghanistan or any of the other peacekeeping missions that Canada has taken part in since Afghanistan.

Aside from this bill, how else can we do things to remind that younger generation so that they have an appreciation and don't forget that sacrifice and do recognize that the quality of life they have today is because of the veterans who served before them?

**Captain Phil Ralph:** Well, I think the first thing that I'd encourage people to do is, when you see a veteran, talk to them.

At my very first mess dinner when I was newly enrolled into what was then 2nd Field Engineer Regiment down at Old Fort York, I was sitting at the head table as the newly enrolled chaplain. They put everybody by rank through the tables, and I was sitting next to an elderly gentleman—he was just introduced to me as “Major Burton”—looking really prim and proper for sitting at an officers' mess dinner. I'd just learned to read military medals, and I looked at him and saw his France and Germany Star, saw his volunteer medal, saw the Victory Medal and thought, “Wow!” Then I looked, and there were other medals on the other side. I realized, as we had a conversation, that I had the privilege of sharing dinner with a man who served as a lieutenant in the First World War and a major in the Second World War. He was well into his nineties then, and he passed away one week after that.

It is so important that we talk and tell the stories.

I had an uncle who fought in the Second World War and who was blown up in a tank in the Scheldt, and who was the only surviving member of his tank crew. It messed up his inner ear, but that's not really what got messed up. He's one of those people who never really came home.

When I was a child, we would have Christmas dinner, and there were two uncles: my uncle Jack, who also was a veteran of the Second World War, who would tell stories about travelling around London—and I thought uncle Jack won the war all by himself when I was a kid; he seemed to be everywhere—and my uncle George, who never, ever, ever said a word. It wasn't until he passed away that I found out that he was even in the military. Somehow, I was fortunate enough that my aunt, because they didn't have children, when she was cleaning out his drawer, went into the back of the drawer and picked out his medals—they didn't even have ribbons on them; he had never worn them—and his cap badge. She said, “Here, would you like these?” Together with a pocket watch that I have, a gold pocket watch that was my grandfather's that went through the Second World War with him—those are two of my most precious possessions.

I wonder how life would have been different for my uncle George if people had had the awareness that they have now about things like post-traumatic stress disorder, if organizations like Wounded Warriors Canada would have been around. To that end, I've now taken his ribbons, put them together, and I proudly display them with my family history of service that dates back into the 1800s.

Talking is a really important thing—and also, some of the trips that students have made overseas. One of the things we do at Wounded Warriors Canada is Battlefield Bike Rides. When I said I was time zone messed up—I just came back from Italy. We toured from the battle of Ortona up to where Canadians ended in northern Italy. I'm telling you, there's nothing like standing there to humble you, to remind you of service and sacrifice and to remind you of the great privilege that is ours.

The Canadian military is small today, underfunded, I'd say, and a lot of other things I could say about the state of our current military, but the men and women—I'll never doubt their service and their sacrifice and their bravery.

I'm going to tell you, if you go to Europe, there are over 100,000 Canadians still serving there—and a stone marks the place of every single one of them.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** Forty seconds left for the government for any follow-up questions. MPP Coe.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Thank you, Chair, and through you to Mr. Wall: Mr. Wall, you were probably here when we were discussing the importance of education and its inter-relationship to this bill.

As a former educator and a long-time educator, I'd like you to speak to what you think the path potentially could be beyond what the work is with local Legions and Wounded Warriors Canada—the path forward, particularly in the boards of education, about—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** I apologize; that's time, MPP Coe.

We'll now go to the official opposition for seven and a half minutes. MPP Shaw.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I want to start by sharing my utmost respect and my gratitude—I'm sure that my colleagues share that—for your service and for what you continue to do for veterans and for families. Thank you for that.

I also just have to say, Captain Ralph—that's a great name. It's like Captain Dan—remember, from *Forrest Gump*? It's a pretty good name.

I'd ask for your indulgence. We talked about our family members who served, and I'm going to very quickly get on the record, share with you, from my family—my great-grandfather Patrick Michael Joseph Gavin served in World War I, and he lost a leg in World War I.

My uncle Albert Gauvin, who fought in Anzio—hand-to-hand combat—and that was very difficult on him for many, many years.

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George Wilson, who was my father-in-law, was a tail gunner in the Lancaster, and he was shot down and he was war blinded after that.

Edward Frank Hoyle was a relative who swept the English Channel for mines before the landing at Dieppe.

I have a brother-in-law who has just retired from the American air force, and his name is Lieutenant Colonel Mark Caudill. He served in, among other things, Desert Storm.

But mostly what I want to share with you is my great-uncle Adam Shaw—he fought in World War I, and he was killed. He was 18 years old, and he was shot dead just before Armistice Day. His name, Adam Shaw, became my uncle's name and my son's name. We also have what's called a “dead man's coin” commemorating his loss.

What we're here talking about today is an official act of remembrance, but all families have their personal acts of remembrance, and so what I want to say to you is that all of this is very heartfelt.

I'm so mean to these guys all the time—I can't believe they think that I'm crying. I really appreciate your personal stories.

I want to say how much we support this bill and how much we appreciate MPP Coe bringing this forward. What

we're saying is that this act of remembrance is an important first step, and it's an opportunity not only to remember but to be able to have discussions about what we still need to do for families who need our support and for veterans who are still struggling.

For any of you who want to talk about it, can you talk about how you see this bill not only respecting an act of remembrance but playing a role in continuing to raise to the forefront how we need to always support our veterans—and their families—who are active duty or recently retired?

**Captain Phil Ralph:** I can speak on behalf of Wounded Warriors Canada. Obviously, our programs are for veterans, first responders and their families.

I'm so glad you brought up the family piece because our programs are not only—think of what my aunt went through with my uncle. Think of what your family went through—the second- and third-party effects. Our programs are downstream programs. They're group-based OSI programs that are evidence-based and evidence-informed. We have two clinicians. They take them away for a week. We only have one program for individuals: our Trauma Resiliency Program. Every single other one of them involves the family. We have Couples Overcoming PTSD Everyday and the Spousal Resiliency Program. We have the Surviving Spouses' Program that has just been transformed into the Surviving Family Program. Sadly, in the province of Ontario, we know of the loss of police officers over the last—I know we're talking about veterans, but the need for these kinds of services for the impacts of trauma on families. And we have something that a lot of people don't think about—how does that impact the kids? How do they feel when their loved ones come home and—“Why is Mom angry? Why is Dad angry? What did I do?” So we have the Warrior Kids Camp and a warrior virtual program. The majority of our focus is there on our downstream treatment programs because the evidence shows, and the literature shows, that you need that community, which begins with the family support, in order to recover from these injuries. It's really important, and focusing on families is a really important piece to where we need to go.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Do either one of you want to add to that?

I saw you react over the Lancaster.

**Mr. Thomas Wall:** Yes. My dad was actually a bomb aimer in a Lancaster in World War II.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Really?

**Mr. Thomas Wall:** Yes. Charles Banting Wall.

You talked about the traumatic effects on the family. After my grandfather passed away, my grandmother Azline Mallett was left with no means to support herself. She actually had to put my mother and my Auntie Vonnie in an orphanage for two years—incredibly traumatic. It was a Catholic orphanage, and they weren't even allowed to talk to one another. So they'd peer over the fence—“Vonnice, Vonnice.” “Phyllis, Phyllis.” That had long-lasting effects. So it was not just the person, Richard Mallett, who suffered the effects of emphysema, scarred lungs; it was the family members, and that carries on from generation to generation.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Further to that, it is the unspoken trauma, when we know—and you said so many of these veterans came back and didn't talk about it at all. We know so much more about mental health, and there's not the stigma that they suffered in silence with.

I also want to share with you: I attended a ceremony, and it is the Commonwealth veterans' war grave memorial—I don't know if I've got the right name of the organization. It was in Hamilton. There was a young man who had served and came back but died by suicide, and they commemorated his gravestone to say that he died in active service, which just happened very recently. Those are the kinds of things that a bill like this can help us understand, to see that we can—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** You have one minute.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** —re-recognize history.

The other part about this bill—I'm just trying to push it a bit further, MPP Coe. This is a fantastic bill, but maybe we could use this to advocate for Remembrance Day being a statutory holiday in Ontario. I'm wondering what you would think about that.

**Captain Phil Ralph:** That really is a tough one. My gut instinct is that it should be, but then I wonder, going back to the educational system, how many children in school would just use it as a day off, whereas if they're in school—I know that's part of the rationale for why it's not—then you can at least control having a time of remembrance. For me, personally, yes, it should be, but I understand why it might not be the wisest—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** That's time; I'm so sorry.

We'll now move to the government for questions. MPP Coe.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Thank you, Chair, and through you to Mr. Wall, please: The question was on education, and as part of addressing that education—if you could relate it back to your long, successful career as an educator and how you see this particular bill being an opportunity to have a younger generation understand that we need heroes to admire, we need heroes to respect, and we need heroes to advance the values of this province as well as Canada. I know that you've been involved over the years in significant partnerships within our community in the region of Durham—but I'd like you to speak to the how, and how you see that moving forward beyond what the current practice has been, and the opportunity for the future, please.

**Mr. Thomas Wall:** Thank you for that question, Mr. Coe. That is an excellent question.

You mentioned the word "heroes." Heroes can be 5 foot 5 inches tall, 120 pounds, with bad eyesight. Heroes can be anyone. I think we have to make that clear to kids. They can be a hero every day just by promoting tolerance, inclusion and good behaviour.

I think kids learn best by doing, so on Remembrance Day each year, I would have the kids very involved, right down from decorating the gym, putting together wreaths. I would also have a veteran in quite often. They would

write letters overseas and poetry to veterans and members of the Canadian Armed Forces, which were returned. So they really built an ongoing relationship. They brought history alive.

History is more than just words on a page. In order for it to become meaningful to children, we have to enshrine it into our curriculum. We have to have kids involved with hands-on activities that put them in touch with Canadian Armed Forces members and veterans from the past. Even in class, we did some role-playing of signing peace treaties and various historical events from the past. So if we enshrine it in our Ontario curriculum and allow kids to take part in role-playing and bringing history alive, I think that's going to be the secret to giving these veterans and families who are victims of war the credit they deserve.

