Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

No. 139B

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Nº 139B

1st Session 43rd Parliament

Wednesday 27 March 2024 1^{re} session 43^e législature

Mercredi 27 mars 2024

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

Wednesday 27 March 2024

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PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

TAXATION

Mr. Steve Clark: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the federal government should halt the carbon tax hike set for April 1, 2024, which will add 17.61 cents to the cost of a litre of gas and will therefore increase the cost of everything for the people of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Pursuant to standing order 100, the member has 12 minutes for your presentation. I recognize the member.

Mr. Steve Clark: Well, thanks, Madam Speaker. It's great to see you in the Chair this evening.

Three words: Scrap the tax. Speaker, I hear those words every week in my riding of Leeds–Grenville–Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes. On April Fools' Day, April 1, Justin Trudeau will play a very cruel joke on all Canadians. Trudeau is planning on hiking the carbon tax by 23% as part of his plan to quadruple it over the next six years. **1800**

Speaker, I think all the government members can agree you've heard it in the House many times, in question period, members' statements—Ontarians can't afford this.

Motion number 82, Speaker, gives all members of the Legislature an opportunity to send a message to Justin Trudeau and the federal Liberals that an increase to the carbon tax is wrong and it should be abandoned.

It doesn't matter where you go in my riding. Every corner of my riding, I hear the concern about Justin Trudeau's Liberal carbon tax and its hike, because 23% it's going to be on gas, it's going to be on groceries, it's going to be on everything. Make no mistake: No matter what the Liberals say, it's making life more expensive and they're doing it on the backs of hard-working families all across Ontario.

I can look back on the last month or so in my riding. I remember I heard concern about the hike and the carbon tax on Family Day when I was in the village of Westport—heard it from many, many constituents. I heard concerns from dairy farmers at a breakfast I had with the Leeds county milk committee in Elizabethtown-Kitley. I heard it at Mount Zion Masonic Lodge's wild-game supper in North Grenville.

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Mercredi 27 mars 2024

In fact, Speaker, if my MP, Michael Barrett, had had some Pierre Poilievre hats and shirts, he could have probably made a fortunate at the event in North Grenville.

I heard it at Rideau Lakes council. I made a deputation last break week at Rideau Lakes council; it came up twice. It came up from one of the members of council who was a farmer and who was concerned about the farmers, and then I had a question that was strictly at, how can we help affordability issues, how can we help the pocketbook of hard-working Ontarians? So, it came up from two members of council.

Last Saturday, at my first annual Handshakes and Pancakes community breakfast—heard it loud and clear. People were concerned about the carbon tax; literally, at every anniversary and every birthday that I attend in the riding.

In fact, Speaker, the other day Deanna and I were in Walmart being good grandparents. We had three of our grandkids with us—spoiling them, buying lots of things that I'm sure their mother and father weren't happy that we were buying. But anyway, we were going through the self-checkout. Deanna had the three kids helping her with the self-checkout and I had the guy next door, and he basically looked me in the—he grabbed me by the shoulder and basically said, "When are we going to scrap Trudeau's carbon tax? We've got to get him out of there. We've got to stop this tax."

Every corner of my riding, every event, every week, the message is crystal clear: We need to spike the hike. We need to scrap the tax. That's what I hear in Leeds–Grenville.

But I want to do a little contrast now. I want to contrast with what happened yesterday in the Legislature with our government, and the contrast between our government and opposition parties from us, who stand with the federal government's carbon tax. I want to take a few moments. I'm going to talk about yesterday's budget, Building a Better Ontario, because it provides a perfect contrast to Justin Trudeau's April Fool's cruel joke with his carbon tax hike.

Minister Bethlenfalvy talked, said life has rarely been this expensive in Ontario. And like many jurisdictions around the world, our province has really faced economic uncertainty due to the Bank of Canada's rising interest rates, due to the global economy slowing. The cost of everything is higher and our government had, really, two choices.

You know, as a government, when comparing and presenting a budget, we could have put the brakes on, right? Or we could've decided, as a government, to keep going, and I think we all are happy, as a government, that we decided to keep going. So, we needed to ensure, as a government, that we continued to support families, businesses and workers in Ontario. That's why we've presented our budget the way we could, because there are other choices that governments can make, right? Mr. Bethlenfalvy articulated them perfectly yesterday. One choice the government could take, like the federal government, is to burden taxpayers, right? It's to increase tolls, increase tuition, increase fees, raise taxes.

