

Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario



Assemblée
législative
de l'Ontario

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

No. 100A

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

N° 100A

1st Session
43rd Parliament

Monday
23 October 2023

1^{re} session
43^e législature

Lundi
23 octobre 2023

Speaker: Honourable Ted Arnott
Clerk: Trevor Day

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
Greffier : Trevor Day

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



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

ISSN 1180-2987

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Monday 23 October 2023

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 23 octobre 2023

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

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 Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): When we last debated this motion, I understand the member for Peterborough–Kawartha had the floor.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm sorry; my mistake, as usual. Further debate.

Ms. Sarah Jama: Thirteen days ago, I called for an immediate ceasefire and de-escalation over the horrific siege which had begun on the Palestinians in Gaza, and I would like to share some thoughts today about the censure vote.

Since I made that statement, Israel has only escalated its assault on millions of Gazans. The Israeli Defence Forces have killed thousands of Palestinians, destroyed residential areas and ordered the evacuation of at least 20 hospitals in northern Gaza. Israel is telling people who are already injured, sick and dying in hospitals in Gaza to leave. Since I made my statement, Israel has bombed refugee camps, United Nations schools, hospitals, airports and the Rafah border crossing between Gaza and Egypt. The unspeakable destruction continues and represents collective punishment against all Gazans in retaliation for attacks by Hamas.

The Ford government has done nothing meaningful to say about these atrocities and has now targeted me to distract from its own scandals. Those of us committed to Palestinian life refuse to be distracted. I restate my call for an immediate ceasefire by Israeli forces and for the immediate restoration of food, water, fuel and electricity in Gaza.

I applaud the many elected officials in Canada who have joined this call in recent days and I hope even more of you will speak out. I ground my words in the reality of the Israeli apartheid and Israel's ongoing domination and occupation of Palestinian lands.

Governments and institutions in Canada are trying to use their voice and weight to silence us—to silence workers, students, educators and peace-loving people who dare

to support Palestine. To every person who is taking a risk to speak up for Palestinian dignity and safety, I see you and I hear you and I am with you. They try hard to silence us, but we know that our words are powerful. And we must continue to speak up, no matter the cost.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: What about the hostages?

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

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: I will be sharing my time with the member for Carleton.

Mr. Speaker, the attacks on Israel earlier this month shocked the world. We heard over 1,400 people were murdered one by one; over 3,500 people wounded; almost 200 people taken hostage. The elderly, men, women, children and babies in arms were murdered. They were mutilated. They were raped. They were burned. We should call it by its name: It was an act of terror. And we call for the immediate release of the hostages.

Speaker, 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. There is no excuse, no justification for the horror we've seen. As the Premier has said, "This is terrorism in its darkest form."

Israel was founded not just as a homeland for the Jewish people but as a sanctuary of safety and security to ensure that what happened in the Holocaust could never happen again. One reason this attack is so shocking is that it is a fundamental challenge to any idea of coexistence, which is essential on the pathway toward peace and stability in the region. Israel has an unalienable right to defend itself, to go after Hamas and rescue hostages, to deter further incursions and to strengthen its security for the long term. That must be done in line with international humanitarian law while recognizing that Israel faces a vicious enemy who embedded themselves behind civilians.

That is what brings us to the discussion on the motion today. Simply put, all forms of hate and discrimination against any faith, including those of Jewish and Islamic background, are wrong. Hate is hate. I think the member of Hamilton Centre is fully aware of the impact that her statement would have. The fact that the member's statement is still online and has now been pinned to the top of her profile is evidence of her intentions. It is increasingly clear that the member is unwilling to apologize because it was meant to be hurtful.

No one questions the inappropriateness of the statement made by the member of Hamilton Centre. The member's statement received almost immediate condemnation from the people of Ontario, and I believe it is beneficial to

review some of the condemnation so that members of the House can be fully aware of how the member has brought into disrepute the reputation of this House.

Andrea Freedman, CEO of the Jewish Federation of Ottawa, says:

“It is appalling that that particular MPP is choosing to blame the victims in all of this. Hamas is a terrorist entity, labelled a terrorist entity by our government. They conducted a massacre of civilians. They went into people’s homes, murdered and slaughtered entire families. They took babies captive. They took senior citizens, ill people, captive to the Gaza Strip. This MPP should be ashamed, and she should be censured by her party.”

Hershl D. Berman, 40-year-old member of the NDP, former federal and provincial NDP candidate:

“This week” the member “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.”

Now, Mr. Speaker—Madam Speaker, sorry—ultimately, that is what this motion before us would have us do. It would recognize that in Ontario’s parliament we are held to a higher standard. As public servants, we must clearly and without hesitation condemn this hatred, and we must continue to draw on our shared values—our freedom, democracy, human rights and the true rule of law—to send a clear message that we will not be divided.

0910

We are fortunate to live in a nation that values these ideas. But freedom of religion is not just simply a Canadian Western value; it is a fundamental human right, and people should be free to worship without fear of violent persecution. Here in Canada, we don’t just tolerate differences—we celebrate them. Every day we celebrate them.

We recognize that our diversity is one of our greatest strengths; that no matter the colour of your skin or which part of the world you come from, what language you speak, whether you attend mosque on Friday, synagogue on Saturday, church on Sunday, every distinct element of who we are as people comes together to form that mosaic that is Canada.

As elected representatives of the province of Ontario, our voice has influence. Your voice has influence. Further still, in our democratic system, when one member speaks and offers a public position, it is a de facto position of the entire party and all of its elected caucus members and electoral candidates. So, not seeing the leader of the NDP take control and tell the member from Hamilton Centre, “If you’re going to have this hate-filled opinion, and because that hate-filled opinion is out there for the world to see, you cannot be part of our party, because we’re

supposed to be a party that represents all people in Canada”—but clearly, as my eyes see and my ears work, the member from Hamilton Centre still sits amongst the benches of the official opposition after a whole week of condemnation from all corners of the province, and the party still counts amongst its caucus a member that has marched in rallies where anti-Semitic and hateful language is at the forefront and leaves pinned to her profile with the emblem of the province a statement that ultimately supports the objectives of terrorists and the terrible outcomes they have.

That the New Democrat Party continues to take part in proceedings shoulder to shoulder with the member of Hamilton Centre is disappointing. The member for Hamilton Centre and her hurtful comments need to be universally condemned.

To that member: You are a representative of our great Canadian democracy. You took an oath and it has weight. When you support or choose the side of terrorists, you are supporting war.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Comments through the Chair.

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: War has casualties. Innocent lives are taken. Death and destruction become commonplace.

Madam Speaker, I’m stopping because I know how difficult it is for many of us to be in this House, to get to the point of being in this House. So I will keep going. I just feel like our words have so much weight, and our words, when we do not speak in a position of peace and support of all, it endangers our ability to do this humanitarian work effectively.

Clearly, the NDP are not fit to lead on the world stage or on our stage, and the member from Hamilton Centre should not be afforded the opportunity to speak in this House until an official, proper apology is issued. If the leader of the NDP will not have her member sit as an independent and leave her party, then clearly she supports the opinions of the member from Hamilton Centre.

So where is the accountability and the integrity now? We have been back in this House for a whole week, and the member is still allowed to be in this official position with these statements. Well, we will do what she won’t, which is to ensure that the member doesn’t get to speak in this House again.

We cannot jeopardize Ontario’s position as the largest contributor to Canada’s economy, our diverse and multi-cultural mosaic, with hostile and hateful remarks. That is the language that drives away jobs and economic prosperity.

Again, your voice has weight, and what you say can cause harm and can destabilize countries. Madam Speaker, inflammatory remarks, insensitive sentiments and attending marches of hate do nothing to advance the cause of peace, and peace should be the chief aim, chief pursuit and objective of all parties affected by this conflict.

As elected officials, we have a duty and responsibility to weigh our words and be held accountable when we fall short of that standard. That’s why, Madam Speaker, I will

be voting in favour of today's motion to censure the member from Hamilton Centre.

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

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: When my parents immigrated to Canada in 1986, I was a year old. The reason that they immigrated to Canada from Iran is because in 1979 there was an Islamic revolution, and our once free and democratic country was taken over by radical Islamists, was taken over by terrorists and was taken over by fascists, who actually executed over 40,000 Communists in the late 1980s. So my parents escaped in 1986 because they wanted to live in a free and democratic society.

I was a year old at the time. We were blessed to be able to come to Canada to escape that hatred, to escape that radical, fundamentalist, Islamo-fascist ideology. That's the same regime, Madam Speaker, that denies the Holocaust. That's the same regime that spreads anti-Semitic information and propaganda, not just inside the Islamic regime of Iran but around the world and through its proxies, like Hamas, Hezbollah and others.

When we came to Canada, my parents raised myself and my younger sister always telling us how blessed we are to be Canadian and we should always put Canada first: "Never forget your heritage. Never forget your culture. Never forget your background, but always remember that you are first and foremost a proud Canadian." What that means, Madam Speaker, is that you come here to embrace culture and diversity and accept people for who they are, and you leave the problems of your home country behind.

Now, it doesn't mean you can't speak up. It doesn't mean you can't attend rallies and protests. I do it all the time, in support of the people of Iran who are fighting for freedom and democracy against the brutal and terrorist Islamic regime in Iran. But what I don't do: I don't go to protests calling for genocide. I don't attend protests where I say, "From the river to the sea"—I can't even finish that sentence because it is abhorrent and vile.

To anyone who says these are peace rallies, it's appalling that I have to put this in Hansard, but it needs to be done so that the world will always remember what these hate rallies were about. This is a message from the Palestinian Youth Movement one day after the horrific October 7 genocidal massacre of 1,400 innocent Jewish people. It says:

"Toronto: All out for Palestine.

"Join us Monday, October 9th at 2 p.m.

"An unprecedented series of events has taken place by our heroic resistance in Gaza—with over 30 Zionist hostages captured, the fall of settlements surrounding Gaza, and the prison break that destroyed the fence that has been entrapping Gazans for over 17 years. The resistance's offensive attack has shaped a new precedent for our national liberation struggle and we remain steadfast in our right to resist by any means necessary.

"We call on our people in the far diaspora in Toronto to uplift and honour our resistance and our martyrs. Join us this Monday, October 9 at 2 p.m. at Nathan Phillips Square and celebrate our steps closer to liberation." Shameful.

0920

I was in Toronto on Monday, because Monday was Thanksgiving. I was walking my dog and I happened to come across this pro-Hamas celebration, this pro-Hamas rally. It was the first time in my life that I had ever felt uncomfortable as a Canadian. The hate, the anger, the way they were marching, the chants they were making—that's something you see in the Islamic regime in Iran. You do not see that in Canada. That's the kind of behaviour you see in radical fundamentalist countries, not in Canada. That is not the Canada that my parents immigrated to. That is not the Canada that we were raised in. That hate does not belong in Canada.

What was even more shocking to me—and I didn't realize this until a few days later—is that the member from Hamilton Centre marched in that parade, participated in that very same parade, rally, celebration, whatever you want to call it. The pro-Hamas rally that supported the genocide—the member from Hamilton Centre marched in that. She can try to explain away her statement, she can try to say whatever it is she wants to say, but silence is louder than words.

Even prior to this, when I had the unfortunate opportunity of having to hear her voice in this Legislature again, she spread misinformation. She accused the State of Israel of bombing a hospital, even though it was debunked right away. It was the Palestinian jihad organization, and Hamas was using it to spread propaganda, to fuel more hate rallies around the world. She also failed to mention anything about the 1,400 innocent civilians. She failed to mention that the Hamas terrorists must release the hostages.

You cannot negotiate with terrorists, Madam Speaker. You cannot. As someone who comes from a country that is ruled by Islamic regime terrorists, we know you cannot negotiate with them. They have no problem killing people.

There's someone who is named Mosab Hassan Yousef, and I encourage everyone to look him up. Mosab Hassan Yousef is the son of a Hamas leader. He defected. He knows what happens on the inside, and he has some fascinating interviews. He even wrote a book called *Son of Hamas*. In that book and in his interviews, he writes, "Hamas does not care if you are Israeli or Palestinian, Arab, Jew, Bedouin. They do not care. They will execute everyone. They do not care about the people. They use Palestinians as human shields."

He said that every few years what the Palestinian Authority does, the Palestinian leadership, is they will just create a war because they know what's going to happen is that Israel will retaliate, and then the world will be outraged and then they will get money through donations. That's what he says. This is someone who was born and raised in Hamas, and he defected.

Another thing that was very shocking for me, and I can't fail—I have to mention this. The hate and the violence at these pro-Hamas rallies are getting worse. Yesterday—I believe it was yesterday, or possibly the day before—Cafe Landwer in Toronto was surrounded by pro-Hamas supporters who were at the rally, and they all started chanting, "Boycott. Boycott this Zionist cafe."

Madam Speaker, what does a Jewish-owned cafe in Toronto have to do with the conflict in Israel and Palestine? We are being faced with full-on hatred, full-on anti-Semitism. This is not 1933; this is 2023. And what's horrifying is that, in 1933, Cafe Landwer fled Berlin because of the anti-Semitism they were experiencing then, and now, 90 years later, they're experiencing it once again in Ontario, in Canada. It is horrifying. And this is what the member from Hamilton Centre supports. This is exactly what she supports.

We all—we all—our hearts bleed for all the innocent lives lost, including Palestinians, but if you cannot call out terrorism, if you cannot have the moral clarity to understand that the root cause of this is terrorism that's funded by the terrorist and illegitimate Islamic regime in Iran, if you are out there spreading a message of divisiveness instead of caring for people, then you should not be in this Legislature.

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

Mr. John Jordan: I always appreciate the opportunity and privilege to speak in this House. It's an honour. But today I am troubled by the need to speak on a motion to censure another member. But there is a need, and I rise to speak in support of motion 39, the censure of the member for Hamilton Centre.

We are all aware that on October 7 the terrorist organization Hamas launched a massive and unprecedented unprovoked attack against Israel. The images we have seen are both shocking and horrifying. Young people scrambling for safety, not knowing what was going on—that is one image that is stuck in my head. We all agree that these actions were horrific and can only imagine the terror and pain suffered by the Israeli Jewish people. There was a lot of emotion in this chamber last week. And we know that pain went around the world and was felt by all Jewish people.

That is why when there is a statement put out that attempts to justify this terrorist attack, we need to act. That is why we have this motion before us to censure the member for Hamilton Centre. All members hold varied and sometimes unpopular opinions. We're all capable and do make mistakes from time to time. Sometimes we are misinformed, sometimes misunderstood. But when we make a mistake, even if we are just misunderstood, we must do our very best to correct that mistake and mitigate any damage that may have resulted.

To censure a member of provincial Parliament is a strong action and is not taken lightly. As the member for Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston, I know this only too well. It reflects poorly on the Parliament, it reflects poorly on the member, it reflects poorly on the riding—but, as a last resort, necessary. It could have been avoided: Take the statement down, retract, apologize.

This government must act. To not act would only further the pain inflicted on our Jewish community. Parliaments have a responsibility to swiftly exercise their disciplinary powers to protect this Parliament and maintain the respect it commands and deserves. To serve in this Parlia-

ment is a privilege; it's not a right. It is not an opportunity to move personal agendas forward. When I heard of the terrorist attack by Hamas, I was shocked and, like many of you, glued to the TV in disbelief. When I heard that a member of this Parliament put out a statement in defence of this action, I was confused. With my limited Parliament experience, I thought: What's going to happen? What are we going to do?

So I thank the government House leader for his leadership in bringing forward this motion. Having listened to all of the debate, I fully support this motion.

Speaker, I move that the question now be put.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Mr. Jordan has moved that the question be now put. I am satisfied that there has been sufficient debate to allow this question to be put to the House.

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

All those in favour of the motion that the question be now put, please say "aye."

0930

All those opposed to the motion that the question be now put, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, this vote will be deferred until after question period today.

Vote deferred.

OPPOSITION DAY MOTION

Mr. Trevor Jones: On a point of order, please.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Go ahead.

Mr. Trevor Jones: I'm seeking the Speaker's ruling on the orderliness of the motion proposed for consideration on opposition day number 3, filed in the name of the member for Davenport and scheduled to be debated this afternoon. It's my contention that the motion is in violation of the sub judice convention to which our Parliament adheres, as well as our Parliament's unique codified rules regarding sub judice found in standing order 25(g).

Speaker, I submit that the motion itself is actually out of order and that any relevant debate of such a motion would also be out of order. A decision to permit this motion to be considered would be unprecedented and set a dangerous new standard for the conduct of future business of the House as it intersects with the judicial branch of government and will negatively affect the delicate balance that is the constitutional separation of powers. With your indulgence, Speaker, I do have several points for your consideration.

The unamendable motion put forward by the Leader of the Opposition includes a significant amount of preamble related to various government policies and initiatives, and alone, that subject matter would be in order for consideration. However, the thrust and crux of the motion, the resolution itself, seeks to have the House adopt a position which would directly insert itself into a matter presently before the Information and Privacy Commissioner, which

is a quasi-judicial body constituted under the authority of an act of the Legislature.

Further, adoption of the motion, and the requisite references to the subject matter in debate, would create a real and substantial danger of prejudice to the proceedings presently before the Information and Privacy Commissioner. The subject matter of the opposition leader's motion is an appeal presently being considered by the Information and Privacy Commissioner, an officer of the Assembly and an office established under section 4 of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act passed by this Legislature.

While I acknowledge that the Speaker cannot be aware of every proceeding before every court or every quasi-judicial body or its status, in the case before us the Leader of the Official Opposition has set out the fact that there is a pending proceeding before the Information and Privacy Commissioner's adjudicative division directly and clearly within the text of the motion. I quote the motion's last line: "Therefore, the Legislative Assembly calls on the Premier to cease his access-to-information appeal and disclose the contents of his personal phone and email accounts to the Information and Privacy Commissioner."

Further, I will table a Global News article written by Colin D'Mello, Global's Queen's Park bureau chief and member of the Queen's Park press gallery, and Isaac Callan dated August 15, 2023. This article sets out that a Global News access-to-information request on the subject had been denied and makes clear they are pursuing an ongoing FOI, or freedom-of-information, appeal. As FIPPA sets out, such appeals are to the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

Part IV of the act sets out an appeal process to the Information and Privacy Commissioner in cases of disputes between members of the public and heads of branches of government over the disclosure of information. This part of the act establishes the quasi-judicial nature of the Information and Privacy Commissioner and parts of his or her office by establishing an adjudicative process for the resolution of appeals. The IPC is empowered, under section 52 of the act, to conduct inquiries and hearings related to appeals, to examine records, to summon persons, to examine them under oath, to apply rules of evidence and make orders to resolve appeals, which clearly establishes the commissioner's quasi-judicial nature.

Further, the IPC's own materials acknowledge the commissioner to have "quasi-judicial duties and powers" and the commissioner maintains a tribunal and dispute resolution division. I will table a number of references for your review.

Now, I will address the application of the sub judice convention and our own codification of it within our standing orders. House of Commons Procedure and Practice notes the convention "is first and foremost a voluntary exercise of restraint on the part of the House in which restrictions are placed on the freedom of members to make reference in debate to matters which are sub judice, that is, awaiting judicial decisions." It goes on to

say, "It is also understood that matters before the courts are also prohibited as subjects of motions, petitions or questions in the House" but not to legislation or the rights of Parliament to legislate.

Speaker, I'm sure you recall, you ruled to this effect related to the sub judice nature of content of the bill back on September 17, 2018, as several Speakers have before you. What we have before us now is not a piece of legislation. It's a motion. Its adoption or defeat cannot alter the state of the law in Ontario, but it can serve to prejudice the ongoing appeal before the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

House of Commons Procedure and Practice goes on to note that "no distinction has ever been made in Canada between criminal courts and civil courts for the purpose of applying the sub judice convention. It has also been applied with respect to certain tribunals other than courts of law" but that "the precedents are not as consistent where civil cases are concerned. The convention has been applied on some occasions and not on others" and that "although nothing resembling a settled practice has developed in relation to civil cases, the Chair has warned on various occasions of the need for caution in referring to matters pending judicial decisions whatever the nature of the court."

When discussing the sub judice convention, these procedural authorities must be considered carefully and the House of Commons context distinguished from our assembly.

It is important to note that the House of Commons, from which the procedural authorities I have referenced originate, has never made any attempt to codify the convention within its standing orders, while this assembly partially has. While the uncodified convention is acknowledged to apply beyond criminal courts to tribunals, which have status as courts of record, our House, under standing order 25, which has existed in some form since 1970, has chosen to go further and specify that matters that are the subject of a proceeding before any quasi-judicial body constituted by the House or by or under the authority of an act of the Legislature are considered sub judice and must be avoided. It is true that standing order 25 respects matters which are out of order in debate. You noted this, Speaker, in your September 2018 ruling, but you noted it to distinguish debate on legislation from the effect of the legislation itself.

You correctly noted that the convention and our standing orders do not and cannot "operate to limit the superior and pre-eminent right of the Legislature to legislate in the first instance."

It is critical, however, to note that this situation is not precisely the one which was before you in 2018. The NDP leader has not put forth legislation, but a motion, a motion seeking to establish a position of this House directly respecting a matter that is sub judice. In this particular matter, it is also clear that the wording of the motion necessitates that any substantive debate of it would have to discuss the matters which are sub judice.

Certainly, it would be an absurd interpretation of our standing orders that they could allow for a situation in

which a motion may address matters which are sub judice when the very debate on that motion would be out of order.

If this House were to adopt this motion, especially in an area where the assembly has, in statute, delegated a specific authority to an officer of Parliament, it would create an extremely dangerous precedent.

0940

If allowed, would it then be permissible in the future for the assembly to consider and adopt motions which sought to take a position in a case before Ontario's Landlord and Tenant Board? Would it be permissible to take a position in a case before the Human Rights Tribunal? What would distinguish any of these scenarios from a minor criminal case or a civil trial? In any of these cases, permissibility aside, would it be advisable or will we have firmly charged that through the constitutional separation of powers into the domain of the courts?

This motion before us does not seek to assert the assembly's legislative superiority or pre-eminence, it seeks only to insert the House politically into the Information and Privacy Commissioner's statutory sphere of competence.

There is another important distinction from the House of Commons. In June 1987, Speaker Fraser considered a similar point of order to the one I am raising today: an opposition day motion respecting a civil matter that was before the courts. The Speaker also noted that there was no settled practice respecting matters of the subject of civil cases and referenced Beaudesne in noting that the convention has historically applied after the matter has reached the trial stage.

The Speaker ruled allowing the opposition day motion to stand as that case had not yet reached the trial stage and further referenced Beaudesne, pointing out that "the opposition prerogative is very board to use the allotted day and ought not to be interfered with except on the clearest and most certain procedural grounds."

The case before us today is different than the one before Speaker Fraser for several reasons: one being that the House of Commons had not codified any part of the sub judice convention, as we have; a second being that this is not strictly a civil case before a court, it is an appeal before a quasi-judicial body, which is clearly sufficient under our standing order to make its consideration problematic.

Also distinguishing is that the IPC appeal process does not include a formal trial stage; instead the adjudicative part may include an inquiry and hearings which may not be open to the public. Thus, this House has no way to know if they are occurring until a resolution has actually been reached. In such a case, the House ought to show restraint in the spirit of the convention and restrict its deliberations until such a time as an IPC appeal has been settled. It's even more problematic that the quasi-judicial body responsible for this matter at hand is headed by an officer of this Parliament, unlike a court, which exists entirely outside the jurisdiction of the Legislature, the Information and Privacy Commissioner is hired on the recommendation of an all-party panel of members of this assembly followed by the adoption of a motion in this House.

Despite the statutory powers granted by this Legislature to the commissioner to adjudicate certain matters, the commissioner is independent of only the government but is not independent of this assembly. If this House were to adopt the NDP leader's motion, is there not a real risk that the commissioner and the commissioner's office could take such an act of the assembly as a signal from us of a desired outcome in this particular appeal?

We, as an assembly, maintain the ability to remove the commissioner, and even reduce or eliminate the office's funding. This intersection of authorities is exactly why the member's motion is out of order and why it would be so dangerous to set the precedent that the House should consider any such motions.

By considering this motion, this House creates a real and substantial danger of prejudice to the proceeding before the IPC, the outcome of which would not be risk to an initiative of government, but potentially significant invasion of the Premier's personal privacy.

I submit that the NDP leader could possibly have rephrased the motion to make it more orderly and achieve her political objective. With matters sub judice, I admit there has typically been a balance between the legitimate objectives of a Parliament and the need to respect the constitutional separation of powers.

I have mentioned the right to legislate cannot be subverted. Looking to the Laurentian University Speaker's warrants which were issued by this House in the last Parliament, I can imagine a situation in which further action of the House was warranted while the matter remained before another court. In that case, I believe several motions and debate would have been justified despite the sub judice convention and standing order because the Speaker was, in fact, party to those matters on behalf of this House.

In preparing these documents, I have reviewed all of the opposition day motions considered by this House since 1989. In some cases, the House has come quite close to crossing the boundary set by the convention and our standing orders but has not crossed it.

In June 1997, the House considered a motion calling for an independent inquiry into the events at Ipperwash and mentioned the death of Dudley George; however, the House waited to consider this until after the criminal matter was settled at the trial stage and concluded consideration before the matter was appealed.

Another motion related to the very same matter was considered in May 2001 prior to the resolution of a pending civil case. However, that motion did not refer to the civil case in any way and called only for a public inquiry, not action of this House in the lawsuit or desired action of any parties to it.

In May 2002, the House considered a motion with respect to the sale of Hydro One. While there was an appeal in a civil case pending from April to June of that year, the government had simultaneously tabled legislation. The motion called on the government only to withdraw its legislation or to call a general election on the issue. It did not mention the civil case. In this case, it was

certainly within the jurisdiction of the House to consider its position on a piece of legislation before it.

Other similar examples exist, and it is to some regret that, on occasion, the House treaded as close as it has to the fundamental constitutional boundary between Parliament and the courts; but of key importance is that it has not made a practice of crossing the boundary as this motion does. Even if the House had crossed this boundary in the past, the intentional or unintentional disregard for a rule does not forever abrogate it.

Where the subject of opposition day motions has treaded near the judicial sphere, the record shows that the thrust of such motions have dealt with a more general public policy position and that members have generally shown restraint during debate when departing the policy discussions and approaching the case-specific subject matter. However, no motion has so directly sought to improperly enter the judicial sphere as this does by specifically calling on this House to take a direct position in a pending case.

If the sub judice rule does not apply to the thrust of the motions when they are so clearly offensive to it, then this rule may as well be entirely disregarded as we will have confirmed it to be a mere platitude which, when challenged directly, is swiftly dispensed with. This is not only the opposite of restraint described in Bosc and Gagnon, but it invites the courts to gradually make such similar incursions into the parliamentary sphere of competence.

I would also submit that there is nothing exceptional about the proposed debate which justifies a change to precedent, a departure from the application of the standing orders or the risk of sending a signal to one of our own parliamentary officers that the assembly as a whole desires any particular decision in the case before him or her.

Speaker, the arguments I have made have demonstrated the following:

Our codification of the sub judice convention in standing order 25 clarifies that the subject matter of this motion is clearly sub judice as it remains before the Information and Privacy Commissioner's adjudicative division.

Any consideration of the motion would require or encourage members to reflect upon the matter, which is sub judice.

0950

Given the nature of the quasi-judicial body which is responsible for the matter as an officer of this Parliament, it is certain that the motion and consideration of it "would create a real and substantial danger of prejudice to the proceeding."

The House of Commons procedural authorities are insufficient alone to provide complete guidance on the matter because the House of Commons has not codified the sub judice convention as our House has.

The most relevant Speakers' rulings from this place and the House of Commons are not sufficiently analogous to the situation before us to serve as precedent.

The overwhelming practice of this House has not been to directly test the boundaries of the sub judice convention.

Finally, I would like to address the application of standing order 1 to this matter. That standing order states that the purpose of the standing orders is to ensure that proceedings are conducted in a manner that respects the democratic rights of all members to do several things.

The first is to submit motions, resolutions and bills for consideration. We know that right is not unlimited by the simple fact that a motion must be in order to be submitted for consideration and determined by vote. Similarly, not all members are entitled to submit all types of motions for consideration. The opposition cannot submit substantive government motions nor routine motions, and similarly the government cannot submit motions for consideration on opposition days. As well, the subject matter and phrasing of motions follows very specific rules, as you know.

The second, to debate, speak to and vote, is also not unlimited given that we maintain rules which limit the subject matter of debate such as those listed under standing order 25.

The third, to hold the government accountable for its policies, does not apply in this case given the thrust of the motion relates to a quasi-judicial matter of a personal nature for the Premier.

The fourth, to collectively decide matters, is limited by the need for such matters to be proposed within the confines of the rules of this place.