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**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Thank you, Mr. Wall, for that response.

Mr. Ralph, did you want to add anything to that response?

**Captain Phil Ralph:** One of the greatest things and most fun I ever had when I was in uniform was going to my kids' school every year on Remembrance Day and getting to share with the kids. I remember one year, they didn't have the kindergarten kids come into the assembly for obvious reasons, but both my sons' kindergarten teacher invited me into the classroom and said, "Could you talk to the kindergarten kids?" I thought, "What am I going to tell kindergarten kids?" So I came in. Luckily, I had all that background as a church pastor, so I knew how to talk to kids, telling children's stories. I had those medals in my pocket that I talked about, my uncle George's medals, and they were still all in pieces. I sat in the big reading chair, and I held them out, and I said, "Does anybody know what these are?" I showed them to all the kids, and they were looking at all the shiny bits. One little boy came up and asked, "Are they Pokémon badges?" Do you know what my answer was? "How do you get Pokémon badges?" "Well, you earn them for doing good things." "Exactly." And I told them the story of my grandfather.

So it can start really young, in age-appropriate ways. That's why I'm so proud of our Warrior Kids program; we have kids as young as seven learning about trauma. It's really important—the hands-on piece, telling personal stories of heroes.

I'll tell you about a hockey player at Vimy Ridge later.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** MPP Gallagher Murphy.

**M<sup>me</sup> Dawn Gallagher Murphy:** How much time do we have?

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** You have two minutes and 30 seconds.

**M<sup>me</sup> Dawn Gallagher Murphy:** My question is to Captain Ralph.

First off, thank you very much for your service. Thank you, also, for your chaplain role. It's so important to have that spiritual faith, especially for our veterans. So thank you very much for providing that service as well.

One of the things you noted was basically the model of honouring the fallen and helping the living. So when I hear you talk about that and we talk about the mental health and

well-being of our veterans, especially those with PTSD—and it goes beyond the veterans. You spoke about it, too, about our front-line heroes, the police, who experience PTSD as well.

Just yesterday, in my constituency office, I had the humble honour of presenting scrolls to two York region police officers who just recently received their Ontario Medal for Police Bravery. In speaking with these two officers, one of them said to me, “Do you know the circumstances behind how we got this bravery medal?” And I said, “I do.”

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** You have one minute.

**M<sup>me</sup> Dawn Gallagher Murphy:** I wasn’t too sure how to approach it. They said, “We go back to the families.” That’s what you were talking about—the families and the traumatic experience.

To give you a quick couple of seconds to talk to that—how will this bill provide the living with that mental health and well-being?

**Captain Phil Ralph:** Well, there’s the wider appreciation of society—to feel supported. I’ll just say, when I joined in the 1990s, members of the Canadian Forces were not very well-received in the general public. Then, throughout Afghanistan—I noticed a significant change in the support that we received. It was something that I felt, and it was something our families felt was important.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** That’s time.

Now we’ll go over to the opposition. MPP Shaw.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I’m going to ask some questions, and I have MPP Oosterhoff to thank, for reminding me to ask about the many, many families who are here in Canada because of being liberated by Canadians, this diaspora—when we look at all of the multicultural generations of people who are in this country because of the liberation that our Canadian troops participated in overseas.

Particularly, maybe if you could comment on Holland—it’s a very interesting history there.

MPP Oosterhoff, I’m sure, will share at some point his family story, but maybe it’s fair to say that his grandfather’s life was spared, really, just within hours because of the liberation of Canadian troops. So we have the Canadian troops to thank for MPP Oosterhoff here today.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** Or to blame.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Well, it depends on the day.

We all know when we go to the House of Commons in the Parliament at Ottawa, we see those masses of tulips. I think we need to be reminded that that is a gift from Holland that came to Canada in gratitude for what we did for that country—so maybe if you want to speak a little bit about how that contributed, not just to wars, but contributed to the growth of our communities and our country.

**Captain Phil Ralph:** Penelope mentioned her family from Belgium. I’ve participated in the Knokke-Heist march. Knokke-Heist was the last town in Holland to be liberated twice by Canadians, in the First World War and in the Second World War. I’ll tell you, when I went on that march—it starts in Middelburg; we marched through the exact road that my uncle was blown up on—in 2003, it was very moving. The weather was miserable; it was plus 1 and raining, but in every little town, everybody came out and

thanked us. It was so important. And I thought I was a proud Canadian—I had been in the Canadian Armed Forces for 12 years at that point. I was marching, and I got to the last town. We crossed over into Belgium; a little band came out, they played O Canada, they led us into town, and the whole town came out. You would have thought we had just liberated them today. I was tired of marching, and being a padre, I pulled padre privilege and I got out of the marching order. The corporal said, “Sir, you can’t go there,” and I said, “Just watch me.” I pulled out all the little paper flags that you get from MP and MPPs offices and the little Canadian lapel pins, and I started handing them out. There was a lady there with her granddaughter, so I gave the grandmother a flag or a pin, I can’t remember which, and I gave the granddaughter one. The little granddaughter grabbed my arm and said, “Thank you for saving my grandmother’s life.” I looked at her and said, “I wasn’t here, but my uncle was.” This lady—she was well over 90 at the time—stepped off the curb and said, “Your uncle?” She almost broke my ribs, she hugged me so hard—that feeling. When I came back, my life was transformed, because then I really understood—even as a Canadian Armed Forces member, you would think I would have understood—how important it is and why the tulips were there. It’s a feeling that we need to remind people about.

Think of all those countries: Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, France—all of western Europe Canada had a hand in freeing from the evils of that day and making the world the place it is today. Penelope’s family wouldn’t be here, our family would have been transformed—and many members here, I’m sure, have family members. So it’s important. It’s an important thing to remind us of—and its effect on families.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Madame Williams, did you want to add to that? You did say that you didn’t know what happened to your grandfather’s family. I don’t know if you want to share further about that or not; maybe it’s too personal.

**Ms. Penelope Williams:** I can share more. I didn’t get into the details of my grandfather. He was Russian. He was in the Russian Revolution. He was a Cossack in the white army. He was fighting in Croatia. He met my grandmother in Bulgaria; they got married. They went to Belgium. My dad’s sister died on the way to Belgium. In Belgium, my father was born. So they had a huge migration, and my grandfather’s life was all war.

I am so grateful for being able to be here in Canada as a result of the liberation of my family that was in Belgium.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Thank you very much for sharing that.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** My thanks to all the presenters for being here.

I was in Wageningen at the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Holland, and it was a very moving event. There’s a lot of gratitude for all the work that our Armed Forces—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** Yes. There you are. So thank you so very much—and my thanks to all members of the committee this morning.



This concludes our presentations for the morning, and we will be back at 1 p.m. for continuing presentations.

*The committee recessed from 1150 to 1300.*

MR. GARRY RUTLEDGE

MR. MATTHEW MACKENZIE

NATO VETERANS OF CANADA,  
DURHAM CHAPTER

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** The Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs is called back to order.

Today we have Garry Rutledge, Matthew Mackenzie and Bob Hartley, who I believe is joining us virtually. We also have Steven Boychyn.

You will each have seven minutes for an opening statement, followed by 39 minutes of questioning for the witnesses, divided into two rounds of 7.5 minutes for the government members, two rounds of 7.5 minutes for the official opposition, and two rounds of 4.5 minutes each for the independent members of the committee.

Mr. Rutledge, you may now begin your statement. Please also state your name for the record and for Hansard. We look forward to hearing from you.

**Mr. Garry Rutledge:** First of all, thank you, Chair, committee members and MPP Coe, for asking and putting this forward.

My name is Garry Rutledge. I am speaking on my behalf. What I'd like to talk about today is both to reinforce what has already been discussed this morning to some degree, I understand, and then to talk about the fact that this is probably a spearhead to bigger things, I would hope, moving forward.

I'd like you to remember three things when we're done. The first thing is that it's important to recognize the service of both those who have fallen and those who are still here as we're going through this. The second thing is: Are we doing enough through this first bill? I recognize the MPPs who serve their constituents—I recognize part of their responsibility in representing this part of their constituents through Legions and elsewhere. And the third part is about, perhaps, what we can do moving forward after this bill—whether it be incorporated with Bill 65 or beyond that.

I'm going to tell my experiences in Europe to reinforce—I was fortunate to live in the Netherlands for a number of years—and I understand it was brought up this morning, as well, a number of times. I'm going to talk about the experience I had and why it's important here.

The first part of it that I want to talk about today is how people reflect or appreciate what has been done on their behalf elsewhere in the world. I can tell you, when I was in the Netherlands, the very first day they realized I was Canadian, they actually brought over a food ration can and brought me over to dinner. They were so appreciative. They recognized what was done for them. I don't know that we recognize how we gave—whether it be our relatives in World War II or World War I, or recently in

Afghanistan and beyond. So part of this bill—and, I think, the first part, the two minutes of silence and reflecting on it afterwards—is an important part of communicating that.

I will say that in the bill reading, in the description, it says it's about those who have fallen—it's not just about those who have fallen; it's about those who have come back, as well.

In World War II, there were 1.1 million who served, and just over 40,000 died; another 50,000 or 55,000 were wounded, so that means that of those who served, just under 4% actually died.

When we get to Afghanistan, it was 40,000 who served; we lost approximately 168 people—that's a tenth of a per cent of what had fallen in World War II. However, those people are still coming back suffering trauma from it—and I'll speak to one in a moment.

I'll speak to the next issue, which is about, do we remember and do we do enough? I'll speak to my experience in the Netherlands again. I had the fortunate opportunity to go to Groesbeek in southwestern Netherlands. There are over 2,600 Allied soldiers buried there; over 2,300 of them were young Canadians. What struck me about it was how pristine the cemetery was. It's actually maintained by the equivalent to high school and junior high school people. When we were there, I actually saw a number of young men and women going through and maintaining the cemetery in pristine condition. They're very proud of it. I think that today, we need to think about the same—and I know there are organizations like Historica that try to build the stories from World War II, as MPP Coe does when he's going to visit some of the long-term-care facilities and hears the stories of the World War II veterans. It's not just about the World War II veterans; it's the people who served after that, as well. When the two minutes of silence is held, we have to recognize that.