We decided as a government that we're not going to do that. The other opportunity is to pull back, pull back on spending, right? To not invest in hospitals, to not invest in infrastructure, to not invest in housing. That's certainly something you can't say about our government. We continue to make those necessary investments in communities right across Ontario.

And the third choice, as Minister Bethlenfalvy said yesterday, was just to throw up your hands and expect that municipalities are going to accept that burden. We're certainly not going to do that—far from it.

So our choice was to follow through on that plan of ours, to make sure that we're going to continue to make the necessary investments, knowing that higher deficits, higher than our projections last year, those that are timelimited are going to be dealt with as we move towards balance, but those investments we're making in our communities are going to be beneficial for decades to come. So I think Minister Bethlenfalvy hit the nail on the head, and in contrast, you've got Justin Trudeau, who wants to increase the carbon tax, to increase gas and groceries, heating your homes.

So we're going to invest in more roads and highways. We're going to invest in transit. We're going to be investing in housing, and very, very importantly, no new tolls, no new fees, no new taxes.

Under the leadership of Premier Ford, we've always been very clear that we don't support raising taxes. This budget was no different. At a time when Ontario families are really struggling to make ends meet, we refuse to pass along these extra costs by raising costs for families or cutting services or offloading to our municipal partners.

It's clear to our government what Ontarians need: They need relief. They don't need a federal carbon tax increase, yet on April 1 that's exactly what Justin Trudeau's desperately out-of-touch government are going to be doing, by hiking that carbon tax by 23%. This is the latest part of a Liberal plan that will quadruple the tax over the next six years.

Let's face it, the queen of the carbon tax, Bonnie Crombie, hasn't said one word. She has not lifted one finger to contact her federal colleagues, where she sat, in the House of Commons. She has not said one to her federal colleagues about that cruel April Fool's Day, a cruel tax on Ontarians.

In addition to global uncertainty, the federal government's carbon tax is going to make everything more expensive, from gas to groceries. Hard-working people of Ontario can't escape paying the high cost of the federal carbon tax. Here's a stat, folks: 70% of Canadians and 70% of Premiers, including the Liberal Premier from Newfoundland and Labrador, do not support the carbon tax, do not support the April 1 hike.

Yesterday, in our budget, Premier Ford and Minister Bethlenfalvy made a good point about talking about the Get It Done Act, which is going to enshrine into new law a very clear message that it will require future provincial governments to seek the consent of the people before being allowed to burden people with the high cost of any new provincial carbon tax.

As Minister Bethlenfalvy noted, leaders from all levels of government, from all parties, all across Canada, are standing up against the federal carbon tax.

When asked about the federal carbon tax, one of our leaders in Canada, our leader here in the Legislature, Premier Ford, was crystal clear: He opposes to carbon tax, full stop. It's a simple answer to a simple question. That's leadership, unlike the queen of the carbon tax, Bonnie Crombie, who won't say one word to her federal cousins, at a time when all parties in the House need to stand up for Ontario families and call the federal carbon tax hike—to spike the hike. That's what motion 82—that's what we're debating this afternoon.

Remember what I said a few minutes ago. Our budget was clear: no tuition increase, no tolls, no fees. Instead, we're choosing to rebuild our economy by building roads, building highways, investing in municipalities and moving forward. We're cutting taxes, cutting red tape, lowering the cost of doing business and creating the conditions that attract investment and jobs.

Speaker, do you know what happens tomorrow? The Toronto Blue Jays have their season opener in Tampa Bay. Do you know what we also have on April 1? Wave got a double play. This time, it's Trudeau's double play. Not only is he raising the carbon tax by 23%; he's also increasing the tax on beer, wine and spirits by 2%—another cruel joke on April Fool's Day.

Earlier this week, we announced, as a government, many, many good decisions in terms of saving Ontarians money. We extended the gas and fuel tax cut to the end of 2024. Our drivers are going to be able to save over five cents per litre every time they fill up their cars for the next six months. That is going to save Ontarians an average of \$320 over the last two and a half years, since the cuts were put in. That's real money in your pocket, right? We've saved Ontarians \$2.1 billion since we made that decision.

We've eliminated the 6.1% on-site wine tax. We've maintained the beer tax indexation freeze for another two years. We've frozen college and university tuitions. Together, we are polar opposite of the double play that Justin Trudeau is playing on April 1.