I would also urge you, Speaker, in considering the democratic rights of all members to consider the democratic rights of our Premier, in this case, but of any member of Parliament or member of the public who in the future might have a pending matter before a court or quasi-judicial body and ought to expect fair and impartial consideration of that matter without the undue influence of this House outside its jurisdiction.

Given these conclusions, I submit that the opposition day motion violates the sub judice convention and standing order 25 and does so, in the words of Beauchesne, on the "clearest and most certain procedural grounds." As such, the motion must be ruled out of order and the debate set aside.

Speaker, thank you for consideration.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Thank you. I will reserve my ruling. Orders of the day—

Mr. John Vanthof: Speaker, I would like to respond.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): I recognize the member from Timiskaming—Cochrane for a response.

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you, Speaker. Before I begin, I would also like to—having just heard the government's argument on this—also reserve to submit more on paper later.

First, the government is saying that this motion shouldn't be allowed under section 25. We submitted the motion, I believe, on Wednesday. It was ruled in order by the Clerks' table. We are now several days later.

But before we go further, I would like to read the motion into the record:

"Whereas the government is under criminal investigation by the RCMP for their removal of lands from the greenbelt; and

“Whereas the Auditor General is in the process of reviewing whether there has been mismanagement and abuse of ministerial zoning orders; and

“Whereas there are outstanding questions about an inappropriate relationship between a former government minister and a land speculator, and incorrect information provided to the Integrity Commissioner about this relationship; and

“Whereas there are outstanding questions about whether there was preferential treatment given to a foreign company to build a private spa on public land at Ontario Place; and

“Whereas there are outstanding questions about preferential treatment given to government donors and personal friends of the Premier with respect to the building of Highway 413; and

“Whereas there are outstanding questions about unqualified patronage appointments to public agencies, boards, and commissions; and

“Whereas the Premier has admitted that he regularly uses his personal phone to conduct government business and those communications might be relevant to these inquiries;

“Therefore the Legislative Assembly calls on the Premier to cease his access to information appeal and disclose the contents of his personal phone and email accounts to the Information and Privacy Commissioner.”

Let’s be very clear: The Premier made this the realm of the Parliament when he said his personal phone number, gave it to Ontarians. He basically told people to call him and that he would fix their problems. The government House leader responded several times that that’s what people expect. Then, when he said that, it stands to reason—and I will back up a second: I’m not a lawyer or a standing orders expert. Perhaps I should be to be making this argument, but I’m not. But when you give your personal phone number and say, “I’m doing business on the personal phone number, and it is the business of the public,” then it stands to reason that those phone records should also be public. Are we talking about the courts? No. But the Premier, in the Legislature, gave his phone number and made no bones about it that he was doing public business on his personal phone—public business, taxpayers’ dollars, on his personal phone—in this room.

A motion is a serious thing, but it’s not a binding motion. It doesn’t direct the courts and nor does it direct the integrity and privacy commissioner. It doesn’t direct the commissioner. We are trying to get information to be made public, that should be made public so that the public can find out what happened, right or wrong.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Does the member for Chatham-Kent–Leamington have a point of order?

Mr. Trevor Jones: Speaker, point of order: The member opposite is arguing the merits of the motion, not the actual point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): I’m going to ask the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane to continue his remarks.

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you.

Actually, the merits of the motion—the point of order is that the motion shouldn’t be brought forward. So I think it is part of the argument that you have to debate the merit of the motion.

Just from the public perspective, this is the House of the people. So we brought a motion forward that the Premier’s phone records—which do include public business; that is not under dispute here. The Premier said it. The government House leader said it. That’s not under dispute at all. We, in this opposition motion, are trying to convince the government and the Premier to release those records, to be open and accountable to the people of Ontario.

Your point is that this motion shouldn’t be discussed here, that public business and public dollars on the Premier’s personal phone shouldn’t be part of the public record. We very strongly disagree. If the government feels that this motion shouldn’t be—I’m going back up for a second. If this motion goes forward, the government has every opportunity to make their argument that this motion shouldn’t go forward.

1000

Also, because it’s a majority government, you can also vote this motion down. You have a majority. There is no question that, if the government decides that they don’t want this motion to pass, this motion will fail. You have a majority, one which you use—rightfully so—on a regular basis. The last opposition day motion, you chose not to vote; you chose to ring the bells to eliminate the vote. With this motion, your motion, you’re basically trying to eliminate debate. You can use all the legal terminology you want, but at the end of the day, that is what you’re trying to do.

And, quite frankly, Ontarians should be even more interested, right now, in what’s on the Premier’s personal phone—even more. They should be, because had you just let this motion go through, made your argument—but now you’re using procedural tactics to try and prevent information from coming to the floor.

We will provide more information once we’ve had time to actually study your long-winded legal arguments—and I get along great with the member personally, so he’s not taking this personally. But for the government to have had this motion on Wednesday and waiting until the morning of the day it’s going to be debated, that also puts out some red flags that the government is doing whatever it can not to be put on record regarding the Premier’s personal phone.

Now the people are realizing that those records should be part of the public record, need to be part of the public record, have to be part of the public record. And eventually, they will become part of the government record, regardless of what this government is trying to pull. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): I will reserve my ruling.

Orders of the day.

CONVENIENT CARE AT HOME
ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 SUR LA PRESTATION
COMMUNE DE SOINS À DOMICILE

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 16, 2023, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 135, An Act to amend the Connecting Care Act, 2019 with respect to home and community care services and health governance and to make related amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 135, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2019 pour des soins interconnectés en ce qui concerne les services de soins à domicile et en milieu communautaire et la gouvernance de la santé et apportant des modifications connexes à d'autres lois.

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

Mr. Joel Harden: So the government, as I understand, in this bill—well, they move very quickly, so it's hard to sometimes understand everything they want to do with this bill. But I want to begin on a charitable note and assume that the government, like the members of this opposition, care about the people who raised us; that we assume that every single part of this building, every single facet of this province, exists because elders have paid their taxes, they have gotten up in the morning and they have put one foot in front of the other and they have built our communities; and when the time comes that they get an opportunity to retire, they want to live with dignity.

And every single person I talk to from our community who talks about home care—it is not just a frill. Home care should be one of the most important things that the province of Ontario funds and cares about on a regular basis. And why? Because people want to live in the homes they have built for themselves and their families for as long as possible—that's why. They deserve the right to live in the homes they have built for themselves and their families.

But what are we currently doing in the province of Ontario with home care? Absolutely clear, it's on the record; the Auditor General previous to the current Auditor General issued two reports on the problems in home care in Ontario. We are losing, depending upon the agency hired by the Ministry of Health, between 27% to 32% of every taxpayer dollar we invest in home care to for-profit operators that care more about investors and the bottom line than the well-being of seniors and persons with disabilities.

It's why it's so hard for so many families to find appropriate home care. It's why when persons with disabilities and seniors have some kind of a critical incident in their home—it could be a fall; it could be an injury of some kind—and they get admitted to hospital, they cannot be brought back to their home. Why? Because it's unsafe for them to be there. So they get trapped in this awful cycle of emergency room admissions, being put into beds which emergency room staff need to deal with emergencies. But they get trapped into this cycle, and they get trapped into that cycle after a lifetime of caring for children, paying taxes, doing what everybody in this prov-

ince says you have to do to lead a decent and meaningful life.

I've always thought, as someone middle-aged—I'm 51 now—that part of that social contract I have with elders in this province is to stand by them when they want to live in their own homes for as long as possible. But that's not the case. We line the pockets of ParaMed, of CarePartners, of Bayshore. Linda Knight, a fantastic example of this: \$140 million of contracts currently—CarePartners—with the Ministry of Health and the province of Ontario. We are losing 30% of every one of that \$140 million we invest in CarePartners to profit, to investors.

There was a time in this province when there was an NDP government. We had a Minister of Health, and her name was Evelyn Gigantes, member of provincial Parliament for Ottawa Centre, someone I'm very proud to call a friend. Evelyn told me that when she stood in this esteemed House as the Minister of Health, 81% of the contracts signed with the Minister of Health for home care were with non-profit entities, by and large the Victorian Order of Nurses, a historic agency which now is called Carefor. Carefor still exists in Ottawa. It still plays a critical role in looking after people with disabilities and seniors, not just in my community. I see the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell over there, my friend east of where I serve. I know many seniors who benefit from home care services provided well outside of downtown Ottawa thanks to Carefor.

But what has happened over time when the Victorian Order of Nurses and non-profit care was 81% of home care? What has happened over time is the Conservative government of the mid-1990s introduced a market model for a competition for contracts for home care. That has driven down working conditions and it has driven down the standards of care, so seniors, people with disabilities and families cannot get the care they need.

Let me switch to the other critical part of this puzzle, and that is the largely women and men who work in this sector. If you can believe it, Speaker, their travel is not compensated when they work for a big company like Bayshore or ParaMed or CarePartners. Their travel is not compensated, so when they head out to Glengarry—Prescott—Russell and when they head out to Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke or when they head out to one of the rural areas of eastern Ontario, my neighbours, they are not compensated between destinations. Their compensation is between clients.

Just recently when I was at the grocery store, I had occasion to talk to a rural community care PSW who works for different agencies, piecing together a full-time employment. This gentleman called the care coordinator at Bayshore and said, "Do you know I'm being given 30 minutes to look in on somebody in Smiths Falls? I know the senior has not had a bath in a week, and I want to give that senior a bath, a very personal process—older lady." The Bayshore care coordinator said back to the community PSW, "Well, what can you do in half an hour, Paul?"

How revolting is that? Not only do you not pay Paul for his travel to Smiths Falls from Ottawa—he's an Ottawa

Centre resident; proud to call Paul a friend—you put the senior in the situation where they're not bathed for a week—what is going to be, two weeks? Three weeks?

1010

This government has a close relationship with for-profit home care agencies. They believe and they've said in this House for the five years that I have served here that they have to work with Linda Knight, with Bayshore, with ParaMed. We are losing 30% of investments in home care to for-profit agencies, and nowhere in Bill 135 is there a provision to deal with that—nowhere. People keep putting their Mercedes in the driveways and people keep dishing out dividends to shareholders, and people with disabilities and seniors continue to suffer. It's not right.

Do you know what's coming up soon? I'm proud to stand beside my friend from St. Catharines here. Remembrance Day is coming very soon. Everybody in this House is going to be putting on a red poppy because we honour the service of our veterans. But what about the veterans right now who need home care? What about them? Do we care about them when we get up and we hold our hand over our hearts, and we remember epic moments like D-Day or Vimy Ridge, or the sacrifices or the PTSD that veterans come home with after serving in the field in places like Afghanistan or elsewhere?

I know those celebrations by members in this House are heartfelt. I know we all share them, and we believe them. But it can't end after Remembrance Day. We have to remember that the elders who built this province deserve every single cent that we can put in their hands to ensure dignified home care.

So if Bill 135 is about dignified home care, connected home care, but you are leaving intact a home care system that is bleeding out incredible amounts of money for profit, I believe you are failing seniors, persons with disabilities and caring members of families.

Speaker, I'll never forget what it was like for me when I was a graduate student in this city and my grandparents, within five months of each other, both passed away—they went through that moment where they had to leave that family home and had to be in 24/7 assisted long-term care. They went to Maxville Manor, a wonderful, wonderful non-profit organization in Maxville with a social justice mandate that does incredible work. They looked after both of my grandparents, my grandmother who had dementia and my grandfather who had Lou Gehrig's disease. They did the best they could to keep them together in that long-term-care facility, even though my grandma, who never met a bully she didn't want to stare down in her entire life and wreaked fear and havoc in my town for any reason she believed was unjust—so when she was being asked to stay in the dementia ward for her own protection, she didn't take kindly to that.

As a family caregiver, I ceased my studies and I went back home to live in Vankleek Hill with my mom for a bit and was in and out of Maxville, and I remember thinking, "How lucky is my family that there's enough affluence in my family that I can just put my studies on hold and come down from Toronto and look after my grandparents, who

spent their life looking after me?" But that's our luck, our fortune. I was able to do that. My dad ran a very successful business. My mom was a music teacher. They both did whatever they could. But I came home. So did my brother. So did my mom's second cousin. But not every family has that ability. Not every family can do that.

So many people in this province are struggling paycheque to paycheque to make ends meet today. It's hard. Life out there is hard. So that's where the province has to step up and offer consistent home care to every single person in this province who needs it. That's our social contract with the elders who built this province. But instead, we're lining the pockets of Linda Knight, we're lining the pockets of Bayshore, we're lining the pockets of CarePartners, and I think it's a shame, Speaker.

I invite my friends in government to consider amending this bill to make sure we finally go back to the NDP legacy in this province where we had every or most of every dollar going directly into care and not into profit. That would be a proud day. I would love to work with this government to introduce them to organizations like Carefor, organizations back home like Hillel Lodge on the west end of the riding, a jewel in the crown of Jewish Family Services Ottawa that is there offering compassionate care—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I apologize to the member for Ottawa Centre, who I have to now interrupt because it is 10:15, and it is time for members' statements.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

MARGARET ROBERTSON

Ms. Donna Skelly: Good morning, Speaker. This morning I would like to recognize a member of my riding. Last week, the city of Hamilton held its 28th annual Senior of the Year Awards and Flamborough–Glanbrook resident Margaret Robertson was the nominee.

The Senior of the Year Award program celebrates seniors aged 65 and older who contribute their time and their talents in service to enrich the social, cultural or civic life of those in our community.

Margaret's commitment to the Flamborough area has been evident for years. She established and maintained Pause Awhile Tea Room for 32 years, a place enjoyed by so many in our community. She was chair of the Waterdown BIA, where she led the growth of the Victorian Festival. Margaret is also a founding member of the Rotary Club of Flamborough AM, an organization that provides so much service around our area.

Along with these various roles, Margaret has also volunteered her time to work with Flamborough Connects and the Food with Grace Waterdown Food Bank. She has truly been influential and much loved in our community.

My congratulations go out to all of the nominees, and a special thank you to Margaret for all that you have done and continue to do.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. John Vanthof: I guess I'll call this a tale of two phones. We all remember the day the Premier got up and gave his personal cellphone in the House: "If you have a problem, call me." That's a great marketing strategy. But everyone, especially on the government side—especially Premiers and ministers—also have government phones, and government business should be done on government phones. That's a pretty simple concept.

But now it's come to light that there are long periods of time where the Premier of this province did not use government phones. I don't think the Premier of the province would not conduct any business in those periods, so there is business being conducted, it stands to reason, on his personal cellphone.

We are bringing a motion forward this afternoon to try to push the government and the Premier to release his personal cellphone records so he can be open and accountable to the people of Ontario, which he promised to be. The government has now moved a motion to try to stop that. But let's be clear: Government business, whether it's on a personal or a government phone, should be viewed by the people. We implore the Premier to do so.

THE REFUGE YOUTH OUTREACH CENTRE

Mr. Lorne Coe: The Ontario government is providing over \$4.9 million to help create 27 supportive housing units at The Refuge in Oshawa that will support youth experiencing homelessness. Located at 357 Simcoe Street South in Oshawa, the two-storey converted school building will include studio apartments as well as four accessible units.

I believe that affordable, accessible and suitable housing is essential for healthy communities within the region of Durham. It underpins the quality of life for people in Durham at every stage of their lives. I look forward to continued collaboration with the members of Durham regional council as together we ensure that local communities within the region continue to be safe, healthy and caring, as well as sustainable for future generations.

John Henry, the regional chair of Durham region and chief executive officer, had this to say about the new funding for The Refuge: "On behalf of the region ... I would like to extend a sincere thank you to the province ... for this investment. It signifies our shared vision of creating safe, welcoming and caring communities for all."

CONFLICT IN MIDDLE EAST

Mr. Joel Harden: I have a message this morning for Prime Minister Trudeau about ongoing horrors in Gaza and in Israel. I believe the Prime Minister must join those around the world demanding the release of all hostages and demanding a ceasefire now. Without question, those responsible for the unspeakable atrocities committed against 1,400 Israelis on October 7 must face justice. But

justice is not achieved by levelling entire Palestinian neighbourhoods, bombing border crossings, health care facilities and critical infrastructure, killing entire extended families, including heart-rending numbers of children.

1020

Over the weekend, 19 families in Ottawa were grieving loved ones lost in Gaza. One woman, Hala Alshaer, was grieving 77 relatives, from ages one to 61. This is madness, Speaker—pure madness.

Half the population of Gaza are children. They never voted for Hamas, and they weren't even born when Hamas was elected in 2006.

Prime Minister Trudeau, do those children deserve to die? Will you speak up for them? That's what thousands of people were saying in my city yesterday, in the streets of Ottawa. Will you call for a ceasefire, for the release of all the hostages, for the siege of Gaza to finally end and for the immediate start of negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis so they can live in peace? They deserve to. Please speak up, sir.

DOUG HUNT

Mr. Will Bouma: I am very pleased to rise in the House today to talk about Doug Hunt, a pillar of the Brantford–Brant community and new Guinness Book of World Records holder.

Known to many in Brantford–Brant as Doug the Great, Doug managed to take 14 continuous forward steps atop stilts measuring 55 feet and weighing 125 pounds apiece. This achievement marks Doug's third stilt-walking Guinness record.

Doug the Great broke the record on Saturday to mark the 10th anniversary of the new and upgraded Wayne Gretzky Sports Centre. His walk was one of the main events of the anniversary ceremony, and he had a huge crowd cheering him on.

In addition to making history once again in Brantford, Doug's stilt-walking team used the walk to raise money for Participation Support Services, an incredible organization that supports adults with physical disabilities and complex needs to live as independently as possible.

Despite challenges from dangerous winds, Doug stuck by his motto of never giving up and always taking that next step. Doug the Great is a shining example of perseverance and tenacity and a true role model for Brantford–Brant to try to emulate.

All of Brantford–Brant is proud of you, Doug, although I'm not sure you needed 55-foot-tall stilts to be taller than me.

LABOUR DISPUTE

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: It's now been a year and a half since 9,000 ACTRA commercial actors have been unlawfully locked out of work by the ICA, the Institute of Canadian Agencies. As I've raised in this House, the ICA wants to cut wages up to 60% and eliminate benefits and retirement plans. They are not bargaining in good faith and are using scab replacement labour.

The Ford Conservatives talk a lot about the affordability crisis. What about locked-out actors whose livelihoods have been taken away from them? How do you expect them to survive?

The Ford government refuses to ban scab replacement labour, which is getting in the way of a fair bargaining process. Not only that; the Conservatives are giving business through government-paid advertising to the very agencies that are treating commercial actors so poorly. The government says they are working for workers, but their actions show otherwise.

There's more: TVO CMG workers have been on strike for fair wage increases for nine weeks. After a decade of their real wages falling due to the rising cost of living and inflation, workers simply cannot afford to see their real wages fall anymore, yet they're being asked to accept another three years of below-inflation wage increases. TVO is a public broadcaster, so the government itself is the employer here. They have the direct ability to intervene, and yet they don't.

And here's the thing no one understands: The workers are asking for binding arbitration, a neutral third party to resolve this, and even that the government refuses. Binding arbitration has been offered to other groups. Why not TVO CMG?

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: October has been a very exciting month in my riding of Carleton, particularly in the communities of Riverside South and Findlay Creek. The Ottawa Catholic School Board broke ground on not one but two new Catholic elementary schools that hope to have their doors open by September 2024.

Even before I was first elected in 2018, it was made very clear to me on the campaign trail how badly the communities in my riding needed schools to keep up with the rapid growth. It was by far the number one issue in my riding of Carleton, and since the 2018 election, we have received more than \$211 million in funding for the building or expansion of nine schools in Carleton alone. These new schools in Findlay Creek and Riverside South will each provide 507 student spaces and 39 daycare spaces.

But a new school is more than a building with capacity and state-of-the-art technology; it will be a place where children will learn and feel comfortable, make lifelong friends with their peers, forming relationships with dedicated staff and teachers and creating a foundation of childhood memories that will stay with them forever.

A groundbreaking for a new school is exciting, but it will be even more exciting to visit two new schools full of children as their local MPP in September 2024.

DEVELOPMENT IN ESSEX

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Mr. Speaker, I have an update on all of the fantastic building that's going on in Essex county. In Belle River, we're building a 160-unit seniors'

home. It's a state-of-the-art home. It's going to allow people to age in place.

In Kingsville, we're building a JK-to-grade-12 school. When it opens up, it's going to welcome hundreds of happy students.

In Amherstburg, they're building lots of residential units—not one, not two, not three but four brand new residential complexes that are going to make it possible for people to retire in Amherstburg and also for people to start a family in Amherstburg.

And in Essex, we're expanding Highway 3 from two lanes to four lanes. That's going to help commuters get from one part of Essex county to the other safer and faster. It's going to help our greenhouse growers get their product to market faster and help grow our industry.

There's so much building going on in Essex county, Mr. Speaker. I can't remember a time when so much excellent progress was being made.

I want to thank the Premier for his policies and for investing in Essex county. Let's keep it going.

ROYAL AGRICULTURAL WINTER FAIR

AGGIE ARMSTRONG

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: The Royal Agricultural Winter Fair is a time when farmers, growers, producers and home-steaders from all over Canada descend on Toronto to celebrate the best in farming, agriculture and local food.

Each year, an artist is commissioned to create the official poster for the fair, and I'm proud to rise today to congratulate Oxford artist Aggie Armstrong on being chosen to create this year's poster. It is truly an honour and a privilege for Aggie, who moved to Oxford county when she was 18, from Manila, Philippines. It's no surprise why she was chosen. With her experience in both Manila and rural Norwich township, along with her distinctive artistic style, she is a perfect fit for the 101st fair poster. It's entitled the Magical Voyage to Celebration.

In her words, she wanted to show how growers and producers "take their vocation with pride" and how "the fruits of their labour need to be elevated and celebrated by everyone." She hopes that "people see the beauty of agriculture and husbandry" and that farmers [should] be proud of all the work they do."

I believe this is the spirit of agriculture in Ontario, and I encourage everyone to take a look at Aggie's poster and previous work.

The 101st agricultural winter fair will take place from November 3 to 12 at Exhibition Place.

I once again would like to congratulate Aggie Armstrong for her beautiful work of art and making Oxford proud.

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

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Before I ask the members to introduce their guests, I'll remind them to

please keep their introductions brief and devoid of political commentary or statements.

Introduction of visitors?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: I'd like to welcome some guests from Italy this morning: Dr. Stefano Giorgilli; his wife, Ornella Giorgilli; and a journalist from Italy, as well, who's here with them, Iolanda Russo, from ExtraTV. Welcome to the Legislature of the province of Ontario.

1030

Mr. Brian Saunderson: It's my great pleasure this morning to rise to introduce to the House a great Olympian from Canada. He competed at three Olympics, he was a member of the IOC, he was the president of the World Sailing Federation, and he's a member of the Canadian Olympic Hall of Fame. He's also known as the "Pope of Sailing," Paul Henderson.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Good morning, Speaker, and thank you for the opportunity. I'd like to welcome visitors to our House: the executive director from Pride Toronto, Kojo Modeste, as well as the co-chairs of Pride Toronto, leZlie lee kam and Grant Gonzales. And to the entire board and the set of volunteers and staff, it's wonderful to have you here.

Mrs. Robin Martin: I just noticed and I wanted to welcome my very good friend Clare Michaels to the Legislature this morning.

MPP Jill Andrew: Good morning, Speaker. I would like to welcome my mother who is joining us this morning, Josephine Andrew. I'm really glad that she's here and that she's still with us.

I'd also like to take an opportunity to welcome leZlie lee kam, one of our wonderful St. Paul's constituents and community members who is beloved, and also everyone from Pride Toronto. Thank you for being a second home away from home for so many folks.

Hon. Michael Parsa: I'd like to welcome my good friend Ted Leider. Among other great work that he does, he also co-founded the Shining Through Centre for children with autism. Thank you very much for being here and for the great work you do, and welcome.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'd like to welcome Tim Jennings from the Shaw Theatre. I'm looking forward to the reception tonight and our meeting later today. Welcome to Queen's Park, my friend.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: I want to welcome a very good friend of mine and many other MPPs, Ish Van Der Rassel. He serves on many boards and commissions in North Bay.

Mr. Matthew Rae: I would like to introduce Peter and Beverley Maranger, great community leaders from my riding of Perth-Wellington. Welcome to Queen's Park.

QUESTION PERIOD

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: A question to the Premier: Environmental advocacy groups have joined our efforts to

uncover information about the backroom deals that have been directing the government's policies. Environmental Defence and Ecojustice filed a freedom-of-information request late last year to "find out what kind of influence developers had on the Ontario cabinet and Premier in its greenbelt decision."

This government unlawfully ignored this request, so the Information and Privacy Commissioner ordered the government to comply with the law. But the government ignored this order again. Now, Environmental Defence and Ecojustice are suing to enforce this order.

Why is the government breaking the law to avoid disclosing these requested records?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: In fact, the department is seized with a number of freedom-of-information requests. We're compiling those and will be prepared to provide them as soon as the department has completed its work.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to caution the members on the use of their language.

The supplementary question.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Back to the Premier: We still don't have the full story on how the government selected lands for removal from the greenbelt. The freedom-of-information requests submitted by Environmental Defence and Ecojustice might fill in some of the remaining gaps.

But this Premier is ignoring freedom-of-information law and the Information and Privacy Commissioner's orders. He is wasting more public money fighting in court to keep this information a secret. What is the Premier trying to hide here?

Hon. Paul Calandra: As I just said, Mr. Speaker, just the opposite: The department is compiling information with respect to a number of freedom-of-information requests and once they've completed the work, they will provide the information through to the IPC.

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

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: The Information and Privacy Commissioner, again, had issued multiple orders this year about the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing refusing to comply with the freedom-of-information laws, including ones related to decisions by the ministry that enriched favoured speculators, including changes to the greenbelt and the forced expansion of the urban boundaries. On October 13, the IPC ordered the ministry to recover records that may have been deleted or destroyed in relation to one of these requests.

Again, Speaker, will the Premier release all records on the greenbelt grab, or do we have to wait until they come out in the RCMP investigation?

Hon. Paul Calandra: As I've said twice and I will repeat a third time for the member, we are seized with a number of freedom-of-information requests—the department is. We are compiling the requests for information and when that is completed, we will transition that information through to the IPC for release.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Speaker, my question is, again, to the Premier and I hope he'll take this opportunity to answer.

For weeks now, we've been asking questions of this government on what exactly happened over the three days in September when this government did a 180 on their greenbelt policy, from a rough policy framework on the greenbelt to specific properties that they identified for removal. The Premier told the Integrity Commissioner he did not recall the meeting.

I want to give the Premier one more opportunity to take some responsibility here: Did the Premier have a meeting to discuss the greenbelt on September 15, 2022?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Speaker, as I've said on a number of occasions in this House, we made a public policy decision that we thought would be in the best interest of the people of the province of Ontario. Mainly, it was guided by the desire to build 1.5 million homes across the province of Ontario as quickly as possible, recognizing the fact that there are people in this province who feel that they may never have the opportunity to own their first home or to rent a place.

We also said that decisions on the greenbelt were not ones that were supported by the people of the province of Ontario and that is why the Premier took the step that he did in September to announce that we would be reverting back to the previous policy and that all lands taken out of the greenbelt would be restored.

I have a bill in front of this House, Mr. Speaker, that will soon come again before this House, which transitions those lands back into the greenbelt, which adds thousands of additional acres to the greenbelt, but goes a little step further—in fact, a big step further, Mr. Speaker—by codifying the boundaries of the greenbelt in legislation.

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

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Speaker, I'm going to go through a timeline here because it's important.

Day 1: a dinner with developers where greenbelt packages were exchanged with the minister's chief of staff.

Day 2: an alleged meeting with the Premier, his chief of staff, Mr. Amato and Minister Clark, following which Mr. Amato said the Premier and his chief of staff were "very serious" about greenbelt swaps.

1040

Day 3: Mr. Amato informs the ministry that they will be going forward with site-specific removals and identifies three properties, accounting for 91% of the land this government attempted to remove from the greenbelt. Two of them were provided at the dinner just days earlier.

Speaker, back to the Premier: Did the Premier attend the meeting on the greenbelt on September 15, 2022?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Speaker, I trust what the Integrity Commissioner wrote when he highlighted the fact that the Premier had no involvement in this particular

public policy decision that wasn't supported by the people of the province of Ontario. We've been very clear on that.

But make no mistake about it. We want to build 1.5 million homes across the province of Ontario. We think it is a priority. That is why, since 2018, we have introduced a number of bills, in fact, to move us along on that, whether it's transit-oriented communities, whether it's building our transit system faster so that we can get homes around that.

The reality is, we want to build more homes because it is inappropriate that a full generation of Ontarians should feel that they can't afford a home; that a generation of Ontarians should think that they are going to spend the rest of their lives in their parents' basements. I'll let them argue why they think that is proper. We're going to double down, Mr. Speaker. We're going to do everything that we can to remove obstacles, to put more money back in the pockets of hard-working Ontarians and to ensure the dream of home ownership is available to everyone.

