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Jeudi
19 octobre 2023

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 19 October 2023

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 19 octobre 2023

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Good morning, and let us pray.

Prières / Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MEMBER'S CONDUCT

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 18, 2023, on the amendment to the amendment to the motion regarding the censure of the member for Hamilton Centre.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): When we last debated this item, the member for Essex had the floor. He still has time on the clock. I recognize the member from Essex.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: When I was speaking on this matter earlier, I had been recounting how I had travelled to Jerusalem, how I had been staying with the Sisters of Zion in their house and how I encountered interesting people in my travels. One of those interesting people was an Irishman from the UK, and his name was Paddy. One day, Paddy and I decided we would go down to the Western Wall. The Western Wall is the last remaining wall of a great temple complex that was built in the ancient times. Much, if not all, of it was destroyed, and the Western Wall is the last remaining portion. It's considered a very holy place, and I was privileged to go there.

When we arrived, there were thousands of people there, and Paddy and I, we immersed ourselves into the crowd. While we were there, an individual sidled up next to me. He looked very official. He had on official identification. He said, "Hello," and I said hello back. He said to me, "Where are you from?" And I said, "I'm from Canada. Where are you from?" He said, "I'm from here, Israel." He asked me if I was Jewish. I said, "No, I'm Catholic. What are you?" He said he was Jewish. He said, "Welcome to Israel. I hope you enjoy your stay." And then he melted on into the crowd.

I thought that was a curious interaction. I suspected that he might be some kind of security agent who was doing surveillance and just randomly selecting people out of the crowd to make sure he was doing certain types of surveillance, but I was wrong. He was actually an immigration agent; that's what I learned later. What he was doing is he was trying to identify people who might be interested in immigrating to Israel, and after he had that brief conversation with me, he probably determined that I probably wasn't interested and so he went on to find another prospect. That's how I wound up here.

Now, as a matter of fact, that didn't just happen to me once, it happened to me other times as well in other countries. At a certain time, I actually applied for and received citizenship in the Republic of Malta, so I am actually a dual citizen. I'm a citizen of Canada, and I'm also a citizen of Malta. Malta is a member of the European Union, which means I'm a citizen of the European Union, and that gives me a great amount of liberty. I can go to a lot of places in the world. I'm welcome in a lot of places in the world. I feel safe in a lot of places in the world, and the reason I bring that up is because not everybody can say that.

Sometimes people go to places in the world and they're not welcome. Sometimes people go to places in the world, and they are harassed, they are assaulted and they might even be killed. Nobody knows that better than Jews, and that brings me to the comments made by the member from Hamilton Centre. I read those comments. I think the comments can only be interpreted one way. The comments can only be interpreted as endorsing terrorism and endorsing terrorism specifically against Jewish people. That is the only way you can interpret those comments.

I find them offensive. Everybody should find them offensive. There are in fact Jews who sit as members in this chamber, and I ask the question, and I put it to all the members of this House: What if some other member of this House advocated terrorism against your ethnic group? How would you react? I know how I would react if somebody advocated terrorism against Catholics. How would you react if somebody advocated terrorism against your ethnic group?

Now we made it very easy for the member from Hamilton Centre to correct this error. All she had to do was retract the statement and apologize. That's a very easy thing to do. She refused to do it. In fact, she has not retracted the statement; she's done exactly the opposite. She has pinned the statement and highlighted it on her social media platform. That is obstinate, and I would submit that it's not an isolated incident coming from the member from Hamilton Centre. It is actually a pattern of behaviour.

In fact, I make specific reference to the member's comments of April 3, 2023, in this chamber. I say that the member does not have respect for this chamber or its traditions and, as our government House leader said, brings, by her comments, the reputation of the Legislature into disrepute.

Here are the statements made by the member from Hamilton Centre on April 3, 2023: "I'm not here to be preoccupied by the strange rituals or this colonial building." That was her first statement in this House. The first

opportunity the member from Hamilton Centre had to address this chamber, she immediately denigrated our traditions and our Legislature and then it went downhill from there.

I remember my first comments in this House. I spoke about my family and where I came from, how much respect I had for my teachers—and yet the member from Hamilton Centre uses her first opportunity to denigrate the Legislature.

Now, if I've said anything that the member from Hamilton Centre disagrees with, she will have an opportunity to contradict me. After I finish these statements, I'll sit down, and if the member from Hamilton Centre wants to, she can take her place and refute me. I invite that member to do so. I'd like to hear what that member has to say about what I've said. If she wants to contradict me, if she wants to refute me, she will have a chance. I will stay in my place and I will listen to what that member has to say.

0910

I want to take this opportunity also to address what we would do as Canadians in the event of a similar situation taking place on our soil. I began this analysis yesterday. I'll continue with this analysis. If the terrorist group Hamas launched an attack from Canadian soil, committed atrocities in another country and then took hostages, kidnapped them and brought them back to Canada, what would we do? Would we give them shelter? No. We would not shelter terrorists who seize hostages from another country. We would hunt them down. We would bring them to justice. We would probably send them back to the country where they had committed the atrocities in order to face the consequences.

What is happening in the current situation that occurred on October 7—I'll tell you what is happening. They took hostages out of Israel, they escaped into another place and they melted into the mainstream. That government either was unwilling or unable to do what Canada would do. That government was either unwilling or unable to hunt down the terrorists and bring them to justice.

In that situation, what would Canada do? We would not stand by idly. No, we would not. We would hunt down the terrorists. We would try to recover the hostages. And if that is the standard that we apply to ourselves, then that is the standard we must apply to others. If another country has had its citizens seized and hostaged away to another place, then that country has the right to go try and free those hostages and bring the terrorists to justice. That's what we would do.

The motion before us is as follows: "That this House expresses its disapproval of, and dissociates itself from, continued disreputable conduct by the member for Hamilton Centre, most specifically her use of social media to make anti-Semitic and discriminatory statements related to the existence of the State of Israel and its defence against Hamas terrorists; and

"That this House demands the member desist from further conduct that is inappropriate and unbecoming of a member of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario; and

"That the Speaker is authorized to not recognize the member for Hamilton Centre in the House until the member retracts and deletes her statements on social media and makes an apology in her place in the House."

This is an appropriate motion and, as I said earlier, this entire thing could be avoided if the member simply apologized and deleted the statements, but the member has been intractable. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to stand and to make sure that the reputation of this Legislature and its traditions are not brought into disrepute by that member.

For all of those reasons, I will be voting in favour of this motion.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: I appreciate the comments from my colleague Mr. Leardi from—

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Essex.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Essex. It's great to have you as the member from Essex, by the way.

What a challenging debate to be part of in this Legislature—that we have to actually be doing this here in this august chamber, calling for the censure of one of our colleagues. Why? "From the river to the sea"—I'm uttering those words, but not as part of a protest or my belief; I'm uttering them as a repetition of what we've heard so many times and from the member from Hamilton Centre. You cannot utter those words, "From the river to the sea," unless you are an anti-Semite, because those very words require that the nation of Israel disappear and, along with it, the Jewish state. So if you use those words in protest or for any other reason, you cannot call yourself anything but an anti-Semite.

Speaker, the member for Hamilton Centre is an anti-Semite. She can deny it. Her leader can deny it. But her life mission has shown that before she got here, she was an anti-Semite, and she has continued to practise that since being elected.

Speaker, there are anti-Semites among us everywhere in this country. Anti-Semitism is a cancer out there that seems to be part of almost every community, unfortunately and shamefully.

It's our duty, in this Legislature, to root out and rid this province, this country, this world of all forms of hate, be they anti-Semitism, be they Islamophobia, be they homophobia or any other form of hate. It is our sworn duty to rid this world and therefore all parts of it from them and any other form of hate. But we don't make—it's not a requirement of citizenship or a requirement of living in this country or anywhere else or any part of this country. We know that it's out there, and we see evidence of it every day. I don't think there's—I will speak more on it further in my remarks, I'm sure, if I have time.

We see so much evidence of anti-Semitism all around—and it's daily. We'll talk about our universities and how sad it is that the leaders of tomorrow believe that the Jewish state should be eliminated. Many of the leaders of tomorrow believe that, and they're financed by the dues of other students.

Even if you hold those views, there's one thing that I believe absolutely: that when you are sworn in here as a

member of this chamber—there are only 124 of us who are honoured to serve the people of Ontario in this way, 124 out of approximately 15 million—

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you so much.

When you are sworn in here as a member, in my opinion, even if you are an anti-Semite, as the member has demonstrated repeatedly throughout her life, you check that at the door. Once you become a member here, you have to take on a different persona. You are a representative of this historic chamber. You no longer have the right to espouse your hateful views once you take a seat in this chamber, and you have to accept that as a condition of signing that oath, that you will relinquish your right, your privilege, to act in those ways any longer. It would appear to me that that is a reasonable restriction—if you want to call it that; I don't even want to call it a "restriction." It's a reasonable compromise for accepting of the will of the people that you would represent them here.

0920

But what does the member for Hamilton Centre do, as my colleague from Essex has pointed out? She used her first statements to politicize everything she does here through her own tainted lens. This could have been a great opportunity for the member from Hamilton Centre to actually show that there's been some growth, not some deterioration and some further rot—that there was actually further growth since she became a member here and that she understands what our grave responsibility is to serve everyone and to protect every vulnerable person. But she chose to put out that vile tweet—I still call them "tweets." I don't know, do you still call them "tweets" or "X" or whatever? To put that out, and she was immediately called out for it.

There, Speaker, is where the big failure comes, because her leader called for her to withdraw that and apologize. What we got from the member for Hamilton Centre was this pitiful, pathetic, fake apology that I don't believe for one minute had a scintilla of sincerity. It was done because her leader requested it, but the request included withdrawal and taking down of the original post. And, sadly, instead of the member from Hamilton Centre removing the post, the leader has turtled and gone into hiding on that issue—retreated to her cave, her burrow, whatever you want to call it—and doesn't want to talk about it. In fact, the leader of the NDP shamefully, disgustingly, has said that members on this side of the House—and I'll paraphrase it because I don't have the exact quote in front of me—are trying to take away the rights of a Muslim woman to speak on behalf of her constituents. That's a paraphrase. How shameful. On one hand, she's saying this is a divisive thing. Yes, what has been done is tremendously divisive, and the way to bring people together is to have a full-throated apology for that. But no, she fosters greater division by making that kind of a statement.

This is not about Muslim or Jew. This is about hatred. This is about hatred and using the platform of you, as an MPP—the platform that we have as the privilege of sitting

here. We would not have it otherwise, the platform that we have to get a message out. Whether correct or incorrect, it doesn't matter; it's our message to get out. So using this vehicle to espouse that kind of vitriolic hatred is wrong, and the right and just thing to do for this Legislature is to stand against it.

If we don't stand against it today, we better not try to stand against it tomorrow. You don't get a mulligan on these kinds of things. You must act, and you must act decisively. That's exactly what our government is doing—acting, and acting decisively. You think it's easy? I'm not saying that to you directly, Speaker. I mean that in the broad sense. No, it's not easy when you have—only once in my tenure here did we call a member for censure, and that was the former member for Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston. It may have happened before me. It is a very rare step that is taken; indeed, one that is gut-wrenching to have to go through—to make that choice. We are now put in a position here in this chamber, here in our Parliament, that we must call a colleague to order for words that were both written and, on a repeated basis, spoken. This is not easy but is absolutely necessary.

What it has also shown—and this is truly regrettable—is the actions of the opposition in respect to this. They also could have done the right thing. Their leader could have stuck to her guns and said, "I'm sorry, but this is a condition"—and I will say this without any fear of being wrong, although everyone is entitled to an opinion. Should a member of this Progressive Conservative caucus have made statements either in writing or in any form of communications or media in a quantifiable way similar to those against any group, our leader, Premier Ford, would give you about 30 seconds to have an absolute and unequivocal apology issued or you'd find yourself—the door would be slammed on your backside, because you wouldn't be a member of this caucus any longer. We couldn't do anything about whether you sit in this chamber or not, but hopefully the people of Hamilton Centre have an opportunity to make a decision at some time as well—and hopefully in any riding, if that was the case, the people would make the right decision.

We live in a vast melting pot here in Canada, here in Ontario, where people from all over the world have come here because this is a bastion of freedom, of civil rights and privileges, and a place where freedom and freedom of speech reigns. But freedom of speech, as has been quoted by people a whole lot smarter than me, has its limitations, and when it either directly or indirectly calls for violence against others, then that privilege must be not only curtailed but removed. We do have laws with regard to hate crimes and hate speech in this country, but they tend to be pretty wishy-washy when it comes to anti-Semitism.

My father, as many people know—as everybody here would know by now because I've said it many times—was a World War II veteran who fought overseas. While he was not the division or the battalion that liberated places like Auschwitz and Treblinka, he understood absolutely the persecution that Jews had experienced in Nazi Germany and all around the world.

0930

They lost their homeland—the homeland that was theirs, millennia ago. As a result of the Second World War and the absolute atrocities that were committed to Jewish people, the world rightfully—the free world and the new world, if you want to call it that, the post-Second-World-War world—decided that the Jewish people must have a homeland, and Israel was created. Ever since then, they have had to fight and battle and face tremendous discrimination in all corners of the world, but certainly in their corner of the world, where they are surrounded by hostiles. And then you wonder why Israel has felt it necessary to build a strong military to protect itself, because at any time of the day, of any time of a day, of any time of the week or the year, they could be subject to aggression.

This is what happened on October 7, Speaker. A terrorist attack of the most vile in nature, most abhorrent and hideous in nature, where young children were murdered and beheaded, women were raped, adults and children were killed and kidnapped. And Israel responded in the only way that it could. You have two choices: fight or flight. They have nowhere to go to. This is their homeland. There's nowhere to go. They have to fight for it and they have to defend themselves when they're faced with that kind of inhuman attack from the terrorists that make up Hamas.

And you will have the argument that, well, they shouldn't be attacking back. But Hamas is a terrorist group that doesn't care about human life, be it Jewish or Palestinian, so they set up their headquarters in apartment buildings, in hospitals, in schools. They have missile launchers among the people. They use their citizens. You see, Gaza is ruled by Hamas. Let's be clear. They use their citizens as human shields and find them completely dispensable from the point of view of human life. They don't care how many Palestinians are killed; they only care how many Jews they can kill. That's the difference. The Jews, the Israelites don't rush into the other countries and attack, but they're constantly in a mode of defence. But when they are attacked, they must respond. They must respond.

I tell you, Speaker, that every drop of Palestinian blood that has been spilled in these last couple of weeks, almost, is on the hands of Hamas. They, because they don't care about the loss of life, have put their citizens in grave danger, knowingly. Their actions were a deliberate attack, designed to kill as many Israeli Jews as possible. It wasn't a defensive move; it was designed to inflict as much damage in a short period of time on as many Jewish citizens as possible.

And I tell you, Speaker, it's the largest loss of human life among the Jewish people at any one time since the Holocaust. And we have a member of this chamber not only defending Hamas, but applauding them. How can we possibly do anything—

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Point of order, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member from London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I want to rise under standing order 25(h), which calls on members not to make allegations against another member.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I will rule that that out of order.

The member may continue. You have 10 seconds left on the clock.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Nice try, chief whip—the chief whip who blamed the Jews for the bombing of the hospital, taking her information from Hamas. I get it from US intelligence. It was the terrorists themselves. So you should not rise on a point of order like that again.

That member is wrong. She should be censured. I hope you will do the right thing and vote to censure her.

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

Mr. Dave Smith: When we were in COVID, I had a few speeches on various things related to COVID, and I said that we were in unprecedented times here in the Legislature. We're still in unprecedented times. I will admit I have not followed everything that has gone on in this Legislature for the entire 53 years that I have been alive. I don't recall, prior to last term—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I will ask the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke to please—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I am asking the House to come to order, and I apologize to the member for Peterborough–Kawartha.

This is a very sensitive topic. I'm asking for decorum in the House while we debate this issue. I do have the rules of order, and I will be following very closely. I recognize the sensitivity of this debate.

I apologize to the member and ask him to continue with his debate.

Mr. Dave Smith: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I don't recall a time where the Legislature has censured someone prior to last term. I'm going to read the text of the motion when Randy Hillier, the former member from Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston, was censured. The motion read, “That this House expresses its disapproval of, and disassociates itself from, continued disreputable conduct by the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston, most specifically his use of social media to make racist and discriminatory statements about a federal cabinet minister,” and it goes on to describe things.

The motion we have before us today: “That this House expresses its disapproval of, and disassociates itself from, continued disreputable conduct by the member for Hamilton Centre”—the only difference in that first line is the riding—“most specifically her use of social media”—“her” instead of “his”—“to make anti-Semitic and discriminatory statements related to the existence of the State of Israel and its defence against Hamas terrorists.”

The only substantive differences between the two motions, one that the 26 returning NDP members from the last government unanimously supported—the only substantive differences: “anti-Semitism” instead of the word

“racism,” “Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston” instead of “Hamilton Centre,” and “his” instead of “her.”

Last government, 26 NDP members stood up in this House and said that comments made on social media against a minority group in Canada were inappropriate, and they said they didn't want to be associated with that. They felt that that put this Legislature in disrepute.

0940

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I apologize to the member from Peterborough–Kawartha. I am asking the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke to please not—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I'm asking you to respect the House—this is a very sensitive subject—and not to engage, if necessary, with the members of the opposition. Otherwise, I would ask you to come to order.

I apologize to the member from Peterborough–Kawartha. Please resume your debate.

Mr. Dave Smith: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

What we had in the last session was somebody who stood up on social media, who publicly made comments about somebody who was a Muslim. And they were horrible things to say. There was nothing good that could come from it.

The NDP—the 26 members who were in government last term who have returned all stood up in their place and said it made our Legislature look bad: “That member should not be recognized. That member does not represent what the people of Ontario want. That member should not be able to speak in their place and we should not recognize them as a member. We should take away their ability to stand up here and further discredit the Legislature of Ontario, further discredit the people of Ontario.” And they were all too happy to do it.

I will admit that member was not someone I was particularly fond of. That member was not someone that I would have said I would have shared a coffee with, because I probably would have had to spit it out at some point. I freely admit I had no problem personally saying that I didn't want to hear from them again. But that didn't factor into the decision on what we did. What we did as an Ontario Legislature was we said, “Your comments are not acceptable. You cannot attack a minority group in this country. You cannot disparage another group in this province.”

What we have now is a member from Hamilton Centre who historically has made comments that very much can be taken as anti-Semitic. On October 7, when a terrorist organization came into Israel, slaughtered women, children and families, dragged women out of their homes, raped them in the streets, livestreamed it on Facebook and were proud of it, the member from Hamilton Centre stood up and said, “Yes, but”—

Interjection.

Mr. Dave Smith: —“that is acceptable because.” That is not acceptable at any time. Trying to defend Hamas terrorists is never acceptable.

And to the NDP member who wants to heckle me, it has been said before: When someone comes out and shows you who they are, believe them. And I believe you. That is totally unacceptable—totally unacceptable.

Interjection.

Miss Monique Taylor: Shut up.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): The member from Hamilton Mountain will withdraw that comment.

Miss Monique Taylor: I will withdraw telling him to shut up.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): The member from Hamilton Mountain will come to order.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke will come to order.

I apologize once again to the member from Peterborough–Kawartha. Please continue.

Mr. Dave Smith: Yesterday, I said in one of my speeches that there was a word I couldn't say because it was unparliamentary, because I'd have to withdraw it. I'm going to say it and I'm going to withdraw it afterward because I want to put it on the record: It's a hypocritical statement to make.

I withdraw the statement.

That is something that is absolutely disgusting. We can't ever normalize terrorism. We can't ever accept that that is a way of doing anything. What we have seen from this member repeatedly then is not just anti-Semitism—anti-Semitism is a fancy word for saying Jew hate, and that's truly what it is, a hatred for Jews.

There was supposed to be a pro-Palestinian rally that turned into a pro-Hamas rally that turned into an anti-Israel rally: statements like—and the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke made the statement; he referred to it as well—“From River to Sea.” That is all of Israel. When you're at a rally in support of a group that has made Holocaust-denying comments, when you're there with them and you're making those statements, you're chanting that, you're saying Palestine should have everything from the Jordan River to the Red Sea, that Israel should not exist. That can only be taken one way. You cannot say “Yes, but.” There is no “Yes, but.” That is, “I'm advocating for the destruction of the Jewish state.” That's what it is.

Now, it's an easy thing to correct. All that we're asking in this motion: “Until the member retracts and deletes her statements on social media and makes an apology in her place in the House.” Stand up and say, “I made a mistake.” Stand up and say, “I shouldn't have done that. I'll delete that tweet. I'll delete that statement. I didn't recognize that what I was doing was harmful to a whole group of people. I didn't realize that what I was doing was something that was racist. I now know better.” That's all that has to be said and done.

But, what has the member done? They pinned the statement on Twitter—or X, I guess it's called now—so that every time you go to her page, every time you take a look at what she is saying, that is what you see. She has

doubled down on it, tripled down on it, however you want to describe it.

The Leader of the Opposition said this is not acceptable on the day she did it and said, “I want you to take it down and apologize for it,” and the member doubled down. She didn’t take it down. She proudly put it out there and said, “This is who I am.” We’re at a point where an apology doesn’t fix it. We are at a point where that voice should not be heard.

In 2018, I introduced a private member’s bill called the terrorist sanctions act, and part of the reason I did it was because of somebody the Trudeau government was trying to bring to Canada. At the time, Justin Trudeau said that these could be powerful voices in our country. Those are the voices I do not want. I do not want someone who is willingly standing up and promoting hate. I do not want someone who is willingly standing up and saying, “I believe the destruction of an entire country and the removal of a people from that area is acceptable.” That is not a voice that should be heard anywhere in this province. That is not an ideology that should be promoted anywhere in this province, and I’m going to come back to it again.

Twenty-six members are sitting in this chamber right now, who were in this chamber in the last government, who stood up unanimously and said, “That white guy can’t be heard,” because what he said was unacceptable, and those 26 members are sitting on their hands now because one of their colleagues has done it. One of their colleagues has promoted the destruction of an entire people with her comments, and they find that acceptable; it’s not. It’s disgusting—absolutely disgusting. There are a number of people on that side that I had a great deal of respect for, that I was proud to call my friends. I don’t know that I can do that anymore.

0950

What we’re seeing is the worst that we can see in this Legislature. Not only do we have a member who is defending terrorists, but we have members defending that member with “Yes, but.” We heard the heckling—people at home didn’t hear it because it doesn’t pick it up on the mike. We saw what was going on in here. It was disgusting.

The member from Hamilton Centre needs to stand up—I’m sorry; the member from Hamilton Centre needs to rise above. She needs to say, “I was wrong.” She needs to say, “I recognize I was wrong.” She can say, “I’m a proud Palestinian” or “I’m of proud Palestinian background, but I don’t believe that anyone should be eliminated. I don’t believe that the country of Israel should be removed”—she is not saying that she dislikes Palestine or that she is not supporting Palestine by saying that; what she’s saying is that she recognizes that it’s wrong to oppress any group, that it’s wrong to have hatred for any people. That’s all she has to do. Take down the tweet. Admit that her comments were wrong. Admit that her comments were hateful. Admit that she created a great deal of stress and anxiety for an entire group of people, not only in Ontario, but everywhere.

Our House leader talked about a mistake that was made in the federal government, when a Nazi was celebrated and

the Speaker of the House ended up resigning and taking responsibility for it. The Speaker could have had his own “Yes, but.” He could have said, “Yes, but I didn’t know this person. Yes, but my staff did the research, and they didn’t pass that information on. Yes, but there were extenuating circumstances.” He had culpable deniability on it because he did have a staff who was doing all of the background on it.

The reality is, all of us have staff who do a lot of the work for us, who get us the information we need, but we are ultimately responsible for what comes out in our name, on our letterhead—or because of things that we do.

The member from Hamilton Centre did not have staff do all of this research. The member from Hamilton Centre did not have staff who put her in a position where she made a mistake. The member from Hamilton Centre did this on her own volition.

The Speaker in Ottawa stepped down and took responsibility for that mistake. All we’re asking is that the member from Hamilton Centre take responsibility for what she has said and done.

We have freedom of choice. We have free speech. What we don’t have is freedom from the consequences of our actions and freedom from the consequences of what we say or do. There are consequences for what we say and do. And in order for us to be good legislators, in order for us to have the trust of the people of this province—the trust of the people who elected us to come here—we have to take responsibility for what we say and what we do. We have to be able to stand up and say, when we’ve made a mistake, “I’ve made a mistake.” And we have to try and correct things so that we don’t continue making those mistakes, because the people of this province put their trust in us to step forward and do what’s right.

We’re asking the member from Hamilton Centre to do what’s right: to be accountable, to recognize it’s never acceptable to support terrorism. It is never acceptable to actively speak about the destruction of a people or the removal of another country. That is not acceptable. If I had my way, I would say not only should we be censuring her, but we should be removing her from this Legislature. We will leave that to the electorate in Hamilton Centre. She’s the one who is going to have to go back to those people and justify why they should trust that she has the judgement to do the job when she has demonstrated she does not have the judgement to do this job.

Speaker, I ask everyone here, vote in favor of censure, the same way that the 26 members of the NDP censured someone in the last session.

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

Mr. Brian Riddell: It’s my honour to speak today in support of this motion, and I would like to thank the members who spoke before me. As we witness one of the most significant acts of violence in our lifetime, we cannot stand by and allow the member for Hamilton Centre to issue such irresponsible, inappropriate comments. Day after day, we have witnessed the horrific images of innocent victims of this attack: people throwing hand grenades

into bomb shelters, people they don't even know except that they're Jewish, to kill them; decapitating babies; raping women. This is so unacceptable in our world, and in a country like Canada, it's unimaginable. To support any type of terrorism is ridiculous. We must stand firm against this terror. We must stand shoulder to shoulder with Israel in its grief and against these Hamas terrorists who have no greater goal than inflicting as much damage to civilians as possible.

We cannot accept that a member of this chamber thinks otherwise. It is unacceptable. To make matters worse, the member for Hamilton Centre has a proven track record of anti-Semitic remarks for which this member shows no remorse at all. I find it greatly disappointing that the leader of the official opposition has failed to take decisive leadership into action towards this goal. The Leader of the Opposition has lost out on a historical opportunity to come together with our government to show solidarity with the Jewish community. She has done this by failing to remove the member for Hamilton Centre from her caucus. We must remain unwavering in our commitment, ensuring there is no space in this chamber or within our province for any endorsement or empathy towards the ruthless terrorists that are accountable for this tragic loss of life.

The member's comments about these terror attacks in the defence of Hamas terrorists are entirely unacceptable, in stark contrast to how the majority, if not all, of Ontarians feel since the killings began on October 7 of this year. We are a peaceful province, and we will not tolerate hate.

The actions of Hamas should not be heralded as a resistance movement. They have directly led to the deaths and suffering of thousands of lives in the region, including Palestinians. Make no mistake, the actions taken by Hamas had the sole intention of causing death and destruction to as many people as possible, and that includes Palestinians.

Thousands of lives, young and old, have been lost. Thousands more are injured and many are being held hostage, among them Canadians. The horror, the fear, the anger we as Ontarians have been feeling since October 7 is also being felt across our great country and worldwide. In this critical moment, it is imperative for our province and the global community to reassure our support for Israel and uphold its right to self-defence. What else can they do? As a previous member stated, there is no place for them to run to, so they have to fight. Self-defence is the only thing they can do.

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The right to self-defence is a fundamental right of any sovereign state, and Israel's right to defend itself must be respected just as much as any other state's. The reason we must stand united in condemning these acts of terror is also that every Ontarian and every Canadian knows they will never stand alone in the face of terror.

It is vital to condemn terrorism in all forms because doing so only upholds the sanctity of human life and promotes peace, but also sends a strong message that violence has no place in any society. Whether terrorism

occurs in Canada, Ontario or anywhere in the world, or Israel, we should all find common ground in stopping violence in its tracks.

I would like to acknowledge the Canadian citizens who have been killed. Currently, at least six Canadians have been killed by Hamas terrorists and hundreds are trapped in the region. They're holding hostages and my heart bleeds at what conditions they must be in right now. Efforts are in progress to ensure the safe evacuation of our remaining Canadian citizens in the area and to locate those who are currently unaccounted for. Our thoughts and prayers must go out to all those affected and the families, so they can return to Canada safely.

I would also like to recognize those in our community who are at the front lines of protecting Ontarians during this time of crisis. Thank you to the great police forces from across the province that stood ready to protect vulnerable communities from all forms of hate.

In my riding, Waterloo Regional Police have issued the following statement. It reads: "We are aware of global threats online inciting violence in relation to the current situation in the Middle East.

"We want to assure residents in Waterloo region that we are monitoring the situation closely, in collaboration with provincial and national public safety partners, and have increased resources and patrols ... around faith-based locations and organizations."

Isn't that sad? That's what we have to do in Canada because of these terrorists.

Waterloo Regional Police "will not tolerate any form of intimidation, harassment, ... hate, hate-motivated behaviour or violence" of any kind. "We remain committed to ensuring everyone is safe and feels safe in Waterloo region."