The third point I'm going to make is associated with a trip I had when I was flying back from the Netherlands, through Frankfurt, to Toronto about 15 years ago. I sat with a gentleman by the name of Dan Woodfield. His son Braun Scott Woodfield was killed in November 2005 in Afghanistan. The one point I remember that he made—he was a military person as well—was that he hoped that his son's efforts weren't in vain, that there would be a statue built for those who served in Afghanistan, and that we continue to do that as people continue to serve going forward. My point to each one of you is that this a spearhead. We know we're in tumultuous times. It will not be the last time that we're expected to send people abroad. In fact, my expectation is that going forward—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** You have one minute.

**Mr. Garry Rutledge:** I understand. I'm almost there.

And I apologize, but that struck me as, are we doing enough?

Going forward, this is a spearhead. I would hope that, beyond this, there are additional efforts to support those who have served and the families of those who have fallen, and, in addition, we do start to put our best foot forward. We don't represent ourselves at NATO the way we should

be doing—we're just over half of our GDP requirement for NATO alone—and there are a lot of benefits to doing it. This is step one. I wholeheartedly accept and believe that there's probably more that we could do.

Thank you for your time.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** Thank you very much, Mr. Rutledge.

Now we'll go to Mr. Mackenzie.

**Mr. Matthew Mackenzie:** My name is Matthew Mackenzie. I'm appearing here on my own behalf as well.

I'd like to start by acknowledging that I'm here on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and that I travelled here from my home in Oshawa, which is situated on the lands of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, which is covered under the Williams treaties. I'm also very proud to say that Oshawa is home to the Ontario Regiment.

I'd like to thank the standing committee for the opportunity to be here today and to participate in this important discussion.

I'll begin by clearly stating that I'm here today to speak in favour of Bill 65 and the associated amendments to the Remembrance Week Act, 2016. I'd like to recognize the bill's sponsor, MPP Coe, for bringing these amendments forward that enhance the Legislature's process to honour those who died serving their country in wars and peace-keeping efforts, and also their families. I know that many of the individuals you're hearing from as part of this process have served themselves or work in service of those who have, and I thank them for their service and their dedication. I'm here because I wanted to make sure this committee also heard from an average Ontarian who doesn't have direct or immediate family ties to the Canadian Armed Forces but still feels strongly about ensuring that their sacrifices are always honoured in as many ways as possible.

I believe that members of the provincial Parliament have a deep responsibility to lead by example due to the privilege they have as our elected representatives, and I appreciate how Bill 65 introduces the mandatory two minutes of silence in the Legislature. I'd like to think this would happen anyway, but I think it's important that this lives in legislation, because it demonstrates how important this recognition is to the people of Ontario. I also appreciate how the bill introduces 15 minutes, spread across all parties, to speak on the importance of remembering the sacrifices made by those who lost their lives in service of our great country. The bipartisan nature of this addition really appeals to me, because I think many people's perceptions of what happens in the Legislature is that it can be a bit argumentative and divisive. This bill gives the parties an opportunity to come together and agree on something that is really foundational and that brings people together.

I can't see anything objectionable about what's proposed in Bill 65, and I think it sets a great example for the rest of Ontario to see the members of our provincial Parliament honouring this important day in our Legislature and speaking about its importance. I believe that anything we can do that further ensures we respect the sacrifices and

also tell the stories of those sacrifices will help current and future generations always respect and understand that those who came before us have sacrificed so much for us to have what we have today.

I always reflect upon my children—they're very young—and how I can make sure that they truly appreciate and respect Remembrance Day when it can seem very distant and abstract a concept to them. I know that their school provides information and access to ceremonies for them. I do what I can to help them understand what I know, but I feel that having as many organizations as possible participate in it—such as what's being proposed through this bill to have the Legislature do—clearly signifies to families of those who have served, those who are serving, those who are thinking about serving and all those who are benefiting from the service of those who came before them that those sacrifices are honoured.

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Our family and community members who served also came home to do great work in their hometowns that they lived in. The Legions and gathering places filled with people who came together to do good work in their community, and I want my children to understand that it was their service in the war—and for those who came home, how they continued to serve their communities.

From my perspective, as someone who doesn't have direct family connections, I think the stories from those who do are incredibly impactful and help people better understand and connect to the sacrifices that were made. My children don't have grandparents who have served and who could tell them about the sacrifices of their colleagues and what serving was like, so hearing stories from those who did, I think, is critically important for our younger generations to understand and appreciate. I hope, with the 15 minutes that's being allotted as proposed in this bill, that some of it would be used for members to share stories of their family or community members who gave their lives in service. That would help others who don't have those connections gain a better understanding and perspective. I was impressed when I talked to peers my own age who did have grandparents who served—talking about the strong connection that they have to Remembrance Day, and talking with such pride about the service of their family member. I hope that there's a way that we can create the same kind of connection to the day for those, like my children, who don't have the same kind of familial connection. We so often say that storytelling is essential, and this bill provides yet another platform for stories of family and community members who served to be honoured.

In preparing to come here today, I spoke with one of my colleagues, Krista Hester, who I knew had grandparents serve in the war—on both her side and her husband Kevin's side. She immediately remarked on how important Remembrance Day is to her and her family, and she shared some information with me about her grandfather, which I'll share here today. His name was Leslie, or Les, Welch, and he made it back from the war. He passed away in 2018, at the age of 93. He was in the Royal Canadian Air Force, in the Ferry Command, in World War II. He

flew the Lancaster all over but was mainly stationed between Montreal and Europe. She went on to mention that he was the most honest and amazing man she ever met and how much she truly adored him and still does today. This naturally led me to think about all of those who served who were unable to come home to be those amazing grandparents and spend that time with their family because they gave their lives for us in service.

I hope that this bill creates more space for those kinds of stories to be shared so that they can drive thoughtful reflection and appreciation.

In closing, I'd like to reiterate that I think codifying this respectful moment of silence and carving out the time to remember those who served our country, as outlined in Bill 65, is a very positive thing. It will hopefully help keep the importance of Remembrance Day top of mind for the people of Ontario and allow the stories to be shared of those who gave their lives for us and served in return so that future generations can appreciate the sacrifices that underpin the privileges that all of us have today.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today to bring my perspective as an individual Ontarian.

To all of those who have served, I thank you very much for your service.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** Thank you, Mr. Mackenzie.

I believe we have Sergeant Bob Hartley joining us virtually. Is—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** He's not on the line? All right.

**Lieutenant Colonel Steven Boychyn:** I'll be presenting.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** Then we'll move to Steven Boychyn.

Thank you very much for joining us today.

**Lieutenant Colonel Steven Boychyn:** Thank you very much, everyone. I am Lieutenant Colonel Steven Boychyn. I am entering my 31st year of service to Canada. I am an officer of engineers. I am an engineer by education. I am a member of the local Cub pack, Scout pack, the local Legion, and I am here representing NATO Veterans of Canada, Durham chapter. I come from a long history of Canadians. Et j'ai le grand honneur d'être Acadien. Je comprends le Grand Dérangement, ainsi que tous ceux et celles qui ont servi avec les Forces canadiennes.

J'espère—et je vois que vous êtes plutôt anglophones, so I will continue in English for everyone's comfort, although I'm able to answer in any given language.

*Interjections.*

**Lieutenant Colonel Steven Boychyn:** We certainly recognize that not only service to our great country but the services rendered in populating our great country are important.

I think the amendments for Bill 65 are vastly important. Members of the Canadian Armed Forces not only serve their country; as mentioned before and we've heard, they serve our community, much like I do. They belong to Rotary; they belong to Kiwanis; they belong to the Cub packs, to the sports teams. They are a great asset to all of

our communities, especially here in Ontario, where the federal government has chosen to close a number of bases. The barracks in London and Canadian Forces Base Downsview here in Toronto no longer exist. What an oddity I was walking up from Union Station—stopped a number of times and asked, “What is it that you are wearing?” We have been, in some ways, isolated from the rest of the community in that our place of employment is no longer present in the large communities. So the moment of silence and the ability to address for those 15 minutes is vastly important.

Part of every human's need is to be seen, heard and understood. What better way than the august body of the Legislature to recognize that we are amongst the community of Ontario, that we are here serving not just our country but all of the communities that we live in? And those who came before us have lent us that status. They have provided us with the freedom and the ability to actually serve our communities along with our families. I think, in part, the moment of silence that is provided by the Legislature reinforces to all Canadians the importance of service and the recognition that Ontario has for all of its service members. I believe that the Canadian Armed Forces active reserve, regular and those who have retired and, unfortunately, those who gave the ultimate sacrifice for us deserve the honour provided by the Legislature to recognize us. Part of one of our unique requirements—in fact, a health requirement, I would put to you—is, as I said, to be seen, heard and understood. Those who have served obviously come under certain odd and extreme circumstances. Part of the impact of those circumstances of service is often an isolation, a feeling of invisibility. The acknowledgement of us and our service and those who came before us provides a bit of, I would suggest, antibiotic to that invisibility, to not being seen, not being heard and not being understood.

I think that we do, in a lot of ways, need to continue to support our currently serving members, the families of the fallen, as well as take time to recognize what contributions they have had. As they come back to civilian service—for those who retire from the Canadian Forces—they need that support and that anchor that they and their service still matter. The moment of silence and the 15 minutes to address the Legislature provide that anchor, provide that recognition for their mental health and for the support of all Canadian Armed Forces members. In part, I would suggest that we who are serving in the Canadian Forces have this honour because of those who came before us. Their honour honours us. I ask that the Legislature, you all who sit in this great building and on the Legislature—your honour in taking a moment of silence honours us, and it is important to do so.