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

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Well, Speaker, I think a non-answer is an answer in a way.

When we asked this question in committee, the government House leader recommended that we FOI that information, so we took his advice. Meegwetch for that. Thank you for that. In fact, the Premier's calendar has a meeting on September 15, 2022, at 1 p.m. with former Minister Clark, presumably his chief of staff and Jamie Wallace.

What direction did the Premier give his minister and staff regarding the greenbelt?

Hon. Paul Calandra: I don't even know where to begin with that. Shocking—a Premier would speak with a cabinet minister on policy issues.

The overriding policy of this government since day one has been to build more homes across the province of Ontario. Do you know why, Mr. Speaker? Because under the policies—in fact, I wish that the previous Premier, the Liberal Premier, didn't speak as often with the NDP, because had they not have spoken as often, then we might have had more shovels in the ground.

But since day one, we have been focused on building more homes, removing obstacles, building more transit and transportation, improving our school system, building more long-term care. So when the Premier speaks to his cabinet and his caucus colleagues across the province of Ontario, it is about moving the province forward.

The NDP have figured out how to do an FOI. Congratulations to you. Good job.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Jeff Burch: Speaker, through you to the Premier: Last year, the city of Hamilton proposed an official plan that would focus development within its urban boundaries, growing up instead of out. But the former Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing ignored the people of Hamilton, and on the same day he announced the greenbelt

grab, he also announced a massive expansion of Hamilton's urban boundaries. The first developers to take advantage included those we know now received preferential treatment with the greenbelt grab.

This morning, the minister announced a sudden reversal of that decision. Did the former minister give preferential treatment to favoured insiders when he approved Hamilton's urban boundary expansion, yes or no?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: When I was appointed to the job, I wanted to ensure that I reviewed everything that had been done, with the focus of ensuring the utmost in accountability. When I reviewed the urban boundary expansions in the official plans that had been previously approved, I wasn't satisfied that it met the test of accountability that I think brings public trust along with it.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, I am completely focused—as are my municipal partners and as are home builders—in ensuring that we reach that 1.5-million target for the people of the province of Ontario. We're making a decision to work more closely with our partners. I have to give a lot of credit to Mayor Sutcliffe; when I went to speak with him, he said, "Look, work with us. Start a new relationship with us, because we're on the same page. We want to build more homes, and we can do this with you." I thank Mayor Sutcliffe for his work.

That is why we will reverse some of those decisions, but—make no mistake—we're going to move forward and we're going to get the job done.

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

Mr. Jeff Burch: Through you, again, to the Premier, Speaker: An internal ministry document submitted in court and obtained by the Narwhal and the Hamilton Spectator shows that the former minister had no legitimate basis for expanding Hamilton's urban boundaries the way he did. However, the former minister's decision enriched favoured speculators, just as his greenbelt decision did. Despite this morning's announcement, the people of Ontario still have questions.

To the Premier: Will this government give us some answers, or should the RCMP be investigating Hamilton's urban boundary expansions, as well?

Hon. Paul Calandra: The answer is this, Mr. Speaker: We want to work more closely and better with our municipal partners so that we can do the thing that matters most for the people of the province of Ontario, and that is build more homes so that everybody can have the dream of homeownership. I'm not prepared as Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to live by decisions that won't allow us to meet that goal for the next generation.

I worked very closely with my municipal partners at this point, and they have said, "Look, give us the opportunity to suggest things that allow us to meet that goal." So that is why we are accepting those municipal official plans as submitted and that, over the next 45 days, we will take additional recommendations from our municipal partners in these areas so that they can identify areas

where we could actually build even more housing. But we'll be guided by the requests from our municipal partners on this. I'm very excited by the opportunity to work more closely with them, with homebuilders and with the broader community to ensure that we achieve this goal.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Every day, thousands of people use Highway 401 to travel across the GTA and beyond. I hear from the people and businesses in my riding of Mississauga–Erin Mills that they are tired of being stuck in traffic. They are frustrated with endless gridlock that is causing delays and disruptions that negatively impact their productivity and quality of life. That's why our government must urgently invest in new road infrastructure that will help keep goods and people moving.

Speaker, can the minister please provide an update on how our government is expanding the highway network in Mississauga?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Thank you to the member from Mississauga–Erin Mills for his tireless advocacy for the people of Mississauga. After decades of inaction, under the leadership of Premier Ford we're finally building the infrastructure that we need for our future. We're building new highways, roads, bridges across the entire province, including the great city of Mississauga. In our 2023 budget, we announced that our government is committing to \$27.9 billion over the next 10 years to connect communities, fight gridlock and keep goods moving.

I am pleased to share that our government has completed construction on the widening of Highway 401 between Mississauga and Milton. This provides an additional 18 kilometres of new lanes. Drivers will spend less time in traffic and more time with family. Speaker, we're building Ontario for generations to come.

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

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Thank you to the minister. Widening Highway 401 is an excellent step forward in our government's plan to build a stronger Ontario. Our province needs more transportation infrastructure to help support our growing population, connect communities and improve economic productivity. Unfortunately, these facts are something that the NDP and Liberals don't seem to understand. They say no to building vital transportation projects that will help to reduce gridlock and improve our quality of life. Mr. Speaker, Ontarians deserve better from their elected officials.

Can the minister please explain how investments by our government into roads and highways will help to build up Ontario?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Gridlock has a real cost. When our trucks are stuck in traffic, it only makes the cost of goods more expensive. Gridlock already costs the economy \$11 billion per year, and it will only get worse if we don't build more. That's why, unlike the

Liberals and the NDP, we won't sit by as gridlock gets worse. In the last election, the people of Ontario voted overwhelmingly for our government to continue building highways. We're not afraid to do the right thing. That's why we're committed to investing in Highway 413 and building the Bradford Bypass. We're going to keep our economy moving and build the infrastructure we need to support Ontario's growing population.

1050

HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE

MPP Lise Vaugeois: My question is to the Premier. I am very concerned about this government's plan to further privatize home and community care services. In Thunder Bay and across the province we have seen the devastating consequences of turning over critical services to private corporations: missed appointments, staffing shortages and, ultimately, worse outcomes for Ontarians.

To the Premier: Will you ensure there is publicly available home and community care for all Ontarians?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: What our government will ensure is an expansion of home and community care with a billion-dollar investment. We are stabilizing home and community care because we understand how critically important it is for people to be able to access care close to home and, yes, sometimes in home. That investment of a billion dollars is going to ensure that we have a stabilized home and community care system that includes lots of partners, including organizations like Meals on Wheels, to make sure that we are able to support and provide care for people close to home and in home.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: When private, for-profit companies are involved in essential services, they don't suddenly change their business models. Up to 30% of every taxpayer dollar that could be going into care is instead going into shareholder profits.

To the Premier: Will you listen to home and community care workers and clients and stop the privatization of essential services for seniors and people with disabilities?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: We have listened, and we will continue to listen. This is something that the home and community care system has been asking for, for years. We are finally acting to make sure that no matter where you live in the province of Ontario, there is going to be a consistent approach, a consistent opportunity for individuals to be able to be served in community. What does that mean? It means that Mrs. Brown, when she is recovering from hospital, can go home, get the physio support she needs in home, get the support she needs to be able to continue on her treatment path and do it in a safe way—exactly what they want.

We need people to be able to have those treatment options in home, in community. Individuals want that opportunity to be able to be with their loved ones in community. A billion-dollar investment means we can action that,

something that the system has been asking for, for literally decades.

LABOUR DISPUTE

Mr. Will Bouma: My question is for the Minister of Education. Speaker, parents in Ontario need certainty. They need certainty that their children will be in school learning the foundations of reading, writing and math, uninterrupted by the threat of strikes. I, like many parents, was disappointed to hear that some teacher unions have rejected our plan to keep students in schools by way of interest arbitration. Instead, some teachers' unions have chosen a strike mandate that has left Ontario parents in a state of uncertainty and threatens their children with disruptions to their education.

Speaker, can the minister please explain how our government is standing up for our students and working to keep our students in class?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I want to thank the member for Brantford—Brant for his question, his leadership, his commitment to keeping kids in class in this province. It's disheartening that some of the unions have rejected this opportunity, a deal that ensures stability for their members and for all kids. A Leger poll came out last week; when seven in 10 Ontarians agree with binding arbitration but not one New Democrat has the courage to urge the unions to sign this deal and get on with it so we can keep kids in class.

This government and our Premier are unequivocally clear on our mandate: keep kids in class; back to basics in classroom; stand up for the rights of children to learn. Mr. Speaker, 400,000 high school students now have that stability because we signed a deal with OSSTF. We're going to keep working hard. We're going to urge the unions to get to the table, get a deal, provide predictability and help ensure kids stay in class in this province.

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

Mr. Will Bouma: Thank you, Minister, for your response. All children are best served by remaining in their classrooms, learning the knowledge and skills that they need to succeed. Speaker, the people of Ontario clearly expect that our students must continue their school year without disruption. Nothing should matter more than students being in class and benefiting from uninterrupted learning over the next years, with an enhanced focus on reading, writing and math. Students across our province deserve to complete their school year uninterrupted, especially after the last few years of uncertainty.

Speaker, can the minister please explain how our government is ensuring that students have the support they need for a school year free from any disruption?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: It is important that we get back to basics in Ontario's schools. It's important these kids stay in school as a basic principle, which clearly only Progressive Conservative accept.

Mr. Speaker, when we brought forth a budget that increased funding for this school year by \$670 million,

New Democrats and Liberals opposed it. When we increased math supports and literacy supports and hired 2,000 teachers, New Democrats and Liberals opposed it. When we increased mental health funding by 550%, New Democrats and Liberals opposed it. They have opposed progress in this province when it comes to enriching the lives of students, of ensuring accountability on school boards. Parents know they can depend on this Premier to stand up for children, for better quality education and for the right to learn in this province.

ONTARIO PLACE

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: My question is to the Premier. People across Ontario are being asked to pay \$650 million to subsidize a private luxury spa at Ontario Place. There are questions about the fairness and integrity of the procurement that gave Therme control of public land for 95 years. These questions remain unanswered.

The Ontario Place call for development said very clearly that bidders needed to work with the existing parking and that government would not pay for additional facilities. Why was Therme preferentially offered a publicly funded parking garage when other bidders were specifically told to use existing parking?

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

Hon. Kinga Surma: Honestly, I cannot believe that I'm answering this question again. Every single tourist destination has parking. Why? To make it as accessible for people as possible. What a shocking circumstance that we're creating a world-class destination with attractions and things for families to do, and government considers parking; of course, government would consider parking. Every single other tourist attraction offers parking so that the mom from Scarborough with three kids can get down and enjoy Ontario Place.

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

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: Back to the Premier. We know this government had been secretly planning a publicly funded parking garage for Therme nearly two years before the public found out. The call for development said very clearly that bids requiring additional publicly funded facilities would not be considered. If Therme's bid required a government-funded parking garage, it should have been rejected. Last week, we asked whether Therme's bid required a publicly funded parking garage, and the minister refused to answer.

So I'll ask again: Did Therme's bid require a publicly-funded parking garage, yes or no?

Hon. Kinga Surma: I'm more than happy to speak about how Therme also was a leading contender in a procurement that took place in 2018 when we weren't even government. Mr. Speaker, perhaps the member that's opposite to me would like to speak about that in this House.

1100

What we hope to achieve here, of course, is to create a wonderful site that families can enjoy, with a brand new

science centre, with more exhibition space, with a wellness and water park facility, with 50 acres of public grounds space, and a brand new Budweiser Stage. If that doesn't require parking, honest to God, what does?

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. John Fraser: My question is for the Premier.

Speaker, does the Premier believe that Ontario taxpayers should pay for his lawyer in the RCMP's criminal investigation of the \$8.3-billion deal? Yes or no?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, of course we'll follow all government guidelines when it comes to that, and the member knows that. I will actually probably seek advice from the member since the Premier he worked for was under investigation for the balance of his time in office.

Despite the musings of the member from Ottawa and the opposition, we're going to continue to focus on what matters to the people of the province of Ontario, and that is building more homes for people; that is putting more money back in their pocket; that is reversing some of the difficult decisions that have been foisted on Ontarians by his cousins in Ottawa, which has led to higher taxes, which has led to a carbon tax, which ultimately has led to high inflation and out-of-control interest rates.

I note that the Premier, again, has led the nation today, calling on the Bank of Canada—by writing to the Premier say, "Keep interest rates down."

That is what we're focused on. We will continue to get the job done, because 700,000 people who have the dignity of a job today, who didn't when they were in office, are depending on us to do even more, and we will.

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

Mr. John Fraser: I thought it was a fairly simple question and simple answer, but apparently not.

Speaker, I saw the government's response that it's a long-standing practice to cover legal fees for politicians and political staff. Well, that might be the case in civil litigation, but the difference about this is, this is a criminal investigation—a criminal investigation by the RCMP; a criminal investigation into this government's attempt to give an \$8.3-billion advantage to wealthy, well-connected insiders and, by his own admission, the Premier's friends and fundraisers.

The legal costs for politicians and staff caught up in the RCMP's criminal investigation of the \$8.3-billion back-room deal should be paid for by the individual or the Ontario PC Party. Does the Premier agree? Yes or no?

Hon. Paul Calandra: I've already answered the question.

At the same time, we're going to continue to do what is important to the people of the province of Ontario, and focus on things that, really, as a result of the inability of the opposition, the Liberals in particular, over 15 years—to accomplish anything. It's hard to imagine, but the

Liberals left us the most indebted, most highly regulated, highest-taxed jurisdiction literally in Canada, if not the world. And what do we have to show for it? Literally nothing. They weren't able to get transit built, so we had to do it. Our hospitals were left crumbling, so we're fixing them. They built no long-term-care homes, so we're building them. Our students were left at a disadvantage in comparison to every other jurisdiction, and now finally we're starting to see, because of the work of this minister, improvements in our education system.

We've reduced red tape to the tune of billions of dollars—\$8 billion back into the pockets of our small, medium and large job creators. And 700,000 people have a—

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

SKILLED TRADES

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development.

The skilled trades are important to Ontario's economy and our everyday lives. Skilled trades workers are the ones who build our homes, keep the lights on and help to move our province forward.

The demand for skilled tradespeople continues to grow. That's why our government must continue to demonstrate leadership in attracting more people towards these fulfilling and good-paying careers. The reality is that we need to be doing more to help get people into the skilled trades. We need to have the best workforce in the world in order to keep attracting investments to build a stronger Ontario.

Through you, Mr. Speaker: Can the minister please explain what actions our government is taking to support Ontarians to enter the skilled trades sector?

Hon. David Piccini: Thank you very much to that member for that important question. We're taking the challenge of unlocking the lost potential under the previous Liberal-NDP coalition of actually getting people into the trades, supporting—

Interjections.

Hon. David Piccini: Speaker, they're laughing, but wait till I get to the stats.

Getting people into the skilled trades, the 300,000 jobs that go unfilled every year—that's why we created Skilled Trades Ontario, a new crown agency which has a mandate to streamline registration and certification in Ontario's 144 skilled trades, breaking down the stigma and getting more people in. That's just one of the many changes we've taken on as a government.

The stats speak for themselves: We've seen a 25% increase in apprenticeship registration this year over last and a 30% increase in women in the skilled trades—and wait till we get into the specifics in the supplementary, Speaker.

It's working to build a stronger Ontario. We need the men and women in the trades to get the job done, and we're doing just that.

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

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: I'm pleased to hear that our government is taking the necessary steps to build up our skilled trades system. Our province is experiencing a generational labour shortage. It is a fact that nearly 300,000 jobs are going unfilled across our province, including in my riding of Carleton. By 2025, one in five job openings in Ontario will be in the skilled trades industry alone. That's why our government must continue demonstrating leadership and implement an all-of-government approach to address this ongoing labour shortage.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, can the minister please elaborate on how our government is attracting more Ontarians into careers in the skilled trades?

Hon. David Piccini: That member is right; I'm glad she highlighted the labour shortage. When the previous government failed to build schools—in fact, they closed them in rural Ontario—when they failed to build public transit and failed to build hospitals, it wasn't just that they failed to make those commitments; they did nothing to address the labour shortages that we'll need to actually build them. But thanks to the leadership of this Premier, we're getting the job done: building hospitals, building schools, building public transit. And we recognize the need for the talent pipeline to ensure young men and women enter the trades. That's why we've made that investment in Skilled Trades Ontario.

We're also investing \$224 million to help through the Skills Development Fund Capital Stream. That's helping build training centres for apprentices and tradespeople through that fund. This is just one part of our \$1.5-billion commitment to the skilled trades to addressing the backlog, the neglect from the previous Liberal government, so that people can find a job in the skilled trades. Because we know that when you have a job in the trades, you've got a career for life.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: My question is to the Premier. Today, I want to represent the voices of families in my riding. The Ferris family from Constance Lake First Nation had to go through a preventable tragedy overlooked by this government. On July 26, their family member passed in awful circumstances when an Ornge transfer failed to be efficient enough to bring Mrs. Ferris to the hospital to get vital treatment. Ornge protocol hasn't been upgraded for decades, and there is a well-documented shortage of staffing.

My question: Considering Ornge performs approximately 20,000 air ambulance service or medical flights per year and is fully part of the Ontario health care system, will it take another coroner's report to increase government oversight in Ornge operations?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: The member opposite would know that I cannot speak to individual circumstances without the family's approval; it would not be appropriate. Having

said that, the investments that we are making with and for Ornge have meant that a world-class service that we should be incredibly proud of here in Ontario—the ability for Ornge to be able to move around pediatric patients, adults and individuals who have to get out of remote and rural areas and access our world-class health care have the support of our government to do that work.

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

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: People are dying. People are not getting the service up north. You need to get up north and look at what's happening.

On September 28, William Louttit received a diagnosis in Kingston and decided that he wanted to return home to Moose Factory as soon as possible after having been flown by Ornge. On October 3, Ornge informed him he would be transported home but was forced to stop in Moosonee.

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Two days later, he was told by Ornge, upon arrival, that his transport would not occur before 7 p.m. due to staffing issues with the local Ornge base. William Louttit then had to, even with severe mobility issues, take a boat taxi himself from Moosonee to Moose Factory without Ornge.

Ma question, again to the Premier: Will it take another coroner's report to increase government oversight over Ornge operations and protocols before more preventable tragedies continue to happen?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: While the member opposite will insert himself into clinical decisions, I will not. Having said that, I have and often communicate with and meet with air Ornge paramedics, who are truly world-class.

One of the reasons that we have invested in a Learn and Stay program that includes paramedics in northern Ontario is exactly because we have a plan, and it is working. We now have more paramedics being trained in northern Ontario who will then, in exchange for tuition and books being covered by the province of Ontario, practise in those areas that need a higher level of service.

We will make the investments. The member opposite and their party will continue to vote against those investments, but we're getting the job done.

SKILLED TRADES

Ms. Laura Smith: My question is for the Minister of Colleges and Universities. Ontario is facing a generational labour shortage, particularly in the skilled trades. This is having a profound effect and impact on our economy as this is resulting in a supply chain challenge and higher prices for services.

In order for Ontario to remain a world-class leader, our government must ensure that we are making the right investments when it comes to post-secondary education. By strengthening our skilled trades and apprenticeship education systems, we can provide all Ontarians with the tools they will need in order to be prepared for the jobs of tomorrow.

Speaker, can the minister please explain what our government is doing to expand post-secondary educational opportunities in the skilled trades sector?

Hon. Jill Dunlop: Thank you to the member for asking such an important question. Our government recognizes that addressing labour shortages head-on starts with post-secondary education. That is why we continue to support and promote our Ontario colleges skilled trades and apprenticeship programs across the province.

To further enhance opportunities for college students to enter the workforce with job-ready skills, our government expanded the degrees that colleges can offer to now include new three-year degrees and more four-year degrees. Our government also invested over \$60 million in funding to support Ontario's first micro-credentials strategy and made them OSAP eligible, to help workers from all backgrounds upgrade their skills. All these measures were unsupported by the Liberals and NDP.

As Ontario faces a growing labour shortage in the skilled trades, we are making the necessary adjustments for students to enter skilled trades programs because, Speaker, when you have a job in a trade, you have a job for life.

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

Ms. Laura Smith: Thank you for the minister's response, and for her dedicated work and advocacy for a positive university and college environment.

Mr. Will Bouma: Hear, hear.

Ms. Laura Smith: Yes. I am encouraged by the actions of our government and what we have done to help more young people start careers in the skilled trades.

That said, Speaker, we must recognize that opportunities to pursue a career in this field have not always been equal. In 2021, women represented less than 4% of the workers in automotive and construction skilled trades. This has to change. In order for our government to address the ongoing labour shortages in Ontario, we must create better working conditions for women to enter and succeed in the trades.

Speaker, can the minister please explain how our government is empowering educational institutions to help more women pursue rewarding careers in the skilled trades?

Hon. Jill Dunlop: Our government recognizes the vital role that women have in building a stronger Ontario. When we have more women in the skilled trades, we are not just strengthening the success of businesses, but also empowering women while bolstering economic prosperity in Ontario.

Speaker, that's why events like Jill of All Trades, hosted at Centennial College, are so important. I am excited to be attending this event tomorrow for the second year in a row with my colleagues. These events provide opportunities for high school girls to experience rewarding career options in the trades and teaches them that the skilled trades are a promising option for them.

Speaker, it's projected that one in five new job openings in Toronto is likely to be the skilled trades sector by 2025. That is why I am proud that our government is giving women and all students the flexible access they need to pursue innovative training that leads to rewarding careers.

PRIDE TORONTO
PUBLIC SAFETY

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Pride Toronto released their 2023 economic impact report this morning. I had the pleasure of putting a copy on every member's desk, at their request. Pride Toronto has generated \$600 million in economic activity for Ontario, creating almost 7,000 jobs—very impressive. But because of the rise of hate incidents, insurance and security costs have now doubled. This government has cut Pride Toronto's funding, and it is now sitting at 50% less than where it was in 2019. This is happening at a time as we're entering into a recession. During a time Ontarians are now seeing rising hate everywhere, Pride festivals matter more than ever before.

I want to thank the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport for recently meeting Pride Toronto, but I understand that no commitments were made regarding funding.

The Premier is here today. I'd like to ask the Premier directly: Will his government commit to increase permanent, sustainable for Pride festivals across Ontario?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Brampton North and parliamentary assistant.

Mr. Graham McGregor: I want to thank the member for the question. As we know, Ontario's strength is in our diversity and inclusivity. We're home to a strong and vibrant LGBT+ community whose experiences and contributions have and continue to make our province a stronger and better place.

Our government believes that all Ontarians should be able to fully and freely express who they are and love whoever they want. As one of the world's largest Pride festivals, the government of Ontario is proud to support Pride Toronto each year since 2018. We've provided close to \$1.5 million in grants to support the work they do to celebrate Toronto's LGBT+ community.

But I would ask the member that when we support the LGBT+ community we also support all of the members, including police officers who are members of the community as well. I hope that the member will speak to Pride Toronto and involve police officers in next year's Toronto Pride Parade.

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

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Under this government, we've seen a chronic underfunding of Pride festivals. This has now become an Ontario-wide problem. Grey Bruce Pride informs me that their local police service recently told them—and it's shocking—that they cannot guarantee their safety, despite the fact that they've seen an increase of threats and violent protests.

So, speaking about safety, Speaker, I'm very interested in knowing why this government has not been able to develop an anti-2SLGBTQ-hate-crime strategy thus far. Windows are being broken, hateful graffiti sprayed on schools, Pride flags torn down and burned. Queer and trans families are being threatened and bullied, and yet we are seeing no action from this government.

Speaker, how much longer do two-spirited, queer and trans Ontarians have to wait before their safety matters to this government?

Mr. Graham McGregor: I'll mention as well that the minister has met with Pride Toronto several times and, Speaker, our government respects and supports members of Ontario's LGBT+ community. We have worked closely, the minister and myself, with community organizations. Actually, these discussions that we've had helped inspire the redesigned Anti-Hate Security and Prevention Grant, which includes now Pride and community and other LGBT+ organizations.

I'll note that that's a \$25.5-million investment that the member voted against. And when we talk about what that means, colleagues—when an LGBT+ organization like OUTLoud North Bay, who is here with us today, invests in better windows or security cameras, that member voted against it. When we invest in measures to keep members of the LGBT+ community safe in Toronto or Brampton or other parts of Ontario, that member voted against it. So I think the member should look a little closer to home and stand up for the LGBT+ community and all communities that are victims of hate crimes.

SENIORS

Mr. Andrew Dowie: My question is for the Minister of Seniors and Accessibility. Last weekend, I had the tremendous opportunity to visit the Seniors Active Living Fair in Windsor. The event was hosted by the Older Adult Centres' Association of Ontario in conjunction with the Nigerian Canadians for Cultural, Educational and Economic Progress. It was a great time, and I was greatly impressed by the breadth of information provided to those who attended.

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We often hear the minister speak about the importance of connecting seniors to programs right in their communities, like mine, so that they can remain independent and active. Events such as these are vital in supporting the health and well-being of our seniors. This is why our government must remain focused on advocating for seniors.

Speaker, can the minister please explain how our government is raising awareness about programs and services that are available to seniors in Ontario?

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Thank you for that excellent question. The member for Windsor—Tecumseh is doing a marvelous job advocating for not only the seniors but all the residents in his riding.

These fairs are incredible ways for our government to partner with the Older Adults Centres' Association of Ontario. The OACAO brings together these local seniors' events. These seniors fairs are ways for our seniors to come together to learn about the programs and services that are available close to home. I've been to a number of these fairs and seniors are so happy to be with other seniors.

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

Mr. Andrew Dowie: Thank you to the minister for his response. It's great to see how Seniors Active Living Fairs are helping Ontario's seniors to feel more connected to their communities.

The risk of social isolation for seniors is truly a reality. Research studies have documented the detrimental effects that social isolation can have on the physical and mental health of seniors. With the winter months approaching, it's even more important for seniors to have access to activities and programs where they can remain healthy, active and socially connected.

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

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Thank you again for that very important question. Speaker, not only does the OACAO provide seniors fairs, they also have 299 Seniors Active Living Centres, funded in partnership with our government. These centres are a great way for seniors to stay fit, active and healthy during colder months. With a wide variety of activities, from mah-jong, arts and crafts to pickleball and fitness classes, they have it all.

I encourage all seniors to visit a centre this winter and enjoy some fun activities with your friends.

SKILLED TRADES

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Premier. Speaker, 60 students are about to graduate from Conestoga College in Kitchener, ready to become licensed electricians. But they can't start—

Interjections.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Yes, but—wait for it—they can't start working because of long delays writing their C of Q exams through the Ministry of Labour. In London, I heard from a carpenter who has an employer but is facing up to seven years to get Red Seal certification because he can't get into the classroom.

Speaker, Ontario needs skilled trade workers if we are to get desperately needed housing built in this province. What—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for London West has the floor and I need to be able to hear her question. She's not that far away from me. Thank you.

I apologize to the member for London West. She has the floor. Start the clock.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Why did this government do such little preparation to make sure that skilled trades workers in Kitchener and London and across this province can get certified?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development.

Hon. David Piccini: Speaker, there you have it. For the first time since I was elected in 2018, I heard it. The NDP finally recognize what we've known since 2018: We need men and women in the skilled trades in Ontario. I think that member for the question and I will be happy to connect with that member off-line on specific challenges.

But I'm happy to say that skilled trades registration has been up 30% this year over last. Our Skills Development Fund, under the leadership of this Premier, is getting men and women into the trades like Phil, who I met up in Thunder Bay. It's changed his life. And we're not just doing it at union halls, we're doing it through the youth apprenticeship training. Skilled trades for men and women in OYAP programs and skilled tradespeople of tomorrow is up. Indigenous youth is up, but it's up against a sobering stat. The NDP and the opposition did nothing for youth through OYAP. The fund didn't even exist—

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

The supplementary question: the member from Sudbury.

MPP Jamie West: Speaker, I don't get the rhetoric about skilled trades. We all know that it's important to have skilled trades workers.

Here's the situation, Speaker—the question is to the Premier. Electrician students at Conestoga College are desperate to write their C-of-Q. That means they'll become electricians. But they can't, Speaker. They can't because Conestoga College doesn't have any testing days. They reached out to the Ministry of Labour, the minister's portfolio, to add at least one more testing day—at least one—to the regional office. One more day means that these 30 Kitchener students can start working as qualified journeypersons as quickly as possible. Your ministry told them that you don't have enough staff. For a government that claims to be working for workers, it doesn't seem like they are because everyone knows Ontario desperately needs tradespeople.

Why is the Conservative government not prepared for these tradespeople to take their final certification tests?