Also, the Ontario Provincial Police in my riding and the public school board issued statements calling for peace during these uncertain times. The OPP said that "our law enforcement partners are closely monitoring ... any situation" that "could impact public safety in our communities.... While the OPP respects the right of everyone to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, everyone also has a right to a safe environment."

Since the heinous killings began earlier this month, many people in my riding have called on and emailed my office to express their fear, their outrage, their disgust over this loss of life in Israel. They also are deeply appalled by the actions of the member for Hamilton Centre. The comments made by the member for Hamilton Centre drew a swift reaction not only at the local level, but also from politicians, citizens and organizations across the province.

Please allow me to paraphrase some of the statements that have been issued publicly. I would like to highlight these statements because they demonstrate the actions and words of one member who has caused so much pain during this time, in this immense crisis in the Jewish community in Canada and Ontario.

From the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center on October 10: "We are outraged by this statement from" the member for Hamilton Centre "and her refusal to

acknowledge the atrocities committed by the” terrorist “group Hamas against Israeli” citizens.

“Not for the first time, she has caused hurt and harm to the Jewish community and brought shame to Ontarians” and shame to the NDP that sits across from you right now. And this includes the people that voted for her in Hamilton Centre. “It’s long past time for the @OntarioNDP to take decisive action and remove her from its caucus, once and for all.”

From the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, on October 10: “Israeli babies beheaded”—think about that. How could you behead a baby? What is wrong with you? It just blows my mind. “Israeli young women raped, more than 100 Israeli men, women, & children kidnapped, and 900 & counting murdered at the hands of #Hamas terrorists and this is what” the member for Hamilton Centre “has to say.

“This statement is *filled* with lies that will do nothing”—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I’ll ask the member to withdraw the use of the word “lies.”

Mr. Brian Riddell: I withdraw—“to create peace & will only serve to foment hatred against #Canada’s Jewish community.

“We call for the immediate removal of” the member for Hamilton Centre from the Legislature.

When I think about this, I have a personal note. I remember I was in Munich, Germany, with my youngest son. He said, “Let’s go to Dachau concentration camp just to see what happened there.” At first, I thought, okay, I’ll do that. We went to Dachau; it was a surreal experience. It was something I’ve never experienced in my life, and I will never forget. It’s touched me deeply.

I remember going into the area where they had “bath-house” on the top, and it was a gas chamber. I watched this Jewish woman walk into this gas chamber and fall to her knees and cry. I felt so bad for this woman. I went over, and I helped her. And then at the back of it, they had a place where they fumigated all their clothes and reused them. It’s something that’s touched me my whole life. Then you walk to the back of Dachau, and the ashes from the crematorium—it’s where they just piled them in a pile and they just blew away. It’s heart-wrenching.

To think Israeli people today have a homeland and people would throw, like I said earlier, hand grenades into bomb shelters—people they don’t even know, and they’re killing them.

The part that disturbs me the most, I think, is beheading babies. How do you do that? What’s in your mind? To me, you shouldn’t be allowed to even breathe air to commit crimes like that. It’s horrible.

As a member of this Parliament, it’s our duty to protect the dignity of this Legislature on behalf of all Ontarians. What the member from Renfrew said earlier, it’s such an honour and privilege to be in this chamber. You have to leave all your other thoughts behind and serve the people of Ontario. I just totally disagree with the position that the member from Hamilton Centre has taken.

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

Mr. Lorne Coe: I stand in my place today to speak to government motion 39. I stand in my place this morning to speak on behalf of the residents of the town of Whitby but, in particular, the Chabad of Durham Region.

Speaker, the member for Hamilton Centre, by way of things she has done and left intentionally undone, has placed this House and its members in such disrepute that as a Parliament, we have no choice but to act to defend the dignity of this institution on behalf of our constituents.

We know that in the early morning hours of October 7, unprovoked and by surprise, the terrorist organization Hamas launched a rocket barrage and manned excursion into the State of Israel. We now know that this horrific attack has taken the lives of more than 1,400 innocent Israeli citizens and wounded thousands more. Further, Hamas continues to hold more than 200 hostages, which they forcibly abducted.

1010

Only three days later, on October 10, the member for Hamilton Centre took to social media and posted an image of a statement on her MPP letterhead, bearing her name, her title and Ontario’s coat of arms. Rather than condemning the terrorist atrocities as most of the Western world had already done, the member chose to justify the Hamas attack on the basis of an anti-Semitic allegation that the mere existence of the State of Israel is a racist endeavour. I will paraphrase elements of the member’s statement, because quoting it at great length will only proliferate the member’s hateful rhetoric.

The member states outright that the existence of Israel is a generations-long occupation of Palestine, that Israel is an apartheid regime, and that for its entire short history, it has furthered only violence through what she calls “settler colonialism.” Further, the member ties her anti-Semitic ideological conjecture directly to the present war. At no point does the member acknowledge that the present conflict exists only because of an unprovoked terrorist attack aimed at Israeli civilians and carried out by a militant terrorist group with a core mandate to annihilate the Jewish homeland. The member’s musings at any other time would still have been offensive and unacceptable for any elected representative of the people of Ontario, but to make them in association with a violent act of unrepentant and unprovoked terrorism is repugnant and intolerable to the greatest extent of those words.

On October 7, more innocent Jewish men, women, children and infants were killed than on any day since the Holocaust. It was not enough for the member from Hamilton Centre that their families and friends would never see their loved ones again. She felt justified in spreading her belief that the victims and their surviving friends and families were in fact somehow responsible for their own tragic fate. Inexplicably, the member’s statement, whether intentional or impetuous, blames the mere existence of the State of Israel for the thousands of rockets launched at civilians and the invasion of thousands of militants who killed, raped and kidnapped with no regard for the dignity of human life.

Speaker, the member's own leader recognized the blatant inappropriateness the very same day the statement was posted and quickly called upon the member to apologize and retract it. For unknown reasons, the member took more than 24 hours to post a half-hearted apology buried in the comment section of her own post. Additionally, her so-called apology ultimately reaffirmed her position against Israel's right to self-defence.

At present, the member has still not deleted the original statement, which has now been seen more than 3.1 million times.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I apologize to the member. It is now time for members' statements.

Debate deemed adjourned.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Mrs. Daisy Wai: I rise to recommend the remarkable contributions of Ontario's non-profit sector. These unsung heroes, our community champions, play a pivotal role in addressing the needs of the most vulnerable in our communities.

I extend my gratitude to all my MPP colleagues, along with our valued partners, for making the second Non-Profit Sector Appreciation Week, held from February 13 to 19, a resounding success.

In the spirit of appreciation, I'm excited to reveal our plan for 2024. This year, the appreciation will be on February 13 and we will continue to have it for a week. It will be from the 12th to the 16th. We will continue to issue certificates and will have MPPs deliver them to the non-profit associations. We will encourage more local recognition with the encouragement of our MPP colleagues, mayors, chambers of commerce and professional associations. We will organize a reception day at Queen's Park on February 13 to start off the week of appreciation in February 2024. However, let us keep this spirit alive throughout the year.

CONVERGENCE MUSIC AND ART FESTIVAL

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Oshawa is always a happening place to be, with a long-time vibrant arts and music scene. But I want to tell you about a very special event that took place earlier this fall in downtown Oshawa. There was a lot of buzz about a first-ever downtown urban music festival called Convergence.

The Convergence festival was an event and main concert for the ages—in fact, Speaker, for all ages. Young, not-so-young, parents with strollers and seniors with rollers all converged on the downtown for music, community and a great party.

As Krista Licsi, the director of Oshawa Tourism, said, "Convergence is a celebration of the vibrant ecosystem of artists, musicians and innovators who have long been part of Oshawa's legacy and culture."

Speaker, I am sure you are aware of the music group the Strumbellas. Well, they came to Oshawa. But they weren't alone. Convergence was a 10-hour mashup of emerging artists and established musical acts, acrobats and actors, makers, small shop owners and international cuisine showcasing Oshawa's diversity—all local.

It is estimated that between 6,000 and 8,000 people converged on Oshawa's streets for the festival and it was a rock-and-rolling success because of the backstage crew of so many volunteers. This first-ever annual festival was a partnership between the city of Oshawa, the region of Durham, Central Counties Tourism and the Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce, and they made it completely free to the public.

Anyone who missed it will want to make sure they come next year. Everyone is invited. Mark your calendars for September 21, 2024. It will be bigger and better, with even more to see and do. I've got my 'Shwa Rock City T-shirt ready to go. I hope you will come and see how we celebrate in the City in Motion.

DRESS PURPLE DAY

Mr. Deepak Anand: Every October, children's aid societies across Ontario raise awareness about the important role that individuals and communities play in supporting vulnerable children, youth and families through the provincial Dress Purple Day campaign. The Dress Purple Day is about supporting Ontarians facing challenges and ensuring children, youth and families have access to the support, information and the resources they need.

Dress Purple Day is also a reminder to young people that they have the right to safety and well-being, and that goes beyond what we often think of when we use those words. It's critical to understand that those rights extend beyond physical bodies. They have the right to be safe emotionally, spiritually and culturally.

I would like to recognize the Peel CAS, with their offices in Mississauga–Malton, for amplifying the message that it's our collective responsibility to ensure that every child's journey is guided by love, support and hope. Thank you, Peel CAS and all your members and volunteers, for your community service.

1020

To all my fellow MPPs and all Ontarians, join me this year on October 27 and dress purple to show that you are part of a community that cares for children, youth and families. Let's make sure that they all know that they have the right to the most appropriate kind of support. Let's wear something purple to show children, youth and families that we are all here to help.

No one is alone.

ARTHRITIS

Mr. Chris Glover: I want to dedicate my member's statement to Arthritis Society Canada and to the 2.3 million Ontarians with arthritis—including disability activist Janet Rodriguez—and to my own mother, Gwen

Glover. She got arthritis in her early twenties, and she was one of the very first people in the world to receive artificial joints in her fingers in 1970.

Over half of Ontarians with arthritis are under the age of 65—and the onset in their twenties and thirties is common. The pain from arthritis impacts the ability to socialize, causes loss of sleep, and causes people to reduce their work or to retire early. Some with long-term benefits are pushed onto ODSP, and with a housing allowance of \$556 a month, ODSP pushes some people into homelessness.

But there are solutions. There are community joint management programs that help people self-manage their illness and reduce hospital visits. There are medications, including new biological medications, but not all are covered by OHIP.

And there are actions that this government can take to mitigate the impact of arthritis. They can provide support for the community joint management programs. They can cover the cost of medications so that people can access the medication that works best for them. They can double the ODSP rates so that people with disabilities, including arthritis, do not end up homeless. And they can fund the research to find a cure for arthritis.

GO TRANSIT

Mr. Aris Babikian: Mr. Speaker, I was delighted to join the Minister of Transportation, the Associate Minister of Transportation and the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery at the Agincourt GO station to announce the completion of major infrastructure upgrades at the Agincourt and Milliken GO stations, along the Stouffville line, as part of our plan to deliver more trips more often across the GO network. The enhancements at both GO stations will include an additional track and platforms, new pedestrian tunnels and brand new station buildings with modern facilities. The Agincourt and Milliken GO stations will build capacity on the Stouffville line to meet current and future ridership demand and support two-way, all-day GO train service every 15 minutes between Unionville GO station and Union Station.

Building reliable public transportation has never been so important. The upgrades will ensure the necessary transit infrastructure is in place to support our growing population, while delivering safer, faster and more convenient travel options for commuters.

Commuters in Scarborough deserve reliable public transit. That is why our government is making the critical investments needed to make this a reality.

The upgrades to the Agincourt and Milliken GO stations are great news for residents in Scarborough–Agincourt who count on public transit to go where they need to go.

It is an honour and privilege to serve the residents of Scarborough–Agincourt.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION ACTIVITIES

Mr. Wayne Gates: I've been a hockey player and a fan my entire life. When I was a kid, I became a goalie.

Believe it or not, I was the first goalie in Niagara to wear white skates, which was inspired by one of my hockey heroes, Marv Edwards, who recently passed away. I love going to Leaf games, Sabre games with my family and friends.

This is why I'm so outraged by the National Hockey League's decision to ban Pride Tape on hockey sticks. It flies in the face of the league's message that they support player choice. More importantly, it sends a message to kids in our community and across the province that they are not welcome playing hockey.

We've heard from several players—Zach Hyman; Connor McDavid, the best hockey player in the world—who are disappointed with the ban, and some even plan to still use the tape on their sticks.

I want to be clear: Hockey is for everybody. And we need to ensure that the LGBTQ community feels included in the sport, full stop.

I strongly disagree with the ban, and I believe I should use my voice, as an MPP and a lifelong lover of hockey, to call for the inclusion of the LGBTQ community in the National Hockey League. I call on the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport to send a letter to the National Hockey League, where we have two teams in the province of Ontario disagreeing with the NHL's policy that hurts the LGBTQ community.

CHESTMATES DRAGON BOAT TEAM

Mr. Ric Bresee: Speaker, as we all know, this House is recognizing October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month, so I wanted to share with the House one of the most inspiring events that I had the privilege of attending this summer.

I met with a group of amazing women. They support each other and they inspire the world. Each one of these grandmothers, mothers, daughters, sisters and aunts have undergone, or are currently undergoing, treatment for breast cancer. They are also members of Breast Cancer Action Kingston, and they call themselves Chestmates because they are dragon boaters. They are a dragon boat team, a group of up to 25 members in a 25-foot-long boat paddling their hearts out. They train several times a week all summer long, competing in several dragon boat races against other breast cancer survivors.

It was humbling to watch these health-and-heart warriors propel themselves, showing their strength in unity, their positive spirit to continue to fight to survive and, most importantly, showing their love for each other as they paddled.

Cancer affects everyone. In all cases, cancer causes massive disruption to the individual and the entire family. But thankfully, today more frequently there are success stories, not tragedies.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and as the Chestmates say, paddles up.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Adil Shamji: Ontarians deserve a government that acts transparently, with accountability and in their best

interests. Yet time after time, it feels like that hasn't happened. We've seen it with broken promises to protect public health care, with broken promises to protect the greenbelt. And now we're seeing mounting concerns about backroom deals to build a spa at Ontario Place while demolishing the science centre. The residents of Don Valley East won't stand for it.

When this government walked back its decision on the greenbelt after getting caught by the Integrity Commissioner and the Auditor General, the justification was that they made a decision not supported by the people of Ontario. That's an understatement. Here's another decision not supported by the people of Ontario: the decision to demolish the science centre in my riding of Don Valley East and instead build a private spa at Ontario Place that has a sprawling mega-garage subsidized by taxpayer money.

These are major decisions created without any consultation. And in case there is any doubt about it, these decisions are vigorously opposed by Ontarians. For example, we've already submitted petitions with nearly 35,000 signatures, and we're not done yet.

Today, I join my constituents in calling on the government to act with integrity and transparency, to listen to the residents of Don Valley East and the citizens of Ontario, to save our science centre and to stop the spa.

ÉCOLE CATHOLIQUE SAINT-DOMINIQUE-SAVIO

Mr. Rick Byers: Colleagues, it is my pleasure to tell you about a great occasion that took place in the heart of my great riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound last Saturday: the celebration of the 25th anniversary of École Saint-Dominique-Savio in Owen Sound. It is a beautiful school in a lovely neighbourhood north of the downtown core. It is also a very unique school as it is the only French school serving our Grey-Bruce community.

There was a great turnout for this important event. We heard many speakers tell how the school had made a big difference to them through their education, their roles as teachers and administrators, and as members of the community. École Saint-Dominique-Savio has made a big difference in the lives of so many over 25 years.

We also heard about all the efforts and commitment to establish a French school in the heart of Owen Sound 25 years ago. I was struck by just what an amazing achievement that was. It takes great courage and a spirit of thinking of others to make such a project a success. But the efforts were well worth it, as the spirit of welcoming and community was very evident last Saturday in Owen Sound.

1030

Félicitations à l'École Saint-Dominique-Savio pour votre anniversaire. Pour les 25 dernières années, vous avez joué un rôle important dans l'éducation des étudiants de notre communauté. Merci beaucoup, et félicitations pour cette occasion très spéciale.

VICTIM SUPPORT GRANT PROGRAM

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: Just last month, our government, through the Victim Support Grant Program, announced more than \$4 million to help support victims and survivors of intimate partner and domestic violence, human trafficking and child exploitation, and \$100,000 of that funding went to Halton police services, directed towards crisis intervention and counselling.

Great work is also being done across the province by women shelters, including in my own community of Oakville North-Burlington. Halton Women's Place held its annual Hope in High Heels event, with 400-plus men, women and young people participating. They launched the Silent Witness Project, a profoundly moving exhibit of 52 life-sized purple silhouettes that lined the space, each representing a woman whose life was tragically cut short last year by gender-based violence in Ontario. They symbolize women who lived, laughed and loved among us. They were daughters, sisters, mothers, aunts, friends, neighbours and colleagues. Their voices were silenced forever, and these life-sized figures, aptly named the "silent witnesses," now stand in their memory. Let their lives and actions inspire us to reaffirm our efforts to end the scourge of gender-based violence.

I am proud to be part of a government that has provided vital support and legal protections for victims, survivors and their children, and I congratulate the Solicitor General on taking historic action on this serious issue in our communities.

HOUSE SITTINGS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 9(h), the Clerk has received written notice from the government House leader indicating that a temporary change in the weekly meeting schedule of the House is required, and therefore, the House shall commence at 9 a.m. on Monday, October 23, 2023, for the proceeding of orders of the day.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Next, we have introduction of visitors. Before we commence, I'll remind members that the standing orders allow five minutes for the introduction of visitors. I will ask the members to keep their comments brief and devoid of political commentary. At five minutes, if there are still members standing up, I will see if the House wants it to continue past five minutes. If one member objects, we will stop and move to question period.

Introduction of visitors?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to introduce board members and staff from the Arthritis Society Canada. We have Andrew Branion and Vas Rao, who are both board members, and then we have Trish Barbato, Sian Bevan, Cheryl McClellan, Kelly Gorman, Joanne Di Nardo and Margretha Gonsalvez, who all work for the society. We

also have Shawn Brady, Ilene Cohen-Ackerman—whom most of us met—Carolyn Goard, Luke Fox, Nikki St. Clair, Trish Baldocchi and Laura Mandel. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Robin Martin: I was going to rise to thank the Arthritis Society Canada, who is here today, on behalf of the Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. We enjoyed their breakfast this morning. I wanted to thank particularly Trish Barbato, president and CEO; Sian Bevan, chief science officer; Andrew Branion, vice-chair, national board of directors; Vas Rao, board of directors; Kelly Gorman, senior director; Joanne Di Nardo; and Ilene as well for educating us all about the tools for arthritis.

Ms. Chandra Pasma: It's my pleasure to introduce this morning Stefanie Black, government relations coordinator with the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers, and Mary Jo Nabuurs and Heather Hanwell of Ontario School Safety. Welcome.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: It's another beautiful day, and a beautiful day in the chamber with everyone. I would like to introduce two incredible people from beautiful Beaches—East York, and that is super Shawn Brady and clever Cheryl McLellan—try saying that five times real fast—from the Arthritis Society of Canada.

Ms. Natalie Pierre: From my riding of Burlington, I'd like to welcome France Carbonneau and Carolyn Goard, who are here today with the Arthritis Society of Canada. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Chris Glover: I'd like to welcome to the House, or at least viewing on screen, Janet Rodriguez and Gwen Glover, my mother.

I'd also like to welcome to the House the volunteers with the Arthritis Society of Canada, including Lauren Meadows, Claudia Ali, Chamila Belleth, Marie Beaton, Nikhita Setia, Jutta Auksi, Yolanda Wang, Jeff Aarson, Sandra Grafe, Kayla Jenkins, Therese Lane, Simi Silver, France Carbonneau, Lee Welsby-Benko, Athena LaCarte, Margaret Anne Baker, Norma Lapointe, Mary Lou Boudreau, Deborah Paleczny, Anna Samson and Jo-Anna Armocida.

Mr. Adil Shamji: I'd like to say good morning and welcome to all the members of the Arthritis Society of Canada, notably the volunteers, the backbone of any organization, but also to Trish Barbato, president and CEO; Sian Bevan, chief science officer; Andrew Branion, vice-chair, national board of directors; Vas Rao, board of directors; Kelly Gorman, senior director for public policy and government affairs; and finally, Joanne Di Nardo, senior director for public policy and government affairs. I welcome you to the House today.

Hon. Nina Tangri: I just really want to welcome the students and staff of the Lynn-Rose school in my great riding of Mississauga—Streetsville.

Mr. Nolan Quinn: October is Disability Employment Awareness Month, so I'd like to welcome the organizations joining myself and Minister Parsa for a round table on disability employment today: from Ontario Disability Employment Network, Jeannette Campbell and

her team; from Community Living Toronto, Sarah MacDonald; the Bob Rumball Centre for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing; Spinal Cord Injury Ontario; the Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work; Community Living Oakville; and Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital.

MPP Jamie West: In the gallery behind me, members of TVO and the Canadian Media Guild are here. I'd like to welcome John Michael McGrath, Meredith Martin and Julie-Anne Von Drejs to the chamber.

Hon. Michael Parsa: I'd like to introduce two friends who are visiting us this morning here: Henry Wall, CAO of the Kenora DSB, and His Worship Fred Mota, mayor of Red Lake. Welcome to Queen's Park. I look forward to meeting with you both.

Hon. Vijay Thanigasalam: I would like to introduce today's page captain, Caesar Beesley, and his family, Angela and Christopher, from my riding of Scarborough—Rouge Park to the Ontario Legislature. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Shall I continue? Agreed.

The member for Kiiwetinoong.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch, Speaker. *Remarks in Anishiniimowin.* Good morning.

I'd like to welcome some guests from the riding of Kiiwetinoong: from Kasabonika Lake First Nation, Dorothy Anderson and Karen Anderson; from Kingfisher Lake, Anita Mekanak; from Muskrat Dam, Deputy Chief Vietta Morris, but also my sister-in-law; and then Eugene Tait, council member for Sachigo Lake First Nation. It's good to see you here.

And also Esther Sakakeep: She's a councillor from Kingfisher Lake First Nation, my own First Nation, but also my sister.

Hon. David Piccini: It gives me great pleasure to welcome the mayor from my constituency in my hometown, Mayor Olena Hankivsky from Port Hope, and a fantastic colleague of mine who works in a constituency office, Kaitlynn Steele. Welcome to Queen's Park.

1040

Mr. David Smith: I'd like to let the House know that today is the national day of Nigeria. They will have a session at 12 noon in rooms 230 and 228. Thank you.

Mrs. Robin Martin: My apologies for rising a second time, but I did not know—and now do—that my sister-in-law, Meredith Martin, is in the gallery. So I want to preserve family—

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

QUESTION PERIOD

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: Good morning, Speaker. Government members have applauded the Premier's frequent use of his personal phone to conduct government business, a

flagrant disregard for the Information and Privacy Commissioner's recommendation that government members and political staff only use government devices and platforms. This government should know the rules. In fact, that guidance came after the Premier's own staff were caught using personal email accounts to arrange for his souped-up van.

My question is to the Premier. Did the Premier intentionally use his personal phone to communicate in secret with people who have business before the government?

Hon. Doug Ford: Thank you for the question. Mr. Speaker, you can see where the NDP's priorities are—worrying about helping little Ms. Jones on a pothole or helping someone find a doctor or so on and so forth.

I'll tell you what our priorities are. Our priorities are making sure we cut taxes for people, reducing gas by 10.7 cents, getting rid of the licence plate sticker, cutting tolls on the 412 and the 418, building hospitals in every region of this province, building the 413 and making sure that we're building the subway system. We're doubling the size of the transit system right here in Toronto and the GTA.

Mr. Speaker, that's our priorities—not worrying about little Ms. Jones calling me about a pothole, that's for sure.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, the Premier and the government may not like it, but the Auditor General made it very clear that any devices or accounts used for government business can be searchable by freedom-of-information requests, even if it's a personal device.

But the Premier has been singularly focused on hiding records of these phone calls and text messages. He is even appealing freedom-of-information requests to avoid sharing those records. Will the Premier withdraw his appeals of these FOI requests?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: I would be careful if I were the NDP talking about hiding people, Mr. Speaker. I really, really would.

Look, earlier today, the Minister of Finance announced the date of the next fall economic statement for the province of Ontario. As the Premier has said, he's not going to stop working on behalf of his constituents—Mrs. Jones who might need a doctor or a pothole filled in front of her home. He's not going to stop doing that because the Leader of the Opposition is demanding that he stop doing that. That is at the core of everything that this Premier and Ford Nation have been all about. It's the same type of talk that we heard before when his brother became the mayor, right? It never could happen.

But do you know why Ford Nation became so important to the people of the province of Ontario? Because they actually pick up the phone, because they make the telephone calls, because they're accessible. That is why this caucus has grown, and that is why that caucus has continued to shrink, election after election after election.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, if there is nothing to hide, then why is the government working so hard to hide them from the public?

What we do know is that a Global News investigation found that the Premier didn't use his government phone once during a whole one-week period in November, the exact period when the government decided to carve up the greenbelt.

To the Premier: Did he use a personal device instead of an official government device to avoid access-to-freedom-information laws?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Again, the Premier actually got up—one of the first things that he did in the House when he became Premier—and told the province of Ontario his phone number. He actually, in this House, gave his phone number out, in Hansard, reported in every single newspaper. The Premier has given out his phone number so that people can call him from all across the province. It might be why the people of this province trust this Premier to get things done for them. It might be one of the reasons why.

Do you know what, Mr. Speaker? The Leader of the Opposition is doing everything in her power to distract from the fact that she has a full-blown caucus revolt on her hands. Why, Mr. Speaker? Because she has failed on her first true test of leadership. When she had the opportunity to stand up to the anti-Semitic hard left of her party, she refused to do anything about it. They looked at her and said, "We will not listen to you," despite the fact that she said, "Take something down. Apologize." When they said no, she cowered. She failed the first true test, and it is why she will never be the Premier of this province.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: We'll see about that, Speaker.

This government is under criminal investigation by the RCMP for trying to enrich their friends and donors to the tune of more than \$8 billion in the greenbelt grab. One of the most important questions that requires further investigation: What did the Premier know? When did he know it?

My question to the Premier is, what is he hiding on his personal phone about the greenbelt grab?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Speaker, is the Leader of the Opposition for real? They've actually deposited an opposition day. They get eight opportunities to hold or lead debate in this place, and they're talking about a telephone record. Well, I'd ask you to go back to the Hansard. You can get his phone number, and you, too, can call the Premier of the province of Ontario. He's very generous with his time. He might even give you advice on how you can lead your party a little bit better. He's had incredible success over here.

But we're talking about the things that matter to the people of the province of Ontario. We have a fall

economic statement that will set the agenda for the budget, in next year's budget. We're opening pre-budget consultations, because we want to continue to focus on the priorities of the people of the province of Ontario. We want to continue to grow the economy. Even more than the 700,000 who already have the dignity of a job, we want to grow that number.

We would like the opposition to help us, participate, give us ideas. I doubt they will—

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

Leader of the Opposition, supplementary.

Ms. Marit Stiles: We found out last week that the Auditor General has launched yet another investigation, this time into potential abuse of ministerial zoning orders. It's the same story over and over and over again with this government: rigging the system to help a select few of their insider friends get even richer, preferential treatment at the expense of taxpayers.

I'm going to ask again of the Premier, what is he hiding on his personal phone about these suspicious land deals?

Interjections.

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

Government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: The use of MZOs has been an important tool in helping us meet the priorities of the people of the province of Ontario. In fact, we have used MZOs, and we will continue to use MZOs, to build long-term-care homes. We have used MZOs at the request of the city of Toronto to build affordable and social housing in the communities represented by the NDP. Now, they are against that use, Mr. Speaker, but we will continue to use the MZO.

I have a request on my desk from SickKids hospital, from the mayor of Toronto, Olivia Chow, to use an MZO to ensure that the Ornge helicopter space is preserved and protected. It is my intention to do just that.

I will let them explain why they are against using MZOs to further the priorities of the people of the province of Ontario, to protect the people of the province of Ontario. We will continue to do it when it is in the best interest of the people of the province of Ontario. That is why we are building a bigger, better, safer Ontario. They are against that every step of the way.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: What is on that phone, Speaker? That's what the people want to know. Something doesn't smell right here.

And Speaker, I submitted a new Integrity Commissioner complaint yesterday about what appears to be an inappropriate relationship between a former government minister and a land speculator.

But it begs the question: Is this the standard operating procedure for this government? Did the member from Mississauga East-Cooksville just get caught?

Mr. Speaker, the public deserves to know: What would we find on the Premier's personal phone about this government's secret backroom deals?

1050

Hon. Paul Calandra: I have to say, Mr. Speaker, that in the many years I've been privileged to serve as a parliamentarian, this is the saddest spectacle of any Leader of the Opposition that I have ever seen. We are faced with some very important issues across not only Ontario, but across the world right now. Later on today, we will be voting on a motion in support for the people of Israel against a terrorist attack. The opposition have literally said nothing on this. Hours and hours of debate, they have sat on their hands.