I thank you very much for this opportunity. I am in great support of the amendments. I think we need to continue to recognize the moment of silence to demonstrate to all Ontarians—and, in fact, to all Canadians—the importance of Remembrance Day, even though it may not fall upon a weekday; the strength that the community has with its serving members, whether they are currently serving or have already retired; and the honour and freedom the fallen have brought to all of us.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** Thank you very much, Lieutenant Colonel Boychyn.

We'll now begin our round of questioning. We'll begin with the opposition this afternoon. MPP Shaw.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Thank you for being here today and sharing your time, and thank you for your service. The stories we've been hearing all day today remind us that freedom is never free. So I wanted to make sure you know that we are—I'm with His Majesty's loyal opposition—in full support of this bill and have supported it at second reading.

I only have seven and a half minutes. I have a question for each of you. It's like a game show. Let's see if I can do this.

I want to start with you, Lieutenant Colonel. I just want to let you know that my brother-in-law is a lieutenant colonel in the US Air Force. He's recently retired. He served many, many years as well, and served in Desert Storm, among many other places.

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The thing that I wanted to share with you, which was new information, I think, for all of us—the understanding that these bases that are in our communities, that are the fabric of our communities and that are a source of pride for many of us are closing. I was not aware of that, and that's something I'd like to know more about.

I'm from Hamilton, so we have the Rileys right downtown, we have the infamous Royal Hamilton Light Infantry, and we also have some Highlanders. We have the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders right in the downtown, in a beautiful building. To us in Hamilton, that is a cornerstone of Hamilton.

Maybe you could comment further on the loss that we suffer as a community when those bases are closed.

**Lieutenant Colonel Steven Boychyn:** I would suggest that it is a matter of fact that it has already happened.

Absolutely, I do want to recognize our Canadian Armed Forces reserve personnel who are in these armouries and these great regiments like the Rileys; the Argyll and Sutherland; the Ontario Regiment, as was mentioned before; the 32 Combat Engineer Regiment, which I commanded for five years here in Toronto, at Downsview; the Fort York Armoury, as well as the Moss Park Armoury, which is still there. So our reservists absolutely still exist among us; I am one of them.

Every day I go to work, I wear my suit and tie or my golf shirt. It is a rare occurrence that I am serving in my community as an officer, as a Canadian Armed Forces member.

There were barracks and, I believe, up to some 600-odd regular force people serving in London. There were the barracks that were there before.

At Canadian Forces Base Downsview, when it was opened—and I don't recall when it closed, but many years ago—we had men and women in the Canadian Armed Forces interacting in the community in their uniform, because that was their place of business.

I would suggest that because we have moved, at least in Ontario, the majority of our Armed Forces personnel to Base Petawawa, Base Borden and quite a few of the air

force to Trenton, we don't see them in our large communities anymore. In the same way, across the country, there's Wainwright, there's Borden, there's Trenton, there's Gagetown and Kingston—although somewhat of a large land mass, it is relatively a small base. However, those you see in uniform in Toronto—and I should ask you: When is the last time you have seen somebody in uniform walking down the street?

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Never.

**Lieutenant Colonel Steven Boychyn:** Many years.

I think it really is just that removal of us being visible in the communities—

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I think it's important.

**Lieutenant Colonel Steven Boychyn:** And it was certainly made for good reason, right? There was consolidation—I'm not going to speak ill or in favour of how they consolidated bases.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** That's our job.

**Lieutenant Colonel Steven Boychyn:** It is just a matter of fact that as I'm walking up the street, but also when I am home, and on Remembrance Day—I will show up places in my uniform because I am participating with the Legion. People are shocked to learn that I am a member of the Canadian Armed Forces, because they just do not see us in the community, in uniform.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Exactly, and that's important. I appreciate your answer.

Mr. Mackenzie, first of all, I want to thank you for the land acknowledgement. That's very, very important, and I appreciate you doing that, because it leads to a comment I have regarding understanding the diversity of who serves; understanding that there were Indigenous soldiers, there was a Black regiment, there were women—much diversity in our Armed Forces then and now—and that we need to include that when we're recognizing those who have served.

I've been sharing all morning that my father-in-law was a tail gunner in a Lancaster bomber. This is the second set of deputants who have had a connection to the Lancaster. He was shot—not shot down, but it was anti-artillery fire, and he was war blinded. He spent the rest of his life blind and was not able to ever see his son or his children. So the legacy of that goes from one generation to the next.

I don't have enough time to ask you—unless you want to comment on that.

How am I doing for time?

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** You still have one minute.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I'm going to get the gong on The Gong Show.

So if you wanted to comment on either one of those—the Lancaster or the diversity in the Armed Forces.

**Mr. Matthew Mackenzie:** I think it comes back to what I was saying. What I want my children to understand is that just hearing those stories is so important—learning more about that diversity. I have so much more that I should learn about that as well—about all those different regiments you were talking about. That just comes back to why I think the storytelling and sharing the tales of those

who have served and those who have given their lives or come home with afflictions like you referenced—so I think it's very important.

Thank you for sharing that.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Thank you. Maybe we'll talk afterwards.

Mr. Rutledge, I want to say that what you're seeing here today is a real coming together of both sides of the House. We support this wholeheartedly. There are certain issues that are not partisan. This is a non-partisan issue. As true patriotic citizens and as elected representatives, this is the kind of bill that we should be putting forward.

I want to share your comment about the language in the bill—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** You have one minute.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I did mention this to MPP Coe, and this is a very friendly question and would be a friendly suggestion. We are allowed to amend bills here, if we all agree. So I was suggesting that we might need to amend it to make sure that no one feels excluded—that those who died are recognized, but also those who continue to come home and suffer afflictions don't feel excluded, not intentionally, but by language.

Would you think that an amendment might be in order?

**Mr. Garry Rutledge:** I think it might be wise.

My uncle Ed Rutledge was a navigator in Lancasters as well. My uncle Blake Rutledge was infantry, landed in Italy. Ed was lucky to survive, but he came back and prospered. He took advantage of the education bill, went to Alberta, oil boom, did very well. Blake, on the other hand, suffered tremendously when he got back. He—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** I'm sorry; that is time.

**Mr. Garry Rutledge:** The answer is yes.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Thank you.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** We'll now go to the government. Perhaps someone had a question? MPP Bailey.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** It's not a question. I want to commend MPP Coe and this committee. I'm just joining here in the afternoon, but I'm very interested in the comments so far.

I wanted to make a comment to Mr. Rutledge.

I also had the opportunity, in 2011, to go for the first time to Europe, and I visited many of those Commonwealth cemeteries. I can support what you said—whether we visited a small cemetery out in the rural community with five or 10 graves or 10,000 at Groesbeek. I was at Juno Beach on June 6—tremendous ceremony there. So, yes, I noticed—and I've talked about that numerous times since I came home—how well-looked-after the cemeteries were. I never saw a groundskeeper anywhere we went, but they're all immaculate, so I thought they must watch for the buses or when the vans come and they all go hide, and then they come out when you leave. I just wanted to second what you said.

And I also support this bill 100%.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** MPP Dave Smith.

**Mr. Dave Smith:** My question is for Lieutenant Colonel Boychyn.

We had a witness this morning who mentioned that Canada has never had a war where we were trying to expand our borders. The reality is that we haven't had a war on our nation, in Canada, since 1814—209 years. What I see—and I may sound like a grumpy old man as a result of it. I don't think that many of our youth appreciate some of the sacrifice and the quality of life that existed for most of our veterans who actually went overseas and fought. I don't think they appreciate the challenges in some of the countries where we go for peacekeeping. If we look at Bosnia, if we look at Yugoslavia, if we look at even Grenada, it is a vastly different quality of life, style of life and life-style that we are asking our veterans to go into.

How do we better educate our youth to fully grasp what it is we're asking those individuals to do—in comparison to the quality of life that they have in Canada as a result of those veterans?

**Lieutenant Colonel Steven Boychyn:** Education—I think in part it is. And I'm not one for requiring any organization to do anything. I believe that they will see that it is the right thing to do and it provides the greatest return on invested time. In this case, I would suggest that it is part of the answer; I suggest it is providing the curriculum that I have seen, at least. My children are at the conseil scolaire MonAvenir in the French Catholic board of Ontario, and we are quite pleased with the information and the education around both the war as a subject matter for history, but also service to the community. I feel it is a well-balanced set.

**1330**

The schools themselves certainly try, in some cases, to carve out time to have members of the Legion, members of NATO Veterans Organization of Canada, active serving members come and speak to them and spend time with them. My children's school had me, as well as two others—another father and a mother of children at the school—spend the entire day. So it was not just an assembly for Remembrance Day, it was not just a presentation by—by and large, unfortunately, when we use the word “veteran,” they tend to think of people who are looking more and more—or I am looking more and more like them, as I grey and get white hair and all the rest of it. But I was—and I have many friends who were veterans while they were still well-shorn and had no grey hair whatsoever.

The opportunity to have that engagement in the school on, perhaps, the Friday before Remembrance Day, if it happens on the weekend—or when it's nice enough weather, to walk. Many of our schools in our communities are within walking distance of the cenotaphs that are there. Have them come out, have them go back to class, and change the day's education to an active member or a retired member of the Canadian Forces. I know the federal government has done a great job of providing Canadian Forces members to every school that has asked for it—in some weeks, I have spoken at seven, because there was such a demand in the Durham region. I think this is the key: having people

of the Legion, of other organizations that represent Canadian Forces members, writ large—active, retired and otherwise—engage with the kids and allow them to ask the questions. I have never had a more difficult question come to me than from a first grader, asking, “What was the easiest thing you have ever done in the army?” I had no idea what to say. But I think it is this engagement that allows them to learn and understand.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** MPP David Smith.

**Mr. David Smith:** I want to thank the panel this afternoon. I must say that, all day today, we have given a lot of volume to what has taken place within the military. I commend each and every one of you.

The perspective of Mr. Mackenzie here this afternoon—given the fact that you haven’t served, I still thank you very much for your interest. In our civil society, there’s many more of us than are in the military, and it’s good to know that you’re here in that perspective to share your point of view and to see how we can put the wraparound services, not only to the military, but also to engage people who haven’t served.