Hon. David Piccini: You know, it's lost on nobody that that member voted against the mining act. That member has no credibility in this place. When it comes to unlocking the potential of the next gen in skilled trades, he shuts down every opportunity. We need the critical minerals to support the incredible billions of dollars in automotive investments. He voted against it. He voted against the better future for the men and women in his own community. He's got zero credibility when it comes to the skilled trades.

But, Speaker, those young people who want a better future in the skilled trades know that this government will keep making those investments, supporting men and women in the trades, whether it be in a union hall, whether it be in a college, or whether it be in one of the new training centres we're building thanks to this Premier. We've got their backs, Speaker. That member is all talk and no action.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Order. The House will come to order.

Restart the clock. The next question.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Lorne Coe: My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Many people living in my riding of

Whitby and across the GTA rely on public transit as their primary form of travel. Their experience in using public transit should be convenient and efficient across the entire transit network. However, as the TTC works with other local transit authorities, including the GO transit, the fare system under different transit agencies is inconsistent. This leads to confusion and dissatisfaction. My constituents have been asking for a simpler way to pay their transit fare and it's up to our government to come up with workable and common-sense solutions.

Can the minister please explain how our government is making it easier and more convenient to take transit across the greater Toronto area?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Thank you, once again, to my colleague from Whitby for his tireless advocacy for his community and transit.

Under the leadership of our Premier, our government continues to build on our commitment to improving transit experience for all Ontarians.

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We're making it easier to take transit by giving riders more ways to pay. After launching payment by credit and debit card as a pilot on the UP Express, we extended the option to pay by credit card through smartphones or smart watches to the entire GO Transit network as well, to communities like Brampton and Mississauga and the Oakville transit systems. We are further expanding new payment options to more transit agencies across the GTA, including payment by debit.

We are aligning our Presto system with leading transit practices from jurisdictions across the world. This is how our government will continue delivering—

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

Mr. Lorne Coe: Back to the minister: It's great to see how our government is providing transit riders with more choices to make it easier to travel. However, it's essential that our government continues to remove barriers to ridership and make life more affordable. Life is already expensive for the hard-working individuals and families across our great province. For many of them, transit fares add on to the financial burdens that they're already experiencing.

The previous Liberal government, supported by the NDP, failed the people of Ontario when it came to addressing important transit issues. Speaker, the people of Ontario deserve better. Can the minister please explain how our government is offering Ontarians cost-effective ways to travel?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: The member is absolutely right. Our government has prioritized affordability by putting more money back into the pockets of transit riders.

In contrast to the previous Liberal government, with its transit hikes for six straight years, our government has provided a reimbursement for applicable GO Transit riders. We have also eliminated double fares for many GO train riders in the GTA. For youth aged 13 to 19, we have expanded the Presto fare card discounts.

Speaker, unlike the Liberals and the NDP, our government is making transit more affordable and accessible for every rider across this province. That's why we have also made a record and historic investment: \$70 billion over the next 10 years.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to—

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

NURSING AGENCIES

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé.

Ontario is facing a health human resources crisis, whether we look at emergency room closures, at the 2.2 million Ontarians who don't have access to primary care or at the long wait-list for surgery.

Does the minister believe that nursing agencies are part of the solutions to Ontario's health human resources crisis?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Speaker, I'm not sure if the member opposite has read the news article that says, "Ontario had the highest percentage of people with a regular health care provider at 90.6%, suggesting better health care accessibility." That, of course, came out of Health Matrix today.

We can do more and we are doing more, whether it is directing the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario and the College of Nurses of Ontario to quickly expedite, review and ultimately license nurses and doctors who are internationally trained and want to practise in the province of Ontario, or whether, of course, it is expanding the number of residency positions that are available in every single Ontario health care system schooling. We have made those investments; we continue to make those investments.

We have a plan and it is working, and I wish the member opposite would share some of that with her colleagues so that when these investments come forward in fall economic statements or budgets, you actually support those investments instead of—

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: Let me tell you, Speaker, about what nursing agencies do to our health care system. They have exploded in every part of Ontario. In order to have quality care, you need continuity of care; with agency nursing, there is no continuity. They affect quality. They poach health care professionals from our hospitals, from our health care system to go work in agency nursing. They charge up to \$300 an hour, plus signing bonuses, for a nurse who will get not even a third of that, who usually makes 39 bucks an hour. What is this government doing about the multiple problems created throughout our health care system directly linked to agency nursing?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Respectfully, Speaker, facts matter in this discussion. The use of health personnel—agency

nursing—has actually decreased in the province of Ontario.

We are seeing individuals who want to practise, who want to train, who want to work in the province of Ontario continuously adding to our health human resources, whether it's in our education, through our colleges and universities, or a higher percentage of individuals, internationally trained, who are actually practising in the province of Ontario.

I have no intention of removing a tool that has been a very important tool for hospitals, for long-term care and for home and community care to make sure that they have the staff that they need to appropriately serve the people of Ontario.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We have with us in the chamber today a former member of the Legislature who served the riding of Hamilton East–Stoney Creek in the 39th, 40th, 41st, 42nd and 43rd provincial Parliament, Paul Miller. It's great to have you here.

The Minister of Education has a point of order.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Point of order, Mr. Speaker: Just midway through question period, my uncle Frank and his amazing partner, Virginia, joined us here from BC. My uncle is a wonderful language instructor and an actor, and I want to welcome him to the worst theatre in the city of Toronto.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That's not a point of order, but we welcome you nonetheless.

DEFERRED VOTES

MEMBER'S CONDUCT

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Next, we have a deferred vote on a motion for closure on government order number 39, relating to the censure of the member for Hamilton Centre.

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

The division bells rang from 1137 to 1142.

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

On October 18, 2023, Mr. Calandra moved government notice of motion number 19, relating to the censure of the member for Hamilton Centre. Mr. Jones, Chatham-Kent–Leamington, moved an amendment to the motion. Mr. McCarthy moved an amendment to the amendment to the motion.

On October 23, 2023, Mr. Jordan moved that the question be now put.

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

Ayes

Anand, Deepak

Harris, Mike

Quinn, Nolan

Barnes, Patrice
Bethlenfalvy, Peter
Bouma, Will
Byers, Rick
Calandra, Paul
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon
Cho, Stan
Coe, Lorne
Crawford, Stephen
Cuzzetto, Rudy
Dowie, Andrew
Downey, Doug
Dunlop, Jill
Fedeli, Victor
Flack, Rob
Ford, Doug
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn
Ghamari, Goldie
Gill, Parm
Hardeman, Ernie

Hogarth, Christine
Holland, Kevin
Jones, Sylvia
Jones, Trevor
Jordan, John
Kanapathi, Logan
Ke, Vincent
Kerzner, Michael S.
Khanjin, Andrea
Leardi, Anthony
Lecce, Stephen
Lumsden, Neil
Martin, Robin
McCarthy, Todd J.
McGregor, Graham
Mulroney, Caroline
Pang, Billy
Parsa, Michael
Piccini, David
Pierre, Natalie

Rae, Matthew
Rickford, Greg
Riddell, Brian
Sabawy, Sheref
Sandhu, Amarjot
Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Sarrazin, Stéphane
Saunderson, Brian
Scott, Laurie
Skelly, Donna
Smith, Dave
Smith, David
Smith, Graydon
Smith, Laura
Surma, Kinga
Thompson, Lisa M.
Tibollo, Michael A.
Wai, Daisy
Williams, Charmaine A.
Yakabuski, John

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

Nays

Andrew, Jill
Begum, Doly
Bell, Jessica
Bourgouin, Guy
Burch, Jeff
French, Jennifer K.
Gélinas, France
Harden, Joel

Jama, Sarah
Karpoche, Bhutla
Kernaghan, Terence
Mamakwa, Sol
Pasma, Chandra
Sattler, Peggy
Schreiner, Mike
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)

Stiles, Marit
Taylor, Monique
Vanhof, John
Vaugeois, Lise
West, Jamie
Wong-Tam, Kristyn

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 63; the nays are 22.

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

I am now required to put the question on the main motion to the House. Mr. Calandra has moved government notice of motion number 19 relating to the censure of the member for Hamilton Centre. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye." All those opposed 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 1147 to 1152.

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

On October 18, 2023, Mr. Calandra moved government notice of motion number 19, relating to the censure of the member for Hamilton Centre.

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

Ayes

Anand, Deepak
Barnes, Patrice
Bethlenfalvy, Peter
Bouma, Will
Byers, Rick
Calandra, Paul

Harris, Mike
Hogarth, Christine
Holland, Kevin
Jones, Sylvia
Jones, Trevor
Jordan, John

Quinn, Nolan
Rae, Matthew
Rickford, Greg
Riddell, Brian
Sabawy, Sheref
Sandhu, Amarjot

Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Kanapathi, Logan	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Cho, Stan	Ke, Vincent	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Coe, Lorne	Kerzner, Michael S.	Saunderson, Brian
Crawford, Stephen	Khanjin, Andrea	Scott, Laurie
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Leardi, Anthony	Skelly, Donna
Dowie, Andrew	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Dave
Downey, Doug	Lumsden, Neil	Smith, David
Dunlop, Jill	Martin, Robin	Smith, Graydon
Fedeli, Victor	McCarthy, Todd J.	Smith, Laura
Flack, Rob	McGregor, Graham	Surma, Kinga
Ford, Doug	Mulrone, Caroline	Thompson, Lisa M.
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Pang, Billy	Tibollo, Michael A.
Ghamari, Goldie	Parsa, Michael	Wai, Daisy
Gill, Parm	Piccini, David	Williams, Charmaine A.
Hardeman, Ernie	Pierre, Natalie	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.

Nays

Andrew, Jill	Harden, Joel	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Begum, Doly	Jama, Sarah	Stiles, Marit
Bell, Jessica	Karpoche, Bhutila	Taylor, Monique
Bourgouin, Guy	Kernaghan, Terence	Vanthof, John
Burch, Jeff	Mamakwa, Sol	Vaugeois, Lise
French, Jennifer K.	Pasma, Chandra	West, Jamie
Gates, Wayne	Sattler, Peggy	Wong-Tam, Kristyn
Gélinas, France	Schreiner, Mike	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 63; the nays are 23.

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 tomorrow following private members' public business.

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

The House recessed from 1155 to 1300.

OPPOSITION DAY MOTION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Earlier today, the deputy government House leader, Mr. Jones, Chatham-Kent-Leamington, rose on a point of order regarding the motion on notice for opposition day number 3, standing in the name of the leader of the official opposition, which is scheduled for debate this afternoon. The official opposition House leader also spoke to the point of order.

After taking some time to understand the members' comments and the procedural authorities, I am prepared to rule on this matter.

The crux of the argument made by the deputy government House leader is that the motion is out of order on the grounds that it violates the sub judice convention as well

as standing order 25(g), which provides that a member shall be called to order by the Speaker if he or she:

“(g) Refers to any matter that is the subject of a proceeding,

“(i) that is pending in a court or before a judge for judicial determination; or

“(ii) that is before any quasi-judicial body constituted by the House or by or under the authority of an Act of the Legislature,

“where it is shown to the satisfaction of the Speaker that further reference would create a real and substantial danger of prejudice to the proceeding.”

In brief, this is a restriction on the part of the House to refrain from discussing certain matters that are before a judicial or quasi-judicial body. In other words, it is a self-imposed restriction that the Legislative Assembly places upon itself so as to avoid prejudice to a judicial case. At its core is the principle that the separation between legislative and judicial bodies is to be respected. It applies to statements, debate and question period, and as the member correctly points out, it has also been applied to the text of motions.

The text of the opposition day motion includes a pre-ambule that raises a number of questions about various government actions and outstanding inquiries into those actions that the member suggests are being conducted. The motion includes a statement that the Premier “has admitted that he regularly uses his personal phone to conduct government business and those communications might be relevant to these inquiries....” The motion culminates in a proposed call on the Premier to “cease his access-to-information appeal and disclose the contents of his personal phone and email accounts to the Information and Privacy Commissioner.”

The deputy government House leader argues that this is a reference to a request for information made to the government which was denied and is currently being appealed in accordance with the Ontario access-to-information regime. Such appeals are made through the Information and Privacy Commissioner. The deputy government House leader identifies the Information and Privacy Commissioner as a quasi-judicial body—an assertion with which I agree—and correctly observes that standing order 25(g) is applicable to matters which are the subject of proceedings before any quasi-judicial body.

I have taken some time to review our relevant body of precedents and to assess the text of the motion in question. The question I must consider is whether a debate and subsequent House decision on the motion would create a real and substantial danger to a proceeding.

In his submission, the deputy government House leader noted that the request for information and subsequent appeal were made by Global News, while the motion standing in the name of the leader of the official opposition “calls on the Premier to cease his access-to-information appeal....” It is unclear to me at present whether the motion is referring to the appeal described by the deputy government House leader, but it is not the role of the Speaker to make this determination.

In any case, I am not satisfied that the House simply calling upon the Premier to withdraw an appeal would create a real and substantial danger of prejudice to the quasi-judicial proceeding.

In a statement made on May 8, 2008, Speaker Peters quoted a 1976 report by a special committee of the Canadian House of Commons which was set up to review the rights and immunities of members. The committee considered the sub judice convention and recommended that, “When there is doubt in the mind of the Chair, a presumption should exist in favour of allowing debate and against the application of the convention.”

Consequently, I find that the motion is in order and that debate can proceed this afternoon.

I want to thank the members for their submissions.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Deepak Anand: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce Mr. Sunny Gill, the festival director, and Avi Grewal, the director for film and programming at IFFSA Toronto, the largest South Asian film festival in North America.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy: I want to welcome to the assembly this afternoon my chief of staff from my ministry, Michelle Stock, and her team, and the excellent, dedicated, professional public service staff who have also joined us this afternoon. Welcome to the Legislature of Ontario.

MPP Jamie West: Speaker, the member from Toronto—St. Paul's mom is joining us in the gallery again. I want to share with the entire Legislature that I had the opportunity to speak to her after question period and let her know of the support that the member has had from all sides and all parties during this time. So I want to pass my congratulations on to all members of the House for the support for the member for Toronto—St. Paul's.

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Mr. Deepak Anand: It is an absolute pleasure to introduce Anup Singh, an internationally renowned writer, film director and teacher of cinema, whose feature *Qissa: The Tale of a Lonely Ghost* was awarded at IFFSA, the largest South Asian film festival in North America. Welcome to Queen's Park.

INTRODUCTION OF GOVERNMENT BILLS

BETTER FOR CONSUMERS,
BETTER FOR BUSINESSES ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 POUR MIEUX
SERVIR LES CONSOMMATEURS
ET LES ENTREPRISES

Mr. McCarthy moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 142, An Act to enact the Consumer Protection Act, 2023, to amend the Consumer Reporting Act and to amend

or repeal various other Acts / *Projet de loi 142, Loi visant à édicter la Loi de 2023 sur la protection du consommateur, à modifier la Loi sur les renseignements concernant le consommateur et à modifier ou abroger diverses autres 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): The minister could now explain his bill if he wishes.

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy: Consumer protection in the province of Ontario is of vital importance across our great province. The Better for Consumers, Better for Businesses Act, 2023, would, if passed, enact a new Consumer Protection Act, 2023, to replace the existing Consumer Protection Act, 2002. Amendments to the Consumer Reporting Act are also included in this bill.

The new Consumer Protection Act would be divided into parts that address definitions and general rules; fair marketplace rules; rules respecting various consumer contracts, credit agreements, leases and prepaid purchase cards; rules respecting consumer remedies; and powers and duties of the minister, the director, inspectors and investigators; as well as compliance and enforcement; and authorities for the Lieutenant Governor in Council or the minister to make regulations.

This bill being presented today for first reading would not be possible without the dedication of my chief of staff and her team—that's Michelle Stock—and the great dedicated members of the public service with the ministry.

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

Mr. Trevor Jones: I move that the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet during the winter 2023-24 adjournment of the House at the call of the Chair.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Jones, Chatham-Kent—Leamington, has moved that the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet during the winter 2023-24 adjournment of the House at the call of the Chair.

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

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Today I have a petition entitled “Health Care: Not for Sale.” It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

“Whereas privatization always ends with patients getting a bill;

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

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

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

“—10 employer-paid sick days;

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

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

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

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

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Ms. Chandra Pasma: It’s my pleasure to rise to present a petition entitled “Support the Gender Affirming Health Care Act.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas two-spirit, transgender, non-binary, gender-diverse, and intersex communities face significant challenges to accessing health care services that are friendly, competent, and affirming in Ontario;

“Whereas everyone deserves access to health care, and they shouldn’t have to fight for it, shouldn’t have to wait for it, and should never receive less care or support because of who they are;

“Whereas gender-affirming care is life-saving care;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support ... the Gender Affirming Health Care Advisory Committee Act, to improve access to and coverage for gender-affirming health care in Ontario.”

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

ÉDUCATION POSTSECONDAIRE DE LANGUE FRANÇAISE

M. Guy Bourgoïn: Merci, monsieur le Président. J’aimerais remercier M. Girard de Kapuskasing d’avoir signé la pétition intitulée « Appuyez l’Université de Sudbury.

« À l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario :

« Attendu que les Franco-Ontarien(ne)s du Nord ont travaillé pendant un siècle pour la création d’un institut d’enseignement supérieur francophone pour, par et avec les Franco-Ontarien(ne)s à travers l’Université de Sudbury; et

« Attendu que 65,9 % des Franco-Ontarien(ne)s croient que la province devrait financer l’Université de Sudbury pour la mise en place » à travers le programme « d’enseignement supérieur en français; et

« Attendu que les Franco-Ontariens se battent toujours pour leur droit d’obtenir la même qualité d’enseignement donné dans la langue minoritaire française que dans la langue majoritaire tel que garanti par la Charte; et

« Attendu que » les étudiants « ont démontré qu’à terme l’Université de Sudbury générerait 89,3 millions de dollars pour la région; et

« Attendu qu’il y aura 8 500 Franco-Ontarien(ne)s âgés entre 10 et 19 ans qui auraient l’option d’intégrer un établissement d’études supérieures en français » dans les « prochaines années;

« Nous, soussignés, pétition l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario :

« De garantir le financement nécessaire de 10 millions de dollars par année tel que demandé par l’Université de Sudbury pour assurer l’avenir de l’Université de Sudbury, un établissement d’enseignement supérieur fait pour, par et avec les Franco-Ontariens, et ce dès maintenant. »

Je supporte cette pétition. Je vais la signer et la donner à Clara pour qu’elle l’amène à la table des greffiers.

LABOUR LEGISLATION

MPP Jamie West: This petition is entitled “Pass Anti-Scab Labour Legislation.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the use of replacement workers undermines workers’ collective power, unnecessarily prolongs labour disputes, and removes the essential power that the withdrawal of labour is supposed to give workers to help end a dispute, that is, the ability to apply economic pressure;

“Whereas the use of scab labour contributes to higher-conflict picket lines, jeopardizes workplace safety, destabilizes normalized labour relations between workers and their employers and removes the employer incentive to negotiate and settle fair contracts; and

“Whereas strong and fair anti-scab legislation will help lead to shorter labour disputes, safer workplaces, and less hostile picket lines;

“Whereas similar legislation has been introduced in British Columbia and Quebec with no increases to the number of strike or lockout days;

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“Whereas Ontario had anti-scab legislation under an NDP government, that was unfortunately ripped away from workers by the Harris Conservatives;

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

“To prohibit employers from using replacement labour for the duration of any legal strike or lockout;

“To prohibit employers from using both external and internal replacement workers;

“To include significant financial penalties for employers who defy the anti-scab legislation; and

“To support Ontario’s workers and pass anti-scab labour legislation, like the Ontario NDP Bill 90, Anti-Scab Labour Act, 2023.”

I support this petition and will give it to page Owen to give to the table.

FIREARMS CONTROL

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: I have a petition.

“Ontario Should Say No to Federal Gun Confiscation.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the federal government is banning a large number of firearms legally owned by private citizens; and

“Whereas the federal government has introduced legislation for a buyback/confiscation of the banned firearms and wants provincial law enforcement agencies to execute said confiscation; and

“Whereas participating in this buyback/confiscation will take law enforcement personnel off the streets; and

“Whereas the governments of provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan and New Brunswick and the Yukon territory have said they won’t allow provincial resources to be used for the federal gun confiscation;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to inform the federal government that Ontario won’t provide funding for police agencies to execute the gun buyback/confiscation and take police off the streets to execute his gun control measures.”

I fully support this petition. I will affix my signature and send it to the Clerks’ table with page Gurkaram.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: This petition is titled “Clean Up Mimico Creek and Humber Creek” and it reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas an industrial fire at Brenntag Canada caused a chemical sludge to spill and spread rapidly into Mimico Creek and Humber Creek in Etobicoke;

“Whereas countless local wildlife have been killed or had their habitats contaminated as a result;

“Whereas local residents and visitors have been impacted and need clearer information;

“Whereas this dangerous sludge has begun spreading into Lake Ontario;

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

“That the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks must be transparent with the public about which chemicals were spilled and the risks they pose;

“That the minister provides Ontarians with a clear timeline and expectations for the cleanup operations;

“That the government provides emergency funding to the Toronto Wildlife Centre to ensure they can undertake effective and timely cleanup operations.”

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

EHLERS-DANLOS SYNDROME

MPP Jill Andrew: This petition is entitled, “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario: Help Fund Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome.

“Whereas the Canada Health Act requires provinces to fund medically necessary treatment for Canadians; and

“Whereas a growing number of people in Ontario suffering from Ehlers-Danlos syndrome (EDS) have to seek out-of-country treatment at their own expense because doctors in Ontario don’t have the knowledge or skills to understand EDS symptoms and perform the required delicate and complicated surgeries; and

“Whereas those EDS victims who can’t afford the expensive treatment outside of Ontario are forced to suffer a deteriorating existence and risk irreversible tissue and nerve damage; and

“Whereas EDS victims suffer severe dislocations, chronic pain, blackouts, nausea, migraines, lost vision, tremors, bowel and bladder issues, heart problems, mobility issues, digestive disorders, severe fatigue and many others resulting in little or very poor quality of life; and

“Whereas despite Ontario Ministry of Health claims that there are neurosurgeon doctors in Ontario, who can perform surgeries on EDS patients, when surgery is recommended, the Ontario referring physicians fail to identify any Ontario neurosurgeon willing or able to see and treat the patient;

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

“Require the Minister of Health to provide funding to hire at least one neurosurgeon who can and will perform neurosurgeries on EDS patients with equivalent or identical skills to the international EDS neurosurgeon specialists, including funding for a state-of-the-art operating room with diagnostic equipment for treatments for EDS patients; and meet the Canada Health Act’s requirement to afford equal access to medical treatment for patients, regardless of their ability to pay for out-of-country services.”

I affix my signature on this petition and hand it over to Danté.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Catherine Fife: This petition is entitled “Support Bill 21, the Till Death Do Us Part Act.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there are 38,000 people on the wait-list for long-term care; and

“Whereas the median wait time for a long-term-care bed has risen from 99 days in 2011-12 to 171 days in 2020-21; and

“Whereas according to Home Care Ontario, the cost of a hospital bed is \$842 a day, while the cost of a long-term-care bed is \$126 a day; and

“Whereas couples should have the right to live together as they age; and

“Whereas Ontario seniors have worked hard to build this province and deserve dignity in care; and

“Whereas Bill 21 amends the Residents’ Bill of Rights in the Fixing Long-Term Care Act to provide the resident with the right upon admission to continue to live with their spouse or partner;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Minister of Long-Term Care to pass Bill 21 and provide seniors with the right to live together as they age.”

Of course, it’s my pleasure to affix my signature and pass this petition along to Caesar.

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

MPP Lise Vaugeois: The petition is entitled “Let’s Fix the Northern Health Travel Grant.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas people in the north are not getting the same access to health care because of the high cost of travel and accommodations;

“Whereas by refusing to raise the Northern Health Travel Grant (NHTG) rates, the Ford government is putting a massive burden on northern Ontarians who are already struggling with inflation and price gouging;

“Whereas gas prices continue to rise above \$2 a litre in many parts of northern Ontario;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to strike a committee with a mandate to fix and improve the NHTG;

“This NHTG advisory committee would bring together health care providers in the north, as well as recipients of the ... grant to make recommendations to the Minister of Health that would improve access to health care in northern Ontario through reimbursement of travel costs.”

I agree with this petition, will affix my signature and hand it to Sachkaur.

LABOUR LEGISLATION

Mr. Wayne Gates: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the use of replacement workers undermines workers’ collective power, unnecessarily prolongs labour disputes, and removes the essential power that the withdrawal of labour is supposed to give workers to help end a dispute, that is, the ability to apply economic pressure;

“Whereas the use of scab labour contributes to higher-conflict picket lines, jeopardizes workplace safety, destabilizes normalized labour relations between workers and their employers and removes the employer incentive to negotiate and settle” a fair collective agreement; and

“Whereas strong and fair anti-scab legislation will help lead to shorter labour disputes, safer workplaces, and less hostile picket lines;

“Whereas similar legislation has been introduced in” BC “and Quebec with no increases to the number of strike or lockout days;

“Whereas Ontario had anti-scab legislation under an NDP government, that was unfortunately ripped away from workers by the Harris Conservatives;

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

“To prohibit employers from using replacement labour for the duration of any legal strike or lockout;

“To prohibit employers from using both external and internal replacement workers;

“To include significant financial penalties for employers who defy the anti-scab legislation; and

“To support Ontario’s workers and pass anti-scab labour legislation, like the Ontario NDP Bill 90, Anti-Scab Labour Act, 2023.”

I agree with the petition and I’ll sign my name.

OPPOSITION DAY

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I move the following motion: Whereas the government is under criminal investigation by the RCMP for their removal of lands from the greenbelt; and

Whereas the Auditor General is in the process of reviewing whether there has been mismanagement and abuse of ministerial zoning orders; and

Whereas there are outstanding questions about an inappropriate relationship between a former government minister and a land speculator, and incorrect information provided to the Integrity Commissioner about this relationship; and

Whereas there are outstanding questions about whether there was preferential treatment given to a foreign company to build a private spa on public land at Ontario Place; and;

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Whereas there are outstanding questions about whether there was preferential treatment given to a foreign company to build a private spa on public land at Ontario Place; and;

Whereas there are outstanding questions about preferential treatment given to government donors and personal friends of the Premier with respect to the building of Highway 413; and

Whereas there are outstanding questions about unqualified patronage appointments to public agencies, boards, and commissions; and

Whereas the Premier has admitted that he regularly uses his personal phone to conduct government business and those communications might be relevant to these inquiries;

Therefore the Legislative Assembly calls on the Premier to cease his access-to-information appeal and dis-

close the contents of his personal phone and email accounts to the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutila Karpoché): Ms. Stiles has moved opposition day motion number 3.

I return to the member.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, before I dig into the official opposition's motion today and why it has become so imperative that the Premier disclose the contents of his personal phone and email accounts to the Information and Privacy Commissioner, I would first like to talk about leadership and the responsibility that leaders have to rise in the most difficult of moments.

A few months ago, I had the great opportunity to be present at the swearing in of new Nishnawbe Aski Nation Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler, with thanks to my colleague MPP Mamakwa. Needless to say, it was very moving. With everything going on around us, whether it's at home here in Ontario and Canada or abroad, I've been thinking a lot about what leadership really means. Grand Chief Fiddler talked about the privilege of leadership, of listening, of always learning from your successes and your mistakes, and why he chose to step up during a very challenging time for the 49 nations that make up NAN.

Madam Speaker, Ontario is in a similarly challenging time. I have tried time and again to use my position and resources as the leader of the official opposition to bring to this government's attention how deeply people are struggling outside of the silos of Queen's Park, and my entire NDP caucus team does this every single day.

This moment we are living in demands that the people Ontarians elected, who were chosen to represent their voice in this place, rise and show true leadership—to put aside partisanship, greed, rigging the system to benefit insiders, and lead the way toward prosperity. I think this has just been asking for too much from this government. This order is way too tall for this Premier.

That's why time and again this government has shown flagrant disregard for the people of this province. Instead of using their power to deliver on meaningful solutions and relief for Ontarians at a time when they are financially squeezed, stressed, worried and weighed down by the high cost of housing and rent, mortgages, groceries, gas, the people of this province have been dealt a Premier and a government who are all too preoccupied with rigging the system to benefit their insider friends. And when they're not busy making backroom deals that don't look or smell right to anyone, they're all too busy lurching from scandal to scandal, losing cabinet ministers, spinning stories when they get caught. This is how this government is leading our province.

Ontario is in a huge period of transition. When the people of this province need the government and the people they have elected to step up and show capital-L leadership, what we have instead is a government that's under criminal investigation by the RCMP.