The Leader of the Opposition had her first true test of leadership and has failed so miserably. She's doing anything to distract—she's talking about 411 records on somebody's phone as opposed to focusing on what matters to the people of the province of Ontario. She's trying to do anything to distract from the full-on revolt that she has in her party.

We will continue to focus on what matters to the people of the province of Ontario. Later today, she will have an opportunity to vote with us. I hope that she does.

ONTARIO PLACE

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, earlier this week, the government shut down our motion to cancel the really sketchy Ontario Place deal. You'll remember this deal will see more than \$600 million of hard-earned public funds subsidize the private profits of an Austrian spa developer for 95 years. You'll remember that the people of this province do not support this deal.

The deal makes no sense. What could possibly justify this unprecedented giveaway of prime waterfront property and hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars to Therme? Maybe we should ask Carmine Nigro, chair of Ontario Place and a close personal friend of the Premier.

My question to the Premier is, what would we find on his personal phone about the Ontario Place deal?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply for the government, the Minister of Infrastructure.

Hon. Kinga Surma: The member opposite is speaking to, yes, a property in a prime location, absolutely; a property that had to be closed in 2017 because of severe flooding that even impacted Budweiser Stage operations. The site is in complete disrepair. It is constantly flooding, which is why we are doing the site servicing work; it's under way. That is exactly why we will repair the shoreline to make sure we protect the island for years and years so that people can enjoy it in the future.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Carmine Nigro is only one of many of this Premier's friends who have been given very lucrative positions across this province's agencies, boards and commissions, and there are a frightening number of

those appointees who appear to be entirely unqualified for this job.

The appointment of people whose only qualification seems to be a big enough donation to the Conservative Party calls into question the competence and integrity of vital services like the Landlord and Tenant Board and the Human Rights Tribunal. The people of Ontario want to know, and so do I: How many of these unqualified appointees would we find on the Premier's personal phone logs?

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

Hon. Kinga Surma: Maybe the leader of the official opposition should inquire about the 2018 procurement led by the Liberal government which also had a top proponent, and that top proponent's name was Therme. Therme is building a wellness centre and a water park facility.

To the Leader of the Opposition: Two different procurements with two different governments with different criteria—proponent is the same. Therme will be at Ontario Place and will offer water park play for families 365 days of the year.

FISCAL AND ECONOMIC POLICY

Mr. Will Bouma: My question is for the Minister of Finance. Across the world, economic challenges continue to grow, and we know that Ontario is not isolated from this geopolitical uncertainty. We recently heard the great news during public accounts that our government received a sixth straight clean audit from the Auditor General. This is a refreshing change from the fiscal mismanagement of the previous Liberal government, supported by the NDP. Unfortunately, Speaker, many families and individuals in my riding and across our province are feeling the economic pressures that have been caused by ongoing supply chain disruptions, inflation and increased interest rates. The people of our province are looking to our government for leadership during these times of uncertainty.

Speaker, can the minister please address this House on how our government is providing much-needed fiscal leadership for the people of Ontario?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you to the hard-working member from Brantford–Brant for that question. As highlighted by the recent Ontario Economic Accounts, the numbers of our province's economy remain resilient.

As we've said before, Ontario faces potential economic uncertainty ahead. That's why, Mr. Speaker, as we continue to build more homes, more hospitals, more schools and more transit, investing in better services and keeping costs down for the people of Ontario, we are doing so in a prudent and responsible way.

And I am pleased to inform the House that we will be releasing our government's fall economic statement just a few weeks from now on November 2, Mr. Speaker.

This government will continue to make targeted investments to support families, to support workers, and to support businesses today while laying a strong fiscal foundation for future generations.

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

Mr. Will Bouma: Thank you, Minister. It's great to hear that the fall economic statement will be released in the coming weeks. The people of Ontario look forward to hearing an update on our government's plan for our economy.

The minister spoke about the fact that Ontario is not exempt from factors that are contributing to global economic uncertainty. That is why our government must show leadership and demonstrate a strong economic vision and plan that will help families and individuals during this unpredictable financial period.

Speaker, can the minister please explain how our government is continuing to work on behalf of Ontarians during these challenging economic times?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you again to the great member from Brantford–Brant for that question, Mr. Speaker. In the fall economic statement 2023, we will continue to deliver on our government's plan to build as we continue to work on building a stronger, more resilient Ontario with targeted investments in critical infrastructure.

As we have seen over the last year and the last few months, Mr. Speaker, Ontario's population continues to grow—almost 500,000 people last year; over 15.6 million people, who call Ontario home. That's why we are building Ontario.

That's why we're building in Durham, for Bowmanville, four more transit stations in transit-oriented communities. That's why, up in Sault Ste. Marie at the Algoma Steel plant, they're going to be building and completing a clean steel manufacturing operation due to open in November 2024. And that's why, in the west Niagara region, we are building a new hospital that they've been asking for, for almost three decades. We are committed to supporting the people of Ontario, and we will build Ontario together.

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch, Speaker. A question to the Premier: Things are different in northern Ontario. Things are different in Kiiwetinoong. Things are different on-reserve. But since I've been here, since I've become a member, I've talked about many issues that need to be improved on-reserve: housing, fire safety, education, mental health and clean drinking water. It is systemic racism to do nothing and let these conditions get worse.

Will this government acknowledge that they have a responsibility to improve these conditions in First Nations?

Interjections.

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

The Minister of Northern Development and the Minister of Indigenous Affairs.

Hon. Greg Rickford: First and foremost, I want to welcome the members from the isolated communities here

today that I've had an opportunity to live in, especially Kasabonika, one of my favourite communities.

Mr. Speaker, we see these as opportunities. We acknowledge that there remain some challenges around things like legacy infrastructure for isolated communities. But when it gets right down to it, we have an extraordinary opportunity to work with those communities to open up corridors for electricity, road access, and to improve the health, economic and social conditions of those communities. Increasingly, leadership from those communities are coming to us to have those conversations and develop real opportunities and create real opportunities through my ministries and other ministries in this government to change the fortunes and the road map to prosperity, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to continue that conversation with that member and the leadership across northern Ontario.

1100

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

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Speaker, it's not prosperity when you have young girls dying by suicide, when you have young boys dying by suicide. That's not prosperity. But 31 chiefs in the Sioux Lookout area, as part of the Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority, have declared a public and social emergency because of the disproportionate mental health and addiction issues in the north. The cost of doing nothing, because Ontario uses jurisdiction as an excuse, costs lives and health every day—every day, Speaker.

Will this government acknowledge that colonialism is a determinant of health for First Nations people?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: I thank the member opposite for the opportunity to answer this question. We know that there are gaps in care, and they're wider in Indigenous communities. Since 2019, we've invested over \$40 million annually in Indigenous care organizations through the Roadmap to Wellness. We've strengthened partnerships with community-based organizations doing incredible work: \$4.2 million to open 37 treatment beds in Sioux Lookout; \$3.8 million to St. Joseph's health care and Dilico Anishinabek Family Care; 34 new treatment and medical-withdrawal-management beds; \$1.7 million to expand beds for KCA youth camps, youth mental wellness service programs; \$13.5 million across government with 30 projects aimed at stopping the cycle of inter-generational trauma; two new and expanded treatment and healing centres in northern Ontario through Roadmap to Wellness.

Mr. Speaker, we know we need to do better in Indigenous communities, and we're working in partnership to build culturally appropriate mental health and addiction supports and services for all the people of Ontario, including Indigenous—

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

The next question.

NORTHERN ONTARIO DEVELOPMENT

Mrs. Daisy Wai: My question is for the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development. Every region in Ontario is experiencing a labour shortage. More workers are needed to deliver on our government's plan to build homes, schools, roads and other critical infrastructure. That is why our government must develop a workforce to take on these important projects.

In northern Ontario, many businesses, supply chains and industries are expanding. That is why more people in First Nations communities must be connected with well-paying, in-demand jobs in the skilled trades that are close to their home.

Speaker, can the minister please explain how our government is providing accessible training for First Nations communities to prepare for careers in the skilled trades?

Hon. David Piccini: Thank you to the member for that question. Speaker, 700,000: That's how many more people woke up today with a paycheque thanks to the leadership of this Premier. One of the most successful funds to get people into those jobs, to upskill, to get bigger paycheques, is our Skills Development Fund.

I was proud to be in northern Ontario, a place my Liberal predecessor called no man's land. I was proud to be up there to announce a \$7.3-million investment through the Skills Development Fund to help 1,700 people find better jobs, bigger paycheques. And I was honoured to meet with a number of Indigenous youth and a number of Indigenous men and women who are going to be beneficiaries of the Skills Development Fund, who are going to be supported into getting better jobs, bigger paycheques, to support the skills development in those growing communities in the north.

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

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Thank you, Minister. This is great news. By continuing to invest in our province's labour force, we can achieve a strong Ontario built for the next generation. It is clear that under the leadership of the Premier, our government is bringing opportunities to every corner of our province.

As communities and businesses in northern Ontario continue to grow, workers must be prepared for in-demand careers with local employees. That is why our government must take action to break down barriers so that workers can have rewarding careers that are close to home.

Can the minister please explain how our government is developing a sustainable workforce in northern Ontario and Indigenous communities?

Hon. David Piccini: The Minister of Northern Development just asked me if my riding is in northern Ontario, and I think it's reflective of the outlook this entire government has. We recognize that there is no success in Ontario without unlocking the potential that is in northern Ontario. So, yes, I'm proud to represent northern Ontario as well.

Speaker, I'll give you another number: 17,000 jobs go unfilled in northern Ontario in construction, in health care, in tourism, in logging, in mining.

Under the leadership of this Premier, we've invested almost a billion dollars through the Skills Development Fund to help people get a leg up. But what's most exciting is that these projects are led by partners in the north. They're led by partners—unions, for example—that have been beneficiaries of this.

I was with ironworkers in the north to announce that \$7.3 million, and I heard Phil's story. Phil was at a Safe-way. He was working dirty jobs with low pay, and thanks to the Skills Development Fund, he now has a better job and a bigger paycheck.

We're transforming lives in the north. We're unlocking the potential. It's no longer no man's land. We're unlocking that potential—

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

PUBLIC TRANSIT

MPP Jill Andrew: Businesses in my riding of Toronto–St. Paul's and the community they serve have suffered because of delay after delay of the Eglinton Crosstown P3 project. These businesses have not been compensated for these delays—although we've asked many times of this government. But the P3 contractor has been rewarded with hundred-million-dollar bailouts paid by the public. Metrolinx CEO Phil Verster has been rewarded with huge raises and just had his contract extended. We might as well call him the million-dollar man.

My question is to the Premier: Why are the people responsible for this fiasco getting rewarded while business people in Toronto–St. Paul's and, frankly, elsewhere are left to suffer by this Conservative government?

Interjections.

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

The Minister of Transportation to reply.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Here are the facts: We are making the largest investment in public transit in the history of this province. Speaker, under the leadership of Premier Ford, over \$30 billion is being invested in the city of Toronto.

That member and the members from the Toronto team in the party of the opposition have voted against key projects in transit. They voted against the Ontario Line. They voted against the Scarborough subway extension. They voted against LRTs across this province. They don't want to build transit in cities like Toronto. They don't want to build transit in Ontario. We will take no lessons from them.

We will continue on our path to making sure the people of Ontario can move, whether it's through transit or highways.

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

MPP Jill Andrew: Phil Verster won't hold the P3 contractor accountable for cost overruns and delays to the Eglinton Crosstown. Instead, he paid the P3 contractor hundreds of millions of dollars in bailouts that the Auditor General said should not have been paid.

The Metrolinx board won't hold Mr. Verster accountable. Instead of firing him, they want to give him another raise and pay him over \$1 million per year.

The Premier won't hold the Metrolinx board accountable. Instead, he keeps stacking the board with cronies and PC donors. Where is the transparency and the accountability in that?

Again, back to the Premier, if he'd only answer the question: Who will finally hold the Premier accountable for the Metrolinx gravy train? The RCMP, maybe?

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

Hon. Kinga Surma: Mr. Speaker, I will tell you what the Premier is doing, and that is building the subway system, expanding the subway system by 50% in the city of Toronto and York region. He's also building public transit in other communities—like Mississauga and the Hurontario line.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Hon. Kinga Surma: Mr. Speaker—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Government House leader, come to order. The member for Toronto–St. Paul's will come to order. I need to be able to hear the Minister of Infrastructure respond to the question.

1110

Start the clock.

Hon. Kinga Surma: Mr. Speaker, everyone is aware that we inherited the Eglinton Crosstown project. We do not contract projects in the same way anymore. But since 2018, 27 P3 projects are in construction today—27. It is this Premier that will build this province.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. John Fraser: My question is for the Premier. Last week, Ontarians got some news that comes as a relief for many, news that the RCMP is launching an investigation into the failed \$8.3-billion backroom deal that was going to benefit wealthy, well-connected insiders, or, by the Premier's own admission, his friends. Cabinet ministers and senior political staffers have already been interviewed by the Integrity Commissioner, and it's clear from his report that they all lawyered up.

As the Premier knows, lawyers are expensive, so can the Premier tell us today that not one penny of taxpayer dollars for any government members or staffers caught up in this \$8.3-billion scandal will be spent?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: This is a member who replaced the leader whose chief of staff and members of his party went to jail—to jail, Mr. Speaker. This is a member who

has a leadership candidate who still wants to build on the greenbelt. This is a member who, under their watch, saw the province lose thousands of jobs, gave up on manufacturing, didn't build long-term care, ruined our hospital sector, destroyed education, starved post-secondary education, couldn't build transit, didn't build roads. On every single count, they failed.

Now, for two elections in a row, even the NDP have beaten them at the polls, and that's saying something. So we'll continue to do what's right for the people of the province of Ontario: grow the economy for everybody.

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

Mr. John Fraser: You know, the House leader can talk and talk and talk, but—

Interjection: Yes, he can.

Mr. John Fraser: He can. But sleep easy, Premier, the Mounties always get their man. The Premier's principal secretary, Amin Massoudi; the Premier's director of housing, Jae Truesdell; the Premier's hand-picked chief of staff in the ministry of housing's office, Ryan Amato; the Premier's executive assistant, Nico Fidani-Diker are all caught up in this.

We know that members of the government, former cabinet ministers, senior staffers in the minister's and the Premier's office and the Premier himself are all likely to be questioned by the RCMP in this investigation, and folks, they're all going to need a lawyer. So Ontario taxpayers want to know that none of their hard-earned taxpayer dollars will go for any members of this government or any political staffers caught up in this scandal. Can the Premier commit to that today? Please rise in your seat and tell Ontarians that.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I remind the members to make their comments through the Chair, not across the floor.

Government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Jeez, Mr. Speaker. Honestly, we said we made a public policy decision that the people of the province of Ontario didn't support, right? We made a public policy decision the people of the province didn't support. We then changed course. The Premier apologized.

Now, what we didn't do is what the previous Liberal government did. They then paid billions of dollars to try and help their members win elections on a public policy decision that nobody supported. Remember the gas plant scandal? That scandal actually cost the people of the province of Ontario billions of dollars. In that party, people went to jail. That party has been reduced—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. I apologize to the government House leader for having to interrupt him. It's the Conservative side that is so loud I can't hear him.

Please start the clock. The government House leader still has the floor.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Look, Mr. Speaker, here's the reality: You have an official opposition party who are

hiding half of their caucus today. They have a complete leadership revolt happening there. You have a Liberal Party that hasn't had a permanent leader now in five years, and you have the people of the province of Ontario showing their support for the policies of the Progressive Conservative government time and time again. Because you know what they're concerned about? They're concerned about jobs. They're concerned about the economy. They're concerned about housing, education. They're concerned about their seniors. They're concerned about long-term care and health care, and on every single measure, we are making progress like we have never seen—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. I will remind members once again that it is not appropriate, nor do we permit a member, to make reference to the absence of another member.

The next question. Start the clock.

RED TAPE REDUCTION

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: My question is for the Minister of Red Tape Reduction. Ontario's businesses are a key part of Ontario's economy. They play a vital role in driving innovation, creating jobs and fostering vibrant communities across our province. Our government must be focused on removing burdens that impact their operations. Taking action to reduce red tape supports our small businesses through direct cost savings, which, in turn, fuels job creation and growth.

Businesses expect our government to follow through on our commitments and leave no stone unturned when it comes to cutting red tape. Speaker, through you, can the minister please explain what actions our government is taking to help businesses remain competitive?

Hon. Parm Gill: I want to thank my colleague from Carleton for that important question. Our government is supporting Ontario's competitiveness by keeping costs down. One of the most important ways to do that is eliminating unnecessary red tape. The actions that we have taken to cut red tape have helped Ontario businesses save nearly \$950 million each and every year.

Thanks to our efforts—the 11 different red tape reduction packages—we have removed over 16,000 different kinds of red tape pieces to keep our businesses competitive on the world stage. The results speak for themselves. There are over 700,000 people that are working today that were not under the Liberals, supported by the NDP.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Thank you to the minister for that response. It's clear that significant success has been achieved in making life easier for businesses in my riding of Carleton and across the province of Ontario through the Less Red Tape, Stronger Ontario Act. Reducing red tape is an important part of building a stronger economy and making it clear that Ontario is open for business. We are achieving results and seeing success, all without compromising public safety and environmental protections.

However, there's still more to do in creating an environment that drives new investment and growth across the economy. Speaker, through you, can the minister please elaborate on what actions our government is taking to deliver better services for people and reduce costs for businesses?

Hon. Parm Gill: I want to thank the member for the question again. We're working across government to remove unnecessary red tape that creates challenges for businesses and people in the province of Ontario. Again, thanks to our efforts over the last five years, Ontario businesses are now saving nearly \$950 million each and every year.

Later today I will be introducing our 12th red tape reduction package. It will continue our government's effort to make sure our businesses are positioned to succeed and are competitive in the world. It will show that our government is working around the clock to get it done, driving economic development, encouraging job creation and demonstrating why Ontario is the best place to live, work and raise a family.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is for the Premier. My office has received several calls from mothers desperate for help. They've told me about their daughters who have had psychotic episodes or been diagnosed with schizophrenia. Faced with the unknown, these families have tried everything in an endless loop of referrals which go nowhere. When their children are left isolated and alone overnight with minimal interaction, they often get released from hospitals with no supports, no follow-up and, the worst possible scenario, released to homelessness.

1120

Speaker, when will the Premier give these families the attention they need instead of focusing on his insider friends?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. This is a very important issue for our government. We understand the importance and the needs of children and youth, and ensuring that supports and services are there for them. We developed the Roadmap to Wellness and, starting in 2019, invested \$130 million into children and youth mental health services through the road map. The road map slates another \$170 million over three years in education, \$90 million for school-based supports and \$20 million for an across-the-board 5% funding increase, something that has not been seen before by previous governments.

And we're extremely proud of the youth wellness hubs that we've developed: 22 of them across the province of Ontario, making a huge difference in the lives of so many of our young people. We're continuing to invest with early interventions to keep kids from harmful behaviours, which are giving us a great return, easy accessible care, investments—

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

The supplementary question.

Miss Monique Taylor: Back to the Premier—but respectfully to the minister, I wasn't speaking of children; I was speaking of adults in a system that is absolutely in a horrifying mess, and we see that in all of our communities.

I also wanted to bring a message to the Premier today from Kitchener Centre about their struggle with the access to mental health care. One constituent wrote, "The provincial government keeps touting its investments in health care and its focus on mental health for young people. But what is actually being done? It seems to be that all that is being done is fancy press releases, while single moms like me have to figure out how to make it work, and more often, have to live with the guilt of not being able to provide my teen with the care they need to become a healthy and productive citizen."

Can the Premier tell us if he will stop spending hundreds of millions of dollars on a parking garage in a spa for downtown Toronto, and instead start investing in mental health care in Kitchener and across the province?

Interjections.

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

Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Thanks again for the opportunity to stand up. I started speaking about children and youth because we know that prevention is the key to ensuring that we have a system that's going to be functional for adults and for everyone else in the system.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, I sit here on this side of the House and I listen to some of the rhetoric from the other side, and I wonder if they've stopped for a moment to think about what they did when they were in power and how they permitted another government to do absolutely nothing. Under their watch, 9,645 hospital beds for mental health were closed.

Our government, with \$90 million, opened 400 new beds, 7,000 treatment spots, and we're continuing to build a continuum of care to look after the needs of everyone in the province of Ontario to ensure they get the help they get, where and when they need it, no matter where they are in the province: the north, the south, the east or the west.

SENIORS' SERVICES

Ms. Patrice Barnes: My question is for the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility. When I connect with seniors in my riding of Ajax, they tell me that isolation is a major concern. The minister has always said it is the number one enemy for seniors. Thanks to the commitment of the Premier and this minister, investments made by our government are helping seniors stay active, healthy and socially connected.

In my community of Ajax, several organizations have received funding from this government to provide opportunities for seniors to get together, learn and stay active. Our government is making excellent progress in

helping our seniors stay connected. However, we must continue to support initiatives that will help keep our older adults engaged in their communities.

Speaker, can the minister please elaborate on how our government is supporting the quality of life for seniors in Ontario?

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Thank you to the hard-working MPP for Ajax. We have invested over \$70 million since 2018 to fund nearly 300 Seniors Active Living Centres across Ontario.

As a senior myself, I know what a difference it makes to be surrounded by people and to have activities to look forward to. When I get to go out across the province and spend time with other seniors, I see the important role these seniors' centres have. They are building networks for seniors, bringing people together and preventing loneliness. These centres promote life in the community and support the health and well-being of seniors across Ontario.

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

Ms. Patrice Barnes: Seniors Active Living Centres are a vital network for seniors in communities across the province, thanks to the excellent programs and services that are offered. I often hear from seniors in my community that they're grateful for these spaces to gather and connect. These centres are vital investments into the health and well-being of our seniors and are also important for generations to come. Without these spaces, the health of seniors will be negatively impacted. That is why our government cannot afford to lose focus on the importance of programs and services that reduce social isolation.

Speaker, can the minister please explain how our government is supporting senior centres and organizations in communities across Ontario?

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to share with the House that over \$3 million has been distributed this past quarter for 299 Seniors Active Living Centres across the province. This is part of the funding received each quarter towards the maintenance and operating expenses for the centres. This is how we make sure that local organizations regularly have what they need to support seniors.

From Ajax to Atikokan, Kingston to Kearney, Wasaga Beach to Whitby, seniors have access to these programs right in their community. These centres are vibrant places for people to gather, get active and feel supported close to home.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Premier. A report last month from the Ontario Real Estate Association quoted CEO and former PC leader Tim Hudak saying, "Student debt is not merely a financial burden; it's the biggest barrier to the ... dream of home ownership for many young Ontarians and their families."

The report stated that students with debt want to own homes, but they are losing hope; 70% are worried it will never happen, and student loans are the main reason.

Speaker, this government's changes to OSAP have left more students drowning in debt than ever before. Why is this government denying post-secondary students the dream of home ownership?

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

Hon. Jill Dunlop: Thank you to the member for that question. Actually, after question period, I'm heading down to the college fair, and I'll be meeting with students, faculty and colleges but also with our team from OSAP and hearing directly from those folks who are working on the ground, dealing directly with students.

What's interesting is, under the former Liberal government, this province had the highest tuition in Canada, but it was our Premier who said, "No more." In 2018, we decreased tuition by 10%. We want tuition to be affordable for all students across the province, and that's why we continued to freeze that tuition. And we've kept OSAP as a needs-based assessment, so that students in 10, 15, 20 years will have access to the OSAP system. In 2021 alone, we invested \$4.2 billion in direct aid to 385,000 full-time students, with 80% of Ontario's funding provided as grants, opposed to the 54% of federal student support.

1130

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Speaker, all this government has done is destabilize the post-secondary sector. Listen to OREA. Listen to what Tim Hudak is saying. The OREA report found that 42% of students carrying debt are considering leaving Ontario after graduation so they can repay their student loans and find a place of their own.

This represents a huge loss to our province, but it can be easily fixed. Make OSAP easier to access. Convert loans to grants. That is how to make the dream of home ownership a reality for young people. Why does this government think that selling off the greenbelt to enrich their friends was a more important housing strategy than giving young people the ability to afford to buy a home?

Hon. Jill Dunlop: This is the same party that opposes building student housing on campuses and in communities across Ontario, so we'll take no lessons from the party across.

We've expanded the OSAP program to be eligible for students who are enrolled in Indigenous institutions and micro-credentials, so that more and more students can have access to OSAP. But because it's a needs-based program, we've actually seen a decrease in the number of students who are accessing the OSAP program.

It's initiatives like the Ontario Learn and Stay Grant, which is seeing free tuition for students who are enrolling in nursing programs, paramedic programs and lab tech programs across the province. They are receiving free tuition in exchange for working in areas of high needs following graduation.

It's ensuring that students who are attending colleges have access to three-year degrees at colleges, increasing the number of degrees in colleges, so students can continue to learn closer to home.

We are seeing a decrease in the number of students using those programs.

WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT

Ms. Natalie Pierre: My question is for the Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity. With more than 100,000 unfilled jobs in the skilled trades, it's critical that we attract more women and under-represented populations into the workforce to pursue good-paying careers in this sector.

It's good news that employment numbers for women continue to rise and more mothers are part of Ontario's labour market. However, the reality is that many women encounter barriers that make it difficult for them to enter the workforce. That's why our government must continue to work on behalf of all women to implement measures that will reduce obstacles.

Speaker, can the associate minister please describe what actions our government is taking to support women in the workforce?

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: Thank you to the member for Burlington for the work you're doing, not just to see women survive, but thrive.

Mr. Speaker, the FAO report is actually saying that we've done significant work to see more women entering the workforce because of the actions of our government, because we know that women are an integral part to the development of Ontario's economy. The FAO's study found that the labour participation rate of mothers with children between the ages of zero to five years increased from 76.5% in 2021 to 78.9% in 2022. That's a 2.4% increase in one year under our government, and it's the first time we've seen an increase since 1976.

Mr. Speaker, that's because our government secured a historic agreement for child care, an agreement that is better than any other province across the country: a billion extra dollars and an additional year of funding, guaranteed, that no other province had. We know that women are—

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

And the supplementary question.

Ms. Natalie Pierre: Our government is determined to support and empower women with economic opportunities. Bringing affordable child care is a step in the right direction and will have a positive impact on helping to get more women in the workforce.

Ontario's economy and our province as a whole will benefit by supporting women in the workforce, especially in leading-edge industries such as skilled-trades occupations. Unfortunately, the number of women employed in this sector is well below their male counterparts. At a time of severe labour shortages, our government must invest in programs that will help women to achieve the success they deserve.

Speaker, can the associate minister please explain how our government is expanding opportunities for women to find careers in the skilled trades?

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: Mr. Speaker, you know, our government has been making significant strides in encouraging women to enter the skilled trades. As our minister of labour has said before, we've seen a 30% increase in women entering the skilled trades and we intend to keep them there. Mr. Speaker, our government has invested and is investing in the Investing in Women's Futures Program, and we've seen an expansion of this program to 10 new sites.

Just recently, I was in Newmarket–Aurora with the wonderful local member there, where we announced the expansion of the Investing in Women's Futures Program to the Women's Centre of York Region with an investment of over \$325,000 for their First Steps Program. This program will address the intersectional, economic and personal barriers that women have to overcome. It will offer over 250 women, each year, the services they need to leave abusive situations and develop economic opportunities for them to thrive. That's why we have expanded our Women's Economic Security Program, and these programs together have seen over 10,000 women access its supports.

Mr. Speaker, we are not going to leave women behind, because we know—

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

The next question.

AMBULANCE SERVICES

MPP Jamie West: My question is for the Premier.

Speaker, like most people in Ontario, I'm very concerned about the current state of our health care system. This week, we heard from a family in Ajax who waited several hours for an ambulance—hours for an ambulance, Speaker. This is a new low; it is unacceptable that anyone in Ontario in need of urgent emergency care has to wait for hours before the ambulance arrives to bring them to the hospital. The son who called the ambulance and waited with his father for hours said, "Our health care system is in a permanent state of collapse. It didn't have to be like this. I blame the Ford government 100%."

To the Premier: Why are families waiting hours for an ambulance?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Frankly, it's because our health care system was ignored for too long when the Liberals were in power and you were propping them up.

But, specifically, I want to talk about some short-, medium- and long-term goals that we have already put in place. Now, we have a plan and it is working. In fact, in northern Ontario we now have a paramedic Learn and Stay program that ensures individuals who want to train to be a paramedic and serve in communities that need that additional assistance, get the ability to do that with two years' training. We cover their tuition and their books, and they ensure that they are practising in northern communities, including your own.

Those are the initiatives that we are working on. I would ask, respectfully, why you did not support the Learn and Stay program when it was voted on.

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

MPP Jamie West: Like the Liberals before them, the Conservatives try to blame the previous party. They had five years to fix it; it got worse. The last time they were in power, they closed 26 hospitals and laid off 6,000 nurses.

Speaker, people waiting for ambulances—this is not an isolated event. Many other Ontarians have shared similar experiences.