I may, sometimes, be ignorant of the fact, and not understanding how we got to this point of safety, comfort—all the things that we enjoy.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** You have one minute.

**Mr. David Smith:** The concern I have is, as our population ages—I heard you mention greying; you can’t see mine because it’s all cut off. But I can say this: How are we going to continue to pass on this legacy to our children? We’ve been talking all morning about education. How are we going to talk about the people who have gone before us and have done such a remarkable job—from losing their lives, losing their limbs, and the suffering of loved ones not coming back home? How do you suggest we should approach that?

**Mr. Matthew Mackenzie:** Is that a question to me?

**Mr. David Smith:** Anyone can answer. You’ve got one minute.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** You have eight seconds.

**Mr. Matthew Mackenzie:** I really loved what my honourable colleague next to me said about having veterans, those who have served, go into schools and talk to our young people and have that—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** I apologize; we’re going to have to turn to the opposition members again and MPP Shaw.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Did you want to add anything, though? You got cut off twice. Are you good with that answer?

**Mr. Matthew Mackenzie:** I am, absolutely.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Final answer?

**Mr. Matthew Mackenzie:** Final answer. Locked in.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** We’ve been talking a lot about commemorating those who have served and those who have lost their lives, but we’ve also spent a lot of time talking about the struggles that returning veterans have.

We have heard from MPP Coe, who understands that many of those folks are in long-term care—recognizing where our veterans are currently.

I just want to share with you that there is an organization called Homes for Heroes—that’s about trying to find housing for veterans who are experiencing homelessness. In Kingston, they’ve opened a village of tiny homes for veterans. I’m wondering if you’ve heard anything about this. I think this is the kind of active support that we need to be showing for our veterans—if any of you want to answer, if you’re familiar with this, and how you think we could play a role in supporting that.

**Lieutenant Colonel Steven Boychyn:** Certainly, I’m very familiar with them, and I think it is all part of what we need to do—whether it is that they are experiencing homelessness, whether they are experiencing trauma, if they have operational stress injuries, or whether they are just dissociated from society and they are missing that camaraderie that they had.

I think, in part, organizations like NATO Veterans of Canada, like the Legion, like vetscanada.ca, Boots on the Ground, which recognize not just our uniform service members who are first responders, but also veterans and the military—all of these organizations have a part to play.

I think it is the support that the government of Ontario, frankly, in all its years, in having the access to public positions available—so internal postings to the public service are available to active and former members of the Canadian Armed Forces. This ability to reintegrate and have them be seen, heard and understood is really important.

There are a number of organizations that exist in support of VAC, in support of other community organizations that help with all of these things; I think Homes for Heroes do, and they fill a void that needs to be filled.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Exactly. They fill a void. It’s not the ideal solution, but it is a short-term solution.

I just would like to let you know that myself and MPP Monique Taylor, who is from Hamilton, are working to see whether we can bring this to Hamilton and find a spot where this could be hosted in Hamilton.

I’m going to turn the balance of my time to my colleague MPP Begum.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** I recognize MPP Begum.

**Ms. Doly Begum:** Thank you so much, Mr. Rutledge, Mr. Mackenzie and Lieutenant Colonel Boychyn, for being here today. Your deputations have been so valuable.

One thing that really stuck to me, Lieutenant Colonel, was when you said the feeling of invisibility—it is something that I also hear when I go to the Legions or when I’m in the community, meeting with those who have served and have been in the community—but sometimes tell me of the way that they’re getting through life. They just say they’re counting the days. I feel like this is one of the worst feelings, and I sometimes find myself speechless because I don’t know how to change that. I wish I could change the clock and do something. I know there are suggestions that have been made. You’ve talked about mental health. You’ve

talked about support. You've talked about the way we can serve families and the support that we can provide.

I wonder if you could talk to us about a few things you would recommend that would be helpful for those who have served and are here. It is wonderful for us to have that moment of silence—and I want to commend MPP Coe for the work he has done to bring this, and I think it will give us that opportunity to raise those voices. But I would like to hear from you what your thoughts are on the ways that we can improve.

**Lieutenant Colonel Steven Boychyn:** It's a very deep subject, I would suggest—very complex. I think in part it really is to provide our members of the Canadian Forces, those who have served, with the culturally appropriate care, whatever it might be. There are a number, as I'm sure you all recognize, of organizations that help with homelessness, yet predominantly they are not used by the veteran community. This is why Homes for Heroes exists.

In the same way, having trauma rehabilitation programs, trauma therapy, provided by a culturally competent clinician is absolutely important. That's why people like Boots on the Ground provide the peer-support telephone to uniformed service people.

Wounded Warriors Canada has the Introduction to Trauma-Exposed Professionals, the education needed for anybody—case managers, clinicians—interacting with those who served. It does not teach you, nor will it ever teach you or have you understand fully, what it is to serve, but you will understand the service culture and how best to interact with them.

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I can tell you—and it is not even a war story, to be fair—I went away to basic training and dug a trench for three days. I spent two days gnashing my teeth, trying to explain this to my high school friends when I came back on leave. That was not even, by and large, a traumatic experience. The frustration of trying to explain something as simple as that in service doesn't even compare to that which we saw, and I saw, overseas—and trying to explain to people.

So having that cultural competency to interact with uniformed service people is, I think, by far the most important thing, whether it be dentists, whether it be—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** You have one minute.

**Lieutenant Colonel Steven Boychyn:**—family doctors, whether it be any government official or organization that is trying to deal with a uniformed service member—having that cultural competency and learning it.

**Ms. Doly Begum:** I think we've got ourselves some tasks that you've given us to maybe add on to the 2016 act. There are amendments that are happening, so I think there are other things that we can do to improve it as well.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** We'll go back to the government for questions. MPP Gallagher Murphy.

**M<sup>me</sup> Dawn Gallagher Murphy:** Ma question, c'est pour le commandant, M. Boychyn. Donc, oui, il y a

quelques-uns de nous qui parlent français. Je vais poser la question en français.

J'ai bien remarqué, quand vous avez expliqué votre journée aujourd'hui, que vous avez commencé par arriver à la gare Union et puis à marcher ici à Queen's Park. Vous avez rencontré des gens qui vous ont demandé : « Qu'est-ce que vous portez? » Donc, je me demande, quels sont vos sentiments quand il y a des gens qui ne comprennent pas ce que vous portez?

**Lieutenant-Colonel Steven Boychyn:** En fait, il y a deux côtés pour répondre à ça. Il y a le côté où je pourrais être un peu à l'égard et me dire : « Mais, écoute, comment est-ce qu'ils ne comprennent pas c'est quoi les Forces canadiennes? Pourquoi ils ne savent pas que les médailles que nous portons, c'est parce qu'on les a eues en service au Canada? » Mais, en fait, je trouve, d'ailleurs, ici à Toronto même, c'est mieux qu'on a au moins l'honneur ou peut-être la capacité de demander des questions. Il n'y a pas de honte. On n'a pas peur de demander et on a la curiosité de demander : « Mais, c'est quoi ça? » Et nous pouvons en parler et discuter ensemble.

En passant, il y a pas mal d'organisations et de civilisations qui n'ont pas ce fait-là. Ils ne peuvent pas s'entre-parler, et de demander des questions de même, c'est une insulte. Ici au Canada, ce ne l'est pas du tout. Moi, j'aime bien quand on me demande des questions puisque ça me donne l'opportunité d'expliquer et de faire parvenir un peu de mon histoire et les informations que j'ai aux autres.

**M<sup>me</sup> Dawn Gallagher Murphy:** De donner de l'éducation.

**Lieutenant-Colonel Steven Boychyn:** Mais oui, en fait.

**M<sup>me</sup> Dawn Gallagher Murphy:** Parfait, merci.

**Le Président suppléant (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** Merci beaucoup. Avons-nous une autre question du gouvernement ici? MPP Stéphane Sarrazin.

**Mr. Stéphane Sarrazin:** Thank you for the presentation—it's always interesting hearing, especially the testimony we heard earlier.

One of my questions: Do you feel like the Canadian Forces should get involved more in the education of the kids toward what happened in the past? I see it's mostly Legions that do the work. I believe, especially with COVID, there were a lot of problems keeping the members. In my area, I think we don't have them. In some of the towns, the Legions simply dissolved, and we don't see as many members. What is your—

**Lieutenant Colonel Steven Boychyn:** I'm not sure that I really expect much more of the federal government and Department of National Defence.

There are two nationally led projects. One is called the Memory Project, and it pairs local people with former and active serving members of the Canadian Forces to speak at these events. It's thememoryproject.com. They've been around for many, many years. As well, the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces themselves message out through all of the community and communication channels they have that they have members

ready and willing to participate and speak at schools and events in Remembrance Week.

Should we do more throughout the year? Perhaps. We are stretched quite thin, as you indicated. A lot of people aren't there anymore. I'm not sure what more the organization itself can do, but I feel that, as communities, knowing that we have Canadian Forces members and they are generally there to support us—to reach out to those you know about, ask them for that help. It is there, and they will be able to find the channel to the Memory Project or to the speakers' program, as it's called, with the Canadian Forces and the Department of National Defence.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** Any other questions from the government benches?

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** How much time, Chair, do we have left?

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** Three minutes. MPP Lorne Coe.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** I'm going to direct a question to the lieutenant colonel.

I've spoken earlier today, sir, about the importance of role models.

Earlier in your presentation, you talked about the degree of involvement you have in our community in the town of Whitby.

I want you to elaborate a little bit more about the importance of role models and how veterans and peacekeepers can play a significant role for future generations—your children, my grandchildren and others. Talk a little bit more, broaden that out a little bit, about the role model that you are.

**Lieutenant Colonel Steven Boychyn:** As I mentioned, I currently am serving with the Canadian Army Command and Staff College. I am active in the Canadian Armed Forces. I am active on the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario. I am on that board. I have just retired from the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority of Ontario as an executive member there. I sit on my local alumni organization. I am the vice-president of the NATO veterans group of Canada, the Durham chapter. I'm an active member of the Legion, as much as I am able to attend. I lead the parade on Remembrance Day, and a number of things. I am also a Scout and Cub leader and have interacted, then, with other youth organizations.