Speaker, let me lay down exactly why the official opposition NDP is calling on the Premier to cease his access-to-information appeal and disclose the contents of his personal phone and email accounts to the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

The first example I want to bring up is the greenbelt grab. This has become one of the biggest scandals in the history of this province—bigger even than the gas plant scandal that the Liberals served us during their time. What the government has been involved in for the past year, a scandal of their own making, has cost this province so much time, so much effort and, yes, taxpayers' money. Virtually everyone—experts, municipalities, First Nations, the government's own housing task force—told the Premier and his government that pursuing the greenbelt was bad policy, that there was enough land available to develop without having to touch the greenbelt or expand urban boundaries, that the housing crisis is just not about a lack of land. And yet, despite so many voices of opposition, this government single-mindedly, unilaterally pushed forward for the greenbelt to be opened up, and it was ostensibly to build luxury urban sprawl—away from built-up towns and cities, away from jobs and services, away from transit. It's hard not to wonder, who was this all to the benefit of? It was certainly not the people of this province.

In many ways, this government's actions have made the housing crisis worse because these real estate games that they've been playing, this land speculation, have only further helped home prices to go up and up and up, and Ontario is not a single step closer to building the homes we need in this province. In fact, housing starts are actually trending downwards in the province of Ontario.

The Premier can't explain why he ignored his own task force, why he ignored every single voice, and we are now nowhere closer to solving the housing crisis—again, a very real housing crisis in this province. More than five years in government, and they have nothing to show. Thousands in tax dollars have been wasted in the wrongful pursuit of parts of the province that were never meant for homes—thousands of dollars and people's time and effort that could have been meaningfully spent in following the recommendations of the government's own housing affordability task force. This government's scandal, this corruption, has set Ontario back years on building the homes that our province so desperately needs.

Speaker, we know these schemes go beyond the greenbelt. I've visited the greenbelt issue here, but I'm going to take it a bit beyond that. Even a criminal investigation of the dealings around the greenbelt hasn't stopped this government. The Premier continues to show us who he really is: someone who puts the interests of a very few of his well-connected insiders above everybody else, and everyone else in Ontario suffers because of it.

I want to talk for a minute about municipal zoning orders. The greenbelt grab made it clear that this government's schemes run way deeper than we first thought. The greenbelt was a very small glimpse into this government's troubling pattern of preferential treatment for well-connected land speculators. Ontarians are onside with the official opposition, and they have questions about how far and how deep this pattern extends to other decisions. Does it also include urban boundaries and this government's frequent use of MZOs? The government says they are now

going to reverse course on those urban boundary expansions that came out of nowhere, but let me be clear and, in the words of our critic and caucus chair, MPP Burch, tell you that is the very least the government could be doing, the absolute bare minimum. They finally find themselves without a choice, backed into a corner, because it's just such bad policy. It makes no sense—so why? What is the government's motivation?

Well, to Ontarians, I would say that the Ontario NDP are committed to answering those questions and bringing ethics and transparency back to Queen's Park.

Interjections.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you. That's why the Ontario NDP requested a review of the financial and environmental impacts of the government's amendments to municipal official plans—such as Hamilton, Ottawa, Waterloo, York, Peel, Niagara, Peterborough, Halton and Wellington—and ministerial zoning orders and ministerial orders under section 34.1 of the Planning Act. We made a similar value-for-money audit request into the greenbelt, which led, I will remind everybody, to a pretty explosive August 9 report that led to several high-profile resignations in this government's inner circle, including the former Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, when this scandal first came to light.

If I may, I'd like to take a moment to quote some of my colleagues here, Speaker—because they say it so well.

The member for Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas—I'm going to quote that member. “These forced urban boundaries are the other half of” the Premier's “greenbelt scheme that benefited wealthy land speculators. I call on” the Premier “to do the right thing and respect the decision of our Hamilton council and community by cancelling this plan.” Well said.

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The member for Ottawa West–Nepean said, “Ottawa's city council has asked the new housing minister to review” the Premier's “plan—but” the Premier “can't be bothered to listen.” But “the Ontario NDP are listening and are committed to getting to the bottom of what happened and reversing these forced expansions.” Well said.

The member for Waterloo, somebody I love to quote, says as follows—I'm going to quote her again: “It seems that” the Premier “doesn't trust our cities to do their jobs. We're already losing 319 acres of farmland a day in the province of Ontario, and” this government's “forced expansion will make it worse. After the backlash to his greenbelt scandal, he should think twice.” Strong words from the member from Waterloo.

Madam Speaker, I agree with every single word they said.

This government's forceful boundary expansions must be investigated. Who's benefiting? We know that the availability of land is not the issue. A few developers or land speculators out there right now might seem to be the luckiest ones in the whole world, getting an inside scoop on which land to buy right before it's being added to the urban boundary. Given the Auditor General's findings regarding the greenbelt, we think it's absolutely essential

that this case of lucky insiders cashing in is also investigated.

One of the properties that the province included in the urban boundary expansion was a 37-hectare farm at 1177 Watters Road, Ottawa, purchased in August 2021 for \$12.7 million. All five directors of 1177 Watters Developments Ltd., the company that owns the property at 1177 Watters Road, donated a combined \$12,315 to the Ontario Conservatives in 2021 and 2022. This property had been excluded by the city of Ottawa from its official plan due to the provincial government's own policy to protect valuable farmland, and still, this government chose to include it, raising even more questions.

I want to quote, again, my colleague the MPP for Ottawa West–Nepean right here: “Questions of integrity aside, this decision will cost Ottawa taxpayers for years. The price of building the necessary infrastructure to develop these lands could fall in the billions—a tall price to pay for development that Ottawa's city staff determined unnecessary in our fight against the housing crisis.”

These expansions are absolutely unacceptable. Municipalities and Ontarians are seriously concerned, and they want and deserve answers. So the official opposition was very pleased to see that the Auditor General will launch an audit into the way this government selects and approves MZOs in this province. I welcome the eventual report that is going to shine a light on this process.

Now I want to talk about the boys' trip to Las Vegas. I wish our evidence of this government schemes wasn't as long as it is, but here we are.

On October 18, we, the official opposition NDP, submitted a request to the Integrity Commissioner, asking him to investigate what exactly happened on that boys' trip to Las Vegas that, unfortunately, has become quite well known to the people of this province—a trip that the member for Mississauga East–Cooksville, the former Conservative Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery, took with two of the Premier's top advisers: his principal secretary and his housing policy director. And guess who was also along for the ride? A land speculator who stood to benefit from the greenbelt grab. The member's story on what happened in Las Vegas has changed many, many times. First, he told the Integrity Commissioner that he'd only been there once since he was elected—turns out, it was at least twice. But worse, this government wants us to believe that it was a total coincidence that one of their MPPs and two of the Premier's closest advisers all provided the wrong dates to the Integrity Commissioner and only corrected the record once media reported evidence to the contrary.

This was a trip apparently paid for entirely in cash. I've got to tell you, most people, including myself, didn't even know that you could still buy expensive airline tickets in cash anymore.

This whole Vegas trip raises so many questions. What were three high-ranking government members doing in Las Vegas with a land speculator? Why were they getting massages together? What else happened in Vegas? And if there's nothing to hide—this is the important piece—then

why did they provide inaccurate information to the Auditor General at that point?

From where I'm standing, none of this looks right, and we know that it doesn't look right to Ontarians either. We are determined, on this side of the House, to get people the answers and the truth that they deserve.

Once again, let me remind members across the aisle, people out there are very frustrated right now. They are frustrated with the growing cost of living and a government that isn't doing a thing about it—a government that has brought back a cash-for-access culture in this province. But our promise to the people of this province remains: Step by step, we're going to put an end to it.

I want to get to a fourth point, which is that while Ontarians, again, are struggling to put food on the table, this government has decided to prioritize building a luxury spa in downtown Toronto.

Madam Speaker, the official opposition has tried to bring this government's attention to what's happening outside Queen's Park several times now. Let me say it again: Ontarians are struggling. They're lining up at food banks. Even people with two or three jobs—we see this all the time—full-time jobs, are waiting in line at food banks. They're making meal choices depending on what they're able to get from the 50% section. The thing is that this is the new normal for so many people in this province.

In these very tough financial times, what we have is a Premier and a government who are busy trying to get a luxury spa built on public land in downtown Toronto. Why? The Premier has called his plan for Ontario Place a "bold vision." Those are his words, not mine. But the fact of the matter is there is absolutely nothing bold about this plan at all. It is not bold to build a luxury spa that will be used by almost nobody in this province. People are barely able to make rent in this province. Does this Premier really think that they are able to afford luxury massages? Maybe they do—I don't know. We'll just leave that to their cabinet ministers, to go get them in Las Vegas, maybe. His plans for Ontario Place just show how absolutely terrible and out of touch this government is from the people of this province. They are living in the twilight zone. The plan is arrogant, it ignores the interests of Ontarians, and it blatantly disrespects the taxpayer.

The official opposition is committed to bringing transparency back to Queen's Park. We're determined to uncover just how deep this government's corruption runs. That's why—just like we did with the greenbelt, just like we're doing to investigate who's benefiting from those MZOs that have proliferated under this government—the official opposition NDP has supported the call for the provincial Auditor General to conduct a "compliance investigation and value-for-money audit" of this government's plans for Ontario Place. The Auditor General is going to be very busy.

We also submitted a freedom-of-information request to Infrastructure Ontario to get answers for Ontarians—answers and transparency that this government has been denying the people of this province. I can tell you that the Ontario NDP, your official opposition, have obtained

documents from Infrastructure Ontario that contain mounting evidence of a rigged process for the Ontario Place redevelopment—a process that ultimately saw this public parkland handed over to Therme. These documents include a parking study from Infrastructure Ontario from January 2021 that mentions Therme and its half-billion-dollar parking garage nearly two years before the public even knew about it. That was also before an election, as I recall. They didn't talk about it there. It suggests, by the way, that the Premier gifted a publicly funded half-billion-dollar parking garage to Therme and hid it from the public for nearly two years. That's half a billion dollars of Ontarians' money being spent on an elite luxury spa while people were pleading for investment in our emergency rooms and our schools.

1350

The greenbelt looked bad from the start, and so does this one. This government is just putting its hands in one deal after another deal. If the Premier has nothing to hide, then why won't they give us more details on the rushed and secretive deal that this government has cut with Therme, a private European luxury spa company?

We the Ontario NDP are committed to making sure that this land is publicly accessible, not just today but in perpetuity.

We've learned through recent media reports—that's right, Speaker; through the media, but not this government—that the Minister of Infrastructure was informed by Carmine Nigro, the chair of Ontario Place Corp.—of course, we all know, a very good friend of the Premier and a big donor of the Conservative Party, who also got appointed to the head of LCBO. He was informing the government that the site had 2.8 million visitors in 2022 and turned a record profit. Why is it that the minister never shared these numbers with the public? Why did she instead choose to keep Ontarians in the dark and insist that Ontario Place is not enjoyed by anyone, when all the evidence shows the opposite?

The people of this province are being kept in the dark about what this deal is costing them, and let me tell you, that number keeps growing. Initial estimates put taxpayers on the hook for \$650 million for the parking garage and for site preparation. We are now seeing that that is a low estimate, as it appears that taxpayers are going to be on the hook for the upgraded water and sewer systems to fill this private luxury spa's pools and to treat their sewage water.

Commercial property in downtown Toronto sells for approximately \$200 per buildable square foot. With 700,000 square feet, that means the West Island at Ontario Place is worth—are you ready?—\$1.4 billion. Not only is this government handing over that prime public parkland to an Austrian luxury spa corporation for free, but they're also giving this corporation that other hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayer money that I talked about.

So, as the official opposition, we want this project and its secretive deal cancelled.

My next point is, like so many of this government's undertakings, whether we're talking about the greenbelt or Ontario Place, the resurrection of Highway 413, too, begs

the question of who is benefiting from this deal. It's not a deal that will do one bit to make Ontarians' life better or easier. Studies on Highway 413 show that it will only reduce travel time by up to 60 seconds. Then why did this government go to such immense lengths to speed up development, especially after the project was axed? Once again, we find ourselves asking the question: Who stands to benefit if it's built? Thanks to a deep investigation by the Toronto Star, we know the people who stand to benefit all have some relationship to the Conservative Party—either they've worked with the government previously or they're big donors to the party. The Star's investigation found that eight of Ontario's most powerful land developers owned thousands of acres of prime real estate near the proposed route of the controversial Highway 413. Four of the developers are connected to the Premier's government through party officials and former Conservative politicians—now acting, by the way, as registered lobbyists. What do you know?

According to the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, if built, Highway 413 will raze 2,000 acres of farmland, cut across 85 waterways, and pave nearly 400 acres of protected greenbelt land in Vaughan. It would also disrupt 220 wetlands and the habitats of 10 species at risk.

These are issues that Ontarians really care about. As I travel around the province, I am always struck by that. Ontarians care about this. They care about their food security. They care about the future of farming. They care about species at risk. They care about wetlands.

One of the developers, John Di Poce, was the head of the Ontario PC Party's fundraising arm for several years, and three other developers—worked on the member for York-Simcoe's 2018 Conservative leadership campaign, as a government lobbyist. As the former Minister of Transportation, that member played a key role in the decisions about the 413 highway.

Another of the developers, Michael DeGasperi, hosted the Premier and the education minister in a private luxury suite at the BB&T Center in Miami to watch a Florida Panthers NHL game in December 2018—coincidence?

MPP Jamie West: You can't make this up.

Ms. Marit Stiles: No, you can't make this up.

Most of the developers in the group are also prolific donors to the Conservative Party, contributing at least—at least; these are only the ones we've found—\$813,000 to support the party since 2014.

The government has handed down extraordinary directives in at least three instances since April 2020 to help fast-track development on lands owned by some of these very same major developers around that proposed highway.

Does any of this seem above board to you, Speaker?

Time and again, this government has revealed their real motives, their priorities, why they're in this important leadership role—not to improve the lives of the people of this province, but only to make their close friends very, very wealthy while they're in power, and that's it.

Speaker, I want to speak about another issue which I don't know if I've raised yet in this House since we

returned from the summer. This government's behaviour of preferential treatment extends to every corner. Let's talk about how this summer they rewarded themselves and their donors with fancy new titles. This one I find, personally—I am embarrassed for the government. I am embarrassed—

Interjection: I am embarrassed by them.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Yes, we are all embarrassed by them.

The Ontario NDP firmly believe that the government's handing out of these King's Counsel designations is absolutely nothing but a Conservative patronage scheme designed to reward their loyal insiders.

I'd like to quote our NDP critic for the Attorney General, the member for Toronto Centre:

“This government has caused absolute chaos in the courts”—I'm going to go back to this, because I want to say, this is just to provide some context of where things are at while this government is prioritizing these fancy titles. “This government has caused absolute chaos in the courts and it's affecting Ontarians' access to justice. It currently takes more than four or five years for a civil action to proceed from commencement to trial. We've even seen serious convictions tossed out due to delays.

“Justice delayed is justice denied.”

Those are the words from the member from Toronto Centre.

Instead of prioritizing fixes to the justice system, this government has decided their priority is to reward not only their donors with fancy new titles—no, that wasn't good enough—but they gave them to themselves. You can't make this stuff up.

Considering this absolutely embarrassing patronage scandal and the state of our courts, the official opposition is calling on each of the Conservative MPPs bestowed with the King's Counsel title to voluntarily return it. If they merit the title and it's important to them, Conservative MPPs can go through the same transparent process that you promised after this became such a ridiculous scandal.

1400

Once again, at a time when Ontarians were waiting up to 24 hours in the emergency room to see a doctor; when emergency rooms were closing down across this province because of a sheer shortage of nurses and health care staff, while this government fought them in court to suppress their wages; while the people of this province were waiting in line at food banks, this government was busy doling out meaningless patronage titles that hold no meaning or relevance to the everyday people of Ontario and do absolutely nothing to make their lives better. It is shameful, and the people of this province deserve so much better.

Finally, I think I have made it abundantly clear by now that this government is not acting in anyone's but their own sole interest. They are here to make their friends wealthier, and that seems to be their only mandate—we don't know, because we haven't seen the mandate letters, but we can guess. The more we learn about this government's preferential treatment for speculators and personal friends, the more the Premier appears to hide.

If the Premier has truly done nothing wrong and has nothing to hide from the people of this province, then why not disclose the records from the personal phone he himself admittedly uses regularly for government business? That's the crux of this motion. While he's at it, why not release his emails?

The government is under a cloud of suspicion. It is being investigated by the RCMP. People deserve to know who their Premier is talking to and what he's saying. By the way, I don't buy that it's just Mrs. Johnson calling about potholes. Can we just be real here for a minute? Come on. It's a matter of public interest. In fact, experts out there agree that it is, in fact, a matter of public record. The Auditor General noted this on page 68 of her Special Report on Changes to the Greenbelt. She noted that under the government's own Acceptable Use I&IT Guidelines—that's the name of the policy—it is not appropriate for staff to use personal accounts for government business because of "cyber security concerns." It also outlines that using non-government resources to conduct government business is unacceptable.

She goes on: "Communication between lobbyists and political staff using their personal email accounts also creates the perception of preferential access and treatment, and thereby an unfair advantage to those receiving unauthorized confidential information from political staff." A perception of preferential access and treatment; an unfair advantage—not acceptable for political staff, and certainly not acceptable for the Premier of this province, and he knows it.

The Auditor General also includes another very important point on this, again, on page 68 of her report. I'm going to read it here: "It is important to note that any communication between lobbyists and political staff about government business is still subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and is not excluded from this act even if the communication occurred on a personal email account."

Ministers of the crown and members of this government have it drilled into their heads when they take office that their emails, their phone calls, documents, must be on their government devices and that they are subject to freedom-of-information requests because they are a matter of public record. We know this is the case. This is designed to safeguard the public's right to know, and it's there to ensure the transparency of government decisions and government actions. And Ontario's Information and Privacy Commissioner agrees.

Back in 2019, a staff member in the Premier's office was caught using his personal email account to conduct government business—including, by the way, managing the Premier's interactions with lobbyists and police. He was using his personal account to work on the Premier's "off the books" souped-up van.

The Information and Privacy Commissioner discourages government officials from using personal emails to discuss government records, and in 2019 he had this to say: "The Premier's office is not exempt from the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act as it relates

to government business." That seems pretty clear. The commissioner said that they recommend "that government and political staff only use government devices and platforms."

In other words, you cannot evade access-to-information requests by using personal accounts for government business. News flash: They are a matter of public record. So if they are, in fact, a matter of public record and not exempt from the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, why not release them? Is it because this government is worried about what would be revealed? It seems the only logical explanation.

Interjection.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I know; it's shocking.

And yet, here's yet another chance for this government to step up and do the right thing. Will they finally show true leadership and pass this motion? Will the members of this government caucus stand up for transparency, for accountability, for integrity? Will they have the guts to stand up to the Premier and stop cowering before him?

Really, I've got to tell you, he's not so scary. We stand up to him every day; you should be able to as well.

It's time to stand up and do what your Premier won't: Bring things out into the open, shed some light, clear your good names and pass this motion.

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

MPP Stiles has moved opposition day motion number 3. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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

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

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. There will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1408 to 1418.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Members, please take your seats.

MPP Stiles has moved opposition day number 3. All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Andrew, Jill	Gates, Wayne	Rakocevic, Tom
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gélinas, France	Sattler, Peggy
Begum, Doly	Harden, Joel	Shamji, Adil
Blais, Stephen	Hazell, Andrea	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Bourgouin, Guy	Hsu, Ted	Stiles, Marit
Bowman, Stephanie	Kernaghan, Terence	Taylor, Monique
Burch, Jeff	Mamakwa, Sol	Vanthof, John
Fife, Catherine	Mantha, Michael	Vaugeois, Lise
Fraser, John	McCrimmon, Karen	West, Jamie
French, Jennifer K.	Pasma, Chandra	Wong-Tam, Kristyn

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Anand, Deepak	Hogarth, Christine	Rickford, Greg
Barnes, Patrice	Holland, Kevin	Riddell, Brian
Bouma, Will	Jones, Sylvia	Sabawy, Sheref

Byers, Rick	Jones, Trevor	Sandhu, Amarjot
Calandra, Paul	Jordan, John	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Kanapathi, Logan	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Cho, Stan	Kerzner, Michael S.	Saunderson, Brian
Coe, Lorne	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Scott, Laurie
Crawford, Stephen	Leardi, Anthony	Skelly, Donna
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Dave
Dowie, Andrew	Martin, Robin	Smith, Graydon
Downey, Doug	McCarthy, Todd J.	Smith, Laura
Dunlop, Jill	McGregor, Graham	Surma, Kinga
Flack, Rob	Mulrone, Caroline	Thompson, Lisa M.
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Oosterhoff, Sam	Wai, Daisy
Ghamari, Goldie	Pang, Billy	Williams, Charmaine A.
Gill, Parm	Pierre, Natalie	Yakabuski, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Pirie, George	
Harris, Mike	Rae, Matthew	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 30; the nays are 55.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): I declare the motion lost.

Motion negatived.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): I'm going to give members a minute to leave the chamber before resuming proceedings.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CONVENIENT CARE AT HOME ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 SUR LA PRESTATION COMMUNE DE SOINS À DOMICILE

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 23, 2023, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 135, An Act to amend the Connecting Care Act, 2019 with respect to home and community care services and health governance and to make related amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 135, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2019 pour des soins interconnectés en ce qui concerne les services de soins à domicile et en milieu communautaire et la gouvernance de la santé et apportant des modifications connexes à d'autres lois.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): The member from Ottawa Centre had the floor. I'm going to turn to him to resume debate.

Mr. Joel Harden: When I left off the debate, I was talking about the fact that we have a home care industry that works really well for private executives seeking to take money—like the billion dollars proposed by Bill 135—and channel it into investors and private profit. The studies that I'm familiar with have shown that we lose up to 30% of every dollar the province invests in home care in for-profit companies and the dividends they pay to shareholders and the fantastic salaries they lavish on their executives.

I was talking about Linda Knight at CarePartners, someone who has been in this building a lot, lobbying politicians—the \$140 million that her company enjoys in contracts.

I want to talk about this from the more important side of the home care spectrum, from the standpoint of personal support workers who work for Linda Knight and CarePartners. I want to quote Dyana Forshner-Juby, who spoke to a reporter three years ago. This is what she had to say, "I'm just sad that I've done [care work] for my whole career. My whole career has been taking care of people and trying to uphold a certain standard of care. And to come to this stage, so close to being able to retire and of course, I'm retiring with nothing. I got nothing. There's no pension plan. And I'm sitting here with a toothache because I don't have dental coverage, and I'm like, I take my whole life to take care of people. And nobody's taking care of me." That is home care, sadly, in the province of Ontario.

The folks on the front lines who are directly delivering the care to persons with disabilities and seniors are getting the shaft by Linda Knight. They're being told, "Come work for me and enjoy a career" in the glossy brochures. When Dyana shows up for work, she shows up without dental coverage, without a pension plan and without travel being covered, and she goes from client to client. In what province do we treat care workers this way? I'll tell you what kind of province, Speaker: It's the kind of province that over the last two decades has seen Conservative and Liberal governments take this critical industry, home care, and hand it over as a gift to the private sector, hand it over as a gift to Linda Knight and CarePartners.

The people who suffer when we line the profits of home care executives are the workers like Dyana. They are also the patients—patients like Mike McLean. Mike McLean, who, back home, had to receive—wait for it—palliative care not from the Bayshore worker assigned to him as he tried to die with dignity in his own home, but he had to receive palliative care from his daughter, who happens to be a nurse, because more often than not, PSWs working for Bayshore were double-booked and they couldn't show up.

Can you imagine, Speaker, a situation in which the McLean family does what they're supposed to do, gets on the roster, files for at-home PSW care for palliative care—a very difficult situation that I'm sure some of us in this House have had to deal with—people aren't showing up, and the daughter of the family, who happens to have medical expertise, is filling the gap? Filling the gap—why? I submit, for our debate on Bill 135, she's filling the gap so Bayshore can make profits at the expense of the Ontario public, at the expense of the Ontario taxpayer.

It is shameful that we aren't—I can't even remember; I'm looking at my colleagues here for some help. How many times have we debated home care in different pieces of legislation in the last five years? At least three or four. Not once has the government proposed taking home care out of the for-profit hands of Bayshore, of ParaMed, of CarePartners so that the McLean family wouldn't have to rely on their daughter to administer palliative care to her father in his last days.

Speaker, I was at the social policy committee in the last iteration of Parliament, and the CEO of Bayshore deputed

to the committee. I asked that gentleman, “Can we see all of the contracts that you currently have with the Ministry of Health? Can we scrutinize how much Bayshore spends on administrative costs, on management compensation, dividends to shareholders? The Auditor General has seen some of those reports, and she has told us that we’re losing up to 30% of every dollar Ontario is investing in home care in frivolous administrative costs, executive compensation and dividends to shareholders.” That gentleman told me in the course of that meeting, “Oh, MPP Harden, yes, I would be happy to give you some of those records.” We followed up once, we followed up twice, we followed up three times, through the Chair of the committee, to Bayshore. We heard the sound of one hand clapping—not a single document released, not a single effort made on behalf of this discredited corporation, in my opinion. And I am talking about the leadership here. I’m not talking about the hard-working PSWs and community care nurses who are doing their best to provide the care that we deserve here in Ontario. I’m talking about the greedy, pocket-stuffing executives we have been subsidizing in this province for far too long.

Frankly, I am embarrassed that we are debating home care again in this province and there’s no proposal from the government to do what great countries like the country of Denmark have done, which is to take home care out of private, for-profit companies and to make sure that there is an immediate care coordinator available to every single family in that country; that they can sign folks up; that people are never double-booked as PSWs or care attendants; that the people providing the care have decent pensions, have decent benefits; that being a personal support worker, being a community nurse, is a desirable occupation.

Do you know, Speaker, I was saying to the member for Niagara Falls before we started debate—I don’t think he would mind me sharing this with the House—that I had a private conversation with the former mayor of Ottawa, Jim Watson. We were at one of the many events the city runs to celebrate achievers in our community, like the city of Ottawa awards. And every time the mayor does this, they bring out the colour guard, the marching band for the police and the fire and the paramedics. It’s always a really wonderful bagpiping ceremony. It adds a certain air of professionalism. I said to the mayor at the time, given what we had been through in the pandemic, “There should be a personal support worker colour guard. They should be as honourable and celebrated a profession as those other first responders”—because every personal support worker I know in the city of Ottawa, that’s how they think of themselves often. They are first responders. They are the ones who look in on people. They sometime find people who have fallen and hurt themselves. They often go into homes in dangerous situations, where people have behaviours—they may be living with dementia. They may not want to lash out and hurt a PSW—but it might just be a function of the job.

I would love to see the province of Ontario devote a lot of attention to not just talking about all the awful situations

in which PSW members have found themselves, because that scares people out of the occupation, but I would like to see us promote it, to say that a PSW, a community nurse—these are critical occupations, and we need people going into colleges, we need people going into universities, we need people choosing that as their path.

1430

A government that I, personally, would love to be part of is a government that did exactly what the country of Denmark has done: create a systematic home care system, funded by the public, accountable to the public—all disclosures are made available to the public—where the workers were proud of their work, and seniors and persons with disabilities got to live in their homes for as long as they chose. They got to choose the moment, if they wanted to, when they would require 24/7 frailty care—high-acuity care. But that’s not the situation right now. We have situations in which persons with disabilities and seniors are choosing to go into private, often for-profit long-term care with shoddy records—not on the workers’ side, but again, on the management side, and how money is squandered for private profit. They are choosing to be admitted into these institutions because they can’t afford home care or there’s no home care available.

I’m going to round this out by saying this again to my friends in government: If we are serious about home care—because I think it actually is one of the critical industries of our province—we have to stop treating it like the neglected cousin of health care.

We have to go on a mass recruiting drive in high schools right now to say, “Being a personal support worker and a community nurse is an honourable profession. You are going to be giving people dignity. You’re going to help people get out in their community.”

We have to partner with culturally appropriate care, so if a senior is coming from a particular community—the Chinese community, Muslim community, Jewish community, whatever that community may be—they have home care that is culturally appropriate for them.

And finally, please, can we stop lining the pockets of Linda Knight, of Bayshore, of CarePartners, of these companies that somehow managed to seize control of the home care industry, from the time that we had an NDP government in this province and we cared about that?

We have to retille the doors—retille the doors. Inside the house will be all the people who want to care for our loved ones, people who need the care—and the public prepared to pay for it. People on the outside, if we have our way, will be all the gougers, the profiteers, the people who should have never been there in the first place.

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

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: Thank you to the member opposite for your remarks.

I do have a point I want to speak to. Ontario Health, as you may or you may not know, launched the Let’s Go Home program across all 15 OHTs in the west region, and this is to support the avoidance of ALC. This program coordinates seamless discharge from the hospital and

emergency department diversion for those who are at greatest risk. Since this program launched, in fact, in the fourth quarter, more than 1,000 people have been supported. So my question to the member is, can you see how programs such as this are being supported through Bill 135 and would be welcomed in your community?