Interjections.

MPP Jamie West: Don't laugh about people waiting for ambulances. One family in Markham shared that their child had a sports injury and they waited hours before the ambulance arrived. That's not a laughing matter. Wait times like that can have lasting damage on the children.

To the Premier: Will you increase municipal funding for EMS and ambulances to ensure people are not left waiting in their times of need?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I would remind the member opposite that, in fact, our government is a 50-50 partner with municipal individuals who wish to expand their paramedic services. We have always been there, had the backs of our municipal partners as they expand their paramedic services.

Having said that, we have done some things in the short term that have made a real difference. And that, of course, is, as an example, 911 models of care, so that individuals who do not need to go from a paramedic service into an emergency room have options available to them. As we roll out those programs, as communities apply for that, we have seen a dramatic increase in satisfaction at the patient level and, more importantly, making sure that individuals who use those 911 models of care—so that they can go to palliative care. They can go to a long-term-care home. They can go to serve in mental health facilities and have the option to do that. And the patients love it, and the paramedics love it.

1140

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Trevor Jones: My question is to the Solicitor General. Sadly, there's a concerning rise in criminal activity across the country. Here in Ontario, we're seeing more and more reports of crime in all parts of our province. This has left many feeling troubled over the safety and security for themselves and their loved ones.

Speaker, we all know that these trends cannot continue. Everyone in Ontario has the right to feel safe in their communities. That's why our government must continue to show leadership by addressing this disturbing surge in criminal activity that is negatively impacting every one of us.

Speaker, can the Solicitor General please explain what actions our government is taking to enhance public security across the province?

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: The member from Chatham-Kent–Leamington is 100% right: Innocent people have lost their lives due to the dangerous criminals being on our streets instead of being behind bars, and that's why Ontario is leading the way.

Thanks to Premier Ford, who coalesced all the Premiers and territorial leaders in our country to pen a letter to the Prime Minister calling on the federal government to enact meaningful bail reform, their bill, the federal Bill C-48, has now passed the House of Commons and is on the way to being passed, we hope soon, in the Senate.

But we're not just standing by, Mr. Speaker. We're strengthening the province's bail enforcement and prosecutorial system with a \$112-million investment to keep these high-risk offenders and those who will wreak havoc on our streets in jail, behind bars, where they belong.

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

Mr. Trevor Jones: Thank you, Solicitor General. It's reassuring to hear about the progress our government has made in strengthening public safety measures. Unfortunately, there are reports that criminal activity, like auto theft and illicit drug trafficking, are more widespread and have increased in sophistication.

Another disturbing trend being seen all across Ontario is just how quickly firearms can be purchased in the US, smuggled into Canada and used to commit criminal offences here. That's why it's important for our police officers to have the tools and resources they need to tackle this new level of organized crime. It's negatively impacting our province.

Speaker, can the Solicitor General please explain how our government is increasing measures that will support police services as they combat complex organized crime?

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Thanks again to the member. We know that almost every gun that's used in an illegal activity in our province emanates from across the border. That's why, in 2020, Ontario launched a multi-year Guns, Gangs and Violence Reduction Strategy, through which we've invested over \$203 million. Our strategy focuses on prevention, intervention and enforcement.

And yes, as I said just a second ago, because the firearms are coming from across the border, we're continuing to urge the federal government.

This is the message I said last week in Bromont, Quebec, when I was there together with the Attorney General at the FPT meeting: that the federal government has to step up border protections. I said to my counterpart, "Meet me at the border so you can see for yourself."

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Education has a point of order.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Very briefly, Mr. Speaker. I just want to recognize that, in question period, a member of CIJA, Zehavi Zynoberg, joined us. I want to thank him for his leadership on behalf of all Israelis and all he does.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Paul Calandra: I'm just rising on standing order number 59, outlining the status of business for next week, and to thank colleagues for a productive week.

As you announced earlier, Mr. Speaker, we will be returning Monday morning at 9 a.m. and we will be seized with government order number 39, which, of course, is the censure motion for the member for Hamilton Centre. In the afternoon, we will have an opposition day debate, opposition day number 3, and Bill 135, which is the Convenient Care at Home Act.

In the morning of Tuesday, October 24, we will move to Bill 135 again, the Convenient Care at Home Act, and in the afternoon, we will be moving to Bill 65, standing in the name of the member for Whitby, which is the Honouring Our Veterans Act. In the evening, we will have private member's motion number 65.

On Wednesday, October 25, in the morning, we will continue with the Honouring Our Veterans Act in the name of the member for Whitby. In the afternoon, we will be seized with the member for Chatham-Kent-Leamington's private member's motion number 69, which is a "carbon tax on groceries" motion. In the evening, we will be debating Bill 38.

On Thursday, October 26, in the morning and in the afternoon, we will be debating a government bill which will be introduced later on today, and in the evening, we will be on private member's motion number 66.

DEFERRED VOTES

ATTACKS ON ISRAEL

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Next, we have a deferred vote on the motion for closure on government order number 38, relating to the Hamas attacks.

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

The division bells rang from 1146 to 1151.

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

On October 17, 2023, Mr. Jones, Chatham-Kent-Leamington, moved government notice of motion number 18 relating to the Hamas attacks. Mr. Kerzner moved an amendment to the motion. Ms. Khanjin moved an amendment to the amendment to the motion.

On October 18, 2023, Mr. Calandra moved that the question be now put.

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

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Harden, Joel	Riddell, Brian
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Harris, Mike	Romano, Ross
Babikian, Aris	Hogarth, Christine	Sabawy, Sheref
Barnes, Patrice	Hsu, Ted	Sandhu, Amarjot
Begum, Doly	Jones, Sylvia	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Jones, Trevor	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Blais, Stephen	Jordan, John	Sattler, Peggy

Bouma, Will	Kanapathi, Logan	Saunderson, Brian
Bowman, Stephanie	Karpoche, Bhutlia	Scott, Laurie
Bresee, Ric	Kernaghan, Terence	Shamji, Adil
Byers, Rick	Kerzner, Michael S.	Skelly, Donna
Calandra, Paul	Khanjin, Andrea	Smith, Dave
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Leardi, Anthony	Smith, David
Cho, Stan	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Graydon
Coe, Lorne	Lumsden, Neil	Smith, Laura
Crawford, Stephen	Mamakwa, Sol	Smith, Todd
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Martin, Robin	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Dowie, Andrew	McCarthy, Todd J.	Surma, Kinga
Downey, Doug	McCrimmon, Karen	Tangri, Nina
Dunlop, Jill	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Taylor, Monique
Fedeli, Victor	Mulroney, Caroline	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Flack, Rob	Oosterhoff, Sam	Thompson, Lisa M.
Ford, Doug	Pang, Billy	Tibollo, Michael A.
Fraser, John	Parsa, Michael	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
French, Jennifer K.	Pasma, Chandra	Vanthof, John
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Piccini, David	Wai, Daisy
Ghamari, Goldie	Pierre, Natalie	West, Jamie
Gill, Parm	Pirie, George	Williams, Charmaine A.
Glover, Chris	Quinn, Nolan	Yakubski, John
Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Rae, Matthew	
Hardeman, Ernie	Rickford, Greg	

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): All those opposed to the motion will please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 91; the nays are 0.

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

I am now required to put the question on the main motion.

Mr. Jones, Chatham-Kent-Leamington, has moved government notice of motion number 18, relating to the Hamas attacks. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

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

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1156 to 1201.

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

On October 17, 2023, Mr. Jones, Chatham-Kent-Leamington, moved government notice of motion number 18, relating to the Hamas attacks.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Hardeman, Ernie	Rae, Matthew
Babikian, Aris	Harris, Mike	Rickford, Greg
Barnes, Patrice	Hazell, Andrea	Riddell, Brian
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Hogarth, Christine	Romano, Ross
Blais, Stephen	Hsu, Ted	Sabawy, Sheref
Bouma, Will	Jones, Sylvia	Sandhu, Amarjot
Bowman, Stephanie	Jones, Trevor	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Bresee, Ric	Jordan, John	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Byers, Rick	Kanapathi, Logan	Saunderson, Brian
Calandra, Paul	Kerzner, Michael S.	Scott, Laurie
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Khanjin, Andrea	Shamji, Adil
Cho, Stan	Leardi, Anthony	Skelly, Donna
Coe, Lorne	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Dave
Crawford, Stephen	Lumsden, Neil	Smith, David

Cuzzetto, Rudy	Martin, Robin	Smith, Graydon
Dowie, Andrew	McCarthy, Todd J.	Smith, Laura
Downey, Doug	McCrimmon, Karen	Smith, Todd
Dunlop, Jill	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Surma, Kinga
Fedeli, Victor	Mulroney, Caroline	Tangri, Nina
Flack, Rob	Oosterhoff, Sam	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Ford, Doug	Pang, Billy	Thompson, Lisa M.
Fraser, John	Parsa, Michael	Tibollo, Michael A.
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Piccini, David	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Ghamari, Goldie	Pierre, Natalie	Wai, Daisy
Gill, Parm	Pirie, George	Williams, Charmaine A.
Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Quinn, Nolan	Yakabuski, John

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 78; the nays are 0.

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

Motion agreed to.

NUCLEAR ENERGY

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Next, we have a deferred vote on private members' notice of motion number 63.

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

The division bells rang from 1205 to 1210.

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

Mr. Rae has moved private member's notice of motion number 63. All those in favour, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes		
Anand, Deepak	Hardeman, Ernie	Rae, Matthew
Babikian, Aris	Harris, Mike	Rickford, Greg
Barnes, Patrice	Hazell, Andrea	Riddell, Brian
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Hogarth, Christine	Romano, Ross
Blais, Stephen	Hsu, Ted	Sabawy, Sheref
Bouma, Will	Jones, Sylvia	Sandhu, Amarjot
Bowman, Stephanie	Jones, Trevor	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Breseer, Ric	Jordan, John	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Byers, Rick	Kanapathi, Logan	Saunderson, Brian
Calandra, Paul	Kerzner, Michael S.	Scott, Laurie
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Khanjin, Andrea	Shamji, Adil
Cho, Stan	Leardi, Anthony	Skelly, Donna
Coe, Lorne	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Dave
Crawford, Stephen	Lumsden, Neil	Smith, David
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Martin, Robin	Smith, Graydon
Dowie, Andrew	McCarthy, Todd J.	Smith, Laura
Downey, Doug	McCrimmon, Karen	Smith, Todd
Dunlop, Jill	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Surma, Kinga
Fedeli, Victor	Mulroney, Caroline	Tangri, Nina
Flack, Rob	Oosterhoff, Sam	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Ford, Doug	Pang, Billy	Thompson, Lisa M.
Fraser, John	Parsa, Michael	Tibollo, Michael A.
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Piccini, David	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Ghamari, Goldie	Pierre, Natalie	Wai, Daisy
Gill, Parm	Pirie, George	Williams, Charmaine A.
Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Quinn, Nolan	Yakabuski, John

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

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Kernaghan, Terence	Stiles, Marit
Begum, Doly	Mamakwa, Sol	Taylor, Monique
Glover, Chris	Pasma, Chandra	Vanthof, John
Harden, Joel	Sattler, Peggy	West, Jamie
Karpoche, Bhutla	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 78; the nays are 14.

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

Motion agreed to.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 36(a), the member for Ottawa South has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the government House leader concerning legal fees. This matter will be debated on Tuesday, October 24, following private members' public business.

There being no further business, this House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1214 to 1300.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated October 19, 2023, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 110(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF GOVERNMENT BILLS

LESS RED TAPE, MORE COMMON SENSE ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023

POUR PLUS DE BON SENS ET MOINS DE FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES

Mr. Gill moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 139, An Act to amend various Acts / Projet de loi 139, Loi modifiant diverses lois.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Hon. Parm Gill: Yes. The Less Red Tape, More Common Sense Act, which is part of our fall red tape reduction

package, contains proposals from 10 partner ministries and includes 20 schedules. The items in the legislation, if passed, will help improve services for people, reduce costs for businesses and make it easier to work with government. They could help save up to 100,000 hours each year, and will ensure Ontario remains the leader when it comes to reducing red tape and regulatory burden.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

IMPROVING AIR QUALITY FOR OUR CHILDREN ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 VISANT À AMÉLIORER LA QUALITÉ DE L'AIR POUR NOS ENFANTS

Ms. Pasma moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 140, An Act respecting improving air quality for schools and child care providers / Projet de loi 140, Loi concernant l'amélioration de la qualité de l'air dans les écoles et chez les fournisseurs de services de garde.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Ms. Chandra Pasma: The bill enacts the Improving Air Quality for Our Children Act, 2023. The act provides that every publicly funded school and every child care provider licensed under the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, shall install carbon dioxide monitors in every classroom and congregate space, including portables, gymnasiums, change rooms, auditoriums, cafeterias, music rooms, libraries, staff rooms and main offices.

The act also sets out a maximum carbon dioxide threshold of 600 parts per million above outdoor carbon dioxide levels. Schools and child care providers to which the act applies are required to report carbon dioxide levels to the Ministry of Education as well as what measures have been taken in response.

The act also requires that the Ministry of Education develop an air quality action plan that includes measures to be taken when carbon dioxide levels approach and exceed the maximum threshold.

LIFE LEASES ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 SUR LES BAUX VIAGERS

Mr. Rae moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 141, An Act respecting life leases / Projet de loi 141, Loi traitant des baux viagers.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the member for Perth–Wellington care to briefly explain his bill?

Mr. Matthew Rae: This bill enacts the Life Leases Act, 2023. A life lease is a written tenancy agreement that involves payment of an entrance fee for a rental unit. The person who is first entitled to occupy the rental unit is granted right to occupancy for life or for a fixed term of not less than 50 years.

The bill authorizes certain payments in respect of life leases and requires the disclosure of information related to life leases. The information that a landlord is required to disclose to a tenant includes the estimated entrance fee; the projected completion date; information regarding governance and management of the residential complex; the estimated amount of other fees, including monthly occupancy fees; and the estimated refund that a tenant will receive upon termination of the lease.

Prescribed landlords are required to maintain a reserve fund to pay for any unforeseen major repairs to or replacement of assets of the complex. The landlord is also required to maintain insurance policies in accordance with regulations.

The bill includes rules relating to tenants and board meetings, including requirements in respect of notice and timing.

The landlord is required to appoint a trustee to receive and administer a tenant's entrance fee in accordance with specified requirements.

PETITIONS

ENDOMETRIOSIS

MPP Jill Andrew: I'm really, really proud today to put forth this petition on behalf of Endometriosis Events. The co-founders, Tami Ellis and Leah Haynes, couldn't be here today, but they have spearheaded this project across our province.

I also want to welcome the following organizers from Endometriosis Events who are in the members' gallery with us today: Jenny Rolle, Anne-Marie Seessle, Veronica Brown and Michelle Milheiras.

I also want to welcome Michelle Milheiras's dad, Jack Milheiras, who is a proud supporter.

This petition is entitled "Endometriosis Awareness and Action." Again, thank you to Endometriosis Events for leading this charge.

"Whereas the Ministry of Education updated the Ontario physical and health education curriculum in 2019; and

"Whereas the updated curriculum includes sexual health and education expectations; and

"Whereas \$7 million has been spent on endometriosis research in Canada in the last 20 years; and

"Whereas there is currently an average wait time of seven to 10 years to see an endometriosis specialist in Ontario" or get a diagnosis;

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

“—update the current Ontario physical and health education curriculum to include an endometriosis component with specific expectations; and

“—invest significantly more funding in endometriosis research; and

“—improve medical program requirements to reflect endometriosis education in Ontario universities and therefore train more specialists; and

“—ensure people with endometriosis receive timely access to expert surgical and integrative care” through our public health care system.

I couldn't support this more. We need a provincial strategy for endometriosis care.

HOME CARE

Mr. Deepak Anand: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario is taking the next step to better connect and coordinate people's home care services through Ontario health teams; and

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“Whereas the province has already approved 57 teams across the province that will help people experience easier transitions from one provider to another, with one patient record and one care plan being shared; and

“Whereas the government is investing over \$128 million to provide OHTs with \$2.2 million over” the next “three years to better coordinate people's care. This would establish a new single organization called Ontario Health atHome that will coordinate all home care services across the province through the Ontario health teams; and

“Whereas instead of navigating a complex system and waiting for a call at home, Ontario health teams will be able to provide people with easy-to-understand home care plans and what care they will receive before going home from the hospital; and

“Whereas care coordinators would be assigned to work within OHTs and other front-line care settings to facilitate seamless transitions for people from hospitals or primary care to home care services; and

“Whereas an initial group of 12 Ontario health teams have been chosen to accelerate their work to deliver home care in their local communities starting in 2025. With support from the Ministry of Health and Ontario Health, these teams will start by focusing on seamlessly transitioning people experiencing chronic disease through their primary care, hospital, and home and community care needs;

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

“To urge all members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to build on the progress this government has made on building a patient-centred home and community care system.”

Mr. Speaker, I fully support this petition and will be happy to sign it and give it to Clara.

LAND USE PLANNING

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: This petition is titled “Stop Highway 413....” It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government is pushing ahead with plans to build Highway 413, a redundant and wasteful 400-series highway through the greenbelt that would cost taxpayers an estimated \$10 billion or more; and

“Whereas according to a TorStar/National Observer investigation entitled ‘Friends with Benefits,’ powerful developers and land speculators with political and donor ties to the Premier and the PC Party of Ontario own thousands of acres along the proposed highway corridor and would profit from its construction, suggesting that this \$10-billion taxpayer-funded highway is about serving the private interests of the Premier's friends and donors, not the public interest; and

“Whereas the Ontario government's expert panel concluded in 2017 that Highway 413 would be a waste of taxpayer money that would only save drivers 30 to 60 seconds on their commutes; and

“Whereas that expert panel identified less costly and less destructive alternatives to new highway construction, such as making better use of the underused Highway 407, just 15 kilometres away; and

“Whereas Highway 413 would pave over 400 acres of greenbelt and 2,000 acres of farmland, destroy the habitats of at-risk and endangered species, and pollute rivers and streams; and

“Whereas building more highways ... increases traffic and congestion; and

“Whereas the highway would cause significant harm to historic Indigenous sites;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop the plans for building Highway 413.”

HOUSING

Mr. Anthony Leardi: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas our government is taking action to increase housing supply to make sure that everyone in Ontario can find housing based on their income and to provide certainty to municipalities to help more Ontarians find an affordable home based on their household income; and

“Whereas changing the definition of affordable housing units would qualify for development-related charge discounts and exemptions which will support the lower cost of building, purchasing, and renting affordable homes across Ontario; and

“Whereas Ontario will be consulting on new regulations to streamline hearings and speed up decisions at the Ontario Land Tribunal that will help set service standards and prioritize those cases that would create the most housing; and

“Whereas Ontario is working closely with the federal government to increase the supply of purpose-built hous-

ing by removing federal and provincial portions of the HST that will make it easier and cheaper to build these important housings; and

“Whereas the province is seeing meaningful progress in its plan to build homes. Both 2021 and 2022 saw the most housing starts in over 30 years, with close to 100,000 homes built in each year. In 2022, Ontario recorded close to 15,000 purpose-built rental housing starts, the highest number on record.

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

“To urge all members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to continue” taking “action tackling the housing supply crisis and making life more affordable for all Ontarians.”

I support this petition, and I will give it to page Michael to deliver.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I rise in this House to present a petition:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

I will be proud to affix my signature to this petition and to return this to the centre table with page Sachkaur.

ÉDUCATION EN FRANÇAIS

M. Joel Harden: J’ai une pétition ici au nom de « Soutenez le système d’éducation francophone en Ontario. »

« À l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario :

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

« Alors que l’augmentation des inscriptions dans le système d’éducation en langue française signifie que plus de 1 000 nouveaux enseignants et enseignantes de langue

française sont nécessaires chaque année pour les cinq prochaines années;

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

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

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

Je suis très heureux de signer ça et d’amener la pétition à la table avec Michael.

ONTARIO PLACE

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario Place has been a cherished public space for over 50 years, providing joy, recreation, and cultural experiences for Ontarians and tourists alike and holds cultural and historical significance as a landmark that symbolizes Ontario’s commitment to innovation, sustainability, and public engagement;

“Whereas redevelopment that includes a private, profit-driven venture by an Austrian spa company, prioritizes commercial interests over the needs and desires of the people of Ontario and it is estimated that the cost to prepare the grounds for redevelopment and build a 2,000-car underground garage will cost approximately \$650 million;

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“Whereas there are concerns of cronyism by ... Therme Group Canada’s vice president of comms and external relations who was previously” the Premier’s “deputy chief of staff;

“Whereas meaningful public consultations with diverse stakeholders have not been adequately conducted and the Ontario NDP has sent a letter of support for a public request to begin an investigation into a value-for-money and compliance audit with respect to proposed redevelopment of Ontario Place;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to halt any further development plans for Ontario Place, engage in meaningful and transparent public consultations to gather input and ideas for the future of Ontario Place, develop a comprehensive and sustainable plan for the revitalization of Ontario Place that prioritizes environmental sustainability, accessibility, and inclusivity, and ensure that any future development of Ontario Place is carried out in a transparent and accountable manner, with proper oversight, public input, and adherence to democratic processes.”

I proudly affix my signature to this petition and return it to the centre table with page Katherine.

ONTARIO PLACE

MPP Jill Andrew: This petition is entitled “Save Ontario Place.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario Place has been a cherished public space for over 50 years, providing joy, recreation, and cultural experiences for Ontarians and tourists alike and holds cultural and historical significance as a landmark that symbolizes Ontario’s commitment to innovation, sustainability, and public engagement;

“Whereas redevelopment that includes a private, profit-driven venture by an Austrian spa company, prioritizes commercial interests over the needs and desires of the people of Ontario and it is estimated that the cost to prepare the grounds for redevelopment and build a 2,000-car underground garage will cost approximately \$650 million;

“Whereas there are concerns of cronyism by Mark Lawson, Therme Group Canada’s vice president of comms and external relations who was previously” Premier “Ford’s deputy chief of staff;

“Whereas meaningful public consultations with diverse stakeholders have not been adequately conducted and the Ontario NDP has sent a letter of support for a public request to begin an investigation into a value-for-money and compliance audit with respect to proposed redevelopment of Ontario Place;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to halt any further development plans for Ontario Place, engage in meaningful and transparent public consultations to gather input and ideas for the future of Ontario Place, develop a comprehensive and sustainable plan for the revitalization of Ontario Place that prioritizes environmental sustainability, accessibility, and inclusivity, and ensure that any future development of Ontario Place is carried out in a transparent and accountable manner, with proper oversight, public input, and adherence to democratic processes.”

I overwhelmingly support this petition. Thank you to Ontario Place for All and all Ontarians who have made this possible. I’m going to hand it off to Danté.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): There is no longer time left for petitions.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MEMBER’S CONDUCT

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 19, 2023, on the amendment to the amendment to the motion regarding the censure of the member for Hamilton Centre.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further debate? I recognize the member for Whitby.

Mr. Lorne Coe: I’m continuing my remarks from earlier today on government motion 39, the censure of the member for Hamilton Centre.

The NDP leader has inexplicably changed her position on the appropriateness of the member for Hamilton Centre’s offensive remarks, and now actively defends her in the face of pressure for real action from the press and the public. It’s important to understand that that pressure is based in thousands of Jewish people murdered, injured and kidnapped; families torn apart.

Speaker, the entire Jewish world is in deep pain. I spent the weekend at Chabad of Durham Region, situated in my riding. There was a lot of pain that weekend palpable in the Chabad—heartbreak, fear. What’s clear, Speaker, is that I, my caucus and the Premier stand firm in our support of Israel and its right to defend itself against violence. Today and always, as a caucus, with the leadership of Premier Ford, unequivocally, we stand with Israel.

Speaker, this Legislature is the place where our voices must rise and cascade through the entire province. We should not be all right until every person responsible for the terrorist acts is held accountable. Now is the time for moral clarity. There can be no question or confusion. The hate rallies celebrating the kidnapping and slaughtering of innocent Israeli people perpetrated by Hamas terrorists are reprehensible and, yes, disgusting. They have no place in Ontario.

I’m grateful, Speaker, to Rabbi Borenstein from the Chabad of Durham Region for bringing everyone together in solidarity this past weekend at the community prayers in Whitby. I praise everyone’s support from the town of Whitby for Israel and other Jewish communities within the region of Durham.

During the meal that followed the prayers, Rabbi Borenstein and other members of the Chabad said that we must never be afraid to teach our children, like my granddaughters Sophia and Annette, the difference between right and wrong, and calling out black and white when others just see shades of grey.

Here in Ontario and across Canada, our Jewish friends and neighbours face the constant threat of violence. It’s another painful reminder of the work left to do to stomp out the cancer of anti-Semitism once and for all. That’s why our government is investing over \$25 million, through our Anti-Hate Security and Prevention Grant, to address the rise of hate against religious and minority groups, including anti-Semitism. The Chabad of Durham Region and Whitby is one of the recipients of that grant from the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism.

Everyone in Ontario deserves to be safe in their communities. As a government, we have a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to hate. These grants will help provide safe and secure areas so that people can worship in peace. We will continue to protect people living in the region of Durham and other parts of our province.

It’s why our government is investing \$150,000 to support the new Toronto Holocaust Museum. Through the Honourable Stephen Lecce, our Minister of Education, it’s why we’ve mandated Holocaust education in our schools.

This is what Minister Lecce had to say the day that he made that announcement: “We’re taking action to counter anti-Semitism and hate, because those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it. With anti-Semitism on the rise, we are introducing mandatory Holocaust education in elementary schools, expanding resources and straightening anti-hate training for Ontario students, educators, and families.”

At the time of Minister Lecce’s announcement, Michael Levitt, the president and chief executive officer of Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies, noted that, “Recent studies amongst Canadian youth have revealed an overwhelming lack of knowledge about the history of the Holocaust, the ultimate example of what happens when hate is left unchecked. We commend the Ontario Ministry of Education for taking this monumental step....”

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Also, Marilyn Sinclair, the founder of Liberation75, had this to say: “My father was a Holocaust survivor whose entire family was murdered in Auschwitz. He spoke to Ontario schools for more than 20 years and always finished his speeches by imploring students to fight hate and protect the freedoms of our great country. Hate begins in the younger grades and this outstanding initiative allows us to teach students what it means to be good citizens. In a time when we are losing Holocaust survivor witnesses, ‘never again’ won’t just be an empty phrase, it will be a requirement.”

In early 2022, when the past member for Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston made derogatory and racist remarks about a federal cabinet minister and used social media to post messages inciting violence, this House swiftly came together to unanimously censure him in much the same words as motion 39 before us today. At the time, the House ordered apologies to be made by the member. It asked the Speaker to assess the sincerity of such apologies, and it ordered the member to desist from further conduct unbecoming a member of provincial Parliament. No apologies were made by Mr. Hillier, but the position of this House disavowing that member’s unacceptable conduct was recorded so the people of Ontario now and in the future would know that racism and discrimination are not things this institution condones or abides.

Today, as I stand here in this Legislative Assembly, we’re asking that the House apply the same standard it has in the past. No one—no one, Speaker—questions the inappropriateness of the member from Hamilton Centre’s statement, not even her own party leader, who was one of the first to condemn it. The member’s statement received almost immediate condemnation from the people of Ontario, and I believe it’s beneficial to review some of that condemnation to this House to be fully aware of how the member has disparaged the reputation of this House.

Speaker, this is what the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs had to say: “Israeli babies beheaded, Israeli young women raped, more than 100 Israeli men, women, & children kidnapped, and 900 & counting murdered at the hands of # Hamas terrorists and this is what Ontario MPP @SarahJama_ has to say.

“This statement is *filled* with lies that will do nothing to create peace & will only serve to foment hatred against #Canada’s Jewish—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Excuse me. I apologize for interrupting, but you will have to withdraw the word “lies.”

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

“We call for the immediate removal of Jama.”

Moreover, Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center noted: “We are outraged by this statement from @SarahJama_ and her refusal to acknowledge the atrocities committed by the terror group Hamas against Israeli civilians....

“Not for the first time, she has caused hurt and harm to the Jewish community and brought shame to Ontarians, including her constituents in Hamilton Centre.”

From B’nai Brith Canada: “@SarahJama_ has never properly apologized to the Jewish community for her prior offensive statements. Now, as our community faces an onslaught of barbaric terrorism, your comments are void of even one word of condemnation against Hamas.

“You do not deserve to sit in the opposition’s caucus in Ontario ... we call for her immediate removal from the”—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I’d like to remind the member from Whitby that we do not refer to members in the House by their full name, only by their constituency.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you, Speaker, for that clarification.

What remains before us is an apology to this House for bringing it into disrepute and a deletion of the offensive statement so it is clear that she has truly retracted it.

Now more than ever, Ontario’s Jewish community, including the Chabad of Durham Region, needs our support. They need to be reminded of the best of us. They need to be reminded that there is far more that unites us than divides us, and what unites us is rejecting brutal acts of terror perpetrated by Hamas terrorists and other terrorists around the world.