I feel that having us out there in the communities, and, as we mentioned, the question of walking up the street—it's not being afraid to state that I am a member of the Canadian Armed Forces. Certainly, we are derided at times because there is a vast opinion in Canada as to whether we should be armed or not. That's fine. We all have our opinion. Our ability to show that we are reasonable, that we are professional and we have additional abilities that the Canadian Forces have taught us, in support of our communities—they're available to community members, whether it be to help organize an information booth at the Open Streets or things like that.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** You have one minute.

**Lieutenant Colonel Steven Boychyn:** I think it really just demonstrates—and as our kids see that it is an option

to them. Unfortunately, many who are coming to Canada—their militaries are not nearly as professional as ours, and it is not something that anyone wants for their kids, but here in Canada it is different, and it is a profession of arms, and we are all professional.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** We have 30 seconds left.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** I'll defer.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** All right. That concludes this round of presenters.

Thank you all very much for coming in and speaking to this legislation. I know the committee appreciates it. Thank you for your service, as well. It's very much appreciated.

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ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION, BRANCH 112

MR. SHAHID CHAUDHRY

MS. DEIDRE NEWMAN

MR. CHRISTOPHER LEAHY

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** We will now move on to the next round of presenters. We have a virtual presenter this afternoon in this round, but I believe we also have two from the town of Whitby, Deidre Newman and Christopher Leahy. Is the committee okay with having both of them come forward and sit? Generally, it's one—but if there's room, in this case? Yes.

We will begin. Every presenter has seven minutes for an opening statement, followed by 39 minutes of questioning for all three witnesses altogether, divided into two rounds of 7.5 minutes for the government members and two rounds of 7.5 minutes for the official opposition, as well as two rounds of four and a half minutes for any independent members who may be on the committee.

We will begin with Bobbie Simmons, the president of Branch 112, Whitby.

**Ms. Bobbie Simmons:** Good afternoon, everyone. This is my first time, and thank you very much—a woman at the helm. It takes a lot, but we get here, we get it done.

It is my honour today to support Bill 65, Honouring Our Veterans Act, brought forward by Lorne Coe, the member of provincial Parliament for Whitby and a member of our Branch 112 of the Royal Canadian Legion in downtown Whitby.

Chair, it is very important to show respect to our veterans—and not only to our veterans from World War II, Korea or Afghanistan, but to their families, who have suffered the most. They suffered the loss of a loved one or suffered an injury of some member of the family. And there is a tendency to feel, at some point, they have been forgotten about. Everybody got busy with their life, and those veterans feel like they've been left behind.

With this proposed legislation—it is a very small token of appreciation, to show some appreciation for those veterans who served our country. People in uniform are different and have a different life than the rest of us. They actually have no exact schedule. They don't take vacations like the rest of us. They don't enjoy being with their family



at Christmas, Easter or any other religious holiday. They have minimal time with their families and their children. They are sacrificing a lot—and, of course, the cost of sacrifice is if some of those veterans lost their lives.

The other part I want to speak about is that we need to do all we can do to teach our second generation, to show them how much we are honouring the veterans, how much we are honouring the people in uniform who are making those sacrifices, and how proud we are of those people in uniform. We need to build that patriotism in their personalities—the feeling of the country, the Legislature, everybody.

I remember that when I was young, when we had small villages, when one of the members of the village came home from his war duty or an assignment somewhere, the whole village would do celebrations, proud that one of the village members is serving the country.

I will say for everyone here, if you go to one of the Legions, you will see some of the veterans. I would encourage you to sit with them, have a coffee, have a drink, and talk with them about their memories of the war. At least that will give them some feeling that somebody still remembers what they did for this country.

I know that everyone gets busy and families get busy with their lives, and the veterans feel that nobody is appreciating what they did or that nobody still thinks about what they did. Therefore, I think Bill 65 is a very important piece of legislation to show some respect to those veterans, who, in my opinion, even during their day-to-day work, leave home and don't know if they are coming home or not. They might get an assignment, leave the country in a hurry, and never come back to their families. This is very stressful. All the people in uniform, when they leave their home, don't know if they are going to see their family again or not. I think it is a very big sacrifice from them, from those members, from their families, from their children. What we are doing today is a very small token of appreciation, of showing some of the appreciation for what they did and what they do every day—and giving an example, for the people who are currently in the service, that we honour their work and honour their sacrifice.

However we choose to remember, we must keep the torch of remembrance burning for future generations to come. Bill 65, Honouring Our Veterans Act, will, with the committee's support, do exactly that.

Let us never forget these brave men and women for their sacrifice and service to make life better for others. We must remember, not just today, but every day.

Thank you for the opportunity to make my deputation. Thank you for listening.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** Thank you very much for your presentation this afternoon.

We'll now go to Shahid Chaudhry, who is with us virtually.

**Mr. Shahid Chaudhry:** Good afternoon, Mr. Chair and esteemed members of the standing committee. Thank you for allowing me to present today. I'm honoured to have the opportunity to share my thoughts with this distinguished committee. My name is Shahid Chaudhry. I'm a

resident of Whitby, a father, and an engaged member of the community.

I'm keenly aware of the significance of Bill 65, Honouring Our Veterans Act, 2023. It resonates deeply with me, as I understand the importance of supporting and honouring our veterans. Today, I'm here to support Bill 65, a truly significant piece of legislation.

Thank you, Lorne Coe, MPP for Whitby, for introducing Bill 65. This bill holds immense significance, as it seeks to amend the Remembrance Week Act, 2016, in order to ensure that we pay proper tribute to those brave individuals who made the ultimate sacrifice in serving their country in times of war and peacekeeping efforts.

Our veterans, both past and present, are the embodiment of courage, selflessness and dedication. They have stood tall in the face of adversity, defending our values, freedoms and way of life. They have shouldered the weight of responsibility and have demonstrated unwavering commitment at great personal cost.

Mr. Chair, Canada is not considered the greatest nation due to the size of our country; rather, it is our values that set us apart. Our commitment to coexistence, freedom, tolerance and generosity define our national character. In Canada, you don't have to be rich to enjoy freedom or to have equal access to education and health care. It's our veterans who have made tremendous sacrifices, laying down their lives to defend these cherished values.

We owe an immeasurable debt of gratitude to our veterans for upholding and safeguarding the principles that make Canada truly great. Our veterans are my heroes. They are our heroes.

Bill 65 recognizes the importance of honouring these heroes, not only during Remembrance Week, but also on the last sessional day before Remembrance Day. It calls for a moment of silence, a collective pause that allows us to reflect on the tremendous sacrifices made by our veterans and to express our profound gratitude for their service. By observing two minutes of silence, we create a respectful space to remember those who laid down their lives for the great good. This act of remembrance not only pays tribute to the fallen, but it also provides an opportunity for all of us to connect with our shared history, to acknowledge the sacrifices of generations past, and to ensure that their legacy lives on.

**1400**

Mr. Chair and esteemed members, throughout the course of our nation's history, veterans have played an integral role in shaping our society. Their unwavering dedication has safeguarded our democracy, preserved our liberties and protected the values we uphold. The moment of silence at Queen's Park prescribed by Bill 65 serves as a powerful tool; a symbol of our collective appreciation for their sacrifices and our commitment to ensuring that their memory endures.

In addition to the moment of silence, Bill 65 also grants members of the Legislative Assembly the opportunity to make speeches during this time of remembrance. These speeches offer a platform to share personal stories and reflections about our veterans. They allow us to amplify

their voices, honour their memory and remind ourselves of the importance of safeguarding the freedoms they fought to preserve. These speeches are more than words; they are a means of weaving together the tapestry of our shared history. Through the power of collective voices, we can illuminate the experiences of our veterans, impart their wisdom and inspire future generations to carry forward this legacy. By sharing these stories, we not only honour our veterans, but we also foster a deeper understanding and appreciation for the sacrifices they have made.

Supporting Bill 65 is not simply an act of legislative duty; it's a moral obligation.

It is your responsibility, as our elected representatives, to ensure that the sacrifices of our veterans are never forgotten, that their stories are passed down through the generations and that their contributions continue to inspire us to strive for a better future.

By coming together in unity and solidarity, by observing these moments of silence and by sharing our words, we demonstrate our deep appreciation for the sacrifices made by our veterans; we send a powerful message to their families, to our communities and to the nation as a whole that we recognize their profound—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** You have one minute.

**Mr. Shahid Chaudhry:** —impact, and that we are committed to preserving their memory for years to come.

Mr. Chair, let's fully embrace the opportunity presented by Bill 65.

Esteemed members of this committee, thank you. Let us carry the torch of remembrance with pride, ensuring that our sacrifices of our veterans are forever etched in our collective memory. Through our actions and our words, may we honour their legacy and inspire future generations.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the members of this standing committee for this opportunity. I'm truly thankful for the opportunity to present before this esteemed committee. Thank you.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** Thank you very much.

We will now go to Deidre Newman and Christopher Leahy.

**Ms. Deidre Newman:** Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. I am pleased to provide this reflection in support of Bill 65, An Act to amend the Remembrance Week Act, 2016, the private member's bill of Lorne Coe, MPP, Whitby. I am Deidre Newman, a lawyer in private practice.

It is clear that life gives us war to understand peace, sadness to feel joy, a voice to share beliefs, and silence to mark moments in history which are profound.

Let us reflect, first, on silence. There is silence when words fail and darkness descends, silence when death smothers the sacredness of life, silence when bombs explode and obliterate human cries, silence when clouds of dark smoke obscure the stars in the sky, silence when there is blackness in space and time. But through silence, there's honour and love for our brave soldiers who have sacrificed their life, reverence for their families, and hope

for the prospect of new birth, new life and renewed faith. For Bill 65, there is unity in silence, and through united silence, there is gratitude.