Mr. Joel Harden: I take what my friend has said to heart. I think people do want to live at home. They want to be at home. They don't want to be in hospitals. A number of persons with disabilities and seniors I've spoken to don't want to be admitted into long-term care. That is a personal choice they've made.

But what you've said and what the government has introduced to date has not done anything about the fact that we are losing 30% on the dollar of every—there's a billion dollars contemplated with this bill, as I understand it. We are losing a third of every dollar we're spending because we're lining the pockets of the for-profit companies. So all the good work that you're going to do to take those thousand people and bring them back home into the community—if they can't get a care worker to show up on time, if those care workers are double-booked, if their travel isn't covered, if they're not making decent salaries, if they have no pensions and no benefits, then I believe your bill is set up to fail.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm happy to ask a question of my colleague on his thoughtful remarks.

I've got an email here from Cindy, a PSW in my community. Some of what she said is, "I make top wage of 22.50 after 10 years and we are struggling. With inflation we are having to go to food banks or get second jobs.... We actually hold people's lives in our hands and enable people to live and die in their own homes but can't afford to eat or live in our own home.... We deserve to be treated with respect for the jobs we do because without us how" do "your parents, grandparents or even yourselves live alone if they need care. Something needs to be done now!! We need a living wage to continue in this profession and to be treated with respect period."

She also flagged for me that she sees that there is "a waiting list for PSW service in home care in our area of 491 people. That is only going to get worse as we are treated as second-class health care workers."

I was wondering, where in this bill is there something for me to share with Cindy that is positive about her circumstances and her future in this profession?

Mr. Joel Harden: First of all, thank you, Cindy, for the work you do. But thanks are not enough.

What I'm going to do just to punctuate the point for my friend from Oshawa is to say this: Can you imagine an Ontario where there was an agreed-upon minimum standard of compensation for all PSWs? The government, through Ontario Health, could do it right now. That is what Denmark does. There is one standard of pay, one standard of benefits, one standard of travel being covered. Can you imagine that?

I can tell you, for any lawyer working for this government right now—you better believe there's a minimum standard that they expect to be paid. Any deputy minister? Oh, there's a minimum standard of what they expect to be paid. And they work hard. Why can't we do the same for PSWs? Why do we have to watch them be gouged by greedy companies that have been ripping off the public purse for too long? That, I believe, my friend, is what's hurting Cindy, and we need a government that's going to stop that and stop it right now.

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

Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: The member spoke about culturally competent care, so I just want to remind the member that this is the government that, for the first time in the history of Ontario, is building culturally sensitive homes. We have the Canadian Coptic Centre developing a home in Mississauga. We have the Muslim Welfare Centre, who are building a Muslim long-term-care home—Guru Nanak Long-Term Care Centre in Brampton. And I could go on probably for an hour listing all the culturally sensitive homes that we are building.

Further to that, we have trained over 16,000 PSWs through the accelerated program—that we have invested in their education. So PSWs are a respected part of our health care system.

Why does the member opposite keep voting no for all the investments that we are making into long-term care, into home care and into educating more PSWs in our health care system?

Mr. Joel Harden: I thank my friend from Mississauga for that question.

What I would say to all of those homes that are being built that are culturally appropriate homes—I want the workers who are going to work in those buildings to know that they have the right to join a union. We had SEIU Healthcare in this building not long ago. They should sign up to SEIU Healthcare, because right now there's no government that's willing to guarantee a standard of living and wages.

The member is a nurse, and I respect the work that she has done in the province of Ontario. The member benefited from that work done by the associations representing her profession.

I want to see PSWs valued more and paid more. That is the missing piece, honestly. Back to my friend: We can build homes. Homes and beds are great infrastructure. But what makes them come alive are the people who work in them. So that is the thing we need a government to do. And if this government isn't prepared to do it, believe me, in 2026, there will be a government prepared to pass laws to ensure PSWs are paid appropriately, their travel is covered, they have pensions and benefits just like all of us in this building.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thanks to the member for your comments on this home care bill.

He is quite right; we've been debating the model of home care in the province of Ontario since I came here 11

years ago. The Liberals, before the Conservatives, were dead set on regarding home care as a business.

There is a commercial quality to the services. It is not an extension of the health care system. And the people who are working within that broken home care system are continually disenfranchised, and they are mostly women. And they are mostly—in Waterloo region and across the province—racialized women. And they do not have a voice, even when they're fighting for more hours so that their clients can get a bath or be fed with some dignity, or so that they can just sit in a moment of compassion with their senior.

My question to the member is, what do you think is actually driving another piece of legislation which doesn't solve the home care problem in the province of Ontario?

Mr. Joel Harden: I liken it to a situation in which you have a recurring problem but you decide not to look at it. You keep thinking that you can make the machine work, you can soldier on, you can push it forward. But you know that there's something fundamentally wrong with valuing private, for-profit investors, management compensation and executive benefits—Mercedes in driveways of operators—over people delivering the care on the front line, as the member from Waterloo has just said; the hard-working women, often racialized women, who are making it happen. But I can tell you, if this government is not prepared to do it, the people of Ontario have an opportunity to choose a team that will lead this province, that will put those hard-working women first, that will say to Linda Knight, Bayshore, ParaMed that the time is up—you're no longer going to run this industry into the ground, and we're going to make sure we have something we're proud of.

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

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: To the member opposite: You did mention earlier, and you are correct—our government is investing \$1 billion over three years to expand and improve home care services. This is going to be across the province. That's \$100 million for community service. I will note that was part of our 2022 budget, which the member opposite voted against.

Also, budget 2023 accelerated investments to bring home care funding in 2023-24 up to \$569 million, which, again, the member opposite voted against.

My question to the member opposite: Can you see how making the delivery system more streamlined, which this bill is going to do, will assist in delivering programs?

Mr. Joel Harden: I say distinctly to my friend over there that I will vote against any bill this government brings before the House that puts the interests of Care-Partners executives, Bayshore executives and ParaMed executives over the interest of seniors and workers. They are all going to be voted against, because we know on this side who we work for. We don't work for the executives who come into this building and put on open bar receptions and try to cozy up to politicians so they can line their pockets. We work for the seniors, we work for the

persons with disabilities, we work for the PSWs, and we won't apologize for it. That's who we are. That's who the NDP is.

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

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: Thank you to the Minister of Health for introducing this legislation and for leading our government's work to improve home and community care.

Home care services in Ontario address the needs of people of all ages, including children and youth with medically complex needs, the frail elderly and other seniors, people with physical disabilities, people with chronic diseases, and people who require health care services on a short- or long-term basis to live safely in their home and community.

With an aging population that is living longer, home and community care is going to be an increasingly important component of our health care system. It is critical that our system has the most effective structure, policies and approaches in place to ensure Ontarians have access to better and more convenient home and community care.

As outlined by the Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, the gradual transition of home care into Ontario health teams is a fundamental part of the work to improve the home care experience for patients and families, and improve how providers collaborate to provide care.

Alors que notre gouvernement continue de moderniser les services de soins à domicile et en milieu communautaire, y compris la planification de la transition des services de soins à domicile vers les équipes santé Ontario, nous avons écouté attentivement et avons travaillé en étroite collaboration avec les organismes prestataires de services, le personnel des services de soins à domicile, les patients et leurs familles, ainsi qu'avec d'autres partenaires du système afin de garantir l'existence d'une base solide de soin plus étroitement intégrée aux autres composantes du système de santé et qui est fondée sur le principe central des soins axés sur le patient. Une partie essentielle du travail continu en vue d'une approche moderne et centrée sur le patient des services de soins à domicile est la continuité des soins aux patients tout au long de ce processus. Il est essentiel d'éviter toute interruption pour les patients et leurs familles.

Ontario health teams are already transforming how people access care in their communities. And the province has engaged in thoughtful planning and preparation to ensure stable home care delivery is maintained while improvements to care are made and the gradual transition to Ontario health teams takes place—because the only thing better than having care close to home is having care in your home.

The proposed Convenient Care at Home Act is the latest legislation designed to improve home care. Significant progress has already been made to modernize the home care sector to achieve better patient outcomes through system integration and help ensure the sustainability of our publicly funded health care system for future generations.

In 2020, our government introduced the Connecting People to Home and Community Care Act, which established a new framework for home and community care under the Connecting Care Act. This new legislative framework, complete with the accompanying home and community care regulations, took effect in 2022. This legislative framework was an initial step designed to facilitate the delivery of home care by Ontario health teams and enable new models of care, including changes to care coordination.

The Connecting People to Home and Community Care Act ushered in a new, flexible and modern framework for home and community care. This new framework enables the provision of home care services by Ontario health teams, as well as more flexible, efficient and responsive care coordination and service delivery by contracted service provider organizations.

Le nouveau cadre législatif et réglementaire des soins à domicile et en milieu communautaire établi par la loi sur les soins de santé a jeté les bases de service de soins à domicile intégrés, réactifs et innovants—qui sera maintenant davantage développé par la proposition de la Loi sur la prestation commode de soins à domicile.

L'une des premières étapes en vertu de la législation proposée consisterait à regrouper les 14 organismes de soutien aux soins à domicile en une seule organisation, appelée Santé à domicile Ontario, qui serait chargée de coordonner l'ensemble des services de soins à domicile dans la province au moyen des équipes santé Ontario, relevant de Santé Ontario. Santé à domicile Ontario serait un guichet unique qui fournirait aux personnes des plans de soins à domicile faciles à comprendre, leur permettant de connaître les soins qu'elles recevront et quand, avant de rentrer chez elles depuis l'hôpital.

La création d'une organisation unique permettrait de relever les défis systématiques liés à la prestation des soins à domicile. Au lieu de politiques et de processus différents, ou de systèmes de technologie de l'information distincts, une organisation unique pourrait réduire les fonctions et l'administration redondantes et soutiendrait l'efficacité du système et permettrait de généraliser les meilleures pratiques.

Ontario Health would fund and oversee both the new organization and Ontario health teams, helping to ensure strategic direction is aligned. Ontario Health would also be able to align funding and oversight of home and community care with other health system organizations and sectors.

Ontario Health has significant experience with integrating our health care system. Ontario Health has already integrated 22 former health agencies and organizations, such as Cancer Care Ontario, eHealth Ontario, Health Quality Ontario and others into a single organization, bringing together the expertise and experience of these former agencies to support a more connected, high-quality health care system. Ontario Health has worked with the Ministry of Health to achieve more than \$300 million in ongoing, annualized savings to reinvest back into direct patient care.

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Ontario Health is also implementing the province's Digital First for Health Strategy, which provides employment for and administrative support of the Office of the Patient Ombudsman; supports the Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence, which is helping to implement the Roadmap to Wellness, the province's mental health and addictions strategy; and continues to support the government's supply chain centralization efforts.

Ontario Health is enabling supply chain excellence across the health sector, including supporting home care by making significant progress in leading new provincial procurements for home care medical equipment and supplies and related services which are critical to delivering patient care. For years, there has been significant variation across the province, and this was identified as an opportunity for improvement.

Ontario Health and the Home and Community Care Support Services organizations have worked closely together to plan for implementation of these new contracts for medical equipment and supplies. This work will bring significant value for Ontario, improve the provider experience, and simplify and standardize key processes that focus on patient care.

Ontario Health has also enhanced the provincial formulary for advanced wound care products and developed the first-ever provincial formulary for home care products, which will be made available to all patients irrespective of where they are in the province, improving the quality and equity of patient care.

Le ministère a écouté attentivement et a travaillé en étroite collaboration avec les organismes prestataires de services, le personnel des soins à domicile et en milieu communautaire et d'autres partenaires du système, ainsi que les patients et leurs familles, et continuera à collaborer avec les partenaires du système tout au long de ce processus.

Au fur et à mesure de la transition vers les équipes santé Ontario, les patients et les aidants continueront à accéder aux services de soins à domicile et en milieu communautaire de la même manière et par l'intermédiaire des mêmes contacts qu'ils ont appris à connaître et en qui ils ont confiance.

Speaker, Ontario's Home and Community Care Support Services organizations, which would transition to a single agency under Ontario Health, have also been engaging in collaborative efforts to support more connected home care, including supporting Ontario health teams. For example, Home and Community Care Support Services Central East is supporting the Durham Ontario Health Team leading project, which will deliver an integrated system of care for the residents of the downtown Oshawa neighbourhood. The residents of this area have higher rates of chronic conditions and a higher utilization of emergency, community and social services when compared to the regional average. Through the downtown Oshawa neighbourhood integrated model of care, patients will be able to access care from various providers on-site at a mid-rise apartment building that is

also home to a significant amount of seniors facing socio-economic challenges.

Providers on-site will include care coordinators, community paramedicine providers, Lakeridge Health mental health services, Community Care Durham, and contracted service provider organizations. Care may also be accessed through self-referrals and primary care referrals, and the patient pathway is based on the principle of “no wrong door” to services.

In Central East, a multidisciplinary mobile emergency diversion team has also been established, composed of rapid response nurses, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, nurse practitioners and community paramedicine providers. The team assists with immediate patient care needs such as IV medication administration, wound care, and home safety assessments until contracted home care services can be secured. This temporary and urgent hands-on care is allowing patients to be discharged from the hospital, and it also prevents a return trip to the emergency department. The multidisciplinary mobile emergency diversion team was first piloted in the Peterborough area and helped to divert 92 emergency department visits within 120 days.

In North Simcoe Muskoka, a stroke care coordinator role has been developed to improve the transition from hospital to home and provide ongoing care for people who have experienced a stroke. Based out of the Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre and supported by the Central East Stroke Network, the program has helped increase the number of stroke patients admitted to the home and community care support services stroke pathway and supported admissions to the pathway from all area hospitals. Benefits include warm hand-offs of patients who are transitioned from hospital to the community, a reduction in hospital readmissions for stroke patients, and improved integration between home care and outpatient programs.

In Central West, the hospital-to-home direct nursing service supports palliative patients through regular check-ins and symptom monitoring from a dedicated team of nurses. These nurses assess patients and can provide appropriate patient care, which helps to avoid an emergency or acute-care intervention. The hospital-to-home nurse completes weekly clinical assessments of the patient, their symptoms and the situation in the home, and provides education and resources to support the patient and their family so the patient can remain safely in their own home.

Home and Community Care Support Services South West has also implemented palliative care initiatives such as providing specialized education in palliative care, which is enabling patients to have access to nurses with more specialized skills in palliative care and supporting more patient- and family-centred end-of-life care in their place of choice: their home.

To address gaps in home care, the ministry engages extensively with key partners to expand more equitable access to services. The ministry provides up to \$14.8 million in funding directly to First Nations communities to deliver front-line home care services such as nursing,

personal support and therapy. An additional investment of \$4.2 million is provided to urban Indigenous organizations to deliver culturally appropriate home care to Indigenous people in urban areas throughout Ontario.

To be more inclusive of all Indigenous patients, communities and organizations, a new category of Indigenous services has been added to the suite of services that comprise home and community care. Traditional healing services and Indigenous cultural support services fall under this category of services. These broader, more inclusive services will support more equitable access to culturally appropriate services for all Indigenous patients.

Already, new models of home care delivery are being implemented to enable a more integrated experience for clients and their families. The Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario is now responsible for home care delivery, building stronger links between home care and the people who care for children at the hospital. Through a model of care called @home, a number of hospitals and health care partners are working together to provide eligible patients and their families with an integrated approach to transitioning patients home from the hospital.

Most patients enrolled in @home programs have been seniors at significant risk for re-hospitalization. Patients receive care for up to 16 weeks, after which many transition to home and community care support services for ongoing health care and personal supports. Care coordinators from home and community care support services central have already supported the safe transition of hundreds of patients through recently established at-home programs from five hospitals: Humber River, Mackenzie Health, Markham-Stouffville, North York General and Southlake.

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Once patients are safely at home, home care providers continue to work together to meet the individual patient’s needs, often with one or more services such as nursing, personal support, restorative and rehabilitation services, and medical equipment and supplies. This connected patient-centred model of care has optimized patient recovery while also helping to support hospital capacity by ensuring the hospital beds are available for those who need them the most.

On top of all of this, last year we announced over \$1 billion to expand access to home care services over the next three years, which will benefit nearly 700,000 families who rely on home care by expanding home care services while recruiting and training more home care workers. In addition, the government announced an additional \$548.5 million investment in home care over three years that is in addition to the \$1-billion investment previously mentioned. This will help prevent unnecessary hospital and long-term-care admissions and shorten hospital stays. Most importantly, it will provide Ontarians with the choice to stay in their home longer, close to loved ones.

We are seeing more and more examples of the benefits of connected and integrated care, including through the province’s community paramedicine initiative, where pro-

viders who are trained as paramedics work alongside home care and primary care providers to give people living with chronic health conditions additional support to live at home more independently. Speaker, home care is an important connector in our health care system, enabling—

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

Questions?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'm going to be referencing the latest report that came out from Seniors for Social Action Ontario; it just came out on October 2. I want thank Margaret Coleman, Marcia Smellie and Rick Chambers for sharing that. This is an organization that surveyed seniors about home care.

What they found was shocking, Madam Speaker. They found that, in Ontario, six times as much funding has been invested in institutional care versus home care. That's a problem. If you want to address home care then you have to resource it. They also found out that because of this funding inequity, seniors feel that they're being forced into institutions instead of home care due to a lack of choice. They also said that the underfunding and under-resourcing by the provincial government, as well as the clumsy hand-over responsibilities from CCACs and LHINs to the HCCSS, has proven to be very problematic.

Bill 135 does not solve these core issues. How is the government going to address the crucial need for reinvestment for a stronger home care system in Ontario?

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. The whole "why" and purpose of this bill is that we know that the demand for home care is increasing, and that's due to our demographic changes as well as an aging population. We also have limited capacity in long-term-care homes, and the COVID-19 pandemic has really exacerbated these capacity pressures.

Now, why this bill is so important: Currently, there are 14 ministry-funded HCCSS organizations. What this bill will do is amalgamate these 14 into a single entity to gain more efficiencies.

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

Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: I'm so proud to be part of the government that, since day one, when we were elected back in 2018, started the hard work that takes vision and leadership to transform our health care system. We started with The People's Health Care Act, Bill 74, in 2019, and I don't think there's been a single session that we have not debated and passed a health care-related bill. Probably if we were to check the record, the opposition voted no to every single one of our health care bills. Talk is cheap and real action and real leadership need bills to be debated and put forward.

I know that the member has done some incredible work in putting forward a private member's bill talking to seniors to recognize June as Seniors Month in Ontario. What have the seniors told us in those tables that you've had? What do they want to see from this government on home care?

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: Thank you to the member for the question. Yes, what they are looking for,

as I've said, is they want to be able to stay in their home longer. How do we help them do that? We ensure that we can have a strong home care system that is centrally managed, no longer 14 different HCCSS. There's going to be one centrally managed at-home service organization. What they are going to be able to expect through that is that things will be streamlined. There will be the same process. All seniors will get the same service, no matter if they live in Ottawa, Windsor, in my riding of Newmarket–Aurora or in Mississauga. They will be able to access the same home care services.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I listened intently to the member opposite. I was glad that she was talking about some challenges that we have in Durham region and glad that the government, with seven members in this House that connect to Durham region—I'm glad we're having conversations about that.

I will share with her something that a PSW named Cindy wrote to me. She said a number of things about what it's like to not be appropriately compensated, the challenges. I've read that on the record before, but I want to highlight this part: She said, "I saw that there's a waiting list for PSW service in home care in our area of 491 people. That is only going to get worse as we are treated as second-class health care workers." I will note that this number is likely to have increased based on when she sent this letter.

My question is, if this is someone who is working the front lines, loves her job, wants to be respected, does not see that from this government and is concerned about the growing waiting lists for PSW service, how does this bill in front of us address that? What would this member say to folks like Cindy doing the work, doing the care and left—

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

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: Thank you to the member for the question. What this bill is going to offer for PSWs as well as our patients is a more consistent approach across the province. This is critical, specifically from a labour relations perspective. The Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act is meant to provide a neutral framework for addressing labour relations issues related to the amalgamation, restructuring and integration of certain broader sector entities. As a result, the Ministry of Health is proposing amendments to the PSLRTA to ensure that this act applies to the amalgamation of the HCCSS organizations.

This will be necessary in order to support the amalgamation of the 26 bargaining units currently under HCCSS and create a labour management structure that can support the transition of care coordination to the OHTs.

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

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I want to congratulate the member from Newmarket–Aurora for obviously having excellent mastery of the subject matter. My question for

her is, in the riding of Essex sometimes we get telephone calls from people who are trying to set up home care for their family members and sometimes they find it difficult to navigate the system. So we have to help them navigate the system. My question to the member from Newmarket–Aurora is, how is this proposed legislation and Ontario Health atHome going to make it easier for people in Essex county and across the province of Ontario to access the home care services they need?

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: Thank you to the member from—

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Essex.

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: —Essex, yes, thank you very much. I appreciated going to the member for Essex's riding to meet with a local family health team there and speak with the providers. It was very informative.

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To your question, the member from Essex, in fact, the Ontario health at-home care coordinators are going to be playing a great part of the connection. This is going to help improve this entire system. They will work within the Ontario health teams. They're going to work in other front-line settings. They will also work alongside the care providers, the doctors, the nurses and directly with patients while they're in the hospital and working with the families so that they can ensure that they set up settings to facilitate a seamless transition from the hospital to the home.

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

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch to the member from Newmarket–Aurora for the presentation. I know that in the north when you travel down to a hospital and then you have to get antibiotics intravenously, sometimes, you know, some of the patients are there away from home because you have to fly in to access that service. You're there for six weeks, eight weeks, to get the home care—because there's no home care in the north. You have to get the IV service or the antibiotics intravenously on a daily basis and you have to be away from home. I have a hard time on how this legislation will help those people so they can be at home to get home care.

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. As I spoke to in my speech, part of what we're doing is to ensure that we have that consistency across the province.

Right now, there has been 14 separate different home care community providers. What's going to happen now is that this will all be connected under one central base with one back office system. That's going to be critical to this entire process, as well as the OHTs, to ensure that home care service is provided and is consistent across this province.

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

M. Guy Bourgouin: Ça me fait toujours plaisir de me lever pour parler du projet de loi 135, the Convenient Care at Home Act.

I like the question my colleague just asked, because this bill will not address the lack of service. It does nothing. In fact, you heard the colleague across say, "Oh, it's to make sure it unifies the services." They have no idea of the lack of services First Nations—or the north compared to the south.

En français, on dit : « Prends une paye puis sors. » Venez voir, dans le Nord. Venez faire un tour. Come and take a trip. Go up north. You will see what type of service we have or First Nations have. There's such a lack of service this bill will never address.

I'll give you just one example. And I'm going off cue, but we had in Moose Factory, I think my colleague will know—it used to be called Billy Bayou. It was in Moose Factory. It was for young adults and family members that had autism that also had other issues. That was a place they could bring their family members to have their services. There's no other services up north. Don't forget, that was the only service that these families had where they could have some relief and bring their family members to that little centre. It was a small, small building. It was a small house, but there was all kinds of services they were offering to give relief to the families.

Do you know what this government did? They cut all financing. They killed it. Do you know where one of the individuals—he was a young adult. Now, he's waiting at home to go to long-term care, and I think there's—I can't remember how many long-term-care beds—six or seven, very little. It takes how many years? Somebody has to die. But he's a young adult. He shouldn't be going to long-term care. So you cancel Billy Bayou, which was a service to the family—the little help they were getting, and you killed it.

Et pour ça, vous vous pétez les bretelles. Vous dites, hé, on va unifier les services.

Il n'y aura pas d'unification des services dans le Nord. Il n'y en aura pas, parce que les services n'existent pas. The services don't exist. My colleague from Kiiwetinoong has said it many times in this House. I've said it many times in this House. So yes, if you want to talk services, come up north. You'll get a true reality check, a real reality check, because the services don't exist. If you leave and go up Highway 11 and go up north—ha. C'est une vraie farce. Et quand on vous entend parler, vous dites que tout va bien en Ontario. "Everything is good in Ontario." Ça va bien. Tu sais la chanson « Ça va bien! »? Sacrifice. Réveillez-vous, puisque la réalité n'est pas là.

Il y a du monde qui est obligé—je vais te donner un autre exemple. J'en ai parlé dans la période de questions. Il y a un monsieur qui est obligé de—comment ça s'appelle? Il était à l'hôpital dans le sud de l'Ontario. Il a été obligé d'avoir un transfert. He asked for a transfer because he found out he was having cancer, and because of the lack of service we have for flying with Ornge—he knows he's going to die, but because the service is so bad, because of the transfer just to get the treatments, he said no to the treatment. He wants to go home and die and refused the treatments that may make him live. Because

the services are so terrible, he says, “I won’t take the services because I want to see my family more.”

That’s the reality. They go up to Kingston. That’s where: Kingston. They live for months in hotel rooms, just because they have diabetes. The services are not there.

So now we’re talking “convenient care at home.” Well, you don’t have the same definition of convenient care at home as what we see up north.

Le projet de loi 135—ce n’est pas compliqué—c’est une extension de la privatisation du système de santé. On va arrêter de se dire de belles affaires, là. Ils peuvent vous monter des beaux bateaux, ils peuvent vous dire toutes sortes de belles affaires de comment le système va bien; s’il va bien dans le Sud, il ne va pas bien dans le Nord.

La réalité c’est que, quand Mike Harris était au pouvoir—il était l’ancien premier ministre d’un gouvernement conservateur—il avait dit qu’on va privatiser le système, que ça va mettre un système beaucoup plus vite, beaucoup plus efficace et beaucoup moins cher. Beaucoup moins cher? Il y a un autre dicton qu’on dit en français : « Allume, légume. » Tu sais ce que je veux dire? Ce n’est pas vrai. Notre système nous coûte plus cher qu’il ne nous a jamais coûté. Puis je vais vous donner un exemple.

Dans un foyer de soins de longue durée chez nous, dans ma région, une « PSW » qui est syndiquée—bonjour, Mr. Speaker. Ça va bien?

Le Président suppléant (M. Lorne Coe): Bonjour.

M. Guy Bourgouin: Je ne t’ai pas oublié, là.

Une « PSW » qui est syndiquée se fait payer 22 piastres et 59—\$22.59 for a PSW in a unionized environment. This is from a long-term care in my riding. An RN? I’ll give you, first of all, for an agency worker: \$65. Cheaper? You don’t have the same definition of “cheaper” as me. It’s a lot higher.

An RPN, unionized: \$22.59. Again, it’s in the same long-term care. An RPN in that same long-term care, because it’s an agency: \$95. They’re using two agencies; one is \$95 and one is \$85, a \$10 difference, for all the numbers I’m giving—but not for the unionized. But it’s cheaper? Ce n’est pas la même définition que pour moi.

RNs: on parle de 115 \$ et 125 \$ pour l’autre agence. So \$115 and \$125 for different agencies in the same place, and then RNs in the unionized environment, \$34.34. Where is the definition of cheaper when it came to private care?

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Now, these homes and hospitals are saying, “We’re having a hard time paying for this.” They’re having a hard time making payroll. And I heard the minister today speak in question period: “Well, we can’t eliminate them; they’re being a great service.” Yes, at a higher cost. So what does that mean when we go to convenient care? How much is that going to cost?

Let me bring you to another reality up at home: You’re talking about a shortage of manpower down south? Come up north. PSWs are being paid peanuts. They have to travel—and you have no understanding of the distance we travel. So the same PSWs—and I’m going off track—

MPP Jamie West: They’re measured by hours.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Yes. So these PSWs have to travel—let’s say there’s a patient in Smooth Rock, so she’ll go to Smooth Rock Falls, and then she has to go to Mattice, and then she has to come back to another community. But because she’s paid so much an hour, she has to cut down, because the distance is too far to do on the same day, on the same shift. Guess what happens? This patient who has been diagnosed—and they say, “No, you’re entitled to these services. You’re entitled to have two baths a week, so you’re going to have an hour of service a day.” Guess what happens to an hour a day? It’s down to 15 minutes.

I’ll talk to you more about this example. It’s right here—and this is one couple in Mattice. They used to receive one hour twice per week. Now they are only getting 15 minutes per visit. This is not enough time to even bathe the patient, let alone help with their medication and tend to their other needs. There is no time for conversation. It feels like they don’t matter and they are just there for the money. The wife is also aging and can no longer do any heavy lifting and is limited in how she can bend and move. She would be willing to pay for more care, but there’s nobody available.

Nobody available—well, do you think privatizing the system will get more services up north? I’ve got a reality: They will go where the money is, where the people are, the population. And who pays for this? It will be, again, my constituents, my colleagues’ constituents, everybody up north’s constituents. That’s the reality we’re facing.