Hamas’s actions and its unrelenting dedication to terror show no regard for human life. Now more than ever, we wish for lasting peace and freedom for everyone in the region, and that can only be achieved by defeating the terrorist group Hamas for the good of Israel and the Palestinian people, and for the good of all humanity.

Speaker, it’s been my opportunity to speak to the intent, the purpose, of government motion number 39, the censure of the member for Hamilton Centre. In all aspects of what’s before us today, I stand in my place as a representative for the town of Whitby. I stand in my place in support of the members of the Chabad of Durham Region and fully support motion number 39 and look forward to the opportunity to stand in my place and vote in support of it.

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

Mr. John Fraser: I’ll be speaking on behalf of our caucus. I want to begin by saying that it was a good thing this morning that we voted for motion 18. It was important to condemn the horrifying Hamas terrorist attack of

October 7 and to affirm that Israel has a right to defend itself.

I spent a lot of time thinking about this in the last couple of weeks, reading, rereading things, talking to people in my riding, here in Toronto, thinking about what's the best way forward for all of us, because I know that in these literally terrifying, scary times, uncertain times, we have to come together. We have to support each other.

Last night, I was home. It was about 11 o'clock at night—I had a lot of meetings yesterday—and my daughter, Kirsten, called me. Kirsten is 45. She's got two young children. She's very smart—an improvement on the previous generation, as my dad used to say. She called me—it was late—and I'm glad that she did, because she asked me to explain motion 19. She wanted to know what it meant. I'm glad she called me, because if there's one thing she knows, it's what the right questions are. We know all our kids know that, and we find that out at a young age. It doesn't change.

She asked me, "Isn't this just dividing us further? Isn't this just dividing us? And, Dad, it's not going to bring peace. It's not going to help or heal families. The only way through this is together." She's right—she's right. This debate is turning the temperature up instead of turning the temperature down. This debate is being weaponized because the government has questions they don't want to answer.

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There's a lot of emotion with this. There are things the government would rather not talk about. Emotions are really running high, and I've got to say, folks, the heckling on this issue—I've watched the debates. I've listened in here. Yes, we all do it, but the kind of heckling that I've seen and the things that people have said—they're just hurtful. They're turning it up. That's wrong.

If we can't actually come together in this place, how are we going to help people come together out there? Because we're not going to get through this, our communities aren't going to get through this, families aren't going to get through this unless we come together.

I really wish this debate was ended right now. I really wish this wasn't happening. I also really wish that the member from Hamilton Centre was here to tell us in her own words—

Interjection.

Mr. John Fraser: I withdraw—what is in her heart. It would help. It would help all of us a lot. I really wish that the apology didn't take 24 hours. I really wish that. And I wish that my colleague, who I have a lot of respect for, the Leader of the Opposition, was more clear about her own words. We need the Leader of the Opposition to provide clarity, to be clear, because we need to build trust.

I said earlier the only way we're going to get through this is together. This debate is dividing us. It's harmful. It's painful. It pours salt into wounds new and old. Families are scared in my riding and all of our ridings, all families. Jewish families in my riding have family in Israel. They're scared for their own kids, scared for their

own families, scared at what they see happening in this world. There are Muslim families in my riding. They've got family in the conflict. They're scared. They're worried for them. They're scared for their kids. My daughter is scared for her kids. And what we have going on in here is an inability to come together to try to heal the pain that's there, to try to say to people, "We can provide you security. We're going to try to come together. We have to get through this together."

One of the intents of the terrorist attack is to create division, to spread the conflict, to create fear. We're not helping that. We have to make sure that we protect innocent lives, wherever they are. We have to call for peace when it needs to be called for. We have to call out heinous acts of terror and stamp it out. We have to ask for hostages to be returned. We have to make sure that people have the things they need so they're not starving, and that they're safe. That's our job and that's what families in our ridings—whoever they are, whatever they believe—expect from us. This debate, folks, ain't doing that—not even close.

The only way through this is together. We're leaders, and we need to lead.

I ask the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition, respectfully, to do what needs to be done to turn the temperature down, to bring us together, to help us lead the people who need our help. I ask them to do that.

We need to lead—all of us. We don't have a choice. This debate has become too divisive.

Speaker, after I sit down, Ontario Liberals are not going to participate any further on motion 19 because we feel the heavy weight of responsibility to bring all families in our communities together.

I want to thank you for your time.

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

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Madam Speaker, we can't start at the end of the story; we have to start at the beginning.

Let me tell you what finds me here, privileged to be one of less than 2,000 people ever elected since Confederation to serve in the Ontario Legislature.

I believe we can all make an impactful change to our province for the better by bringing the best of ourselves, by seeing beyond the impediments and the biases and the intolerances and bringing hopes and dreams to life.

Better begins when everyone feels like they belong and they have a chance to thrive. And yet, at the same time, I am mindful of who I am and where I stand and how I stand in my Ontario—but also a proud member of our Jewish community. I'm reminded of how my family on both sides—my mother's and my father's side—came to Ontario, and a little bit later I'll tell you why that is relevant today. I'll tell you why hate has no place here, and I'll tell you why hate is toxic to our democracy.

Today, I speak about a serious matter: of understanding how our words and actions have impact and, from that impact, consequences on those around us. I'll speak to the values that are inherently ours. I'll speak to the fears of a

grieving community here in Canada, around the world and especially in Israel, and why I support the motion we're debating today. I'll talk about why this place is so important—and if these halls of democracy could talk, what would they say now?

To begin, I want to take people on a journey with you, Madam Speaker, and I want to speak about my definition of the sign of a leader. Leaders are those who dedicate the whole of their spirit for a cause greater than themselves—and we do not know when that time will come and under what circumstance will trigger the time for someone to become a leader. The sign of a hero is those who fight for others when they see and when they know it's right, and when they understand good over evil, no matter the cost and no matter the odds. A leader stands by your side always.

One person stands out for me today, and that's my Premier, Premier Doug Ford. He reminds me of what Prime Minister Harper spoke of to the Israeli Parliament about 10 years ago, finding himself, at that time, becoming one of Canada's greatest statesmen. Let's remember what a leader is: a person with undisputable character and courage, who's never afraid to say things others don't want to hear. Now I understand Prime Minister Harper as he said:

"Now ... in the world of diplomacy, with one ... Jewish state and scores of others" who are against it, "it is all too easy 'to go along to get along' and single out Israel.

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"But such 'going along to get along,' is not a 'balanced' approach, nor a 'sophisticated' one; it is, quite simply, weak and wrong."

He went on to say, "Unfortunately, ladies and gentlemen, we live in a world where that kind of moral relativism runs rampant.

"And in the garden of such moral relativism, the seeds of much more sinister notions can be easily planted.

"And so we have witnessed, in recent years, the mutation of the old disease of anti-Semitism and" recently "the emergence of a new strain.

"We all know about the old anti-Semitism."

That's why, this past Tuesday, just two days ago, I quoted the words of the late Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, and I'll say it again: "The hate that begins with Jews never ends with Jews." And we make a great mistake if we think anti-Semitism is only about Jews, because it's not. It's about anti-Semites; it's about people who cannot accept responsibility for their own failures and instead have to blame someone else. That's why I say, Madam Speaker, we have serious problems here to solve, and we need serious people to solve them. For those who do not want to solve problems, I'll tell you what: They will make you afraid of it, and they will tell you who to blame for it.

As I've said many times, things matter. The founding principles of our democracy, of the best who we are, matter. The rule of law matters. The right to live safely in our communities matters. And the right to live free of hate matters. It matters a lot. Decency matters. Tolerance matters. Respect matters, and caring for every one of us,

regardless of our faith and our culture, our religion, our individualities and exceptionalities, matters as well.

Many members who have served here for far more years than I have have understood the spirit on both sides and the expectations of our behaviour both here and outside the Legislature, and that our conduct outside is as important as our conduct inside. For so many of us, together in this place, we've had moments of friendliness, and that's a fact, but we've also had our disagreements. We could be affable and we could be stubborn, and there were times that I've witnessed that we were prepared to compromise, but we could also dig in our heels. And some of us, even from the other side, could offer fair counsel to each other, and other times we offered it to you. There were times when we exchanged strong words and we tried not to make it personal. I believe, Madam Speaker, that is the expectation that we have of each other in this place, and there is a line that we can't cross. There is a line that is sacrosanct in the history and the tradition of this place that binds us one to another. Words matter, actions matter, and we must be accountable for what we say and do.

The record of the member in question speaks for itself. I wish it wasn't true, but the facts are the facts. You can't stand up at a BDS rally, which, by its own definition, is anti-Israel—there are no other words to describe it—to stand with movements like that on campuses—and it's been well-documented. It's etched into history. I wish it wasn't the case.

It goes further. We can't have people disrespecting our police and those who keep us safe. That hurts me to the core. And I know many of us, almost all of us, will always have the backs of everyone who keeps us safe.

Madame la Présidente, je voudrais remercier chaque personne et tous les premiers intervenants qui travaillent fort pour assurer la sécurité de notre province. And I said this, again, on Tuesday: La raison de leur service est pour faire une différence dans la vie des gens lorsqu'ils ne s'y attendent pas.

Well, why? Why do we have an obligation to make a difference in a person's life every day? Because those are the expectations of civil behaviour.

This past summer, Madam Speaker, I was overwhelmed when I attended the 90th anniversary of the Christie Pits riots, steps from this Legislature. The Christie Pits riots were a dark period, a gross and repulsive example of the worst of anti-Semitism here in Toronto 90 years ago. I was there with our Minister of Education, the member from Eglinton–Lawrence and others, and for those who were there, they remember the meaningful words that were spoken.

I said that we have come a long way from what was once acceptable in the last number of hundred years. Slavery was once legal; it's hard to believe. Discrimination against people for just how they worship was once acceptable. It was okay not to treat people the same if the colour of their skin was different, and that isn't right.

For my family, this was a personal journey, because my grandfather Murray Penwick was born steps from this Legislature on a street that doesn't exist today, called

Agnes Street, at the turn of the last century. He was a Jew from a family, of course, that came from Eastern Europe. He worked hard and he wanted to go to university, but people knew around 1930, if not before, there were quotas. You couldn't get into medical school. So he took the drastic step of changing his name to Penwick, which is a completely made-up name, something to this day I don't understand, and he still couldn't get into medical school, but he became, like many others, a pharmacist. Unfortunately, he did not live a long life, but he had a drugstore for many years; I still drive past the location at Vaughan Road and Cherrywood Avenue.

There were examples of anti-Semitism all through our lives. The Christie Pits riots were only one example, but there were others. Right after the Christie Pits riots, some of us remember that none was too many. When somebody asked a federal bureaucrat or minister at the time how many Jews from Eastern Europe, from wherever, can come here to seek refuge, they replied, "None is too many," which was zero. We've come a long way.

I wanted to also acknowledge that out of the Christie Pits riots, we had a wonderful friendship that formed with the Italian community, and it is special to this day. That's why it's an honour to sit right behind my colleague Minister Stephen Lecce.

I want to acknowledge something else that has been amazingly special for me, and they're here with us today: the leaders of the Philippine community of Toronto, who have expressed nothing but concern for the Jewish community, who have stood with us, who will always stand with us in good times and bad, and we will return the favour.

I have to tell you, Madam Speaker, that it's not only our fundamental right we believe in to live safe in our own homes and communities, and the optimism we should always share, and the fact that we should live free of racism and discrimination. I observed the incredible rally just across the street at the campus of the University of Toronto just a couple of days ago. I observed it, because I couldn't even get close, because the speech that was emanating from some people there was vile. You can't hold a placard that says "From the River to the Sea" and not understand what that means. That means the destruction of the democratic State of Israel. It's completely unacceptable.

I want to go back to say that I wish it wasn't so. I wish the attack did not happen at the end of a wonderful occasion in the Jewish calendar, where we finish the reading of the Old Testament and then we start again. As we began to think about reading the first words of Genesis—its powerful words, the story of creation—Israel, and there were no other words to describe it, was the victim of a heinous terrorist attack. It was sadistic in every way. People were hunted down in their homes just because they were Jews—at bus stops, at music festivals—and in real time, the terrible rampage was broadcast live through the world. There were no words that anybody could come up with that would explain something that one could find acceptable to the acts of Hamas.

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It was absolutely a tragedy—the largest since the Holocaust—and at the same time, the Jewish community has acknowledged the pain of so many that were innocent bystanders on the other side. As I said on Tuesday, it's a documented fact that many people in Gaza are held hostage by Hamas, and that's wrong; they deserve, also, to live safely as well.

When we see, even in the days—two days ago, Hamas had provided this misconceived notion that the hospital in Gaza City, which was subsequently confirmed by the Western world and by Israel that this was a missile gone rogue by a jihad or Hamas group—they immediately blamed Israel, and that's completely unacceptable, and nobody will fall for that.

Let them open up the border with Egypt, so Canadians can leave safely and that emergency supplies can enter.

I have to say that the democratic State of Israel cannot be expected to be an angel when they are dealing with a devil. It is just not realistic. They need to have a way of getting the hostages back. They need to have safe borders. They need to have peace amongst those in the region.

As I said, just a couple of days ago, when the Premier spoke of this to over 15,000 people at Mel Lastman Square, he spoke of moral clarity. It's about seeing the terrorist group Hamas for what they really are: unabashed, unapologetic, sick, megalomaniac terrorists. That's what they are.

And that's why any member of this House must be sensitive to each other and our feelings. We have to realize, as was said by other speakers, that when you walk in that door, you leave any biases that you have outside, so that you treat everybody exactly the way you yourself want to be treated. The best way, the only way we can show respect is by telling the truth, and sometimes the truth hurts, and maybe this is a lesson that we learn.

The leader across from Ottawa is right: We need to turn down the temperature here. That is a very fine statement. But we also need to call someone out if they've done something wrong, so that that person can learn.

Learning is okay, and I think this is an example of many communities, as I said on Tuesday, being part of a quilt, a microcosm of something amazing that represents Ontario. Everyone—the Muslim community, the Jewish community, the Filipino community, the Vietnamese community, the Chinese community, the Caribbean community and everyone who has walked through these halls—is part of a quilt. The responsibility is to each other that that quilt does not tear. This is something that we need to do.

And we will, as it was written, always choose the harder right instead of the easier wrong. And that's hard; I understand that. It's hard for visible minorities to serve in this chamber on both sides of the House, to reaffirm their faith, and that is something that is hard. But we do it because this is a welcoming place for everyone. That's why I'm here. That's why I'm wearing my kippah, and I'm proud of that. That's why people express their faith as to who they are. We must always be the conscience of this place of democracy and preserve the values we hold dear

now and always. That's why, Madam Speaker, I support this motion.

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

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: I rise today with a heavy heart as the people of Israel and people around the world reel from the unthinkable actions of the terrorist group Hamas and fear for their lives. This is a very serious motion before us today. It has been brought forward because of the words and conduct of the member for Hamilton Centre, words and conduct that are wholly inappropriate and unbecoming of a member of this Legislative Assembly.

Speaker, Israel was assaulted with a heinous surprise attack on a sacred holy day and Shabbat. Hundreds of young people at a music festival for peace were gunned down as they ran for their lives: innocent people, from infants to elderly grandparents, Israelis and Canadians taken hostage; children slaughtered; babies slaughtered; entire families massacred; rape; beheadings; bodies burned alive.

Hamas's despicable terror attacks have killed over 1,300 individuals with the majority being innocent civilians. They seized nearly 200 hostages, the highest number of Jews killed in a single day since the Holocaust. This was an act of cowardice. This is an act of sheer evil. There is no rationalizing it, no excusing it.

Hamas continues to threaten all residents and citizens of Israel, making no distinction between religion, ethnicity, citizenship or political belief. Our government, in the face of this horrific tragedy, has provided steadfast leadership and moral clarity and expressed its unequivocal support of the Jewish community of Ontario and the global community and that Israel has an absolute right to defend itself and its citizens against such heinous acts of violence.

I proudly stood with Premier Ford and our PC caucus in solidarity with 15,000 mourners at Mel Lastman Square as the Premier resolutely championed the cause of the Jewish people in Israel and the Jewish community in Ontario. This is a time for moral clarity. There is no place for hate and anti-Semitism in our province and country. Indeed, Israel stands as a refuge for Jewish people around the world. Borne out of the need to provide a secure homeland after the horrors of the Holocaust and centuries of persecution, Israel is and will always be committed to ensuring the safety and security of its people.

I myself am an immigrant to Canada, and my family escaped from the horrors and deprivation of the Second World War and the civil war that followed in Greece for the safety and security of life in Canada. From a young age, I learned of the atrocities committed against Jewish Greeks by the Nazis. In March 1943, the Nazis rounded up and deported the Jews of the historic city of Thessaloniki, sending those Greek citizens to the death camps. Interestingly, up to the 19th century, Jews were in fact a majority of the population in Thessaloniki, with 33 synagogues, thriving schools and businesses. In other parts of Greece, the ancient Romaniotes were Jewish families who called Greece their home since the time of Alexander.

When the Nazis invaded Greece, 46,000 of its Jewish citizens from the city were deported to the concentration camps. Throughout Greece, about 70,000 Jews died. Following the war, the few surviving Greek Jews emigrated to Israel, and some to Canada. The Greek Jews that moved to Israel established several villages, including Tzur Moshe, and many settled in the Florentin, Tel Aviv, and the area around Jaffa harbour. This is sacred land—land that had been inhabited by Jews since the beginning of time.

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In this House, our government has recognized the inalienable right of the State of Israel to defend itself and its people. This right is based in history. During the horrors of the Second World War, many Greeks, at risk to themselves, protected and hid Jewish friends and neighbours. On the Greek island of Zakynthos, when ordered by the Nazi occupiers to hand over a list of the town's Jewish residents, Mayor Loukas Karrer and Greek Orthodox Bishop Chrysostomos defied these orders. Instead, they concealed their Jewish neighbours and submitted a list that bore only two names: their own. This historic and heroic resistance resulted in the survival of the entire Jewish community in Zakynthos. This story serves as a poignant reminder that even in the darkest hours of history, people emerged to do what was right and what was just.

I can also tell you about my own personal experience. I had the rare opportunity to be invited to a memorial service at the Kahal Shalom Synagogue, the oldest synagogue in Greece, on the island of Rhodes, to commemorate the loss of 1,604 Jewish citizens of Rhodes who were sent to the concentration camps. Now, in a spirit of peace, the Chief Rabbi of Athens, along with the Imam of Rhodes and the Greek Orthodox Archbishop of Rhodes, were there together in prayer and commemoration.

I also belong to a Facebook group named the Israel-Greece Friendship Association. When Hamas attacked, Israeli members came to the Greek members, asking if Greece is a safe place for them to seek refuge. The response was overwhelming. Members shared their personal phone numbers. They assured Israelis that Greece would welcome them with open arms. Members from my birthplace of Kalamata, in Ioannina, and across Greece informed them how to safely travel to Greece. Perhaps most poignantly, members from Thessaloniki, whose Jewish citizens had been decimated by the Nazis, assured Israelis that Greece will protect them and their families.

Now, since 2007, Gaza has been controlled by Hamas. Let's not deceive ourselves: Hamas is a political and militant Islamist group, and it has ruled the citizens of Gaza in an oppressive de facto one-party state. Since then, they have in essence held all residents hostage to their brutal authoritarian goal.

Fast forward to October 7, 2023, when Israel was attacked from Gaza. The Hamas terrorist organization has thrust its residents of Gaza into a state of even worse crisis. In fact, they are now facing an immediate future without food, power and fuel. Hamas strategically places its headquarters in hospitals, hides its fighters beneath apart-

ment buildings and establishes its offices within schools. It exploits the people of Gaza, who suffer from both Hamas's oppressive rule and the consequences of conflict as human shields.

It's vital to recognize that the innocent people of Gaza should have the opportunity for safe passage, as they are not responsible for initiating this conflict and deserve to live free from harm. Humanitarian organizations should be allowed to provide relief to those fleeing the conflict. Innocent Israeli citizens should not be kidnapped and held hostage.

Ontario is home to Jewish and Palestinian people, many of whom have lost loved ones as the result of this senseless act of violence. To quote the Premier, "These attacks are not just another conflict on the other side of the world. The impact is being felt throughout the country, including here in Ontario."

I would also like to read a statement from Rabbi Stephen Wise, who is the rabbi for our synagogue congregation in Oakville. The congregation is Shaarei-Beth El congregation. This is what Rabbi Wise has said:

"We stand in solidarity with the State of Israel and all of its residents in the midst of the horrifying, deadly attacks of Hamas terror—unleashed by land, sea and air. We grieve the lives lost, which continue to grow in number. Those killed include children and adults of all ages and walks of life. Our prayers from around the world are directed to the land of Israel. We pray for comfort for mourners, healing for the wounded, we pray for the release of those taken captive, and safety for all who have taken shelter. We pray for the citizen-soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces, those on active duty, and all who have been urgently called into service as reservists.

"Not for the first time in its history, Israel has been assaulted with a heinous surprise attack on a sacred, holy day—in this case, Atzeret-Simchat Torah and Shabbat. A day of peace and rejoicing has been turned into a day of war and grief. Hamas's despicable terror attacks have killed, wounded and continue to threaten all residents of Israel—making no distinction between religion, ethnicity, citizenship or political belief. Today we stand with all in Israel whose lives are being threatened. We pray that the Israel Defense Forces will swiftly repel this terrorist invasion, minimizing the devastating loss of life, and will be able to safely recover the captives."

It is for this reason that I rise today to address a circumstance that as an Ontarian I am ashamed I have to raise. I would like to share with the members a harrowing message I received from a former constituent from my Oakville North-Burlington community, one who now lives in the riding of Hamilton Centre. Here is someone who should be able to trust that their elected official will act in the constituents' best interests. Instead, this individual reached out to me because they are scared for their safety and their children's safety. And their elected official's inflammatory statement put their safety at further risk.

Let me share what this constituent told me when we spoke yesterday:

"I represent and belong to a Jewish community of Hamilton.

"I don't know who to turn and ask for help, because our MPP is the member for Hamilton Centre, and I've heard the Ford government speaking out against her and I was wondering if the government can help me and my Jewish community.

"Given the horrifying nature of attacks and war in Israel, we are scared being in our own country, Canada!

"Last week, Jewish students—children—were attacked in Toronto.

"Several days ago, our children in Hamilton were horrified by cars filled with people flying the Palestinian flag. People screaming toward our children.

"We are asking for help. Everyone has a political opinion; we are not talking about political opinions. We are not talking about Israel or Gaza. We are Canadian citizens, most of the people are not from Israel. They are Jewish children going to Jewish schools.

"We are asking for you to understand us and support us, if you can relate to our fear because we are not going to Muslim or Christian places shouting and chanting death to people. We are peaceful here, that's why we live in Canada.

"We don't know what to do if the hate is not being addressed, that's a big problem.

"It is not fair that children should stay home because of fear in a free country that is not related to Israel or Gaza."

1420

This is, sadly, not an isolated experience. Many other members of the Hamilton Jewish community have written to me. And here is another one who just wrote to me today:

"I don't know who to turn to and ask for help from. I heard my MPP publicly supports Hamas.

"The member of Parliament continuously notes the saddening impact this war that was brought on us has on the innocent Palestinian civilians who are being used as human shields by the terror organization of Hamas and deliberately neglects to mention any of the civilians who were actively targeted as valid targets by that same terror organization, later to be raped, butchered, beheaded and burned alive.

"Clearly, we, the Jewish-Israeli communities within Canada, have a lot to worry about and nobody to rely on.

"We are asking for your understanding and your support. We feel that our fundamental rights were taken away wholly: the right to practise our religion in the house of worship and send our children to school with no fear, the right to freedom, we are scared to wear Star of David necklaces, wearing 'kippa' ... on our heads or dress as some of our community usually do.

"We don't know what to do if the hate is not addressed. It quickly became a big problem for peace of mind. It is not fair that children should stay home because of fear in a free country."

It is shocking that Jewish people living in Hamilton Centre are afraid because of the violence incited by the statements and actions made by the member from Hamilton Centre. Words matter. Actions matter. And I'm

proud that our government stands with them and they can rely on our side of the aisle for the support they so desperately need.

Hamas's leaders recently declared that last Friday would be a global day of jihad—a day for Hamas supporters around the world to threaten Jews wherever they live, including here in Canada. Jews in Canada certainly got the message. People in my own riding of Oakville North–Burlington and across Ontario are terrified of unprovoked violence against them. They have had to remove the mezuzah from their doorstep. They have advised their children to hide their faith. They have been told to avoid places of worship for fear of aggression. In my riding, the Halton police have increased patrols around places of worship. They are afraid, and it is our duty as parliamentarians to advocate and protect them.

To those listening, I have a clear and resolute message for you: We stand with the people of Israel. We stand with the Jewish citizens in Ontario—so that all Ontarians can rely on this government to support you, irrespective of your race, faith or ethnicity.

And to the members opposite, I would like you to reflect on this message from Holocaust survivor and Nobel Peace Prize recipient Elie Wiesel: “We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. Sometimes we must interfere. When human lives are endangered, when human dignity is in jeopardy, national borders and sensitivities become irrelevant. Wherever men or women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must—at that moment—become the centre of the universe.”

The truth is indisputable. Malice may attack it, ignorance may deride it, but in the end, there it is.

Let me repeat: We call on the Speaker to not recognize the member for Hamilton Centre in the House until the member reflects and then retracts her statements on social media and makes a heartfelt apology in her place in the House.

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

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: I was prepared to speak today about the particular motion in front of us, but I rise with a very heavy heart because of what happened before this debate took place today, and that is—folks, whether you're Jewish or not Jewish, whether you've been to Israel or haven't been to Israel, we saw a display in a democratic institution today where we could have upheld another democracy in this world, a democracy that stands for many human rights, stands for female leaders' empowerment, stands up for LGBTQ rights, and instead, when the opposition had an opportunity to act democratically—as stated in the name “New Democratic Party”—they chose to do nothing.

We've seen history, time and time again, of governments who've done nothing, and we've seen at the end of that who suffers, and it has been the Jewish community time and time again. For those who've studied history, for those who are interested to learn more, we are all well

aware of “none is too many.” Why is “none is too many” significant? Why is that phrase significant? There was a time when Canada could have done its part as a humanitarian leader in the world, and it did nothing. Instead, it turned a boat away and let future families, grandparents, children, people of all ages—it turned them away, deprived them from a free future here in Canada and ultimately sent them to their death.

Here today, we had an opportunity to rise above the noise, to stand up for democracy in this Legislature, and we had folks in this Legislature who did not do so. And as an individual who has fled different conflicts, whose family has fled different conflicts—we've all come here for a good reason: To provide voice to the voiceless, to provide both sides. We see many of that reflected in here. That wasn't done today. It wasn't reflecting a side; it was the status quo to just do nothing. That was a shame. I am very disappointed and very sad, and that's why I do rise with a heavy heart.

This House today, for this motion, is seized with a grave issue. It has one of its members engaged in conduct so egregious that official censure is the only possible response. But that's a question, Speaker: Is that the only possible response? This Assembly is meant to be a place for debate, for disagreement. Disagreements are expected, frankly. We've heard them many times. In fact, I think all parties and all members here welcome some of the disagreements. The bar for a censure motion, though, should be high, and it has been high. We do not make the decision to censure a member of this place lightly, nor should we support censure motions for frivolous or partisan reasons.

I've therefore approached my decision on this motion with the seriousness that it really deserves, and I have kept an open mind despite the vote that happened earlier today. I've read the statement from the member for Hamilton Centre several times, as hard as it was to read. I've also made note of her prior conduct, as well as her subsequent behaviour. I've observed first-hand the impacts her words and her actions have had on members of the Ontario Jewish community and the hurt that they felt. I fear for their safety. I'm following the debate in this place closely.

Speaker, when we think about the debate here and this democratic institution and the things we uphold, we uphold many rights. Many of those rights are codified in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms that guarantees these fundamental rights. For example, a right that all of us represent as we get democratically elected is right number 2(a), “freedom of conscience and religion.” Many people from different parts of the world flee to Canada for this very coveted, respected part of our charter. When you contrast this charter that we have in our country, that all of us represent, with the Hamas charter, the Hamas charter does not give freedom of religion. It actually specifically calls out for the death of the Jewish people.

Let me quote you from the Islamic Resistance Movement, which is one of the links against the “Zionist invaders,” as you call them. This is translated from the original language, but the quote here is, “But the Jews will not be pleased with thee, neither the Christians, until thou

follow their religion; say, the direction of Allah is the true direction. And verily if thou follow their desires, after the knowledge which hath been given thee, thou shalt find no patron or protector against Allah.” That’s their 120th verse.

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This is the Islamic Resistance Movement, which is against one of the folks that we’re all talking about here when it comes to the conflict. They’re just invaders of the poor folks we talk about in Gaza and Palestine as they have been the invaders of what just recently happened with Israel.

But also look at section 2(b) of our charter, “freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication.” Speaker, Hamas has no freedom of press, no freedom of media or communication.

Then we have, in our charter, “freedom of peaceful assembly; and freedom of association.” We have democratic rights of citizens. Every citizen of Canada has the right to vote. We have set out maximum lengths for Parliament. But Hamas doesn’t have the right to vote for everyone.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees the rights of life, liberty and security: “Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice.”