To our brave soldiers and their families: Thank you for the gift of our life; your poignant respect for life transforming darkness into light, lifting up, renewing and giving hope to us always. Thank you for the gift of courage—your unwavering courage transforming ordinary into extraordinary, inspiring strength in each of us always. Thank you for the gift of valour; the symphony of your bagpipes, trumpets and poppies in Flanders Fields stirring compassion in our heart and soul always. Thank you for the gift of democracy, ever-present and flowing, a constant anchor releasing us to realize dreams always. Thank you for the gift of our future, your vision and sacrifice, freeing us in our province and nation to be united in love, for peace and hope always.

I respectfully ask for your support of Bill 65, in recognition of Remembrance Day, for two minutes of silence followed by expressions of support by members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, to honour our soldiers, their families and Royal Canadian Legions across our country.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** Mr. Leahy.

**Mr. Christopher Leahy:** It's a pleasure to be here as a resident of town of Whitby and a husband and father of three. I've also had the privilege of being elected to represent the people of Whitby for the last 13 years—currently, a regional councillor, and former chair of the Durham Catholic District School Board. From that lens, I'm here to show my support for this bill and the importance of the signals that were coming from our elected representatives to show the importance to our community of supporting our veterans. It's also going to be through the education system that—they already do a great job; we've all been going to Remembrance Day ceremonies, I'm sure, all of our lives. But what's really important is to show the respect, lead from that position as members of the Legislature and approve Bill 65 for this two minutes of silence.

I'm hopeful for the future in these kinds of initiatives that support our veterans. My fear is—I look at my own children and their own peers, their ability to relate to veterans and overcome those challenges, as we've heard earlier today, of invisibility with the Armed Forces. It's so important that we communicate that hope and vision of the importance of how we honour our veterans throughout our society. Things like the moment of silence, those two minutes, are important to show that it's important to our children, so that they can embrace that as they get older and learn how to deal with the challenges of veterans. We see it on the TV. We see what's going on in Ukraine. We see those challenges of those faraway wars. What we need to do is instill the patriotism and the support within our children to support the veterans we have in our community, so that they are going to events at the Legion, which Bobbie and team are always putting on for us, and you're not just seeing an older demographic that is supporting our Legions and supporting our veterans. We need the younger

demographic to support those different things. We need more supports for the schools. So through this body we have the opportunity to enforce things and change things at the education system—not that they're doing a bad job—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** You have one minute.

1410

**Mr. Christopher Leahy:** Thank you—it's just, how can we do a better job of instilling those values and recognize the importance of the sacrifice of all of the veterans and all of the members of the Armed Forces? You have so much going on. We are so blessed and so privileged to have the freedoms that exist every day in our society here in Canada, and we need to instill those values in our children. It's through things such as Bill 65, which is doing the two minutes of silence in the Legislature, and honouring our veterans and the sacrifice they made, to appreciate the freedoms that we have, that we will be able to instill those values in our children in the future. My hope is of the complete support of all members of the House for this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak here today, and thank you for this bill being brought forward by my MPP, Lorne Coe.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** We will begin our first round of questioning with the government. MPP Lorne Coe.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Chair, through you to the president of my Legion, Branch 112, Whitby, Bobbie Simmons—she's accompanied by the past president of Branch 112, Bernie Bucking.

Thank you both for coming here to the committee to provide your comments in support of Bill 65—not only to the veterans of World War II and Korea and Afghanistan, but peacekeepers as well. That's an important part of the bill that we've been discussing today.

Madam President, I'd like you to talk a little bit more specifically about what you see to be the value, over and above what you've stated already, of this proposed legislation—because it is proposed [*inaudible*] approved by this committee and goes into the Legislature for third reading, final reading.

Our Legion is not unlike many Legions across the province. It's made up of veterans from Korea and World War II, but we also have some younger members who have come into the Legion.

Can you talk about the value of being able—as I am proposing here with my colleagues—to honour veterans and peacekeepers? What does that mean to them and their families?

**Ms. Bobbie Simmons:** First of all, all of us, take even a second and just sit there and think—why are we here today? How are we here today? Because of those men and women and what they have done for us—risked their lives to save ours and bring us into where we are, to a safe environment, where we need to bring them now into a safe environment. They've done what they've done for us; let

us do what we can do for them and bring our children to learn, respect.

I was in Kingston a little while ago at a convention, and, as I was walking to my meeting, there was a vet sitting on the sidewalk. I stopped and asked the gentleman his name and why he was there. He looked at me and said, “Are you really interested?” I said, “Yes, sir, I am interested. You are a veteran, are you not?” He said, “Yes, I am.” I said, “Well, in that case, you should not be on the street.” I went inside the building to a higher up than I am. I stood right up and I said, “There's a gentleman sitting out on that sidewalk who is a vet. Now let's go out there, take him off that sidewalk and give him the respect he needs.” That's what we have to think of veterans.

Veterans are the people who brought us here today, who give me my life. They give you your life. They gave you your children. They gave us the life we've got sitting here today. Without them, would we be here today? I don't think so. We wouldn't be here. None of you would be here. Let's remember, those are the men and women who went out and took the ammunition that was shot at them, the bombs that were thrown at them, the necessary things to protect all of us—and I mean all of us. This is a country that has been fought for.

Now we need to fight back and show the respect to those people who lost their lives, who are now still serving.

I have a son-in-law who is a captain in the air force. He is a pilot. So I really want to keep everyone safe and bring that son-in-law home to my two grandchildren and let them see that he is home—that Daddy can come home safely, and there is a place, when he needs one, where we're going to show respect for our veterans. Please, please, that is my thing—a veteran is a veteran, no matter what they do or what they don't do. They are a veteran, so let's respect the person.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Thank you for that response.

I would like to—through you, Chair—move to Deidre Newman.

Thank you for your presentation, as well.

We've had some discussion about the importance of peacekeepers and other veterans being role models within our community. I think all of us on this committee, including each of you, have seen many of our veterans demonstrating how they can be good role models, not only in our community, but to future generations. Each of you has spoken about the importance of future generations understanding the type of sacrifices that were made so that we can enjoy the type of life we have today.

Can you speak a little bit more about the importance that veterans are currently demonstrating as role models and the potential of how they can get more involved in educating future generations about what we're discussing today with Bill 65?

**Ms. Deidre Newman:** I do believe that it is important to extend an understanding of role models with respect to Remembrance Day and the service of the military to include not only the military, but allies or supporters of the military.

The point was made that our country has been fortunate not to experience war first-hand within recent memory. So it becomes vital to share the history, both from actual experience and also from our understanding of the legislation as it has evolved and of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

I've been a member of the bar association and I have led public initiatives, as the chair of the Law Day committee in the past—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** You have one minute.

**Ms. Deidre Newman:** Thank you.

In the discussion of the Canadian charter, we've talked about issues relating to democracy and how we've arrived at the democracy that we enjoy.

So, to look at a more thoughtful plan; to reach out into the community by those who have led; to provide democracy, both physically and, perhaps, through the laws, to achieve where we are today, would be helpful. Working together collaboratively would be helpful.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** We'll now go to the opposition for their round of questioning. MPP Doly Begum.

**Ms. Doly Begum:** Good afternoon, everyone. I want to thank President Bobbie Simmons; Mr. Chaudhry, who has joined us online; and Ms. Newman as well as Regional Councillor Leahy, for being here and for your, I would say, impassioned speeches and your deputations. It was so valuable, and it really goes to show the seriousness, the gravity of the work that we need to do here and the way that we're, I think, improving, expanding on this act. I think MPP Coe has done a fantastic job of really demonstrating it by bringing all of you to the House, to the committee. I want to thank you for your time and for sharing these stories and the meaningful reality that so many veterans are facing and what we need to do, as well as how they have become role models, and what our next generation can learn from.

Your speech was almost poetic. I was listening to it and, I think, Bobbie—if I may call you Bobbie?

**Ms. Bobbie Simmons:** Yes.

**Ms. Doly Begum:** I'm in Scarborough Southwest. I'm a proud member of Legion 13. I also have Legion Branch 73—they do ask me to go to the other branch as well, to become a member of 73. I get to hear some of these stories, and sometimes I get to hear feedback and things that we have to do.

I think these types of amendments, these types of legislation really improve and bring forward the steps necessary to do the work that we need to do. So thank you for being here.

1420

One of the things I wanted to ask about—and I've asked this before through the previous deputation—was some of the actions that we need to take as MPPs. I know this bill will allow for that time to share those stories. That moment of silence will be very important in the House. But I think we also have to make sure that we as MPPs continue to remember the impact or the trauma that is carried by

veterans—those who come back and those who do not come back—and what their families suffer. We have a lot of work to do to make sure that we provide a safe space for them. They should never be on the streets. We as a nation have failed if even a single veteran is on the street. The fact that there is homelessness where we find veterans there—that is unacceptable. The fact that we have mental health needs for so many of these veterans, and the supports that they need—we have to do a lot more. I think this bill allows for that space to share those stories, but it's an alarm bell as well for us to also do a little bit more to make sure that we address homelessness and we address the mental health trauma they're facing.

Are there recommendations that you would make for us to expand and do more? Maybe all three of you can answer.

**Ms. Deidre Newman:** I would like to see more collaboration between all three levels of government to establish a more thoughtful way to address the needs that you've identified—the mental health needs, the shelter needs—and the supports, together with working with the Legions and other interested groups. I think it is inadequate to simply reflect on Remembrance Day only and then not give attention during the rest of the days of the year. I'd hope that this provides the initiative to think more thoughtfully about these issues.

**Mr. Christopher Leahy:** Again, part of it is creating that culture of remembrance in the children at the school. It's so critical to have that—because once you go off into the corporate workplace, it will be 11 o'clock on Remembrance Day, everyone will have a moment of silence and go back to work. That is the culture that we have right now, and that's what we have to try to break, and we have the best chance of doing that in the formative years—so the kids at the school. I'm not saying the schools are doing a bad job. I'm just saying, how can we do a better job so it becomes more, when they're adults and they have children of their own—to be more than just that minute of remembrance and break at the office before they go back to their conference calls? That's where it has to be critical—through the school system, to create that culture. I think that's the best opportunity and something that the provincial Legislature can impact.

I also agree with what has been said earlier about working with the local level of government to support those needs.