People are coming in. They’re finding out what the work is. They leave faster than they came in. These non-profit organizations—by the way, their budget has been frozen for years—would love to pay more, would love to try to retain them, would love to give them benefits.

And let’s not forget what you guys have done: Remember Bill 124? Oh, you really helped us there. Comme ils disent en bon français : « un bon coup de pied dans le derrière », monsieur le Président. Et je pèse mes paroles là-dessus. Je n’use pas les vrais termes qu’on use en français. Il y a un terme qu’on use en français qui n’est peut-être pas trop parlementaire. Je peux vous dire que je pèse mes paroles quand je dis ça, là.

Mais la réalité est vraie : vous avez tué notre système. Vous avez tué notre système dans le Nord. Il faut de l’aide dans le Nord parce qu’on a de la misère à avoir—on peut les développer, mais ils ne viendront pas travailler chez nous. Ils vont aller travailler pour les agences à 115 \$ ou à 55 \$ ou 65 \$, pas à 20-quelque-chose piastres de l’heure. Puis qu’ils sont obligés d’aller rencontrer un patient et de dire : « écoute, monsieur, aujourd’hui tu as une heure—je ne peux pas te donner ton bain parce que je n’ai que 15 minutes à te donner »? Pas fort.

Quand je vous entends dire qu’on va uniformiser notre système—“we’ll make this system a lot better. We will make sure that everybody gets their service”—every time, you bring all the service and want to consolidate, like you said, do you know who pays the price? Northern Ontario pays the price, because then small communities compete

with bigger cities, and guess who loses? Small communities, every time. And then you go north on that, even north, you pay encore more. They pay even more.

Fait que, quand je vous entends dire que vous allez uniformiser et que vous allez privatiser et que : « non, on ne privatise pas; on veut améliorer le système »—on l'a déjà vu ce bateau-là passer. On la connaît, la toune. Et la toune, c'est que l'on sait qu'il va y avoir une perte de services encore et que ça va nous coûter plus cher. Ce n'est pas moi qui le dit, là; c'est votre système.

On a eu des fermetures. On a passé proche à des fermetures. Il y a des hôpitaux—écoute, l'hôpital de par chez nous à Smooth Rock Falls a de la misère à faire le « payroll » pour quelques mois. Trois ou quatre semaines passées, vous avez été obligés de leur faire une avance jusqu'au mois de janvier. Ça ne règle pas le problème. Au mois de janvier, le problème va être là encore. Ils ont un million-quelque-chose de déficit à cause des agences que vous avez créées, la privatisation, et vous dites : « Mautadit, c'est beau cette affaire-là. Ça marche comme dans l'eau—comme dans l'eau bénite. » Ça fonctionne tellement bien que nos hôpitaux ont de la misère à y arriver maintenant, qu'on a de la misère à faire le « payroll » et qu'on a vu, en Ontario, des urgences fermées. Puis, on dit que le système va bien—qu'il va bien, le système. Je ne sais pas sur quelle planète vous vivez ou dans quelle province vous vivez. Chez nous, ce n'est pas de même que ça marche.

J'ai un de mes collègues qui vous a parlé du Danemark. Il y a des systèmes qui existent. On n'a pas besoin de réinventer la roue, on n'a qu'à aller voir où ça fonctionne. À la place de donner des millions de dollars dans les poches de vos amis, donnez-les donc aux personnes qui en ont besoin.

Vous nous accusez de voter contre vos projets de loi—parce qu'on sait lire, nous autres aussi. We know how to read. You accuse us of not voting for those—because we know where the money is going to go, because we lived it with the Harris government. On l'a vécu. On la connaît, la toune. On le sait. We know what's going to happen, and we'll always vote against it, because the people who need the services—this is where the money should go, not lining the pockets of your friends and these big corporations. That's not where it should go. And I don't think this is what you were elected for either, but you do it anyways.

Je vais vous donner un autre exemple. I'll give you another example. His name was Miguel. Now, it was autism, but I'll just use that example. Their family had to move to Cochrane to get some services, even though they weren't sure—because he was a young adult and he finished school. But the mother was burnt-out. The family was burnt-out. They were even thinking—when the family is at that point that they're thinking of bringing their son to the emergency just because they can't handle it anymore, the system is failing. The system is failing, and this bill will not fix that.

Convenient care? You have to realize that, back home, there is no subsidized housing; there is no housing for

people like Miguel or somebody that needs help. There are hardly any services. Some of them are overbooked; it takes three years to get in. That's the reality we live day to day. And I will repeat again, if you go up north, it's even worse. It's even worse. So on Highway 11, if we are having that much difficulty, I can just imagine other communities up north, how they're struggling.

But they had to move. They sold their house, moved to Cochrane, got a job—or tried to get a job—because they were hoping to get better service for their son.

What's wrong with this picture? What's wrong with this picture is that we should put the money where it's needed, not the other way around. But it seems that it falls on deaf ears.

I said that in the north, families are already struggling as our demands are high, yet our access to proper service is continuously plummeting. Just before I go on again, think about this travel grant: Because we have so much land, we've asked how many times just to re-evaluate, because that doesn't even reflect the services. Do you think these people that need the services to go see their doctors and everything shouldn't be compensated for that, because we don't have the doctors and we don't have the services? I've got a community up north of 5,000 people; 3,500 community members don't have a family doctor. That's our lives up north. Some communities are worse off.

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But to get back to this, they cannot retain workers due to poor wages, and I've spoken about that. These people went through some hard times during COVID. PSWs went through some hard times. They were there. They were giving services to the people who needed them. And yet, we didn't want to move on Bill 124, even though we know it's unconstitutional. Ce n'est pas constitutionnel. On sait que le projet de loi 124 est anticonstitutionnel, mais on continue à dépenser l'argent des contribuables. Pourquoi, eux autres? « Parce qu'on est mieux que toutes les autres décisions qui sont prises à la cour suprême de l'Ontario. On a eu des décisions de la Cour suprême, mais nous autres, on est mieux, on connaît mieux, on sait mieux. On est un gouvernement pour le monde »—for the people. Bill 124 is not for the people. Ce n'est pas quand tu gèles leurs salaires—dans les temps les plus difficiles, quand on passait une pandémie, qu'on vient geler leurs salaires.

Lack of replacement workers in the north: Families have been completely skipped for their weekly home visit as agencies could not find a replacement when a worker called in sick or could not make it on time. Can you imagine only getting one, two baths per week, and your worker does not show up? That means no bath for the entire week. I don't know what you feel, but how would you feel if you could not get your bath? Comment vous vous sentiriez, vous autres? Un à deux bains par semaine, ce n'est pas gros, là. Mais ça, c'est une réalité continue. J'en ai parlé en Chambre drettes dans mes débuts quand j'ai été élu. Pour une, ça faisait un mois qu'elle n'avait pas eu un bain à cause du manque de service. Se faire laver à la mitaine, comme qu'on dit en français—washing with a handcloth is not a bath.

Then, we're saying, "No, we're going to unify the system. It works so good there right now." We're hearing this government speak: "Everything is good." Not back home. I'm not inventing these things; these are my constituents' stories. You think unifying is going to fix this? It won't, because too much money is going—exactly what my colleague has spoken to—to put more money in these big, big corporations, your friends. And that's okay? It's not okay. This is why we keep voting against your bills—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lorne Coe): Thank you very much for your presentation.

We're now under questions and responses.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I listened intently to the member's statement. I do understand the geography of northern Ontario. My aunt was actually a PSW in northern Ontario. She has now since retired. I do thank all the PSWs for their work out there. It's not an easy job, and we appreciate when they look after our loved ones.

Sometimes travelling in southern Ontario is even more difficult than travelling in northern Ontario, so you have to think of PSWs in the downtown area trying to get around. As we know, sometimes it takes us a long time to get from here to the Gardiner. But in the past, opposition, you really have voted against our government's proposals to make health care delivery quicker, more reliable for our constituents. It doesn't matter where you live.

I'm just wondering if the member can explain why your party thinks it's better that their constituents should have to wait to access health care that they need.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: I thank your aunt in northern Ontario for her services, because I think we have to thank her for the work she has done. But tell me, if you want to have success, why can't we pay the PSWs right now that we have that are unionized? Instead of paying these agencies \$55 or \$65 an hour, why don't we pay these PSWs the same rate? Because it seems to be okay from your party. And I heard the minister today say, "No, it's okay. We need them." So why don't you pay these instead? Remove Bill 124 and pay these PSWs the rate that you're paying right now, because it seems to be okay, fine with your government, but yet you're fighting this all the way, even though it's « anticonstitutionnel »—I always have difficulty saying that word in English. But why don't you do that?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Lorne Coe): Question, please?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I want to thank my colleague for a very impassioned speech about home care and about the disparity of services that northern Ontario is experiencing. You can always tell when he's really passionate, because his voice goes up three or four octaves, and it makes it entertaining for some of us.

However, the question on this voting thing—I'm going to go there—because once again, the government has brought forward a piece of legislation which does not solve the problem. They always say to us, "Why are you not voting with us?" We're going to vote against legislation which does not address the needs of the people of

this province, and that includes northern Ontario, to my colleague.

So when my colleague finds out that seniors who are not getting dignity in home care are now looking to medical assistance in dying—they're looking to the MAID system, because they have no dignity—what can he tell the House about the level of desperation, based on this bill?

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Thank you for the question. I'll try not to raise my voice, but it just goes up. It goes automatically. C'est, comment on dirait, la frustration—like they say, the frustration of my constituents you're hearing through my voice.

This is why we vote against a bill like this. People say, "Well, what's wrong with this bill?" When you start also explaining what's wrong with this bill, they see it, because it's opening more to privatization, and we know up north how privatization hurt us.

I gave you the numbers. When we talk in my constituency about the price we're paying for agencies, and hospitals almost closing because they can't make payroll—we need our hospitals, because we have very few hospitals up north and we have distances to travel, not to mention the highways we have to go through and drive through in the winter, and accidents. The list goes on.

But when you explain it to them, they understand, because they live it on a daily basis. So yes, we'll vote against bills that are not addressing the problem, because that's my job: to represent my constituents.

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

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: Merci, madame la Présidente, et merci au député de votre discours.

M^{me} Deborah Simon, qui est la directrice générale de l'Association ontarienne de soutien communautaire, a dit : « Les soins à domicile et en milieu communautaire jouent un rôle essentiel dans l'avenir d'un solide système de santé ontarien. Les modifications législatives qui renforcent ce service vital seront importantes pour favoriser les soins au bénéficiaire dans un système de santé intégré. »

Alors, je dois vous poser la question, monsieur le député : est-ce que nous pouvons compter sur votre soutien de l'Association ontarienne de soutien communautaire et votre soutien de ce projet de loi?

M. Guy Bourgouin: Écoute, j'apprécie ta question en français, premièrement, mais à nulle part dans ce projet de loi est-ce que ça parle des services en français non plus. Ce qu'on sait dans la province de l'Ontario : il y a une grosse pénurie de services en français. Je suis certain que tu ne peux pas le dénier parce qu'on le vit constamment. On n'a qu'à penser à, encore, que vous venez d'annoncer notre université que vous avez annulée—je ne comprends pas la justification.

Mais quand ça vient à des services de santé, un des gros dossiers de l'AFO, madame la Présidente, c'est le manque de services en santé francophones. En étant critique francophone, puis qu'on voit qu'ils n'adressent pas ces services en français dans un projet de loi qui dit « Convenient Care at Home »—what about the French part of it? Because right now, in this bill, it doesn't address

nothing about services in French, which are lacking a lot in Ontario.

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

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to thank the member from Mushkegowuk—James Bay for his excellent presentation. I think every time this government turns their eye to a different part of health care, the province of Ontario shudders—workers and the people receiving the care—while people who make a profit off of health care in Ontario are very excited about it.

Before the pandemic, this government cut inspections to long-term care. During the pandemic, they passed legislation to protect the worst of the worst long-term-care operators, and they even passed legislation to protect themselves from legal liability—not something that generally happens when people are honest and upright.

They claim to respect seniors, and they claim to respect health care workers. My question to the member: Is this bill truly about care when there's no way to prevent companies from overcharging and there are no consequences for providers who fail to meet service agreements?

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: The answer is no.

Because you touched on long-term care, in 2022, during the election, back home they announced a big announcement: 68 new beds and an improvement of another 60—Extendicare; it's a private home. And we need these beds. You have to realize, back home, there is more than three years' waiting time to get into long-term care. And guess what happened when they eliminated the ALC beds? This was like a pressure relief valve. For our people that needed a bed but there was none available, they could use an ALC bed. Then you passed a law eliminating ALC beds. Well, you've just created an even bigger problem. But you announced this in 2022. Eighteen months later—and these beds were welcomed. I was the first one to thank the government on this. But 18 months later, not even breaking ground. Zero. Zéro de fait. C'est radio-silence de votre gouvernement—radio silence from your government on these 18 months.

I passed a letter to the minister. I hope he's got an answer for me shortly.

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

Mr. Adil Shamji: My question is for the member from Mushkegowuk—James Bay. I spent many years working in your community—Moose Factory, Moosonee and all of those James Bay communities. I struggle to understand how home care services will improve by centralizing them in a single monolithic institution. Does that make any sense to you?

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Again, no.

I'm happy, because you went and you saw it and you lived it. That's why I keep telling this government, go up there and go see for yourself. Because once you've been there, your life will change. You won't have the excuse of saying that you didn't know. It's a reality that all of you should get to see, because the lack of service—even “lack

of service” is not the right word; absence of service. My colleague has spoken to it, but the reality is, we need to do better in this government.

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

Mr. Stephen Blais: I'll be sharing my time this afternoon with the member from Don Valley East.

It's an honour to speak to Bill 135, the Convenient Care at Home Act, today. When I first saw the bill being introduced, I thought to myself, “Finally. The government is going to do something about the state of home care in Ontario.” But, Madam Speaker, I don't think this bill does what is needed.

Most Ontarians, and certainly those that I speak to, would like to stay at home as long as possible as they age or as medical conditions arise. There's comfort in being at home where you raised your family, where you live your life. As the scourge of illness or disease and the impacts of Father Time affect us, sometimes taking our dignity, it's essential to hold on to everything that we can, to maintain that sense of normalcy, to maintain our dignity as much as possible. Home care services are essential for those who may need assistance with their daily activities: bathing, dressing, eating, using the washroom, taking medications, amongst many other things. It should be and must be a top priority for our government to ensure that Ontarians can stay in their own home as long as possible and can do so with dignity and respect while receiving world-class health care.

However, as a result of this government's underfunding of health care, home care services in Ontario are facing a crisis. They're underfunded, understaffed and, as our population ages, they are overburdened. The government has failed to address the issues head-on—including by imposing Bill 124, which continues to add to Ontario's health care retention issues.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to share the story of a constituent of mine, Martine. Martine is impacted by the chronic underfunding of home care services each and every day and is not being treated with the dignity and respect she deserves from this government.

Here's Martine's story. Martine is an active 50-year-old. She's smart, articulate and funny. She enjoys movies and concerts, good food, great company, and sometimes just a quiet night in. She has a family life, friends, interests and hobbies, just like the rest of us. She has much to contribute to her peers, her family and the community at large. The only difference is that she is not able-bodied. Martine requires a wheelchair and help with daily living tasks. Throughout the day, Martine receives home care services from two separate home care agencies. But as a result of the continued underfunding, mismanagement and lack of prioritization, Martine routinely goes without the home care services she needs—services she is entitled to. Martine needs help getting in and out of bed. Like any vibrant adult, she has an active social life. She enjoys going out with friends, hosting dinner parties, and all of the other social activities we take for granted.

Routinely, Martine is told that she needs to make a choice: continue to be a vibrant, active adult or receive

home care. How is this choice given to Martine? By being told she can only receive service with help to bed at 8 o'clock, or sometimes as early as 5 o'clock in the afternoon. Imagine being told that you have to go to bed at 8 o'clock every night and cannot get out of bed again the next morning until 7:30 or 8 o'clock. Imagine the indignity of being told that you cannot enjoy the same life we all enjoy because you're being put to bed early. Imagine what it would be like to have plans with friends and family and to get that last-minute call saying the PSW is no longer able to put you to bed when you get home—or how you're going to go to work on time in the morning when the last-minute call comes in that morning saying there's no one to get you out of bed.

Madam Speaker, I look around the room. There are many with us at the moment who, I would guess, are 50 years or perhaps a little bit older right now.

How many of you can go 12 or 13 hours without using the washroom? That's what Martine faces routinely.

She is incredibly lucky. She has support from family and loved ones who, at the last minute, can drop everything to help her in these situations. But it shouldn't come to this. Not everyone has that support network.

Martine and other Ontarians should have the confidence in our health care system to provide the care they need at home and to live healthy and dignified lives.

I had the pleasure of meeting Martine at her home a few weeks ago, and I was amazed at the changes she has made to her home to adapt to her illness and how her illness will progress. As a result of her physical condition, every day is already a challenge, but she works hard to navigate life with a positive mentality. After spending some time with Martine, hearing her story, I don't think I could be that positive. Surely we need to help Martine maintain her dignity and live a productive and fruitful life, and that includes a social life. I wish she was here to be able to explain to all of you the things that she has had to go through and how she has had to adapt her life to this medical condition.

Tragically, Martine's story and situation is not unique. Too many Ontarians who require home care services are in similar circumstances.

Bill 135 is nothing but a cosmetic change that will not address the root causes of the crisis in home care. It's putting lipstick on a pig. It doesn't provide a pathway for more funding to hire more PSWs and nurses. It won't improve conditions to help retain the workers we already have. It won't enhance accountability or transparency in the delivery of home care services or ensure public oversight. In fact, it creates a one-size-fits-all solution to a province that the Premier himself has said many times isn't a one-size-fits-all province. It doesn't make any sense.

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Bill 135 could make things worse by opening the door for more privatization and profiteering in the home care sector.

We need a different vision for home care in Ontario, one that is based on ensuring dignity—dignity for our friends, our family and our neighbours.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutila Karpoche): The member from Don Valley East.

Mr. Adil Shamji: It's always a pleasure to rise in the House to discuss the issues that worry my constituents in Don Valley East and across Ontario, especially as it relates to something that is as important to all of us as health care.

On this occasion, I'm speaking about Bill 135, the amendments to the Connecting Care Act, which aim to provide some material changes to home and community care services here within Ontario.

My remarks will focus on five things: (1) the status of home and community care here in Ontario; (2) how this poor status came about; (3) some of the recommendations from stakeholders; (4) how Bill 135 doesn't meet any of those recommendations; and finally, (5) exactly what is wrong with Bill 135.

Let's begin with the status of home care here in Ontario. There's no way to mince words here. It is a dysfunctional system marked by severe staffing shortages, high staffing turnover, frequent changes to nurses and personal support workers, and a remarkable—not in a complimentary way—amount of rationing of care, with less time spent per patient visit.

In order to illustrate this, I'd like to share the story of one of my constituents, and this constituent happens to be my constituency assistant. His father is bed-bound. His boss—me—is a member of provincial Parliament. His boss is a family and emergency doctor. Despite all of those levers, we still cannot get my constituency assistant's father the home care services he desires—that he requires. This is a situation that has arisen the moment this government got its grips on home care.

How did this come about? Well, it boils down to a few things. We have a demoralized workforce that is burnt-out from the pandemic, that has moral injury from rationing care. They've been rationing care because this government hasn't been able to retain health care workers—doesn't have a strategy to retain health care workers.

We also have a problem with the proliferation of for-profit, private health care, again, impacting the retention of health care workers; imposing wage restriction and wage suppression to squeeze out profits; offering part-time work instead of full-time work so as not to pay out benefits; delivering lower quality, rushed care—public pain for private gain.

Then, of course, we have systemic underfunding, marked by Bill 124, leading to the proliferation of for-profit nursing agencies and staffing agencies. We have a government—this government—that isn't even willing to accept money on the table from the federal government, \$1.7 billion to raise wages for PSWs. They will not do it because they do not respect health care workers. And, of course, we have consistent and repeated overpromising—commitments of \$1 billion given in the 2022 budget for home care, of which only about \$150 million was released, and then in this year's budget, a promise to deliver \$569 million, although the last time the FAO reported on this government's spending, they had already underspent by \$1.2 billion.

So this is how we got there—ignorance, a lack of competence by the current government. We also already have a road map from many stakeholders—stakeholders such as the Ontario Community Support Association, which has said that a mere 10% wage increase would result in an extra almost 1,300 PSWs, would retain one in five PSWs who are about to leave. They said we need to achieve wage parity between home care, community care, long-term care and the acute-care sector. And they have said—and I agree—that we need to pay workers for all the hours worked, not just the ones in direct patient care.

This year, we've seen an increase to 76% of organizations saying that the health human resource crisis and inflationary pressures have forced them to either cut services or increase wait-lists.

Bill 135 ignores all of those things. Rather than doing any of those things, it puts the proverbial head in the sand. It ignores the root causes of our problems. It's the equivalent of throwing darts at a dartboard in the hope that something sticks. Every single one of the fundamental problems plaguing our home care system is completely ignored. It does this because it actually—well, if anything, it makes things worse. It demolishes the existing home care architecture, eliminates 14 local health integration networks and replaces them with a half-baked, poorly conceived monolithic alternative that hasn't been fully thought out. It proposes to provide home and community care services to patients, proposes to deliver operational supports, proposes to provide information to the public about health and social services and proposes to provide placement management services. Those are lines on a piece of paper. How it supposes to deliver those things? No idea. I met with ministry officials and asked them to tell me concretely what it will do and was met with nothing but business power words like “integration” and “connected care.” What does that mean? Why does this monolithic institution think that it can perform these tasks better than local health integration networks? Never clarified. It might, but if history is a judge, that is an unlikely proposition.

We saw, when Ontario health teams were proposed, they were delivered in a patchy, lumbering rollout that took place in an entirely ad hoc manner, lacking in consistency. Now we actually see that was an attempt to decentralize services.

This is an attempt to centralize services. We can't even figure out a consistent pattern on the direction we want our health care system to move in. And the point is to centralize services with an expectation that—I don't really know.

What I can tell you is that the last time we faced a process like this was when we tried centralizing autism intake services under the umbrella of AccessOAP. That has subsequently proved to be an entire disaster, with skyrocketing wait times and a ballooning list of kids exceeding 60,000.

I could go on and on and on, but I don't have the time.

When I asked the ministry for an example of a single concrete problem that this organization would solve, there was no answer.

So pick your metaphor for this bill—it's centralizing at one level, decentralizing on another; lipstick on a pig, as my colleague said; shuffling the deck chairs on the Titanic; a tale of sound and fury signifying nothing. I don't know. It centralizes powers and the minister, who can just reward her friends, as we've seen with the greenbelt—

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

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: My question will be to the member from Orléans.

I have to tell you, my mind is a bit boggled right now. Under the previous Liberal government, you were cutting nurses, you were leaving our hospitals lacking in infrastructure, in disarray.

These 14 separate home care organizations—it's in fact the home care organizations that have been asking this government to make a change, to make it centralized. It's this government that has been investing \$80 billion this year in this health care system. So I have to say, instead of navigating 14 separate home care organizations and waiting for a call at home, now this at-home program will be a one-stop shop that provides people with easy access—

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

Response?

Mr. Stephen Blais: After five years of government, the government should actually take responsibility for the things the government is or is not doing, and one of those things is the provision of adequately funded home care.

The government member says that their administrative reorganization of home care will somehow make things easier. Well, I don't recall the administration reorganization of how licence plates are done making anything easier in Ontario—or, frankly, any of the other administrative changes this government has tried to make. In fact, I think we're seeing lots of problems with the administrative changes they made around the sale of cannabis in our communities. So if they think administrative changes are going to provide more home care, they need to spend less time here at Queen's Park and more time out in their communities talking to people.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: This is something that's very important, because our senior population is going to exponentially get bigger over the next 10 to 20 to 30 years, and home care is an essential piece. We know that when we speak to people who need care, their first preference—especially a senior wants to remain at home.

Under the Conservative government—home care used to be not-for-profit, and then a Mike Harris government changed all that and privatized it. And the Liberals, quite frankly, weren't any better. They continued that privatization.

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Would this member advocate and promote and actually make policy changes so that home care is not-for-profit and there's not a profit extrapolated out of caring for vulnerable seniors at home and many other people at

home? Would you support a not-for-profit policy in home care in this bill?

Mr. Stephen Blais: In fact, in the last election, we proposed a dramatic change to home care that would ensure that it was not-for-profit and based on a more centred-in-community-based model. I think if there is government funding available, that funding should go to helping people directly by hiring PSWs, nurses, other support workers—the things that they need. If you have a profit centre involved in that, obviously, those people are skimming off the top and there's less money available to support people where they live.

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

Mr. Matthew Rae: My question is to the member from Don Valley East. I know that member was not here under the previous Liberal government, and I wasn't here in this place either. I find it rich, coming from the member opposite, talking about everything our government is doing for health care, when they did for 15 years—absolutely nothing. When they tried to reform home care, it was a bullet point in a press release.

Speaker, as was mentioned in the news release, the goal of this legislation is to create integrated service organizations with home care—the Ontario health teams, which have been well-received by stakeholders in the province.

I want to provide one more quote from a website, and it's a bullet point: "Promote coordinated care by establishing an integrated model for continuity of care." That bullet point is from Bonnie Crombie's leadership website—who this member endorsed.

Will he support this bill?

Mr. Adil Shamji: Well, that's a bullet point on a leadership commitment; that is not a full-out bill.

When I asked ministry officials to explain how they were going to deliver on those business power words, they couldn't tell me.

And while we're talking about the things that have or not been done, let's talk about what this government has accomplished. It has accomplished 2.2 million Ontarians without a family doctor. It has accomplished a backlog of medical services that exceeds 22 million. It has accomplished rampant ER closures in almost every community across this province, including in the Minister of Health's own riding. That's not a track record to be proud of.

Madam Speaker, through you: I would invite members of the government to tell me exactly how they propose to actually deliver integrated connected care, apart from just listing bullet points and finding things off websites.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: I always like to stand up here and tell the truth, and I'm not really sticking up for the Liberals, but the reality is, under Mike Harris, you laid off 6,000 nurses—let's be clear on that—and you closed multiple hospitals. So let's at least be accurate and tell the truth on that particular issue.

I see the labour minister is here, so I'm going to ask this question to the Liberal, hoping that he hears me. This bill

does not guarantee that the Ontario Health atHome workers will be unionized or full-time positions with real wages, real benefits and pensions. So my question to the Liberal—either one; it doesn't matter who answers: Do you believe that people who work in home care should be unionized, should have full-time jobs, should be respected, should have pensions and belong to a union? If you want to improve wages, you need to join a union in this province.

Mr. Adil Shamji: I fully believe that the workers who are in home and community care deserve the protections in whichever form they see fit. They deserve to have full-time work instead of just getting offered piecemeal part-time jobs. They deserve to be paid properly, and they deserve to be paid well. They do not deserve to be subjected to Bill 124. I think I will just leave it at that. They deserve the full protections of whatever they choose.

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

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I would like to direct my question to the member from Don Valley East. I understand that he's a doctor, and his question was about what this government did to extend primary care, or how many millions of Ontarians don't have doctors—and I would like to put the question back to him. I am one victim of this. My wife took seven years outside the province to be able to get her licence here. She is a doctor. It took her 10-plus years to be a doctor in Ontario. When we connected to the Minister of Health at the time, who was a Liberal, he said, "We can't do anything. We don't have the spots." Not only that, all the IMGs across the country had 24 spots—to get an internship in this country, during the Liberals' time.

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

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: So my question to you: If you are comparing us to you, can you tell us what the Liberals did in about 13 years of work?

Mr. Adil Shamji: I actually think that question is best directed to the Minister of Health. Under the previous Liberal government, we developed a practice ready assessment program. It was ready to go in 2018. And then, the first thing that happened when this Premier and the past Minister of Health came into power was, that program was eviscerated. In August 2022, when that Minister of Health asked the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario how to get more doctors licensed in this province, they said to bring that program back—the same program that this government got rid of. Ever since accepting that commitment, we've heard over and over and over in this chamber that the practice ready assessment program is coming back. And yet, every time I talk to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, they have heard nothing from the Minister of Health and this Premier.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): A very quick question?

Hon. Rob Flack: My question is to the member for Don Valley East.

I would say there's one business power word that I would respectfully submit, and that is the word "account-

ability.” For the first time in about 15 years, this government is accountable. We’re trying to make changes. We believe that home care is the best.

What part of this bill do you support—instead of being against it?

Mr. Adil Shamji: I’m glad the member across mentioned accountability, because actually, this bill doesn’t have any. The minister can appoint whatever director she wants on the basis of whatever criteria she wants, can set whatever regulations she wants without any sort of oversight, prioritizing and concentrating all power in the Minister of Health, as opposed to working with the public or stakeholder organizations. There is no accountability.