Speaker, Hamas has no rights for the Jews, unlike Israel, which has rights for every minority that chooses Israel as the place of belonging and their home. In fact, Hamas’s charter specifically calls for the death of Jewish people. Let me quote from you their charter, “The Day of Judgment will not come about until Moslems fight Jews and kill them. Then, the Jews will hide behind rocks and trees, and the rocks and trees will cry out: ‘O Moslem, there is a Jew hiding behind me, come and kill him.’”

They have the words “kill them” in their charter, Speaker. It’s unfathomable. I can’t stand up and vote for something that has “kill them,” no matter who it is. If it’s a Hindu, a Muslim, an Arab, a Jew, a Christian, I can’t support that. It explicitly says “kill them” in their charter. It’s a shame for anyone that could stand up and support such a thing, and certainly we don’t as Canadians. I hope we do not as Canadians, and I hope that the opposition proves me and others otherwise.

But those are the rights that we have in Canada that are not allotted to those who are represented by Hamas. My heart goes out to those individuals because not all of them have the ability to democratically vote for their leadership and be able to vote a government like they have here, and that constitutes both the government and the opposition, and, frankly, any third-party members also who get elected.

But, Speaker, to jump ahead a little bit to my conclusion: After I’ve followed this debate intensely, read the comments that the member posted and I’ve come ahead to this conclusion: I believe the member’s conduct rises to such a level that a censure motion is the only acceptable

response and I will, therefore, be supporting this motion and now will urge other members to do so. Let me tell you and let me set out my reasons.

Mr. Speaker, more Jews were killed in the Hamas attack on October 7 than any other day since the Holocaust. Of those who were slaughtered, six were Canadians, more remain kidnapped, and we pray for their safe return. We all saw photos. We all watched the videos. We heard the screams of young women being kidnapped, of children crying, of young women violated, of moms being dragged away, of parents remaining brave in the face of terror—and there’s so much horror that has occurred, I cannot read more as I won’t be able to keep it together.

But this affects us all in different ways. We all know how it affected the member for Hamilton Centre. With dead bodies still warm in the grave, the member issued a statement so heartless and vile that her own leader had to repudiate it, a statement that blamed the victim and repeated the blood libel. That statement continues to be at the very top of the member for Hamilton Centre’s social media page for all to read. She’s unapologetic. The statement is a window into her mind and into her heart, into what she really thinks about terrorism and feels about Jews like me.

Speaker, I will not dwell longer on bleak things. Instead, I’d like to spend a few minutes or two addressing a few of the factual claims that the member made in her statement that, I think, deserve a rebuttal. I will speak to them and speak to the failure of the leadership from the Leader of the Opposition.

In the impugned statement, the member called Israel an apartheid state. This is a serious charge. It is a reference to apartheid South Africa. In apartheid South Africa, people who weren’t white were denied the right to vote. They were forced into different schools. They were treated as second-class citizens. Canada, under Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, was a global leader in the fight against apartheid South Africa. Later in life, the late Nelson Mandela came to Toronto when Mike Harris was Premier, and I was still in school then—to think that I was still in school then. Mike Harris met with Nelson Mandela, and Nelson Mandela came to thank Canadians for being a leader in the fight against apartheid.

The member’s charge that Israel is an apartheid state is meant to conjure up memories of South Africa under apartheid to emotionally manipulate us, except nothing about South Africa’s analogy applies to Israel. Israeli Arabs have the right to vote. Israeli Arabs serve in its Parliament. Israeli Arabs are full citizens, be they male or female or identify as anything else. In fact, an Arab Israeli has more democratic rights and protections than a citizen of Israel’s neighbours. Speaker, let me repeat that: An Arab Israeli has more democratic rights and protections than a citizen in most of Israel’s neighbouring countries. This is because, unlike many of its neighbours, Israel is a democracy.

I have tried to address the apartheid charge related to Arabs who live within Israel, but what about Gaza? What about the West Bank? What about the deplorable con-

ditions under which they live? I care about them just as much as I care about the conditions of Jews and the conditions they live in in Israel. But Speaker, as for Gaza, Israel evacuated the Gaza Strip in 2005. Even though it's fashionable to say Israel occupies Gaza, the reality is this hasn't been true for decades.

Hamas won the election in 2006, and the first thing it did was violently eliminate its main opposition. Hamas hasn't held elections since then. Instead, it has lined its pockets with humanitarian assistance that has gone into Gaza and launched terrorist attacks against Israel. As for the West Bank, it is mostly under the control of the Palestinian Authority. The Palestinian Authority leader is currently in the 18th year of what was supposed to be a four-year term, having repeatedly postponed elections.

Whatever this is, it is not Israeli apartheid. The member's accusation that Israel is an apartheid state is an insult to the memories of those who suffered under apartheid in South Africa. It is also blood libel against the Jewish people. It is evidence of a new Jewish hate, a new anti-Semitism.

I'll turn now to another part of the member's statement. She accuses Israel of being a settler-colonist state. Ms. Speaker, when I first heard the words "settler colonialism," it brought back memories to my university days. Though you should never ask a woman her age, my time in university is longer ago than I care to admit. But I remember one thing or two about academic jargon. As someone who came from the Soviet Union, I think of George Orwell, who wrote that some ideas are so dumb that only anyone with a PhD would believe them. This is the case with the term "settler colonialism."

Settler colonialism is a term favoured by professors of decolonization studies and post-colonial studies. It's very much academic jargon, but it is being abused and applied in the context of the Middle East. The question here is, is it properly being applied to what's happening in the Middle East? The answer is no. Jews have been continuously present in the land of Israel since Biblical times. If people who have been there for millennia are settler colonialists, then the term "settler colonialism" has no meaning.

Let me put the question another way: If a Jew is a settler colonialist in the land of Israel, in what part of the world is he not or she not a settler? Where can she or he or they call home? Where do they come from?

1440

I think we know the member for Hamilton Centre, and I know how they may answer. They would answer, "Nowhere." They'd say that there's "nowhere to go, nowhere to flee—from the river to the sea." The settler-colonialist charge is bankrupt both intellectually and morally when you indicate things like "river to the sea." To believe it, you either need to be a radical with tenure in a university humanities faculty, or someone with a two-digit IQ taking one of their classes.

I want to turn briefly to the Leader of the Opposition. Earlier this week, the Leader of the Opposition stood in this place and accused Israel of launching an air strike on

a hospital in Gaza that killed hundreds of civilians. We now know this to have been disinformation—disinformation planted by Hamas and accepted uncritically by many different media outlets, spread and amplified by all opposition parties, spurring protests across the province. Now we know the truth. There was no air strike against the hospital. It was a Hamas rocket that failed to reach its intended target in Israel and instead landed in a hospital parking lot. Those deaths rest on the moral conscience of Hamas.

But has the Leader of the Opposition retracted her accusation that Israel launched an air strike against a hospital? Has she accepted the truth of the matter as confirmed yesterday by President Biden and a bipartisan group of American senators? Given that she rushed to accept the Hamas version of events, then spread it in this place, I believe she has a positive obligation to set the record straight—to correct the record, to tell us what she thinks. If she declines to do so, she's allowing the blood libel that Jews launched an air strike against a hospital to spread yet further. She would be willing into existence the next "jet fuel can't melt steel" conspiracy theory. Maybe this is her plan.

Increasingly, Mr. Speaker, I'm coming to think that the member for Hamilton Centre is not an outlier within the opposition. Maybe she may be part of its vanguard. Maybe the member for Hamilton Centre said what the opposition secretly believes to be true but are too politically astute enough not to admit it publicly. Perhaps the opposition all wish they could just wear their old university keffiyeh, find an old protest sign and join the rabble on the streets ranting and raving about Zionism every evening at 2 Bloor Street East.

Speaker, let me conclude by returning to the motion at hand, why the member for Hamilton Centre's statement is so beyond the pale and why she must be censured. My sincere hope is that the Palestinians achieve peace with Israel. The member for Hamilton Centre wants the Palestinians to achieve peace instead of Israel. She wants peace that negates Israel's very existence, but this is not peace. It is conquest—conquest from the river to the sea. This is why I'll be voting to censure this member.

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

Ms. Laura Smith: I'm here today to speak in favour of this motion and, more specifically, the sanctions to be brought against the member from Hamilton Centre.

Usually, it is my very great honour to have the opportunity to speak on a matter in the House, but sadly, I find there is limited honour in the actions from the member for Hamilton Centre. Specifically, utilizing her position to provide a statement inferring the mere existence of the State of Israel is the reason for thousands of rockets launched at civilians and the invasion of thousands of terrorists who killed, raped and kidnapped Israelis with no regard for the dignity of human life—it's literally difficult to digest.

Life is complex, but the last week and a half has made me question humanity itself, when a member of this

democratic House demonstrates the actions that make me question her position in this House. Perhaps we should go back to the events of October 7. We all went to bed that night not realizing that we would wake to the reality of terror and the nightmare of human slaughter in Israel—human slaughter that was tantamount to 9/11 and the Holocaust. It was unbearable to watch, surreal and disturbing.

It was Saturday, October 7 or, on the Jewish calendar, the 27 of Tishrei, the Jewish holiday of Shemini Atzeret, with the evening of Simchat Torah, which marks the final day of the reading of the Torah. It's a holy day, supposed to be a joyous occasion, one of the happiest holidays in the Jewish calendar, but as I turned on the television and scanned social media, we discovered that hundreds of young people's lives were gone, brutally murdered at a music festival located in southern Israel, near the Gaza Strip. The lives were savagely taken by Hamas terrorists, and then families, including women and children, slaughtered in their own homes.

The videos on social media, visuals of inhumane atrocities: children dying; teenage girls being raped, dragged bruised and bloodied, pulled out of trucks; elderly people with dementia, patients who had no idea what was going on or why they were in pain; Holocaust survivors, people who had started their life in terror and now ended in terror as well. Hamas's attack on Israel was the worst Jewish casualty since the Holocaust. Currently there are over 1,400 Israelis murdered, including six Canadians; 3,000 injured; and over 200 people still held hostage, and we do not know if we will ever see them again. It was horrific, it was inhumane, and it was despicable.

I spent the rest of that day with my neighbours, with members of my community and with my children. I sat in a living room and watched the news as Israeli Canadian reservists who were in Thornhill tried to figure out a way back, to go across the globe and serve their community. These boys are only a few years older than my son, and we were in that living room with them. We listened to them preparing to defend the democratic Israel.

I will say this: There can be no question or confusion; Israel has a right to defend itself and its people in an unprovoked attack. The member from Hamilton Centre used her platform in a way by inferring in the heinous behaviour of Hamas, making the victims and surviving friends somehow responsible for their own tragic fate. The member's statement was and is offensive and unbecoming of an MPP, but I will continue on with my journey through my community.

That night, I visited the congregation and families of the Chabad Russian Center of Thornhill Woods, where I was greeted by Rabbi Hildeshaim and his wife, Chanie. We celebrated Simchat Torah, the end of the reading of the Torah. At that time, many Orthodox Jews who did not use technology were not even aware of what was happening, not directly. They hadn't opened up their phones; they're observant. But rumours had begun to circulate. It was sickening for them to think about what their friends and family members were experiencing in Israel.

Although they were deflated, their spirit was not broken. The rabbi's wife, Chanie, and I had a brief conversation. She reminded me that we had to lift ourselves above everything that had happened and celebrate regardless. Chanie's a strong woman, and at any other gathering we would be laughing and perhaps even baking, and I'm thankful for her company and her guidance. Just like everyone else in that room, part of her heart and many of her family members are in Israel.

The following day, I travelled to the BAYT, which is the Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto, which is the largest Orthodox synagogue in Canada. Rabbi Korobkin is their stoic leader and just about everyone in his purview has deep ties to Israel. Many of the congregants are dual citizens. Like many members of this House, I represent a community of diversity. Many members of the Thornhill community have a heart that lives not only in Thornhill but also Israel. This connection could also extend to another home in Israel and very close family ties: brothers, sisters, children. And like my son's friend, many of our Thornhill youth were at that same moment planning to go back to Israel to protect Israel, to fight for democracy and protect its people, who include all spectrums of religions.

In the Knesset, the Israeli legislative assembly, Israeli Arabs sit. Israeli Arabs also sit on the Supreme Court. Israeli Arabs are doctors and professors in every capacity. Full rights: That's Israel and that's democracy, and not the depiction painted by the member from Hamilton Centre, that of an apartheid state. So this is hurtful behaviour and unfortunately demonstrates and underscores the pervasive anti-Semitic culture that our government is seeking to stamp out. How was this possible, and how do we live in a world that would perpetrate such evil—an unprovoked attack on Israel.

1450

The member from Hamilton Centre's statement went far beyond inappropriate. It was hurtful and not of a standard that you'd expect in this House. And I'm sure many of the members of my community would find it extremely hurtful. By this and previous actions, this member is simply not acceptable in this House.

Let's continue on with the events following October 7 in my community of Thornhill. I then went over to Chabad Flamingo. The Flamingo is a very large congregation with very similar ties to Israel. I attempted to console the people and spoke with their passionate leader, Rabbi Kaplan, who led the congregation in prayer and support. We were deflated. We were shocked.

I also travelled over to visit my friends at the Jewish Russian Community Centre, led by Rabbi Mendel Zaltzman. They, too, were in prayer mode. The rabbi's daughter was in Israel, and I chatted with the congregants, who so desperately wanted to help their friends and people in Israel. They were making plans to bring supplies for those in need, including emergency food, essential supplies, trauma support, with all supplies to be shipped to Israel.

Last Thursday night, I visited Chabad Lubavitch at 770 Chabad Gate. This is a special place for our community. The address is significant because it represents 770, which

is the street address of the world headquarters of the Chabad Lubavitch movement, and that's located in Brooklyn, New York. The building in Thornhill is significant because it's considered by many to be an iconic site in Judaism.

Chabad Gate is adjacent to a strip mall that has been riddled with hateful, anti-Semitic incidents for so many years. In fact, another hateful act just happened last weekend. The peaceable business owners have been harassed by destructive, anti-Semitic behaviour for years—having to face this consistently and stopping businesses in that area from functioning on their busiest day, which is Friday, the day right before Sabbath. It's hateful, it's sad, and it's anti-Semitic. And it's this kind of hateful behaviour and rhetoric that is undeserved—as well as the comments made by the member from Hamilton Centre.

I went into the Chabad Lubavitch and joined their evening session, as beautiful children played around the adults, as we prayed for the souls of those who had been lost in Israel. Rabbi Spalter, also a strong leader, leads his flock with great care and love. He was there with Rabbi Itchy Grossbaum—or Rabbi Itchy, as I call him—a kind leader with an ever-expanding family. I sat with the congregation as family member after family member came up and talked about life's blessings and their family members who were either about to serve or already serving in the Israeli defence effort, protecting the democratic nation of Israel for their future and, more importantly, those family members ahead of them.

In the words of Golda Meir, "If the Arabs put down their weapons today, there would be no more violence. If the Jews put down their weapons today, there would be no more Israel."

My own rabbi has said that when he now speaks to congregants, he looks to the entrances and exits, and there's a little bit of fear and caution. And these were words he said to me prior to October 7.

I've spoken to countless constituents, each with a connection to the terror. Last week, I called on a constituent who runs a remarkable not-for-profit, only to hear a very sad and crying person on the other side of the telephone. She advised that a family member was one of those held hostage by Hamas, and she also had countless family members in Israel who had been under siege.

I grew up locally. Many of my friends and I went to York University. It was close by and safe, and it offered a variety of courses. I loved campus life.

Many years later, we were delighted when my oldest chose York. It was close by—but at what cost?

When you're a Jewish student on campus at York, you learn very quickly that there are forces around you that will make you feel uncomfortable about your Jewish identity. The BDS movement is a prime factor. I've heard this on countless occasions from constituents. It's consistent. Specific student unions don't make the Jewish students feel very welcome, and it's very sad in a community of learning and vibrancy. I remember a few years ago when a Jewish student group was holding a small Israeli event at York University and there were

protesters outside. That protest turned a little upsetting as a parent. A group of student union protesters had gathered in the area outside the room and the Jewish students were locked inside. My child was on campus that night, and that was a very scary night. She wasn't picking up her phone. I was relieved when I was able to get through to her, but that was hard. What I faced until I could get through to her pales in comparison with what some parents in Israel are feeling right now, knowing their sons and their daughters are held hostage by terrorists.

Over the weekend, the family of a Canadian Israeli woman who was missing since Hamas terrorists ambushed a music festival in southern Israel learned that she had died. Her name was Shir Georgy. She was only 22.

Canadian Ben Mizrachi was one of at least 260 people gunned down by Hamas at the music festival in southern Israel—also only 22 years old, so young.

Canadian Israeli Adi Vital-Kaploun, 33, was killed by Hamas terrorists in her kibbutz near the Israeli border within Gaza. Vital-Kaploun's family said she died a hero after convincing her killers to spare her two young children and warning her father and husband to stay hiding during the attack.

Alexandre Look, who recently celebrated his 33rd birthday, was also among those killed while attending the musical festival. Alexandre Look, who lived in Montreal, died a hero. His dad said in a Facebook post on Monday that he found refuge with 30 other people in a bomb shelter without a door and he used his body to barricade that entrance.

The pain and the loss of not just Israeli blood, but also Canadian and, yes, innocent Palestinians is unsurmountable. Throughout its 75-year history, Israel has demonstrated endless strength and resilience, yet the member from Hamilton Centre states—and I'm quoting from her post, because, like my friend, we want to get this post information very clearly set out. This was her statement: "For 75 years, violence and retaliation rooted in settler colonialism have taken the lives of far too many innocent people."

By all accounts, the loss of lives that happened on October 7 was the result of and directly related to the actions of Hamas, a terrorist organization, full stop. As we look to our local communities over the course of the last week, and as I reflect, I received countless calls from concerned parents and scared York University students who face the BDS movement, harassed by organizations that uphold values that are not inclusive, divisive behaviour—so very sad for our humanity—and a joint statement from three student unions that support a recognized terrorist organization, promoting and glorifying violence against innocent Israeli citizens.

This statement failed to acknowledge the death toll of those who have been savagely taken. This is unacceptable and must not be tolerated. The glorification of a murderous terrorist group that has butchered innocent lives is vile. We don't expect any member of this House, regardless of the side they sit on, to justify terrorist attacks on thousands of innocent Israeli lives. An apology was eventually provided

by the member for Hamilton Centre, but how does the saying go? When someone shows you who they are, believe them the first time.

In the last several days we've seen hate rallies celebrating the kidnapping and slaughtering of innocent Israeli people. That, too, is very difficult to watch. Our friends at the Israeli consulate now suffer undeservedly with nightly demonstrations. To quote our Premier, "These hate rallies are another painful reminder of work left to do to stamp out anti-Semitism once and for all.... These rallies have no place here in Ontario," or Canada.

As a parent, I'm grateful to the Minister of Education for implementing mandatory Holocaust education in schools. As Winston Churchill used to say, "Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it." No matter the origin, the sentiments are eternal. We are destined to repeat the past if we do not learn from it.

Right now I'm grateful for many things in my community. I'm grateful for the extraordinary leadership in Thornhill and that our Premier denounced this act of terrorism, because, quite simply, it was the right thing to do. I'm thankful for my colleagues who periodically check in with me and ask about the people in my riding, providing support and compassion for a bleeding community.

And I'm thankful for the support of our amazing York Regional Police professionals, who have made us feel safer during these very difficult times. I'm very cognizant of the combined effort of the GTA police forces, including Durham, Toronto and the OPP, who are working around the clock for our community while my community is challenged by unprovoked hate.

1500

And I want to thank the Premier for his powerful speech in support of Israel at Mel Lastman Square. There were 1,500 people gathered in Mel Lastman Square, members of every community, not just those of the Jewish faith, and I was proud to stand beside so many of my caucus colleagues shoulder to shoulder in support of this cause—municipal, provincial and federal.

There were so many local efforts that should not go unnoticed. When a cargo plane was scheduled to leave Canada for Israel, our community stepped up. As far as the eye could see, there were drop-off locations for supplies. People streamed in. They gave what they could. That cargo plane left loaded. Thornhill sent its most valuable cargo, our children, to travel back to Israel and protect democracy. There was an anonymous man who stood at the airport and paid for tickets for any reservist that was flying back to Israel to serve. He bought 250 tickets. People coming together and caring for one another—I'm seeing it now, light through darkness.

Last week, we witnessed a day of rage where there was a call for violence against the Jewish people globally, and my community, already wrapped in fear, who are very mindful and cognizant of the Holocaust and the Jewish community realized that "never again" is happening now. The painful lessons of history weigh so heavy on us, and I'm mindful of the innocent Palestinians caught in a

desperate situation with Hamas using them as human shields—no respect for humanity, dignity or life.

I support this motion, as I am mindful that the member from Hamilton Centre has a history of destructive social media postings. In a previously deleted post, prior to being elected, the member from Hamilton Centre's postings included one where she said that police across this province kill babies. I quote her from her post: "Police in Ontario have a record of arbitrarily killing babies, Black, Indigenous, racialized, disabled civilians (many of whom are Muslim) & those who are in crisis." This tweet was deleted, by the way.

This is dangerous territory for an elected member to display, and a modicum of decorum is lacking at the very least. When this information is combined with others along with the motion presently in question, there can be no doubt in my mind that the member lacks suitability in her role. I wholeheartedly support this motion in favour of censure against the member from Hamilton Centre. Her anti-Semitic ideology, whether intentional or not, in this war only feeds the fire, and it is comparable to pouring gasoline to wildfire, wreaking havoc on the ideology of democracy in this House.

I want to thank every member for their contributions.

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

Mr. Rick Byers: I will be rising as well in the House to speak in favour of this motion. I thought, to start my remarks, I would quote from the motion and read it to frame my thinking on this subject:

"That this House expresses its disapproval of, and disassociates itself from, continued disreputable conduct by the member for Hamilton Centre, most specifically her use of social media to make anti-Semitic and discriminatory statements related to the existence of the State of Israel and its defence against Hamas terrorists; and

"That this House demands the member desist from further conduct that is inappropriate and unbecoming of a member of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario; and

"That the Speaker is authorized to not recognize the member for Hamilton Centre in the House until the member retracts and deletes her statements on social media and makes an apology in her place in the House."

This motion is probably the most challenging topic I have seen us talk about here in my time as MPP for the last 16 months. It has caused me to step back and reflect on that, the role we all have and where and how we do it. Because at the root of it, being a member of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario is a great privilege that we all share. It's hard work, and our motive is to get things done, but it is a great privilege.

I begin by reflecting on the place where we conduct our work, this beautiful building that we're in today. Every day when I come in—the grounds around here, statues that reflect on history of this place and of our province. I come in the east door and past the statue there of Agnes Macphail, the first elected woman in Canada in the House of Commons in 1921. It happens to be that she grew up about 20 minutes from where I live in Bruce–Grey–Owen

Sound—a marvellous, amazing lady. All the challenges she would have had to face in getting elected are just extraordinary. And some other beautiful pictures of so many of the first women elected to this chamber: Rae Luckock, Margaret Birch, Margaret Scrivener, Andrea Horwath, Kathleen Wynne. Over the years, it's now equality, effectively, but that history causes me to reflect. The names on the walls and being sworn-in as one of 2,000 or so members is quite extraordinary.

I was also a page back a few years ago. Yes, that's right: 1972; yes, 51 years ago. It was a while. Bill Davis was Premier—Darcy McKeough, Bob Nixon, Bette Stephenson. I reflect on that with this motion just because it sets the scene of where we all do our work and emphasize that it is a great privilege to serve in this House and that our actions and words should reflect that privilege.

Most of the time, the discourse in the House does reflect that. Yes, question period can be divisive at times—maybe almost all the time—but the roots of the issues are sincere. When speeches are made and bills are introduced and tributes are made and motions, do we always agree? No. But we share the passion and the commitment for getting things done in what we believe in. I saw that the other night in the private member's motion debate that we had. I was so grateful for that kind of co-operative atmosphere that we saw. To me that was probably the highlight of my time here, and it also caused me to reflect a little bit on before I was elected.

I've climbed a few mountains, done four of the world's seven summits—who knows whether I'm going to do any more. But my first mountain, approaching the summit caused me to reflect. I stopped and I was looking around and down to my right, it was about 1,000 feet straight down. I said, "Byers, take your next step and make sure it's the best one you can take." Happily, I did, and I got down, but that moment caused me to reflect on life as well, and it brings it back to what we do in this place. Let's be motivated to take the best next step that we can.

That brings me back to this motion because it's so unfortunate that the words and actions of the MPP from Hamilton Centre are, in fact, instead of a step forward, a real step back. We need to stay focused on making those steps forward.

This motion of censure is rare, but it has been done before. In fact, it has been done by us, our party, to one of our own members in the past. As the government House leader commented, it was in early 2022 when the past member for Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston made the derogatory and racist remarks about a federal cabinet minister and used social media to post messages inciting violence. The House swiftly came together to unanimously censure him in much the same words as the motion we're debating today does.

At the time, the House ordered apologies be made by the member. It asked the Speaker to assess the sincerity of such apologies, and it ordered the member to desist from further contact. In other words, this has been done before. It's not easy, and we've done it ourselves. I think that's a

very important thought to have here as we consider this motion.

1510

Reflecting again on our thoughts from the House leader, fundamental to our system of government is the ability of a Parliament to maintain institutional respect and dignity so it can fulfill its constitutional duty. That's why, since the foundation of our Westminster system of Parliament, the two most significant rights which Parliaments have maintained are the collective rights to discipline and to regulate their own internal affairs.

It is expected that members will hold varied and sometimes unpopular opinions. They may even compromise their own personal dignity at times, but what can not be compromised is the public respect for the institution itself. That's why, over the course of history, when faced with a conduct so unbecoming that it reflects on the entire institution, Parliaments have sparingly but swiftly exercised their disciplinary powers to protect the institution from the actions of any individual, whether a member of the public or a member of that Parliament. That, again, reflects on why we are discussing this motion.

I've been listening to the remarks from other members—really excellent thoughts. The member from Essex talked about—I've never been to Israel myself, but his reflection on going there, seeing what he saw and making the comment as others have, that on the Holocaust—in what happened on October 7, more people in Israel were killed than any time since the Holocaust, just an unbelievable notion.

The member from Cambridge mentioned his trip to the Dachau concentration camp and what an impactful event that was. He also mentioned the six Canadians who have been killed in this conflict.

The member from Whitby talked about the events in his community and reflections on the recent difficult days.

The member from Ottawa South, I acknowledge, said we need to come together and build trust. I agree. We should move towards that.

Beautiful remarks from the member from York Centre—his passion in choosing the harder right, he called it.

The member from Oakville North–Burlington told stories about her family coming to Canada and the links between Greece and the Holocaust.

The member from Barrie–Innisfil's passionate remarks in reference to constitutions were very good.

Of course, our member from Thornhill: beautiful remarks and so passionate about the activities in her community—I believe the largest Jewish community in all of Canada, or even North America, so quite extraordinary. Thank you so much for sharing those.

These remarks all cause me to reflect on our role here and this motion. This matter strikes the very heart of the principles on which our democratic institution was founded. It's an issue that demands our undivided attention, not merely as representatives of our diverse constituencies, but as representatives of our great province.

The motion before us pertains to a member's use of social media, a powerful tool in our age, to disseminate

opinions and perspectives that have been perceived as both anti-Semitic and discriminatory. Ontario is an interconnected collection of cultures, faiths and histories, and stands as a testament to the world that diversity is our strength. Regardless of background, every individual contributes to the unique tapestry of our shared identity. Therefore, when any member of this House bestowed with public trust chooses to use their platform to threaten this harmony, it's our collective responsibility to address it and rectify.

It causes me to think again of Agnes Macphail and all the work she went into to go to the House of Commons and to this chamber. I can only imagine what she would be thinking in hearing about the comments from the member from Hamilton Centre and how disrespectful it is of the institution of our Legislature.

Free speech is a fundamental right in many democratic societies. It ensures that individuals have the liberty to express their thoughts, ideas and opinions without facing retribution. However, like many rights, it's not absolute and does not exist in a vacuum. When one exercises the right to free speech, especially in a public or shared space, there are inherent responsibilities that come with it. These obligations aren't necessarily legal but are based on societal norms, mutual respect and the preservation of a harmonious community.

While individuals can hold personal beliefs, intentionally spreading false information can be harmful. In the context of anti-Semitic comments, it's essential to differentiate between holding a view and perpetrating harmful stereotypes and falsehoods.

Today's debate transcends the motion at hand. It delves into the essence of our roles. That's why I was reflecting on the place where we do our work and how we do that work. It is a great privilege, and our actions both here and elsewhere need to reflect that privilege. As we chart our path forward, let us be guided by wisdom, understanding and an unwavering commitment to the principles that define us, for the strength of Ontario lies not just in the voices of its representatives but in its people's unity, harmony and shared vision. Let's champion this unity today and always. That is why I will be supporting this motion.