I've got more to say in my two-minute final. Spike the hike. That's what motion 82 is all about.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to speak in the House and to respond to the member from Leeds-

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Grenville–Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes. Basically, his motion is to advise the federal government to scrap the carbon tax. On our side, the provincial NDP, we have never been in favour of the personal carbon tax.

Mr. David Smith: No?

Mr. John Vanthof: Never, never.

He talked a few times about a double play, and that sparked my interest, because if you have a credible provincial system, you don't have to pay the carbon tax. We had cap-and-trade, which had its flaws. I'm not saying it didn't. But the Ford government did institute an industrial carbon tax, \$63 per tonne. They pulled in \$146 million last year on the industrial carbon tax, and we're still forced to pay the federal carbon tax. So actually the double play is that Ontarians are paying the Ford carbon tax and the federal carbon tax. And do you know what? On January 1, the Ford government is going to raise their industrial carbon tax up to \$80; that's a 23% increase.

We've heard the 23% number quite a few times. The same percentage that the Trudeau government's going to raise the personal carbon tax on April 1, the Ford government's going to raise the industrial carbon tax on January 1. So actually you're paying two. And the Ford industrial carbon tax is fairly similar to cap-and-trade, and we're not opposed to cap-and-trade.

If you look at what's happening to our weather, if you look at the weather changes, we're going to be fighting an awful lots of forest fires next summer. This is a strange winter. There's no snow. You all remember last fall we were in here and you could smell the smoke in the Legislature. I come from a place where we have forest fires. The weather is changing. I'm not even talking about spending money to try and slow down the change; I'm talking about the funding that we're going to need to prepare for the changes that are already there.

So, we're not opposed to having a price on carbon and neither is the Ford government, because they're actually doing it to industrial users. So, either you lower your price of carbon under the Ford system, you either lower your price of carbon or you pay a penalty. Last year, the penalty, \$146 million that you charged industrial customers. Now, that \$146 million is also going to funnel through the system and make prices higher, just like the Trudeau carbon tax. All the arguments you've been making against the Trudeau carbon tax, you've all been making them against yourselves as well, \$146 million. and it's going to increase more next year, 23%. It's similar to cap-and-trade.

Now the Ford government goes, "Oh, well, cap-ontrade and carbon tax are all the same thing." We're perplexed that you seem ashamed of your own policies, because you instituted this. You, the majority Conservative Ford government, instituted an industrial carbon price system, a compliance fee similar to cap-and-trade. Now, if you actually put the time and effort in to make sure it was compliant, we likely wouldn't have to pay the carbon tax, but you're so busy trying to politick for your federal members that you don't even want to put the horsepower in to tell people, "Yes, we care about the environment. Yes, we are putting a price on carbon, and yes, we are trying to comply." You're doing politics instead of governing. Quite frankly, you say that there can't be an increase in carbon pricing unless we have a referendum except on the carbon pricing system that you instituted. Because there's not going to be a referendum when the industrial carbon price goes from \$63 to \$80. There's not going to be a referendum, folks.

Mr. John Fraser: Oh, maybe there will be.

Mr. John Vanthof: No, they exempted themselves from that.

Mr. John Fraser: Oh, they did? Shocking.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yeah. So that's the problem. Why do you keep spinning it instead of talking about the real issues that we're dealing with? Tell people. Tell people Ontario has an industrial carbon-pricing system. We tax the big polluters. We agree with that. We think the individual carbon tax is regressive. You should tax the big polluters, and if it's more economically beneficial for big polluters to make less pollution as opposed to paying the fee, that's how you're going to bring your emissions down. That's what you're trying to do. You just don't want to tell people because you're so busy politicking—so busy. That's what you're doing.

So I hope that in his two minutes the member tells us where the government is going to be spending the \$146 million that they collected last year, and likely more that they're going to collect in the upcoming year, so we can prepare for more forest fires; so we can prepare for more floods; so we can prepare for all those things. Because they're going to happen.

That's what we should be talking about. We agree with you on the individual carbon tax, that Ontarians shouldn't be paying it. You have a program in place that, if you actually employed it, Ontarians wouldn't be paying it, but you don't want to tell them that. I don't understand. I don't understand.

Your Premier says, "We scrapped the cap-and-trade. Cap-and-trade and carbon tax is all the same thing," and then silently you implemented the same program. You put it back in yourself, but you're hoping that no—and I don't understand that. It's not a bad program. It has a purpose, but you don't want to tell people. I just don't understand. **1820**

The Ford government has instituted an industrial carbon tax on the big emitters. They have it. It's going to go up by 23% on January 1. Last year, it was \$146 million that the Ford government collected—carbon tax. And that money, that cost, that extra cost to industry, is going to filter through the system and cost people for it. But we have in Ontario the ability to use that program to offset the federal carbon tax, and the Ford government is choosing not to.