**Ms. Bobbie Simmons:** My thought on the school part of it is—let's say a Friday once a month that you bring a veteran or you bring an active serviceperson and bring a video. Children listen and watch. They learn more by seeing an action, or what that soldier has done, or what has been happening to that soldier. Like you all know today, all our children are playing actions—they want action. If you bring a video in and show those children what these men and women went through, some of the explanations, I think they would get a better concept of what a veteran really did. In the generation of—going down what their grandfathers went through, their fathers went through, their great-great-grandfathers went through, it gives them

the thought of walking away and saying, “Jeez, that’s what my grandpa did? I didn’t realize that.” That’s where I think we could help.

**Ms. Doly Begum:** Do I have a few more minutes?

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** You have one minute.

**Ms. Doly Begum:** Thank you very much.

I actually want to follow up on a piece that Councillor Leahy talked about, which was making sure that our kids get to know. One of the most beautiful things I find, especially in Scarborough, is when we do our Remembrance Day ceremony—the local school comes and joins, as well, at the Legion hall. It’s a beautiful sight. They have little drawings that they make about what Remembrance Day means for them, what the sacrifice means for them. I think it’s the best portrayal we get to see, and it’s a reminder for us, so a big shout-out to Birch Cliff and all the schools that do this.

Another question—hopefully I’ll have time after to go on to this—is that there are specific needs that even Legion halls and community services and support groups need. For example, at one of my Legion halls, they don’t have an elevator, so a lot of the veterans are not able to go downstairs, where they hang out. I haven’t figured out how we make sure that they have the proper services. And if we don’t have all levels of government working together—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** Sorry; that is time.

We’ll go back to the government benches. I believe we have a question from MPP Bailey.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** It’s not a question, Mr. Chair, but something I just double-checked. I said to the last group that I had the privilege to travel to Europe in 2011. One of the experiences we had when we were there was, we went to the Menin Gate—I’m sure you’ve all heard of the Menin Gate—in Ypres, Belgium. Every night, at 8 o’clock, they have a memorial ceremony at the Menin Gate. All the men—I’m sure there were women too—who served in the British Commonwealth had their names inscribed on that gate. Every night, at 8 o’clock, they stopped the traffic and everybody, whether you’re a tourist or live in town—if I remember right, it’s the firemen who come out, and they have a band and they play. It was the most moving ceremony I was ever at. So when we talk about two minutes here in Canada and if we can do a little something more—we can do a lot more, and a lot more does happen. Europe experienced a lot of something we’ll hopefully never see here. Those are the kinds of memorials that take place. I’m really privileged that I got to see it.

Anyway, that was not a question; just a comment.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** Do we have any other questions from the government? Seeing no other questions, we will go back to the opposition. MPP Shaw.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I’m going to pick up where my colleague MPP Begum left off.

Before I start, I just also want to remark—I cannot believe that you’re a lawyer, that you’re not a poet or writer, because that was simply magnificent. It was really

inspirational. I’m going to go back and get Hansard and print that off, because that was just spectacular.

**Ms. Deidre Newman:** Thank you.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Some of the words that you used, like “reverence,” “hope,” “unity” and “silence,” were very inspirational words. Thank you very much for that.

If I could just move to talk to—if you don’t mind, everyone seemed to call you Bobbie, if I could do that.

I just have to say to MPP Coe that I think you should be concerned if Bobbie decides to run for MPP. I think you’re going to have your work cut out for you.

Thank you for your passion. I can see how you whip everyone into shape; it’s fantastic.

I want to let you know that I am a proud member of the Legion in Dundas—it’s Valley City, Dundas, Branch 36. To go back to what Doly was saying—they do their best to keep that building going. They do have an elevator, but it has seen better days. They have perogy night, there’s a fish and chip night, there’s the meat draw—there’s all kinds of fundraising that happens to keep that going. They try to keep up the membership, but as those numbers dwindle, there’s a shrinking pool of people from which to fundraise.

Maybe if you wanted to combine those two questions—and say what we can be doing to make sure that veterans still have a place where they can meet, congregate, share stories and share their camaraderie as the years go by.

**Ms. Bobbie Simmons:** What can you do to help us? Is that what you’re asking me?

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Yes. What supports do you need, exactly—perhaps something that the provincial government could do to support you. A former MPP of ours, Percy Hatfield, moved a private member’s bill to make sure that veterans got the money from their lotteries, and I know that was a source of revenue. Is there anything additional to that that we could be doing?

1430

**Ms. Bobbie Simmons:** Yes, right now, there are a lot of Legions that are not hanging on because of this reason—because of less members and things like that. But those people who have moved on, who were members and veterans—we still have to help them. Just because they’re not in the Legion doesn’t mean that we have to forget them. So there is a lot of work to do yet, to bring those people back, bring new ones in, bring the young ones back to us. We have dart tournaments, dart nights, to bring the young ones in, to show them what’s going on.

So, basically, yes, money is the number one priority everywhere in a Legion because of the things that are going on, the things that we’re trying to bring into our Legion—to bring it up to where we want it to be, and to bring those people back and let a veteran come back to a Legion so he can tell his stories. That’s what we need to do. We need to keep the doors open. So communication is a basic thing here for all of us—all of us sitting here today and all of us all over.

Please remember: Keep the communication going, because that’s what we all need today. We need the communication between all of us.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I will say that that idea—  
*Interjection.*

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Okay, I'll see who's got the purse strings around here. We'll see what we can do.

What you're describing, this sense of community, I've experienced when I'm there.

I shared earlier with another group that I was honoured to participate in the 100th birthday of a gentleman named Leo Shaidle, who continues to be the oldest veteran in Dundas. The room was packed, and not just with his family, but members of the community. When he came back from World War II—he went on to live 73 years of giving back to our community. The stories that he shared with complete grace and humility were incredible.

When they tell those stories, and you're like, "What? Wait a minute. You were on a minesweeper in the English Channel before D-Day?"—we don't want to lose those stories.

The other thing I think that is not always understood is that, a lot of times, veterans and their families are entitled to certain services and can apply for certain benefits that they may not be aware of. I know that the Legions are a place where people and their families can go for information to find out about the entitlements.

What can we do not only on government levels of benefits, but other community sources of support—I think maybe if you want to talk a little bit about what important role the Legions are in that kind of sharing, that kind of information.

**Ms. Bobbie Simmons:** At the branches—I'm sure all the branches have the same—we have a veterans affairs person. If anyone knows of anyone who's out there who needs help, please call our Legions.

There are people there who will guide you, will show you what you can do—get the benefits that you haven't been getting. They will benefit you—to get those benefits.

We had one lady from England—never had a benefit. She came to our veterans affairs person. She now has a pension. We now got that lady a pension she deserved.

That's the thing—there are veterans out there who don't know where to go or where the help is.

So please come to the Legions. There are people there who will look after you, get you on the right path, get you places to maybe live in.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** You have one minute.

**Ms. Bobbie Simmons:** I'm a half of the ladies' auxiliary, also—they look for places. We built homes for some of those veterans. We gave furniture to veterans. We give food to veterans.

If I know of anyone who can help a veteran—it's all of us. So please back our veterans.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Thank you very much for your testimony here, especially around the idea that any veteran who is suffering from homelessness—this is unacceptable.

I shared earlier that there's an organization called Homes for Heroes, which is a group that I'm trying to work with.

We're doing our part here. You're doing your part.

I want to thank all of you for being here today. It has been my pleasure and my honour to hear from you. Thank you for all you do.

**Ms. Bobbie Simmons:** Thank you for listening.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** This concludes our presentations this afternoon.

Thank you very much to the presenters for coming before the committee.

Committee, the time for public hearings has expired.

The motion passed by the committee on June 6, 2023, states that the committee meet for clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 65 immediately following public hearings.

Is the committee ready to begin clause-by-clause?

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** We are.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** We will now move to clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 65, An Act to amend the Remembrance Week Act, 2016.

Are there any comments or questions to any section of the bill, and if so, to which section? MPP Shaw.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I wanted to address my comments to MPP Coe.

I would like to propose to move an amendment that would change some of the language. You and I talked about it very briefly. I don't have the bill in front of me. That would be section 4(1)(a)—to change that language to make it more inclusive. We heard from some of the deputants that they felt that that might have excluded folks who survived the war and came back and faced enormous challenges, and their families.

I want to be clear that, in moving this amendment—this is fully in the spirit of the entire day, of being non-partisan and collaborative. I just wanted to move it to, in my opinion, improve the bill to make sure that we are not just referring to people who were killed. Mr. Rutledge provided the statistics to say that the vast majority of folks who serve in the war come back—they're not killed in service; they do come back. Legislative counsel has taken the liberty of helping me draft an amendment, and I will move that. But I also want to say that it's fully in the spirit of—it's your bill, MPP Coe, and I want to respect your wishes. But I think this might be an improvement, in my humble opinion.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** Were there any other comments or questions to any section of the bill, and if so, to which section?

Ms. Shaw has indicated that she wants to move an amendment at one point.

When would you want to move that?

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** This is sort of out of order, but I guess I could just get a thumbs-up or thumbs-down from MPP Coe—if he wants to have a look at the amendment. Or should I move it? I don't want to annoy you with my amendment today.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** MPP Coe.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** No, I won't be considering any amendments.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** MPP Shaw.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** In the spirit in which I intended the amendment—it's MPP Coe's bill, and if it's not a welcomed amendment, I won't be moving it.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** Thank you, MPP Shaw.

We will now begin clause-by-clause consideration of the bill.

Shall section 1 of Bill 65 carry? Carried.

Shall section 2 of Bill 65 carry? Section 2 carries.

Shall section 3, the short title of the bill, carry? Section 3 carries.

Shall the title of the bill carry? The title is carried.

Shall Bill 65 carry? I declare the bill carried.

Shall I report the bill to the House? The bill will be reported to the House.

Congratulations, Mr. Coe.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Thank you very much, Chair. Thank you to the committee members.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Sam Oosterhoff):** Thank you, everyone. That concludes our business for today.

The committee is now adjourned.

*The committee adjourned at 1440.*

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