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

Miss Monique Taylor: I guess the Conservatives no longer choose to speak about their own legislation that they have before the House, which is unfortunate. We’ve definitely heard a lot on this side, just today alone, that the government members could have had a chance to rebut—or to tell their side of the story. But I think their silence is golden when it comes to our health care system and the privatization that they are full force ahead with here in the province of Ontario.

Today, we’re speaking—for folks who are listening in at home and may not have had an opportunity to hear, this is Bill 135, Convenient Care at Home Act. Again, it’s a fancy title—not quite fancy legislation to meet up to those expectations, as we’re actually just seeing more bureaucracy being created within the health care system.

We know, and I can pretty much bet on the fact that the government members, if they’re listening to their communities, are hearing the same things that I hear in my community of Hamilton Mountain, and that is the lack of services and availability to people who need home care in the province of Ontario. This encompasses seniors, people with disabilities, children with complex needs. So many folks, for whatever reasons, look to the home care services to be able to keep them home and safe in their homes and, hopefully, prevent long-term care, hopefully prevent them going back into the emergency rooms and then needing a bed in the hospital, to fix the things that were created due to the lack of home care.

We hear from people on a regular basis that are not able to get a bath—they’re not able to get a bath. They’re not able to get their toenails cleaned. Think of people with diabetes and the foot care that goes with that and the health care crisis that that creates. These are proactive measures that our home care system is supposed to be able to prevent. They’re supposed to keep people healthier, in their homes, keep them out of hospitals, keep them out of long-term care to stop the bottlenecks that we see throughout the system.

1610

If this government truly cared about the people of this province, they would ensure that the home care system is robust, that it is strong, that it serves our most vulnerable residents in their homes, but that’s not what we see. We definitely are not seeing legislation coming forward to protect the citizens of Ontario.

We hear on a regular basis from folks, again, who are struggling within the health care system. And like I said, there are so many things that folks are looking for from home care, and it’s not in this bill.

SEIU was here last week. They talked about how one of their biggest challenges in the home care system is retention of staff. We know we have a severe shortage of PSWs in the province of Ontario that is mainly due to poor working conditions, poor wages, not being compensated for their travel time between clients, not being respected for the work that they do. So the government decided to put out an education program that was free to PSWs, to be able to encourage more folks into that education field and hopefully into the PSW system. But what we’re seeing is people who took the education and are PSWs for a day or two and they’re quitting, because they’re just not the folks who were meant for those jobs. Not everybody can do every job, and we know this.

I know, personally, I could never be a PSW; that is not within my realm. It’s not within my heart, to be able to provide those critical private services to so many folks. It’s just not. And I’m sure if people are honest with themselves they would say the same thing—that it’s not an easy job. Not everybody has it within themselves to be a doctor or a nurse, and a PSW is really doing those very private things, like bathing and toileting and things like that. Not all of us are built to do that.

So the government is offering free education to people who are finding, after they’ve taken the education, that they’re just not up for this work. And it’s far from glamorous work, and without glamorous pay to encourage it, it’s just not working for folks. They’re seeing that it’s actually costing them money or costing them whatever it is to do that work, and so they’re leaving as quickly as they’re getting in. So the retention of PSWs is still a great concern.

The other piece that I want to make sure that I talk about today is critical care nursing. I’ve met with families from the Ontario Disability Coalition who have brought their stories forward of their children who are in critical complex care and need around-the-clock nursing at home and not able to get that because they don’t have enough money to be able to pay the nurses that are now being hired through temp agencies. So that has increased the cost of nursing to the homes that—and these families who have been made bosses and contractors over their own children’s health care are left without enough money to be able to cover the number of hours that are needed for those children and families who are burning out and struggling. So if the government truly wanted to bring forward good legislation, maybe that should have been something that they considered, instead of creating more bureaucracy that I’m sure will take more money out of our health care dollars that are so desperate in our communities.

I see here within the bill, Speaker, that the bill creates an arm’s-length agency of a board of directors who are appointed by the minister, which to me is very concerning because we have definitely seen so many political appointments happening under the Ford government with

really no resumé for those folks to be able to fit the need of whatever agency or appointment it has been. So when I see that it is the minister who appoints—the board must consist of the following members: up to six members appointed by the minister and up to three members appointed by the minister on the recommendation of Ontario Health, who are already appointed by the minister.

It's just a continuous push towards privatization in our health care system. We know that the privatization, in the first place, of our health care system began under the Harris government, which was Conservatives also, and created the spiral of what we have seen to date. We have seen, under Harris, nurses laid off, hospitals closed, and the privatization of our long-term care and home care began. Unfortunately, it's mind-blowing, but that also led to a very fruitful future for the Harris family, because Mike Harris became the chair of the board of directors of Chartwell, making a very wonderful pay with also millions of dollars in holdings throughout the Chartwell system. And then his wife and he created a home care system; it was the Nurse Next Door, providing private nurse services into the community, which is now the Care Company. That is temp agency that provides nursing at a very high, hefty cost to the community or to whatever services those nurses are needed in. And the profit that they're making is actually being siphoned from the patient care that is needed within our health care system. Now I know there are billions of dollars that go into our health care system, but I would love to see the numbers of how much of that is now actually going to for-profit services that really should be instead funding these critical services to keep people out of hospital and healthy in their home.

We also know that the government underspent our health care system by \$1.2 billion—again, more dollars that could have kept people safely in their homes, making sure they had baths, making sure that someone was cleaning their toilets and helping them keep their homes clean to prevent infection. We see PSWs running in and out of people's homes within a half hour and not really, truly providing the service that they need to keep them safe and healthy. It's very, very concerning.

I can tell you, the seniors in my community that I talk to, they're scared. They're terrified about the system that they may find themselves in in not that many few years away. These are still healthy-bodied seniors, but they know that once they start getting sick or start having health conditions, they're going to be put into a system that they don't want to be in.

Literally yesterday, as I went into my local pub to pick up some takeout dinner for my family before coming in last night, I came across a group of seniors sitting at a table. I had never met them before. They noticed who I was. They called me over to the table, and they said, "Monique, please stick up for the seniors." And they said to me, "The next time you get up, we need you to say"—and that was yesterday—that they're terrified. And the cost of living that they are seeing, they are so concerned about that. The cost of eye exams—I heard it from them at the table, and yet I was on the phone with my father earlier

in the day, who was telling me he had to pay \$75 for an eye exam to be able to go through his driver's license. It's a snowball effect that this government is creating, and the fight that they had with the optometrists has created this also.

1620

From my mom the other day, I get that she's—the HCHC Family Health Organization, the service guide for uninsured service fees that doctors are now charging for: back-to-school notes, children's aid society medical certificates, sick notes, death certificates, prescription renewals, administrative costs for vaccines and shots, transfer of drivers' medical examination reports—all of these costs on this uninsured service guide are now being filtered to the people of Ontario, and seniors are having to eat up these costs. She had to buy into an insurance program because the actual costs aren't as high as the cost if you're not insured. So for her, as a senior, she had to pay another \$90 to her doctor so that when she needs a prescription referral or when she comes up on her driver's medical exam, she's covered for it.

In the letter, this is what it said: "This is not a decision we came to lightly. It's frankly not something we have any desire to undertake. The situation is such that we simply have no choice. The financial landscape in the country is one of heavy inflation. The cost of running a medical practice has skyrocketed, and the government has refused to even come close to helping us meet these inflationary demands." You're the government, over there on that side. This is you that they're talking about. "We are at the point where the choices were to close the practice, to significantly cut back on services to patients (i.e., hours, clinic, staffing) or to begin collecting payment for uninsured services. So, we have collectively made the difficult decision to do the latter." It's very, very disturbing that this is the privatization schedule of this government.

I have heard the Premier say over and over and over again that you're going to be pulling out your OHIP card, not your credit card. Well, let me tell you, my mom had to send over her credit card, and my mom is not alone; I just happen to have her forms with me. A credit card to pay for services that this government is refusing to pay for in our health care system: That is not the health care system that was dreamt of so many years ago in Canada. Ontario is blowing it up.

I came across—somebody actually sent me an Instagram of Tommy Douglas, and it was one I hadn't seen before. It was really cool to watch Tommy. It's in black and white, and we all know this is back in the 1950s, 1960s, when he introduced medicare into Canada. I've got the actual transcript of what was said, and I would like read some of that, just for historical purposes, into Hansard.

Tommy says, "I would propose in the act that we say the federal government will enter into a 50/50 arrangement"—I agree, because the members are going to say the federal government is not paying 50/50, that they should be, because that's what's coming—"with the provinces to institute nursing care, home nursing care, Meals on Wheels, that we would share 50% of the cost of setting up

community health clinics that would start a program of dental care among school children.” This is back in the 1950s that the vision of health care was happening, and this was Tommy Douglas.

And the interviewer said, “But in other words, we should dictate the services that we are going to pay for?”

And Tommy said, “No, we dictate the ones we are going to pay for. We would say, ‘These are the programs we are prepared to share with you on a 50/50 basis.’ Now, there is no way by which the federal government can dictate to. The problem is that they must undertake those programs. But they can say to the provinces, ‘If you want to institute these programs, we will pay 50% of the cost.’ I think what most people miss is the essential point, mainly, that the provinces are even more interested than the federal government is in cutting costs down because the provincial governments are much less able to finance their half of the cost than the federal government is. So if the federal government is worried about escalating costs, just imagine what little provinces like New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Nova Scotia feel about rising health care.”

You know, it goes on, but I just wanted to put it out there that back in the 1950s he was talking about nursing care, home nursing care, Meals on Wheels, community health clinics, a dental program. They’re the same things the New Democrats continue to fight for today. They’re the things that we know keep people healthy in their homes.

When we are providing proactive services, it keeps people out of emergency rooms, which we know are the high costs. Keeping people in hospitals, keeping people in long-term care—that’s where the expense is. Providing home care keeps people at home safely for much cheaper cost and a much bigger return.

I see I’m out of time already; that went very fast. I just want to see if I had anything else here.

Home and Community Care Support Services: A big report has come out from them because of the crisis in the system and what people are saying and how “All of these issues are creating anxiety and despair and placing elders at risk of hospitalization and institutionalization.”

Folks across this province are speaking out. They know that we need a health care system that works. This bill is not going to provide that. It’s creating more bureaucracy that, again, will end up for-profit and in people’s pockets instead of in our health system.

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

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: Now, we’re moving from 14 organizations to a single-organization model, and this is going to provide a strong and centralized foundation to support the stability of the home care services now and into the future.

The Ontario Health Teams—they’re going to be taking on the responsibility. The organization would provide ongoing operational supports and care coordination to those teams. This is not a layer, but a support partner for OHTs, and planning and delivery.

This being said, in the past, the opposition has voted against our government’s proposals to make health care delivery quicker and more reliable now for constituents in your community.

So I ask the member from Hamilton—

Miss Monique Taylor: Mountain.

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: Mountain, thank you. Can the member explain why they think it is better that their constituents should have to wait—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutila Karpoche): Thank you very much.

Response?

Miss Monique Taylor: If she thinks that I think that our constituents should wait for access to health care, then she really wasn’t listening to what I had to say.

But she did talk about creating another team, and we’ve heard already in the House—we see the access to OAP and what that’s doing, and it’s really not creating any help within the system. There is no assistance to ensure that people are getting the services they need when they need them.

Also, she’s not thinking about the diversity across this province. We heard from the member from Mushkegowuk—James Bay that the services out there are completely different. People need doctors; they need family health care. Instead, they’re creating bureaucracy.

1630

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: From reading this bill, it looks like it completely leaves open the service delivery arm of home care to private, for-profit companies. We know that private care almost always leads to worse care. We saw that in long-term care, where 6,000 of our seniors died in long-term care, but 78% of them died in private care. Could the member discuss why this government would allow private companies to continue to control home care in this province after seeing what’s happened in long-term care?

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you to the member from Niagara Falls. I said in my statement today that this was created by Mike Harris, and we’re seeing, just in that family alone, the money that is being made. The people across the long-term-care system, the for-profit—we’re seeing the money that is being made and what that does to the seniors’ care, and every little thing that’s extra, the seniors are paying for once again. I don’t know where the government thinks that seniors who are living—and so many of them below the poverty line are expected to be able to pay for services without the support necessary.

So it’s for-profit. It’s making a lot of people very rich. But it’s not helping the people it’s supposed to serve.

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

Mr. Anthony Leardi: In my riding, in Essex, we have lots of people entering the career of PSW because of the steps taken by this government, and the member opposite made reference to the number of PSWs available in the marketplace and available to deliver the services required. I can tell you that I went to Anderson College and talked

to the trainees there and they were very happy to have received free tuition and free books from this government to get their training, to get more PSWs. I know that that program is being taken up very well by the people in the riding of Essex.

My question to the member is, is she aware of how many people in her riding are benefiting from the remarkable program introduced by this government to pay the tuition and pay the books for PSWs entering that profession?

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you to the member opposite. I recall saying that we're hearing very clearly from SEIU, who are working, who are hired PSWs, that the retention is just not there and it's not helping the fact. They're grateful; they thought that the education program would work, as so many people would hope and expect. But people are taking the education and they're not following through on the PSW work that is critical. So I think the government needs to re-look at the program again. It's not just about handing out dollars all over the place without some kind of strings attached to it, but these same folks who are taking up this free education are just not fitting the bill—and not all, of course, but so many are leaving and not able to provide the services that they were educated to do.

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

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Historically, Ontario residents have seen major amalgamation in health sectors that have led to major—and I say major—service disruptions. This is, and will be, detrimental, and could be very problematic if this Conservative government cannot guarantee that patients will not experience any lapse in care, considering the strain the health care system is already under due to amalgamation bills and Bill 124.

To the member from Hamilton Mountain, can you explain how problematic it will be if this government cannot guarantee that patients will not experience any lapse in care?

Miss Monique Taylor: Thanks to the member from St. Catharines. We're already seeing a lapse in care each and every day, and we're hearing from seniors in our community that are experiencing those lapses: PSWs not showing up; they're showing up late; they're supposed to be there to put them to bed, and instead, they're showing up at breakfast time. It's a major strain on someone's life when they're not able to get a PSW in on time to get their DARTS bus—which we know is another problem—to be able to get to the workforce.

So there are so many challenges that people who need these PSW services face that are just not taken into consideration by this government. When you have a for-profit system, the shareholders and the stakeholders are only there for profit. At the end of the day, they want their return and it doesn't matter, by the looks of it, what system is given to the province of Ontario. Patients and seniors and people with disabilities in our province deserve so much better than to be put at the end of the line and profit at the beginning.

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

Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: I agree. I think it's really important that that home care nurse, the CCAC nurse, does show up—or the PSW—after the patient has been discharged from ER. I think that's precisely what this bill is doing, because we need to embed our home care into our Ontario health teams. This is part of the modernization of our restructuring of our health care system, because the status quo back in 2018 was not working. That is why every single term we are putting in a new bill to move forward on our transition and our transformation of our health care system.

So to the member opposite, why can't can the NDP just support what we are doing in transforming our health care system so that the care is centred around the patient and not around the brick and mortar where the patient happens to be?

Miss Monique Taylor: The member seems to neglect the fact that every bill that they put forward on the health care system has been a steamroll towards privatization. We have seen—seniors are being sent 70 to 150 kilometres away from their homes or being charged \$400 a day. We still have seniors who have spent their entire lives married and being separated at the final days of their lives because this government can't get it right.

So I'm not sure where it is confusing that we don't trust them to put forward legislation that actually benefits the people of this province. We have serious concerns with pretty much every piece of legislation that they put forward, and that's not just because it's theirs, it's because of what it's written in: It's written in the people of Ontario's blood. It's a mess. It is a mess, and we have seen it time and time again.

The government needs to get off the privatization track and actually invest in public health care instead of breaking it.

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

Ms. Chandra Pasma: I'm honoured to rise on behalf of the residents of Ottawa West–Nepean to speak about Bill 135, the Convenient Care at Home Act. This bill amends the Continuing Care Act to create a subsidiary of Ontario Health called Ontario Health atHome, amalgamating the 14 current Home and Community Care Support Services into a single agency that will be responsible for home and community care services in the province.

I just want to clarify for my constituents that what we're talking about here is the agencies that used to be called community care access centres, then local health integration networks, then Home and Community Care Support Services and now Ontario Health atHome. That's a lot of name changes in just six years—I hate to think how much money has gone to updating business cards and letterhead—and the result is that, when constituents talk to me, they usually end up picking one of the names and then tagging on, “or whatever it's called now.” If one of the goals is easier and simpler access to care, I'm not sure another name change would have been at the top of my list, but here we are.

Last year, I had the opportunity to tour the Queensway Carleton Hospital in my riding of Ottawa West–Nepean, an important institution which provides incredible care to residents in the west end of Ottawa and the Ottawa Valley. Dr. Falconer, the CEO of the Queensway Carleton, made a point of taking me to the acute care for the elderly unit, a relatively new unit at the hospital. He told me that the acute care for the elderly unit was created because a significant number of the admissions to the Queensway Carleton are seniors, and they know that every day that a senior spends in a hospital bed they are 50% less likely to ever live independently once again. The acute care for the elderly unit works incredibly hard to shorten hospital stays for seniors to get them up and moving again, get them back on their feet as quickly as possible so that a hospital stay doesn't rob seniors of their independence. But oftentimes, going home safely means having home care and community care services available, and this is where the system is breaking down, Speaker.

1640

Earlier this year, hospital CEOs in eastern Ontario sent a letter to this government, and I'm going to read it to you. It's addressed to the Minister of Health: "We, the undersigned representatives of acute care hospitals in eastern Ontario, are writing in support of Ontarians who require community support services to live at home.

"We clearly understand both the challenges and the potential of our health care system. The sustainability of supports in the patient's home and in the community is critical to our ability to effectively respond to the acute care needs of our communities.

"Community support services are a key part of a proactive and responsive solution to health care pressures. We are writing to raise the alarm that a robust, well-funded community support sector is required to respond to the needs of Ontarians, in partnership with hospitals. Without realistic and meaningful funding to community support services, patients in our community will suffer and acute care hospitals will continue to see growing numbers of ALC patients."

It's signed by 12 CEOs of acute care hospitals in eastern Ontario, including Dr. Falconer of Queensway Carleton.

These CEOs signed this letter because they understand that when we don't have a strong community care sector, more patients end up in the hospital and they stay in the hospital longer, because the supports are not there to get them home. Our hospitals depend on a strong home and community care sector so that patients can go home safely, with the supports they need to help them on their recovery journey. But you would never guess that from the way this government funds home and community care, Speaker. The sector is so vastly underfunded that they are in crisis, and what funding the government has promised they don't seem to be able to actually get out the door, deepening the crisis and pushing organizations to the brink of collapse.

One executive director of a not-for-profit home care organization told me this summer that he's not sure how much longer his organization can keep subsidizing the government as they wait for promised funding to flow. He

is warning of collapse. What I am hearing from all of the community support sector organizations in Ottawa West–Nepean is that their workers cannot continue to subsidize this government's underfunding of this sector. The workers feel that they are being asked to make up for the government's stinginess with their time, their hearts and even their wallets. They are burning out trying to fill in the gaps left by this government's failure to properly invest in and stabilize the system, and so they are leaving the sector.

The organizations that are providing not-for-profit home and community care in my riding—Carefor, the Olde Forge, Jewish Family Services of Ottawa, Meals on Wheels—are all having difficulty recruiting and retaining staff, and a big part of that is fair compensation. But you can't offer fair compensation if demand is going up and inflation is going up but your funding is not. Between 2012 and 2023, the community support sector received only a 3.5% increase in funding. Inflation over this period, meanwhile, was 27.5%.

The people who work in this sector are great. I have really enjoyed getting to know them and seeing them in action. They are compassionate, energized and committed, but they are not magicians. They cannot make less money, provide more care and better wages.

Last year and earlier this year, community support sector organizations in eastern Ontario worked hard to draw the Minister of Health's attention to this issue. They warned of the serious situation in the sector and the need for more funding in order to be able to continue providing care for seniors, for people living with disabilities and for people coming home from the hospital in eastern Ontario.

Let me read from a memo that was submitted to Ontario Health East and signed by 31 community support sector organizations in eastern Ontario: "The community support sector is faced with presenting and/or living within annual budgets that are not sustainable and simply cannot be balanced. In many cases, providers are anticipating significant deficits—percentage in the double digits."

The memo goes on to say, "Organizational foundations are crumbling, in the face of exponentially greater challenges and pressures. Timely and significant funding increases are needed to build organizational responsiveness and resilience.

"—Service reductions are inevitable in the absence of realistic annual budgets. As the aging population with complex health conditions increases, service reductions will be counterproductive to building a responsive health care system.

"—Current deficit budgets may result in increasing client fees to a level that would limit access for the most vulnerable, low-income clients striving to age at home. Raising the client co-pay fee for service adds yet another barrier to Ontarians in need.

"—Inflation rates currently sit around 6.8%. Patients are finding it difficult to make ends meet and are often faced with tough economic trade-offs, when considering their health care needs. Employees are leaving CSS employers, and the health care sector in general, in favour of employers able to offer higher compensation rates, and incentives."

The memo concludes, “Community support service providers seek to be viewed as valuable contributors to a robust health care system for Ontario. We are part of the solution to current pressures. We share Ontario Health’s goal to ‘connect, coordinate and modernize our province’s health care system, working with all partners so that everyone in Ontario has an opportunity for better health and well-being.’ Current Ontario Health funding does not support the effort needed to align with OHE goals.”

These organizations warned that they needed a funding increase of 10% to 15% in order to be able to continue to provide the same level of service, and that without this level of funding they would have to implement service cuts of up to 40%. And let’s be very clear what we’re talking about here, Speaker, because I know 15% sounds like a lot of money, but home and community care are actually some of the most cost-effective forms of care that we have in Ontario. The average cost of a hospital stay is just under \$7,000 in Ontario, which is actually on the low side when we look at health care in Canada, because our government grossly underfunds hospital care too.

But hospital care is an expensive form of care. The daily cost of hospital care for an individual, according to the Financial Accountability Office, is \$722. The daily cost of home care for an individual is just \$36. And what did the community support sector organizations in eastern Ontario say they needed to maintain service levels and not have to implement any cuts or fee hikes for patients? Just \$7 million. The government’s health budget for 2023-24 is \$81 billion, Speaker; \$7 million isn’t even a rounding error for a budget of that size. And yet the government could not bring itself to act, despite the fact that community support services are incredibly important and far more cost-effective than acute care services, despite the fact that they reduce the need for acute care services and despite the fact that there is strong demand from Ontarians, who after the past few years have been very clear that they want to age in place—not in long-term-care facilities, not in hospitals, but at home.

I raised these concerns on their behalf multiple times in this House. On March 30, I asked the government about imminent cuts to the dementia program at the Olde Forge Community Resource Centre, leaving 95 seniors with dementia without their day program. The government House leader smirked about how this government wants seniors to work and participate in the economy.

On April 19, along with the member from Ottawa Centre, I asked the government why they were allowing prices to increase 300% for Meals on Wheels for the lowest-income members of our community. The Minister of Health stood and said she had increased funding—an increase that was absolutely not seen on the ground by those members of our community now paying 300 times more for their food.

The government did not heed the warnings of so many health care leaders in eastern Ontario that increased funding for the sector was vital. They ignored the call for urgent investments. They allowed those 95 seniors at the Olde Forge to lose their dementia day program. They allowed prices at Meals on Wheels to skyrocket, resulting

in some community members having to cancel because they could no longer afford food.

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And then finally—finally, Speaker—a glimmer of light: The provincial association for home and community care organizations, the Ontario Community Support Association, received a verbal assurance from the minister that some additional funding was going to be coming to the sector, but what followed is what I call the summer of chaos, because for a long time no one in the sector knew what was happening. The cuts and the price hikes were already implemented. The minister refused to put the commitment in writing. Organizations were being told different things by Ontario Health about how much funding might actually be coming, then finally, an increase was confirmed, an increase of around 3% for most of the organizations in my riding, but no one could tell them whether it was one-time funding or base funding. You cannot hire more staff with one-time funding. You can’t offer wage increases to staff and then take them away. Ontario Health’s communication could not have been more abysmal.

Finally, in September, organizations received confirmation that funding increases will be considered base funding, but they’re being told they must raise wages and serve more clients with just 3%. What the organizations in eastern Ontario are telling me is that this is just a drop in the bucket compared to what they need. What they really need is funding increases of 15% in order to be able to increase wages, lower fees and expand services to meet the level of demand. This is staving off near death; it is not sustainability.

Furthermore, in order to make a difference, the money actually has to flow, and what I am hearing is that it is still a commitment that has not materialized. You can’t pay workers with promises, because workers can’t pay for rent and groceries with promises.

I wish this was a unique circumstance, but sadly, it’s not. In early 2022, the Conservative government promised a billion dollars for home care and \$100 million for community support services. Sounds pretty good, right? But a year later, only a fraction of that money had actually been delivered, just over 10% of the money for home care and less than 30% of the money for community care. Organizations were left to plead with the government to actually deliver what they promised.

Carefor CEO Steve Perry told the Ottawa Citizen, “We are going to run the risk of collapse, or at minimum of service rationalization.” Carefor’s inability to compete for staff with other parts of the health care system meant that between 2020 and 2023 Carefor’s workforce was down 25% of its nurses, 28% of its PSWs and 15% of its community support staff. According to the Citizen, these shortages meant a 21% reduction in home nurse visits, a 14% reduction in PSW visits and a 13% reduction in community care services, all because this government can’t seem to get promised funding out the door.

So how long will home care and community support sector organizations have to wait for this new, still inadequate amount of funding to actually arrive? This is

the reality of home care and community care in eastern Ontario.

What will this bill, the Convenient Care At Home Act, do to address these challenges in the sector? Not a darn thing. In fact, the procurement process envisioned by this bill has the potential to make things much, much worse, because what this bill envisions and what the Minister of Health has said is that once Ontario Health atHome is created, the plan is for this new agency to procure home care services through requests for proposals, similar to the process Ontario Health is currently using, and as my colleague the member for Nickel Belt, the official opposition's health care critic, has pointed out, if this is just like the current procurement process, then what we are talking about is RFPs that will go out for service providers that can provide care to the whole province. And who is going to be able to bid on a multi-year contract to provide home care to all of Ontario? Not Carefor, a not-for-profit home and community care organization that has provided excellent care in Ottawa for 125 years; not Jewish Family Services, which provides excellent, culturally sensitive care for Jewish seniors and diverse seniors, many with language barriers, in Ottawa; not the Olde Forge, which has provided supports to seniors in Ottawa's west end for more than 50 years. These local, not-for-profit organizations don't have the resources or, frankly, the mandate to bid on contracts to provide care for the entire province. It will be the big, for-profit companies, like Bayshore and Extencare, that will be in a position to bid for province-wide contracts.

Let's talk about what that will mean for seniors, for people living with disabilities, for people with chronic or complex health needs in Ottawa West–Nepean. These are companies that siphon off our precious health care dollars for the pockets of their shareholders. How do they do that? They pay their workers extremely low wages and then bill the province double, sometimes triple, what the workers are paid, with the difference going to the shareholders, not the workers. They also refuse to pay workers for travel time and travel costs, so home care workers in some parts of the province work 10-hour days, but they're only paid

for six of them and they're not compensated for the cost of gas or of using public transportation.

As you might well imagine, Speaker, this makes it very difficult to recruit and retain workers, because who would want to work in these conditions? These workers are essentially subsidizing the shareholders of large, for-profit companies with their time and their expenses. Nobody can sustain that over time, so workers are constantly leaving, for-profit companies are perpetually short-staffed and patients are left to deal with shortages and a revolving door of care providers.

Another thing these companies do is book patients back-to-back even though they live miles apart, as if workers are going to apparate from one location to another as if they're wizards in a Harry Potter novel. Or they double-book patients as if workers have a time-turner that they can just turn back to go back in time to serve another patient at the exact same time.

The result of these unreasonable demands and the workforce instability is complete chaos and lack of care for patients. Care visits are routinely being missed or cut short. Caregivers change on a weekly basis. Family members are being told by caregivers that they are supposed to provide key elements of care. These are complaints that my office hears constantly from local residents receiving care from for-profit health care providers.

What my constituents need is not something that opens the door to further privatization of home and community care. What they need is high-quality, reliable care delivered by a qualified, well-compensated and stable workforce. But that means making the necessary investments to actually stabilize the workforce—to expand care rather than to cut it.

Unfortunately, what we see from this government time and time again is the opposite, and now we have another bill that opens the door to further privatization. It's time for the government to stop its ideological attack on our public health care system and focus its attention on delivering high-quality care to Ontario residents who deserve no less instead of rewarding health care profiteers.

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 (IND)	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	
Kemaghan, 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	