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

Mr. Ric Bresee: Speaker, I wish to start by sharing the content of an email that I received from a former colleague of mine and a constituent. Her name is Robin. Robin is a professor at St. Lawrence College, working in classes for students with English as a second language. Robin and her family had taken a family trip to Israel for a wedding. They were scheduled to leave Israel on Saturday, October 7, but because of the brutal attacks by Hamas on the people of Israel, they didn't get to leave; they needed to take cover. They ended up spending most of the day hiding in a bomb shelter. The email she sent me said that they had been waiting for safe passage out of Israel, and that they heard that there are over 1,000 Canadian citizens also in need of leaving Israel—some of them are residents; many of them were tourists.

I'm thankful that my friends are currently safe, and I hope that they can soon return home to safety. Unfortunately, this is not the same story for everyone after the horrific attacks.

Thousands of Israelis were attending a music festival in Gaza, and suddenly they were under fire. One concert attendee, Gili Yoskovich, told the BBC, "I said, 'Okay, I'm going to die, it's okay, just breathe, just close your eyes,' because [there] was shooting everywhere. It was very, very close to me." That is not what someone attending a concert should be saying.

For anyone listening who doesn't know, Hamas is called the Islamic Resistance Movement—with the goal of creating an independent Islamic state within historical Palestine. They have maintained that Palestine is an Islamic homeland that can never be surrendered to non-Muslims. Put bluntly, according to United Nations standards and Canadian law, Hamas is a terrorist organization, plain and simple, and they wish to eradicate the Israeli state.

Let's talk about what happened on Saturday, October 7. This was not a liberation movement. It was a brutal attack on humanity. Many news outlets have reported that the Hamas terrorists who infiltrated Israel were carrying manuals with instructions on how to kidnap and torture people. This was a planned attack, with the purpose to cruelly torture their captives. This was not a military-to-military battle. Quite simply, this was an attack on everyday civilian people simply trying to enjoy an event.

1520

As of yesterday, and I may be wrong on this, it's been confirmed that five Canadians have been amongst the many who have been killed because of this attack. I'm told that currently, over 1,400 Israeli people, mostly civilians, are dead, and I fear that my numbers are inaccurate and they're growing.

We've learned through media reporting that there have been top-secret documents found on the corpses of some of the Hamas terrorists detailing plans on how to kill as many people as possible in targeted places like elementary schools and a youth centre. Other documents have been shown to give the directive to achieve the highest level of human loss possible and then take captives. The mission was clear: Their strategy was to hurt and to murder as many innocent civilians as possible.

Following the attack, many Ontario citizens expressed their grief and their fear. They may have family and friends in Israel. They may have family and religious roots in Israel. Everyone watched in horror as they saw children and the elderly being beaten, being taken, being slaughtered and, as we've heard today, even being beheaded.

As the Premier of this province said on Tuesday, these attacks are not just another conflict somewhere on the other side of the world. This is an attack where, because of the history of the Holocaust, it is even more important for us to intervene. Atrocities like the Holocaust can never be repeated, not while we're standing by.

The motion before the House today emphasizes our government's commitment to human rights, to democracy

and to the Jewish community. Across the world and across history, Jewish people have a long history of persecution. We need to stand together and support the Jewish people here in Ontario and in Israel.

As democratically elected representatives of the province of Ontario, it is important that we defend our democracy and all democracies around the world. Israel is one of the few democratic states in the Middle East. Hamas has declared war on a democratic, sovereign nation. When someone attacks one democracy, they have, in fact, attacked all democracies.

And all of this because of a hateful set of beliefs. It shocks and amazes me that a belief in God, a belief in any religions which guide us on how to get along with each other, ends up as a horrible excuse for murderous brutality. I've never been able to understand that.

Within this House, there are many people of many faiths, ideologies, beliefs, but we can work together because we choose to work together in a civil setting and work through our differences. Hamas has not done that. Hamas is not willing to do that. Instead, they choose to take matters into their own bloody hands in an attempt to show who is somehow most powerful.

Now, at a time when Ontarians and the world were grieving, the member from Hamilton Centre chose to post on social media justifying this unprovoked attack. She chose deliberately harsh and inflammatory rhetoric, claiming that Israel's generations-long occupation of Palestine was nothing other than settler colonialism. When Israel, Ontario and the whole world are grieving, it is not the time for someone to monopolize their own personal social agenda. It is a time when the people of Ontario are looking to us, their elected representatives in this place of power, to be their support.

We have heard that on October 7, more innocent Jewish men, women, children and infants were killed on that day than on any other day since the Holocaust of World War II. Whether or not the intention of the statement by the member of Hamilton Centre was to aggrieve the Jewish communities of Ontario, I assure this House, it did. And it aggrieved the majority of peaceful Ontarians of any faith.

Following the publishing of the member's statement on social media, the Leader of the Opposition then requested an apology from her own member and a retraction of that offensive comment. At that time, obviously, the leader of the NDP recognized that the comment posted online was wholly inappropriate. It's unfortunate that the leader's words were weak and subsequently ignored.

As has been mentioned, in the previous term of this House, the then member for Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston made offensive comments regarding a federal cabinet minister and shared those same comments through social media. At that time, this House stood together for the decorum of our democratic House, using a very similar motion to what we are looking at today. That member was given an order from this House that an apology to the Speaker's satisfaction was to be made. Mr. Hillier—my former MPP, actually—chose to ignore those instructions from the House. Madam Speaker, I believe, and I think

that all members here believe, that it is motions like this that ensure the dignity of this House and its members.

Early in 2022, the opposition found themselves in a similar situation. It was discovered a member of their own caucus was demonstrating a pattern of publishing troubling Islamophobic, homophobic and racist views. The provincial director of the NDP at the time wrote a statement saying, "Any other candidate and any other caucus member—in any context ... attempting to run for any reasonable party—would be disqualified for ever having been a member of an Islamophobic, racist group." The previous leader and her party understood how important it was for the members of this House to be true representatives of all the people of Ontario.

We may not like it all the time, but as elected officials, we are held to a higher standard. Today, we are calling on this House to come together as a democratic institution to uphold that standard. Now and long into the future, the people of Ontario must know that racism and discrimination will not be condoned by this institution.

Madam Speaker, when I last heard from my friend Robin, it was that her children had found flights into Europe and that their parents were waiting on help and a possible flight from our heroic Canadian Armed Forces. I think, and I hope, that they are safe, and I weep for all the families and the friends that don't have that hope. She had reached out to me as the only elected official that she knew personally.

So I hope and I believe we must—I hope this House respects the term "elected official" by passing this motion and ensuring that everyone knows that we will always condemn that horrific and violent attack.

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

Mrs. Robin Martin: Like others have said today, I rise with a heavy heart. It's a very difficult and serious issue that we are debating today. I want to start just by putting down some basic facts.

Hamas has been recognized as a terrorist entity by the government of Canada, and Hamas' charter clearly declares that its aim, the reason for its existence, is to commit a war crime, basically. It is to eliminate the state of Israel and every Jew who stands in the way. And they're not above eliminating others as well, like Arab Israelis, for example.

Now, on October 7—we've said many times, but I have to go there again—appalling news came out of Israel: Innocent civilians, men, women, children, even babies and the elderly, some of whom themselves were Holocaust survivors, were kidnapped, raped, murdered, burned and mutilated. And Hamas terrorists gleefully paraded their war crimes on social media, showing a total absence of respect for human life. By treating these innocent victims as though they were less than human, by dehumanizing these innocent Israelis, these terrorists displayed their own inhumanity for all the world to see, and all the world saw that. It was the purest manifestation of moral evil in recent history. Every bit of news of these atrocities committed by Hamas hits us viscerally in the gut, leaving us gutted,

really, as the descriptions also echo pogroms and the history of the Holocaust, and we all feel that very much.

1530

As my friend has just said, at least on Monday of this week, by then, 1,400 Israelis had been killed, including 260 who were massacred at the Supernova Sukkot gathering. Attendees there began fleeing in panic as Hamas terrorists arrived and began shooting, and the few who managed to reach their vehicles were met with gunfire and blocked roads. Those that hid were hunted down, raped and then they were taken hostage or murdered. The attack, and all of the other attacks perpetrated by Hamas, deserve nothing less than unequivocal condemnation.

Now, in light of that, what was the response of the NDP MPP for Hamilton Centre? There was a post posted on October 10. Let's remember that October 10 was just a few days after October 7. We were still just figuring out what had happened. There were two parts to the post: There was the statement itself, and the post on X, formerly called Twitter, which attached the statement.

Let's examine how the MPP for Hamilton Centre responded to the October 7 terrorist attack by Hamas. What were her first words in the face of this unspeakable horror? The Hamilton Centre MPP posted a two-paragraph statement, and this is what she said: first of all, some irrelevant nonsense stating that the MPP for Hamilton Centre was reflecting on her role as a politician in this "settler colonial" system—I guess that was just a side smear on the Legislature. Then, she followed that with a "#FreePalestine." Then, her statement called for an immediate ceasefire. This was on October 10, just a few days after this unspeakable terrorist attack on Israel when Israel was still reeling from the attack. If we all reflect—if something traumatic happens to you, you can't think, especially something this traumatic.

On October 10, she posted this when Israel was still reeling from the attack, had had barely a chance to regroup and to start to defend itself, even while Hamas was holding hostages, perhaps as many as 200 hostages taken from Israel, which itself is a war crime, which they are still doing—this is when the MPP for Hamilton Centre was asking for an immediate ceasefire, even while Hamas continued bombing Israel, its rescue forces and those who were trying to give the people who had been murdered so viciously a decent burial.

Her statement also smeared Israel, this very recent victim of a horrific terrorist attack, as an apartheid state. It states—her statement—that the solution is the end of the State of Israel. She specifically rues the ongoing violence on October 10, but she doesn't say a word against the terrorist attack against Israel or its innocent citizens. Not a word for those innocent human beings who were slaughtered in Israel. Not even a word for the 40 innocent Arab Israelis—at least 40 that I know of at this point—who were killed in the terrorist attack on Israel, nor the six Canadians who were killed in the terrorist attack on Israel, nor the people from other countries who were killed in the terrorist attack on Israel—not a word for any of them.

CIJA, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, said this in response to the statement by the MPP for Hamilton

Centre: "Israeli babies beheaded, Israeli young women raped, more than 100 Israeli men, women & children kidnapped, and 900 & counting murdered at the hands of #Hamas terrorists and this is what the Ontario MPP ... has to say.

"This statement is filled with lies that will do nothing to create peace and will only serve to foment hatred against Canada's Jewish community.

"We call for the immediate removal of"—the MPP from Hamilton Centre. That was the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs when she posted her statement.

This is fundamentally where the problem is. In the face of horror, the MPP from Hamilton Centre could not spare a first thought for the victims of this terrorist attack and their families—not one thought, not one moment. That is fundamentally racist. It is anti-Semitic. It is overlooking the humanity of the people who were attacked. It is conduct unbecoming a member of this Legislature. We all say every day that there should be no hate, no racism of any kind, and anti-Semitism is a type of racism, perhaps the oldest.

We have all said this in this House, but it's much worse when an individual member of the Legislature does not live up to this standard and says something which is fundamentally anti-Semitic and racist in the face of the most horrific tragedy. This is a member sworn to represent all constituents, and we've heard that she has Jewish constituents. All the member had to do was to apologize and retract her statement and issue a statement condemning Hamas' terrorist attacks, as she should have done originally. This is the position of the New Democratic Party, which she belongs to. Although unfortunately, today, they did not vote in line with that position, that is their stated public position on the issue at the time of the post anyway.

The statement by the NDP leader, the member for Davenport, on October 11, condemned the statement from the member for Hamilton Centre. The leader of the New Democratic Party released a statement saying the MPP's message was not approved by her caucus. She asked her to retract it and instead asked her to clearly state "that she decries any violence against both Israeli and Palestinian people." The NDP leader said, "This statement does not reflect our party's position, which is articulated in our federal party's statement ... The terrorist attacks by Hamas on thousands of innocent Israeli civilians are unjustifiable and must be condemned unequivocally." But the member has not done that, not to this day.

Our Premier called on the member from Hamilton Centre to step down. He said, "As Premier, I'm doing what"—the Leader of the Opposition won't do, calling on her—"to resign immediately" as the member for Hamilton Centre. Then the member for Hamilton Centre offered what could best be described as a very tepid apology, a simple post buried in the comments section of her X post, just two words really: "I apologize." That was the whole sentence. That was it. She did not even bother to say exactly what she was apologizing for.

As Michael Mostyn, CEO of B'nai Brith Canada, noted, "The MPP from Hamilton Centre has never prop-

erly apologized to the Jewish community for her prior offensive statements. Now, as our community faces an onslaught of barbaric terrorism, your comments are devoid of even one word of condemnation against Hamas. You do not deserve to sit in the opposition's caucus in Ontario." He went on to call on the NDP leader to immediately remove the MPP from caucus.

But there was never any retraction of that statement, even though her leader asked for a retraction. Indeed, the MPP from Hamilton Centre doubled down on it by pinning it on the top of her X feed, highlighting it. Leaving the post up is contributing to inflaming the situation. She is continuing to foment hatred.

A recent op-ed by David Matas, senior legal council of B'nai Brith, and Sarah Teich, a member of the B'nai Brith Canada's Matas Law Society, stated, "In Canada, the Jewish population, according to Statistics Canada, is the most vulnerable identity group by far on a per capita basis.... This disproportionate victimization is directly linked to past anti-Zionist rallies and the propaganda which incites them." These rallies are "straight bigotry, endorsing these killings and kidnappings."

1540

Now, as the government House said, it's expected that members are going to have comments, sometimes unpopular opinions, but we cannot allow them to compromise the sanctity, the value of this institution and respect for this institution. And that's why Parliaments over the course of history have acted swiftly to condemn members and censure members when there has been a problem. And that's why we're arguing this motion today.

There is unanimity amongst the members of this Legislature, by the way, on this issue, despite how people vote sometimes, despite what the member for Ottawa Centre said, the leader of the independent Liberals. Previously, he had said, "This is about innocent lives. And that tweet left the impression that those innocent lives, that somehow they had it coming. Somehow, what did you expect? It didn't recognize the utter inhumanity of what happened." That was the member for Ottawa Centre.

CIJA said just yesterday on X, "By pinning her statement to her profile, after specifically being asked to retract it," the member for Hamilton Centre "demonstrates that her 'apology' was nothing but empty words. No minority community would tolerate this.

"We once again reiterate our call for her immediate removal from the NDP caucus."

We must hold the members—all of us, ourselves, each other—to the highest possible standard. And even the Leader of the Opposition said the member from Hamilton Centre should apologize and retract the statement. Yet, the member has not. That's all three parties in this Legislature, and we haven't heard from the Green member. But otherwise, everybody.

So what is the problem here? Never acknowledging the terror attack that started this. We've often said this: You have to name these things. You have to call them out: a tepid apology, a statement that has still not been retracted, doubling down on that statement and sticking it in the face

of everybody for all to see, and she did all of this with the coat of arms of the Legislature beside her name. In doing so, she tainted the reputation of this great institution, our democratic ideals and all of the institutions that uphold them. Her conduct, I would say, is disreputable, and it brings shame on this institution and all of us by association with it.

Even long-time members of the NDP think that the MPP for Hamilton Centre should resign. Hershl D. Berman, who ran in the last provincial election for the NDP and in the last three federal elections and has been a member of the party since 1984, said this this week about the member from Hamilton Centre. He said this "caused great harm to the Jewish community in Ontario. While Hamas was attacking our friends and family she posted remarks on her 'X' page that were inappropriate and deeply hurtful. She was asked to withdraw them but she did not, and her subsequent statements were inadequate and unacceptable.

"This is the latest incident in a pattern of anti-Semitic behaviour that predates her election to the Ontario NDP caucus. Her actions demonstrate that she is neither fit to speak for the New Democratic Party nor to hold elected office.

"I therefore respectfully ask our leader ... to expel her from the ONDP caucus, and I call" on the MPP from Hamilton Centre "to resign as a member of provincial Parliament." And that is from a long-time member of the NDP, a former candidate.

I guess what I would ask is, if the member for Hamilton Centre thinks she's participating in a somewhat distasteful Legislature, a distasteful place, then she could step down quite easily. She doesn't seem to have respect for this institution. As Michael Mostyn, CEO of B'nai Brith Canada said in a recent Toronto Sun article, all of us "must start asking ourselves who we are, and how much more of this evil incitement we are willing to condone" or just ignore because, as I said before, I think it will infect everything.

He went on: "Think about this: A Hamas terrorist called for a holy war on all Jewish people, and there are Canadians celebrating it." They're handing out cake here in our multicultural society. He concluded, "You cannot support the actions of Hamas while also claiming to believe in a multicultural and diverse Canada."

We have a place here called a Parliament—speak, "parler," "Parlement." Words matter. That's what this place is about and these are her words.

And I just want to mention that a representative of the National Council of Canadian Muslims held a press conference yesterday, and I read a transcript of everything that was said. One of the points he made repeatedly was that words matter, that words have consequences, and they absolutely impact people—even the words that we're talking about here today and the words in the tweet.

Well, I think we all agree, and that is why we brought this motion. But that representative, despite confirming that words matter, could not understand the relevance of this motion. He said the National Council for Canadian

Muslims “do not see it as a problem,” but many others do, I can assure you, including my colleagues and myself.

Let me try to explain quickly why it’s important because I think it’s important that everybody understand. We all want peace. Nobody wants anyone to be hurt. No civilians anywhere should be hurt, especially not innocent civilians going about their business. But our shared humanity requires that we value every human life. Human rights are attributed to all of us—Jew, Muslim, Israeli, Gazan and, yes, Canadian—because we are human beings. Every life is sacred—every Jewish life, every Muslim life, every Israeli life, every Gazan life. If we do not accept that as the foundation and let each other live according to your own religion and beliefs, or lack thereof, here in Canada, then we will not ever be able to have peace and live together. Our society will be torn apart. This is fundamental.

Now, any statement that I and my colleagues and this government have made about this issue have been statements condemning a recognized terrorist group, not Gazans generally—or Palestinians or Muslims. The innocent people of Gaza should be able to have safe passage. The innocent Israeli citizens should not have been so brutally murdered in a terrorist attack, but calling for an immediate ceasefire without letting Israel recover its hostages, secure its borders and eliminate the ongoing threat of further attacks coming from Hamas is just not tenable. It is strategically intolerable.

“Legitimate defense can be only a right but also a grave duty for one who is responsible for the lives of others. The defense of the common good requires that an unjust aggressor be rendered unable to cause harm.” Furthermore, as “it happens that the need to render the aggressor incapable of causing harm, sometimes involves taking his life.” That is a quote from Thomas Aquinas.

Aquinas argued that it was only in the pursuit of justice that the good intention of a moral act could justify negative consequences, including the killing of an innocent during war. Our United Nations charter says at article 51, “Nothing in the present charter shall impair the inherent right of an individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a member of the United Nations, until the security council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security.” Israel does have a right to defend itself. It can’t have a ceasefire before it has secured its own safety and the safety of its citizens, especially in light of what has happened.

That’s all we need to understand. We don’t have any problem with Muslims. We love everybody. We want everybody to get along. We don’t want anyone to die, especially not innocent civilians. But we’re here today to say if only the MPP for Hamilton Centre could agree, condemn the attack first and then talk about the rest of this.

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

Mrs. Daisy Wai: I rise today to address matters of great importance. It really makes all of us sad. Each one of us watched in horror as children, the elderly and even Holocaust survivors were kidnapped, beaten and slaughtered at the hands of Hamas.

Speaker, I’m outraged by the terrorist attack by Hamas against civilians. That is the key, and that is the problem with all this that we are talking about. They are civilians and Hamas are terrorists. Indeed, they are a terrorist organization that decided to violate the laws of nations and nature in this bloody, preplanned massacre, and I say it is preplanned. As I was watching on TV, I could see there is a guidebook that they go by, and the group were just going by that. They really want to torture the Jewish community, and it’s really sad.

1550

Hamas murderers slaughtered hundreds of innocents. The dead are not just Israelis but Canadians, our Canadians, and citizens of countries around the world. We have six Canadians who lost their lives because of this. We have two other Canadians who have been reported missing. The heartbreaking images, videos and stories are still coming out. As I’m sitting here listening to a lot of our colleagues reminding us what they have seen in the videos, the saddest one is the most horrifying one, the babies being beheaded. And can you imagine the young women being raped and tortured? I can see all the bloody scenes as they come out from trucks and cars. This is sad.

Can you imagine some of our family members suffering this? I am about to hire a person who is from Israel. When I was talking to him, confirming his appointment a couple of weeks ago, he was so energetic. But last week as I was talking to him, he was so stressed out to the point that I said, “Should I offer you a couple of days not to come in and work for us yet and just make sure things are more settled at home in Israel?” This is how sad things are. We will not feel it as much if we do not have family members going through the same thing.

I stand here to defend Israel for doing what they need to do to defend themselves from this inexplicable and obscene violence. It is very sad, and at one point when I first saw all these things going on, in fact, I was praying for peace. Like MPP Fraser was saying, let’s not talk about it; let’s have peace. I agree. We all wish for peace. We all see the innocence of the Palestinians and all the Israelis. However, they are innocent people. It’s the terrorists who have committed all these crimes; we have to stop it. We have to really hold justice. Not only do we have to hold justice—if somebody is going around murdering people, will we have police? Will we have our own forces going out to grab these people and put them into jail? This is called justice. We have a justice system. Why can’t we apply the same thing internationally? We are not encouraging more wars. I appreciate what Israel has already decided, that, “Okay, we’re not going to continue to fire if you just release all the hostages and stop and make sure that they are secure, that they are safe. Then we can have further talks.” But this is not coming from Hamas.

When I first heard that they have no water, they have no gas and they have no electricity, I say, my heart goes out to the Palestinians as well. I say, they are innocent people; come on, give them water; give them gas; give them electricity. Then I realize it is not the Israelis who are doing that. It really gets confused. They create that

confusing vision and, in fact, it is done by Hamas. The bombing we have all talked about—I have people coming to me and saying how sad it is that the bombing of the hospital has so many of them killed. But it's not that. The bomb is done by Hamas. They were trying to aim at the Israelis, but then they overshot a little bit and then they hurt their own people. How sad this is. This has to stop. This is why we're standing up here, to make this stop.

I'm sad to witness also the conduct of one of our MPP colleagues. It is also with a heavy heart that I have to do so, as we are not here to pass judgment lightly. However, when a member's actions undermine the principles of equality, fairness and respect that underpin all our democratic institutions, it is our duty to stand up and make our voices heard.

Our democracy thrives on the diversity of opinions and ideas, on the robust debates that shape our policies and on the open and honest exchange of views.

Yes, we can do that. However, there is a line; this line must not be crossed. This line represents the boundary between free speech and discrimination, between legitimate criticism and hate speech. It is a line that the member for Hamilton Centre has unfortunately crossed.

We gather here today not to stifle dissent or to silence voices, but to ensure that the principles of respect, tolerance and understanding are upheld. It is serious that the member of Hamilton Centre used social media to make anti-Semitic and discriminatory statements related to the existence of the State of Israel and its defence against Hamas terrorists.

We have to stop that, because this is affecting our own institution. Anti-Semitism, like all forms of hate, has no place in a just and equal society. Our government has made it clear: We have no tolerance of any hate crimes. No tolerance means no tolerance at all, whether they are a member in our caucus here. Discrimination against any group, be it based on religion, race or any other factors, is fundamentally incompatible with the principles of freedom, democracy and human rights that our great province was founded on.

The allegations against the member of Hamilton Centre, if substantiated, reflect poorly on this institution and all of us. They undermine the trust that the public places in their elected representatives to conduct themselves with honour and integrity. This is why all of us speak out and really want to protect—protect and make sure that what we are fighting for, for all Ontarians, is exactly what they want us to do. It is imperative that we send a clear and unequivocal message that such behaviour is not acceptable.

We must also recognize that the use of social media is a powerful tool, one that can be used for both good and ill.

That's why we have been asking the member, the member for Hamilton Centre, to really take down that message from social media and also apologize, really sincerely apologize—for this is not the right thing to do. We all understand that we all have our own personal beliefs in different things, but when we are representatives in this House, this is not something that we can mess up or

have confusion about. It's our job. It's our responsibility. When we spread hate or misinformation, it can have serious and far-reaching consequences.

Madam Speaker, I believe, that as elected representatives we have to lead by example. We must demonstrate that we can engage in robust debate without resorting to personal attacks, discrimination or hate speech. We must show that we can address complex and divisive issues with respect and empathy, even when we disagree passionately. And this is what this House is trying to do. We want to resolve it in the right way and make sure we voice out that the justice is being held.

1600

In this spirit, I support the motion before this House—a motion that expresses our disapproval of the member for Hamilton Centre's conduct and calls on her to desist from further inappropriate behaviour. It also authorizes you, Madam Speaker, to not recognize the member for Hamilton Centre in the House until she retracts and deletes her statement on social media and makes an apology in her place in this House.

This is not a decision to be taken lightly. It is a measure of last resort. It is a step we take with a heavy heart but with a clear understanding that this is the responsibility we bear as stewards of this institution. It is not about stifling dissent or suppressing legitimate criticism; it's about upholding the principles that make our democracy strong.

Madam Speaker, I want to reiterate that our democratic system is built on the idea that we can disagree without being disagreeable. It is built on the belief that we can engage in passionate debates without resorting to discrimination or hate. It is built on the promise of equality, fairness and respect for all.

The motion is a reaffirmation of these principles, and I urge all members to support it.

Yes, we support peace. However, we really have to solve the problem. We also have to hold justice. We also have to make sure that our institution is doing all the right things.

At this point, I would like to reflect on a few quotes from the community and from the public and see what others are saying, not only just in this House—we want to see what are the public saying and how can we work with them to support that we are making this decision.

Just now, I understand the MPP for Eglinton–Lawrence has already quoted Mr. Berman—and this is the one I agree, that it really strikes me. He is a former NDP—and he has been a 40-year member of the NDP, and he's a former federal and provincial candidate. And yet, he said, "This week Sarah Jama caused great harm to the Jewish community.... While Hamas was attacking our friends and family she posted remarks on her 'X' page that were inappropriate and deeply hurtful. She was asked to withdraw them but she did not, and her subsequent statements were inadequate and unacceptable.

"This is the latest incident in a pattern of anti-Semitic behaviour that predates her election to the Ontario NDP caucus. Her actions demonstrate that she is neither fit to speak for the New Democratic Party nor to hold elected office."

Allow me to read some others as well, because I have a whole list of different quotes from different people, and they all speak about the same thing—it's something that we need to listen to.

This is from the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs: "Israeli babies beheaded, Israeli young women raped, more than 100 Israeli men, women, & children kidnapped, and 900 & counting murdered at the hands of # Hamas terrorists and this is what Ontario MPP @SarahJama_ has to say.

"This statement is filled with lies that will do nothing to create peace & will only serve to foment hatred against #Canada's Jewish community.

"We call for the immediate removal of Jama."

Yes, a lot of us want peace. What she has done is not peace at all but is really making it worse and is another slam in a lot of people's faces and is on the hurtful feeling of all the Israeli community.

I'd like to read one more before I close off. This is from Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center: "We are outraged by this statement from @SarahJama_ and her refusal to acknowledge the atrocities committed by the terror group Hamas against Israeli civilians....

"Not for the first time, she has caused hurt and harm to the Jewish community and brought shame to Ontarians, including her constituents in Hamilton Centre. It's long past time for the @OntarioNDP to take decisive action and remove her from its caucus, once and for all."

I will have to agree with what the public is telling us, and I agree with the motion that we put forward in front of us that we really want to, and it is our job, to remove the member for Hamilton Centre. We have no choice but to act to defend the dignity of this institution on behalf of all of our constituents.

At this time, I would like to ask all of our members to join us. Yes, we work for peace, but we also have other actions to do to make sure we have justice proclaimed and to make sure we stop provoking one another. Especially, I'm very against the forced lies in front of us when Hamas is creating false information that Israel is shutting down water, gas and electricity and bombing Gaza. This is a wrong and confusing image that was presented.

I want all of us to really hold up to justice. Especially at this time, I would also say that we have no choice but to act to defend the dignity of this institution on behalf of our constituents. We will ask the member for Hamilton Centre not to continue to be in this Parliament.

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

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I'm just so disappointed to be rising today with a motion like this. I'm disappointed because I'm very proud to be here as an MPP.

I would like to cite, to start, the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario. He has published on his website that "MPPs are expected to perform their duties of office and arrange their private affairs in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity of each member, maintains the Legislative Assembly's dignity and justifies the respect in which society holds the assembly and its members." It was

through this lens that I sought to answer the question as to whether the continued actions—not just the recent actions, but the continued actions—of the member for Hamilton Centre were unbecoming of a member and reflective of censure.

I don't think it escapes any one of us that—just take a look at Reddit or other social media forums to be reminded that no matter what our political stripe is and no matter what we say or do, there are individuals who will denounce us and our motivations as an MPP simply for being a member of our particular political party. I get that too. My community has not historically supported Progressive Conservative members. It's tough to take. I've been in the public eye back home for the better part of the last 15 years. Eight days from now, actually, it will be nine continuous years that I will have served as an elected official.

I ask out loud, Speaker, why do we as members seek to serve as elected officials? Are we to truly interpret that when we achieve an election result, it's an endorsement of our individual personal views? Or are we here in spite of those views? Are we here because of our party? Or are we here because we're the least of the worst options? Are we here to be of service to our community members? Are we here to engage respectfully with those who disagree with us?

Speaker, one memory I'll never forget, and it has to do with our party, the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party. We had a convention about five years ago. It took place just a few weeks after the election of the then-government. There were new faces who arrived and new voices, and they decided to use their voices and their votes to escalate a previously rejected resolution that insulted Ontario's gender identities. This vote was widely reported in the media and reflected poorly on all of us as PC members who were in attendance at that convention. It was truly a difficult wake-up call that if you don't use your voice, someone else will use it for you.

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In this case, I put in a call to the Premier. Despite the criticism we heard this morning, I think it's terrific that the Premier gives his phone number to constituents all across Ontario. At the time, I was nobody special. I picked up the phone and I called him. I left a voicemail. I said in that message that I entered public life because I wanted to help people, and I could not understand how this resolution that was brought forward at our convention and being now considered by the party could actually help to make someone's life better. Well, a few minutes later, the Premier returned that call, and later that day, the Premier announced that this resolution would never be adopted in a provincial government that he leads.

The Premier's actions demonstrated a moral clarity. His heart is rooted in helping people. As I said, I was a nobody, and he returned my call. The contrast in the approaches that we've seen in this House since that time has not been lost on me.

Speaker, we live in a world today where very little can be or is attempted to be hidden. That's why, in the early

morning of October 7, relayed to the entire world was the outright celebration of the killing of civilians, with images circulated by those having been proud to have committed those crimes. That image of the young woman, dead, paraded as a trophy in the back of a pickup truck, is one that I will certainly never forget, and I doubt anyone else will either. How could anybody possibly celebrate this?

In light of these events, the member for Hamilton Centre attended a rally on October 8. It was dubbed as a celebration of the heroic Palestinian resistance. The same rally was incidentally decried by Toronto mayor Olivia Chow. This event occurred the day after the Hamas terrorist organization had killed an estimated 800 Israelis and taken at least 100 hostages, including mothers, children and the elderly. Mayor Chow noted, “Glorifying this weekend’s indiscriminate violence, including murder and kidnapping of women and children by Hamas against Israeli civilians is deplorable.” Our Prime Minister also noted, “I strongly condemn the demonstrations that have taken place, and are taking place, across the country in support of Hamas’s attacks on Israel.”

Days later, on October 10, the member for Hamilton Centre posted to her social media feed, armed with our provincial crest and her title as MPP, with a statement that cited that the “violence and retaliation” was “rooted in settler colonialism.” It lacked any empathy for the victims of the senseless murders and atrocities of Israeli civilians that should have been owed. The member’s statement was prefaced with, “I’m reflecting on my role as a politician who is participating in this settler colonial system, and I ask that all politicians do the same.”

Later, on October 10, the Leader of the Opposition published that she had asked the MPP, the member for Hamilton Centre, to retract her statement, noting, “The terrorist attacks by Hamas on thousands of innocent Israeli citizens are unjustifiable and must be condemned unequivocally.” I thank the Leader of the Opposition for making that clear statement at the time.

Steve Paikin, writing for the Trillium, noted, “But is that a smart thing to tweet right now, as the corpses of 1,000 dead Israelis are still being collected and taken to graveyards, and when her leader, Marit Stiles, has asked her to take the message down? There are two synagogues within 10 minutes’ drive of”—the member’s—“constituency office. I wonder how their members feel about that statement?”

So 24 hours later was the next action taken, but it wasn’t the member for Hamilton Centre who retracted their statement; it was the Leader of the Opposition who retracted hers. The original statement from the member for Hamilton Centre remains intact, published for maximum exposure as a pinned post. It’s meant to be seen. It is there to be as visible as possible to anyone who visits that feed. Yes, the words “I apologize” were appended in the comments and were, together with moderated concern for the Hamas violence with reference to historical actions in Gaza.

Speaker, I recall having been here for the first statement in this House by the member for Hamilton Centre. It was

on April 3; it was my brother’s birthday. She said at the time in her opening statement: “The issues I care a lot about are health care, housing and climate and making sure to tackle the disabling conditions caused by harmful legislation in the House. I’m not here to be preoccupied by the strange rituals or this colonial building. I’m here because Hamilton Centre knows that I am a fighter and I’m going to make sure that people are protected, that we’re fighting for health care, housing and the issues that people need to live, because people are dying, Mr. Speaker, because of harm caused in this House.”

As noted earlier, most of our first statements are celebratory in nature and full of optimism. This is a denigration of the work that we do. In referring to our legislative affairs as being a settler-colonial system, strange rituals, a colonial building and disabling conditions caused by harmful legislation in this House, the member’s statements back then demonstrated a disrespect for the work carried out here over and above the disrespect demonstrated toward her own constituents of the Jewish faith in her statement.

Speaker, there is truly room for respectful dialogue in this House. Members can raise legitimate grievances on behalf of Palestinians, including opposing settlement expansion in the West Bank, humanitarian concerns for Gazans living under the terrorist government of Hamas and grievances relating to the resettlement of Palestinians at the founding of the modern state of Israel. Similarly, people of the Jewish faith have a legitimate grievance on the account of the 3,000-year history in Israel and attempts to harm them and remove them from these lands throughout history.

The rhetoric of colonialism, settlers and apartheid as invoked by the member for Hamilton Centre is hardly collaborative, respectful or empathetic to all who have opinions in our communities. There are legitimate historical claims on all sides. As MPPs, we are truly responsible to respond to those opinions with compassion, with empathy, dignity and respect for the position being articulated, whether we agree with it or not.

Speaker, I’d like to cite some posts made on X by a constituent of mine. His name is Noah Tepperman. Mr. Tepperman is a long-standing activist, a truly incredible canvasser, fundraiser and organizer for the NDP riding association of Windsor–Tecumseh. Certainly, he was on my predecessor’s campaign over and over again and does a heck of a job. He is a household name, truly well-respected, and he possesses a moral clarity in his own right that most of us can only hope to achieve. Mr. Tepperman published this on X: “As we wrestle with the news that ‘dozens of babies were reportedly found dead, including some that had been beheaded’ in a kibbutz stormed by Hamas”—the member for Hamilton Centre—“who has already alienated and written off the majority of her constituent Jewish community—stands in solidarity with Hamas.”

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But Mr. Tepperman also put forward a very interesting statement with respect to something completely different,

a different response—another individual who is critical of the situation at hand. His response to her was this: “This is a great example of an opportunity to practise diversity, equity and inclusion. Someone received what you said as being problematic. The response should be to pause, express regret for that impact, acknowledge the disconnect between your intent and impact, bring curiosity, and ask for help understanding.”

The Leader of the Opposition and the member for Hamilton Centre would have done very well to heed Mr. Tepperman’s wise counsel, but neither appear to have chosen that path.

It appears that the concerns expressed back in March by Michael Mostyn, B’nai Brith Canada’s chief executive officer, have fallen on deaf ears. Back at that time he noted, “There should be no room in the Legislature for a member whose demonizing of the Jewish state will only lead to more hate aimed at Jews in Ontario.”

Marvin Rotrand, national director of the League of Human Rights, noted the member for Hamilton Centre’s “candidacy reinforces the perception that there’s an anti-Semitism problem in the Ontario NDP and an unwillingness to seriously confront it.... It doesn’t take much research to discover the member’s animus towards the Jewish state.” Speaker, even if the thoughts were well intentioned and true, who can truly sit here and feel comfortable to be referenced in this way?

On March 15 of this year, Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center met the Leader of the Opposition for what the centre described as “a frank discussion on anti-Semitism linked to” the now member for Hamilton Centre. During the meeting, President and CEO Michael Levitt brought up two incidents that had already occurred involving the member and expressed disappointment over the failure by both individuals—both the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Hamilton Centre—to publicly acknowledge the harm done, to apologize and communicate a commitment to confront anti-Semitism. The FSWC added that it had “proposed a constructive road forward” by “offering anti-Semitism education to the Ontario NDP” caucus. We haven’t heard of further action on the part of the Leader of the Opposition with respect to these actions for the member for Hamilton Centre.

On May 2, the Ontario NDP proceeded to publish on today’s X, formerly Twitter, that the MPP for Hamilton Centre retweeted a tweet by American academic Noura Erakat concerning the death of Khader Adnan and later unretweeted it: “The content of the tweet does not reflect the views of the member or the Ontario NDP.”

B’nai Brith responded, “Khader Adnan was not a martyr for freedom. He was a convicted terrorist and member of PIJ: a listed entity in Canada. Endorsing such a narrative is an affront to his innocent victims and is unbecoming of an elected official.”

Speaker, this House is governed by decorum and procedures as published. As a candidate for the NDP and as an MPP proper, it is your role and responsibility to not only represent and maintain the credibility required to support your community, but to not consciously and

deliberately undertake actions that leave your own standing, that of your caucus and that of your leader in disrepute. I entered politics because I wanted to help people. How many residents of Hamilton Centre are being helped by the member’s statement, by her participation in the rally, by the words that she speaks and by the repeated condemnation of the words that she publishes?

In closing, I’m unable to consider the repeated actions of the member for Hamilton Centre as being consistent with the standard of duty expected of members of provincial Parliament, and I will be supporting the motion as presented.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tom Rakocevic): Further debate?

Mr. Stephen Crawford: It’s an honour to be able to speak today, as it always is, in this Legislative Assembly of Ontario. But it is with a heavy heart that I do have to speak about this particular issue and it’s not an issue I think anybody in the assembly wants to discuss because we don’t want to be in the position where we even have to discuss it.

Having said that, I’m here to represent the people of Oakville, all people of Oakville, to address the matter that not only deeply concerns my community but reflects upon the integrity and standards we uphold in this assembly.

I’m sure everybody here in this assembly, everyone watching on TV or watching today’s proceedings will remember where they were when they first heard what happened on October 7. I know I was getting ready in the early morning, waking up with my family at my cottage to celebrate Thanksgiving, and having just seen the news, having to talk to my family members about what I had just heard. I will never forget having to talk to them and discuss what I was seeing happen halfway around the world, just like many of us will not forget what happened and where we were on 9/11. I’m sure everybody in this particular Legislature will remember where they were and what they thought when 9/11 occurred.

Unfortunately, 1,200 or more people were massacred that morning by an extreme genocidal terrorist organization. Now, those people were not only Israeli Jews, they were foreign nationals: Canadians, Americans, Filipinos, Thai and also, I might add, Arabs. And from what I understand, what the terrorists did to the Arabs they found, of which there were quite a few, is something that could not even be thought of in this House.

I want to certainly say that I am saddened by the events and I’m saddened by the widespread impact that prejudice and hate have in our world. We are in an age of connection, but yet we still grapple with biases that divide us. And my heart goes out to everybody that’s been hurt by these injustices, here and globally. So to all of those affected by these events, I offer my sincere condolences.

It’s unfortunate that we as elected officials have to even take time from our mandate to serve the people of Ontario to address the unsavoury remarks and behaviour from the member from Hamilton Centre. I would also like to say I think it’s important in this House to have discussion, debate, and I would hope that there are some issues which

bring everybody in this House together. There are some issues that are so critical to our democracy and our humanity that should bring us together. And I think this issue is one of them, and I'm sad to see the opposition not even discussing or talking about this particular issue.

The matter at hand pertains to the member from Hamilton Centre. The House, the assembly, which represents the people, is concerned about the disreputable conduct, particularly the use of social media to express anti-Semitic sentiments and statements concerning the State of Israel and its defence against the terrorist group Hamas. We unequivocally express our disapproval of such actions.

It is our collective responsibility to mandate and uphold the values of unity, understanding and fairness. It is paramount that we confront biases and racism, especially when they are in our esteemed institutions. And we as elected officials have even more responsibility. Our words are powerful. Our words are in Hansard forever. Our words are in the media and they're magnified. So it's even more important that people of this assembly think about what they're going to say.

Our resolution today is clear: We demand that the member from Hamilton Centre refrains from further unbecoming and inappropriate conduct, and in recognizing the gravity of her actions, we propose that the Speaker is authorized to not recognize her until she retracts her statements and offers a formal apology in the House.

1630

Diving into the core issue, the recent tragic events in Israel and Gaza have impacted all of us. The profound scale of devastation, with women and children and older adults being subject to the violence, is heart-wrenching. The Israeli response to the assault by Hamas, where many civilians, including those in the safety of their own homes, lost their lives, showcases the high intensity of this region.

The events of October 7, where terrorists from Gaza launched rockets towards Israeli towns and breached the Israeli border, resulting in the tragic loss of over 1,400 lives and the hostage-taking of at least 200 individuals, are a stark reminder of the inhumanity of these terrorists.

We need to remember an important point as well: that the actions of this brutal terrorist organization need to be separated from the innocent people of Gaza and Palestine. The Hamas terrorists also terrorize their own population. There are no free elections; there's no democracy. Back in 2007, when they took control of Gaza, opposition members were liquidated, exterminated, executed. There's no democratic free press in Gaza. There's no human and minority rights. You don't have a choice whether you wear a hijab or not. There are no openly gay Gazans. It is a dictatorship, a theocracy.

God forbid if you call out the Hamas leaders for corruption or mismanagement or, even worse, their terror tactics. It is a total and complete terrorist dictatorship. The Palestinian people are also held hostage to the Hamas terrorist organization. Many countries around the world, including Arab countries, call Hamas a terrorist organization.

My heart goes out to all of those affected by the events in Israel and subsequently in Gaza and the innocent citizens from both regions. It's a sombre reality that in our world, innocent women, children and elderly are not spared from conflict.

Israel faced a horrifying assault, with an overwhelming number of civilian casualties and many taken as hostages by the terrorist group Hamas. Unfortunately, the magnitude of this terror attack is unparalleled in recent history, with Israelis not having experienced this scale since the 1948 Arab-Israeli war.

Addressing these issues is hard but vital. History has shown the harm caused by hatred like anti-Semitism. Here in Ontario, we need to stand united against such prejudices. Being silent is not an option; it goes against our values. Prejudice leaves real scars affecting people, here and globally. We must understand that anti-Semitism's impact is in our past as well as present.

Canada is home to the fourth-largest Jewish community globally, a vibrant group of over 390,000 individuals. Our Jewish community is diverse and deeply rooted in both European and Middle Eastern traditions. Yet even in a country known for its commitment to tolerance, the sinister spectre of anti-Semitism looms large.

From the streets of our cities and to the vast expanse of the digital world, anti-Semitism manifests in Canada in various forms: vandalism and hate-filled graffiti; disturbing propaganda and hate propaganda; racist and intolerant language on platforms such as X, comment sections, web forums and blogs; bomb threats aimed at Jewish schools and community centres, creating an atmosphere of fear and insecurity; intimidation faced by Jewish students at universities; and a growing trend to delegitimize the state of Israel through movements like BDS.

On the global scale, the situation remains grim. Hate crimes, especially those affecting Jewish people and Jewish communities, have exploded recently. Historically, escalations in Middle Eastern conflicts, like those we've witnessed recently, were correlated with a rise in anti-Semitic incidents, not just in Canada but around the globe. The importance of addressing this issue transcends national borders. It's a global call to action, a reminder that the fight against prejudice and discrimination is one we must all partake in for the sake of all Canadians and all of humanity throughout the world. To really understand anti-Semitism, we need to look at its long history. It's not a recent issue; it's been with us for ages, affecting countless lives.

Anti-Semitism can trace its roots back thousands of years, from the ancient world with the destruction of the second temple in Jerusalem by the Romans, to the Middle Ages in Europe where Jews faced persecution, expulsions and forced conversions. The narrative is one of persistent bias and animosity. The bias was often rooted in religious differences, but later it evolved into economic, social and political factors.

Fast-forward to modern history and we encounter one of humanity's darkest periods: the Holocaust. The systematic extermination of six million Jews by Nazi

Germany was the culmination of deeply entrenched anti-Semitic views. This tragedy was not an isolated event but was the result of centuries of discrimination and injustice. The echoes of the Holocaust still reverberate today, serving as a chilling reminder of where unchecked hatred can lead.

In the post-Holocaust era, while there has been a global acknowledgement of the atrocities, anti-Semitism neither disappeared nor diminished. From the Soviet Union's discrimination against Jews under the guise of anti-Zionism to the current tragic events in Israel and Gaza, the thread of bias continues. Recalling this history tells us we must always be alert and fight against these biases, not just anti-Semitism. It's up to us to make sure history does not repeat itself and to give further generations a world without these burdens from the past.

However, while we currently confront the dark chapters of anti-Semitism, we are also reminded of the immense power of strong and effective leadership. Throughout history, and even in recent times, leaders who have chosen to stand firm against prejudice have showcased the profound impact of taking a stand. Their action serves as a testament to the significance of leadership in guiding societies towards unity and away from division.

Democracy thrives on open conversation and differing views. But when these views become prejudiced or intolerant, they challenge our democratic values. We must ask, how often have these biases surfaced right here in our democratic core?

Now, some of the members of this Legislature were here in the previous Parliament, where I'm reminded of incidents with the former MPP from Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston. That member, during his tenure, made comments that were considered by many as inappropriate, insensitive and even racist. Whether it was his divisive remarks on certain communities or racist comments directed even to a federal cabinet minister or the controversies stirred by his public statements, these incidents became focal points of heated debates in this very assembly. This conduct was unbecoming of a member of this assembly. He was censured unanimously by this Legislature.

As representatives of the people, we carry the responsibility of upholding the principles of democracy, but also setting an example to the citizens we represent. We must strive every day to ensure the Ontario Legislature remains a beacon of unity, understanding and respect. As public figures and members of this House, our influence reaches far and wide. With such influence comes great responsibility.

To the matter at hand to which I'm talking about, the remarks made by the member for Hamilton Centre on social media are not just troubling, but deeply concerning. Using a platform of influence to preach anti-Semitic and discriminatory views related to the State of Israel and its predominantly Jewish population is neither constructive nor becoming of a member of this House. The member has leveraged her power to foster division. Her official remarks are counterproductive, especially in matters as sensitive and complicated as the Israel-Hamas conflict.

1640

Such statements don't just remain words on a screen; they ripple out, gaining momentum, influencing perceptions and further polarizing communities. At a time when we should be building bridges and fostering dialogue, such remarks threaten to widen divides, adding fuel to existing tensions. It's not only hurting Ontarians, but more specifically, the community of Hamilton Centre which she represents.

My colleague from Oakville North-Burlington discussed earlier about former residents of her riding that were now living in Hamilton Centre and reaching out to her because they didn't know who else to reach.

This incident has cast a shadow on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It's denting the reputation we've worked so hard to maintain. Government motion number 19 is not just about the actions of one member, but it stands as a testament to the standards and principles we as a collective body choose to uphold. It is our duty as representatives of the people of Ontario to denounce any form of bigotry or intolerance. By supporting this motion, we send a clear message: There is no room for hate in this assembly, period.

Freedom of speech is fundamental to our democracy, but there's a crucial difference between sharing views that are hateful. Our roles in this House amplify our words, making their impact even greater. Beyond the immediate circumstances, by adopting government motion number 19, we signal to present and future members of this House and to the broader public that the assembly is committed to safeguarding the principles of unity, understanding and respect. This motion serves as a deterrent and clear message that any form of bigotry, discrimination or hate will not be tolerated.

We are affirming that in this assembly, we prioritize the well-being of all Ontarians above all else. This motion and the importance of this motion cannot be understated. It is a reflection of our commitment to upholding the highest standards of conduct, championing the values that bind us as Ontarians and ensuring that this House remains a beacon to respect, inclusivity and unity.

Our assembly has clearly articulated its stance. The actions and statements of the member for Hamilton Centre on social media were inflammatory and discriminatory, and not reflective of what this House stands for. It's imperative that the members recognize the magnitude of her actions and the discord that they have sewn.

Final point I would like to highlight: This motion is directed at fighting discrimination and hate. We stand united against the terror organization Hamas. We are standing with the Jewish community, but we are also with the Muslim community who has at times faced discrimination and terror even right here. The horrible circumstances in London, Ontario where an innocent Muslim family who was murdered in a terror attack comes to mind.

For the sake of unity and integrity of this institution, we demand the member from Hamilton Centre desist, delete and apologize to this House. This includes retracting and

deleting her problematic statements on social media and offering a genuine apology in this House.

As elected leaders, we have an obligation and duty to lead by example. I truly hope the member from Hamilton Centre will reflect on her words and do the right thing. It's critically important for the sanctity of this House that the member from Hamilton Centre retract and apologize.

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

Mr. Deepak Anand: Usually when I rise in the House, I always start by thanking God for giving me an opportunity, giving me this job, thanking my family and my extended family, and thanking the residents of Mississauga–Malton. Because as we know, as the Solicitor General said earlier, there are less than 2,000 people who had this privilege to make an impactful change to our province for the better by bringing the best of ourselves here, by seeing beyond the impediments, the biases, the intolerances, and bringing hope and dreams to life.

Madam Speaker, today I rise to speak on a serious matter. A matter of understanding how, in this House of responsibility, our words and actions have impact. And from that impact, it leads to the consequences on those around us.

Our Solicitor General talked about the founding principles of our democracy. Democracy of the best of who we are matters. The rule of law matters. The right to live safely in our homes and communities matters. And the right to live free of hate matters. It matters a lot. Democracy matters. Tolerance matters. Respect matters. Caring for each other matters. And regardless of our faith, our culture, our religion, our individualities or exceptionalities, the love, the respect, the tolerance, the care matters.

So it is very important to talk about this motion so that we can give the joy which all Ontarians have to the next generations to come. That's how it matters.

Before I start, I want to talk about a phrase that is engraved in my life, something which I have seen myself, something which I learned from my grandmother, from my father: When innocent people die, innocent families suffer. Starting with 1947, when the partition happened, when India and Pakistan were born—the time my father and my mother both were born in Gujranwala, Pakistan, and they had to immigrate to India. While on that journey, they lost many of their relatives. And they were not alone. During the time, there were 15 million people who were displaced. It cost two million lives, which is two million innocent people who were killed. When those two million people were killed, the families for those two million people suffered for generations. I'll give you an example.

Even though they were safe, they came, but they had to start from scratch, they had to work hard to go back to the basics of life. I'm thankful to God for giving my parents their education. My father was a very smart man, but he could only study up to grade 10 because he could not afford to after that. Immediately, he had to go to work because he had to feed his newly married wife, who actually started a job just after they got married but

couldn't continue because they wanted to raise us. Yes, he survived, but he could not do the best for himself. That is what matters when we talk about the innocent people who died. Those who survived, those innocent families, suffered.

I was born in Punjab, India, in 1972. When we talk about the Punjab crisis, when we talk about the dark time of the Punjab from 1980 to 1993—during the crisis, I was eight years old when it started. During the dark time, many, many innocent people were killed; from the buses, from the shelters, from many places.

1650

I'll give you some of the examples which I've taken out from the newspapers, Madam Speaker. In October 1983, eight people—I would rather say eight innocents—were killed. They were killed for no fault of their own. Madam Speaker, when they were killed, when these innocent people died, their innocent families suffered. We saw, in 1984, genocide—over 3,000 innocent people died. When these 3,000 innocent people died, were killed, many, many innocent families suffered. In 1986, 13 innocent civilians were killed in fighting. July 1986: 15 bus passengers killed. November 1986: 24 innocent bus passengers gunned down. The list is endless.

Madam Speaker, during this time, many youngsters took up arms, many went missing and many of those have never returned. When those never returned—when those innocent people died—many, many of their innocent families are still suffering. While the actual number of these killings during this decade-long violence, which started at the age of eight and it got finished by the time I was age 21—and I wasn't alone. Almost every family in Punjab and every Punjabi can never forget those dark days. As I said, many, many youths have gone missing.

This painful cycle of violence—what I see now around the world, it reminds me of the human cost of conflict. When I was looking at the media report, the death toll—1,400 people killed and 3,800 injured since October 7. They're not outsiders, Madam Speaker. The pain for many of those here at home—six Canadians known so far. My heart races when I look at the data and the information and I'm going to try to say: Shir Georgy, age 22; Ben Mizrachi, age 22. When innocent people die, innocent families suffer—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I apologize to the member from Mississauga–Malton. Pursuant to standing order 50(c), I'm now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there have been six and a half hours of debate on this motion. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader directs the debate to continue.

I recognize the deputy government House leader.

Mr. Trevor Jones: Thank you, Speaker. Please continue.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I will return to the member to continue debate.

Mr. Deepak Anand: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to the deputy House leader for allowing me to

speaking and able to express my condolences to the innocent people who died and the innocent families. That pain can never be felt.

Adi Vidal-Kaploun, 33; Alexandre Look—celebrated his 33rd birthday—was among those killed. Alexandre Look, who lived in Montreal, died as a hero. His dad said in a Facebook post on Monday, “My understanding was that he found refuge with 30 other people in a bomb shelter without a door and barricaded the entrance with his body.”

Madam Speaker, when we hear these stories, I remember what Martin Luther King Jr. said: “Love begets love.” It means when we treat others with love, that love will bounce back to us in one way or the other—and the same goes for respect. If you want others to respect us, our views, our opinions and our beliefs, we must learn also to respect others. That is why, Madam Speaker, we are debating this motion.

One of our colleagues—and I have to say it’s very unfortunate that we’re debating a motion to talk about one of our colleagues who got elected the way we all got elected, chosen by the people but, because of her views, we have to stand here and defend this place of responsibility.

It is very unfortunate, Madam Speaker, when again what Martin Luther King, Jr. said, “Violence begets violence. Hate begets hate; toughness begets a greater toughness.” It is all a descending spiral and the end is destruction—for everybody. Along the way of life, someone must have enough sense and morality to cut off the chain of hate.

If you really look at natural process, Madam Speaker, even God or, if you don’t believe in God, the supernatural power that has created us, has only given the power to give birth, to give life, not to take life. It is important that I reiterate that anti-Semitism and the glorification of terrorism are not to be tolerated.

At the same time, as I was listening to the member from Oakville, he talked equally about Islamophobia or any blaming of innocent Palestinians for the murder, torture and kidnapping of Jews as also unacceptable.

When we talk about our residents belonging on both sides and both sides when they belong, they have pain. For example, Fozia from my riding said, “I pray for the peace and safety of all Jewish people....” Then D. Scott McNie said, “Nothing but an immediate ... de-escalation can hope to prevent this war becoming a horrible global conflict ... with no winners.”

Madam Speaker, do you know what hurts me the most? I was born in India; I was raised in India. We came to Canada for a good life. We saw the problems; we saw the pain. We saw the dark side; we saw the dark times. What I saw this morning in the chamber when my colleague from Burlington talked about how she felt scared when she saw some of the students’ union chanting—when an Ontarian is talking against an Ontarian, when a Canadian is talking against a Canadian, that’s a slippery slope.

We know we live in a wonderful country. We know we are welcoming people from across the world to come here to live a better life. So it is absolutely important for the leaders of Ontario to understand and know the value of spreading love, not hate. That is why I want to reach out to the member from Hamilton Centre. I want to ask her to come and stand up in this House and tell the world that if she believes in helping the innocent residents, come here. Start up, stand up and begin a peace movement. Stand up and apologize for the hate comments.

1700

As Martin Luther King Jr. said, “Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”

With a heavy heart, I have to share that when I support this motion I’m not going to be very happy that I voted in favour of the motion. I would be happier if she comes here and apologizes to the House and to the people of Ontario. I must say that she should make a fresh start by replacing the existing statement she gave with a statement on peace and unity. That would be a new beginning and a new, good, amazing, strong and wonderful Ontario. That is what I believe we want as Ontarians: a great, strong Ontario.

Report continues in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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

Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative: Hon. / L'hon. Ted Arnott

Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Deputy Clerk / Sous-Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Julia Douglas, Meghan Stenson,

Christopher Tyrell, Wai Lam (William) Wong

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Tim McGough

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

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario Premier / Premier ministre Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Michael D. (PC)	York South—Weston / York-Sud—Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiques et du Multiculturalisme
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Hon. / L'hon. Parm (PC)	Milton	Minister of Red Tape Reduction / Ministre de la Réduction des formalités administratives
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Grewal, Hardeep Singh (PC)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hazell, Andrea (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Holland, Kevin (PC)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Hsu, Ted (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Jama, Sarah (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre
Jones, Trevor (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Jordan, John (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Ke, Vincent (IND)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
Khanjin, Hon. / L'hon Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	
Leardi, Anthony (PC)	Essex	
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean	
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Mantha, Michael (IND)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
McCarthy, Hon. / L'hon. Todd J. (PC)	Durham	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises
McCrimmon, Karen (LIB)	Kanata—Carleton	
McGregor, Graham (PC)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York	
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	

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

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Vaugcois, Lise (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity / Ministre associée des Perspectives sociales et économiques pour les femmes
Wong-Tam, Kristyn (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Vacant	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Vacant	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	