They brought up the carbon tax, the federal carbon tax, at least 200 times in the last—

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Today.

Mr. John Vanthof: Well, it feels like that. It's not quite 200 a day, but they bring it up a lot. It's amazing. This week—yesterday—they brought forward a budget—

Ms. Jennifer K. French: A provincial budget.

Mr. John Vanthof: A provincial budget. And usually the day after the budget, the questions from the government to themselves are, "Minister, can you tell how great this was in the budget? How great that was in the budget?" Self-promotion questions. What we did have today? Not one; all federal carbon tax. We didn't have a question either, and this is the question I'm posing right now: Minister, last year we collected \$146 million in industrial carbon fees. Could you please tell us where you invested those fees to safeguard Ontarians from environmental changes due to climate change? Now, that would have been a good question.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: That would have been a great question.

Mr. John Vanthof: A great question; a relevant carbon tax question. So you have—you call them compliance fees; it's a carbon tax. It's an industrial carbon tax as opposed to a personal carbon tax. We agree with you that the personal carbon tax is regressive, but the personal carbon tax is a backstop. The only reason you have to pay the Trudeau or the federal government's personal carbon tax is if the province chooses not to implement their own system. Yet you're doing both. You implement your own system and you're still forcing people to pay the federal carbon tax. You spend millions going to court, millions doing other things on stickers, and you implement a provincial program.

Why don't you fully implement the provincial program, exempt Ontarians from the federal program and do what we can together to help fight climate change and the effects from it?

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: I want to thank my member from the longest name that has ever existed of a riding in this province—it's something—Leeds–Grenville–Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes—hey, we got it right without looking at anything—for bringing forward this motion. You know they say timing is everything. Well, it couldn't be at a better time. Whether or not this filters over to the House of Commons and the Prime Minister hears it or not, I don't know, but it is absolutely critical that he gets the message because, unfortunately, he's stuck in his own echo chamber, listening to himself.

He is fixated on a carbon tax and has been for years. Do you know the sad thing about it, Speaker? It's going to go up by 23% on April 1 if the Prime Minister goes ahead with it. But the truth is, his carbon tax, since it's been implemented, has not been effective at reducing emissions. What it is, is a Ponzi scheme on the part of the federal government where they take the money out of your pocket every time you make a purchase, and then sometime, at the time of their choosing, for some people, they get a cheque. And they're supposed to get on their hands and knees at the throne of Justin Trudeau and say, "Thank you very much, Prime Minister. You're so kind." But all along, every time they've needed to make a purchase, it's hurt. And it hasn't been the time of their choosing. If you've got to fill your propane tank or pay your natural gas bill tax or fill up your vehicle, you've paid it on the spot. You've paid it. And then Mr. Trudeau, when he feels like it, sends you a cheque—if you're getting it.

In my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke—and I can echo what the member said about hearing it over and over again—we are being hurt by the Liberal carbon tax. It's hurting us. It's hurting our families. It's hurting our communities. There's nothing that hasn't gone up as a result of the federal carbon tax. In my neck of the woods, public transit is the pickup truck, but you've got to pay for the gas every time you fill that up. Whether it's gas or diesel, you've got to pay it, and it is hurting more and more and every day. April Fool's: April 1 the price goes up 23%—23%.

We have farmers in our riding, as many of our members have farmers in their ridings—salt of the earth, great people. There's two times of the year where farmers use the most fuel. There's harvesting—but you won't have a harvest if you don't do the planting. So now, April 1, we're getting into planting season, and the cost to that farmer is going sky-high. Why? Because he's not just paying the carbon tax that he was paying before April 1, he's paying an additional 23% after April 1. Now, you'd have to ask yourself if you were a Liberal that had a conscience: Is this not absolutely cruel to the people who put food on our table every single day? We eat because the farmer produces food.

Speaker, I know I have limited time. I could talk for hours about how unjust and how wrong this carbon tax is. Justin Trudeau doesn't have to worry about the carbon tax. He goes and spends \$236,000 of the people's money to go to Jamaica for a vacation. But the average person is hurting.

It's time to scrap the tax. Support my colleague's motion. We need to do this. We need to send a message to Ottawa, and we need to send it today.

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

Mr. Kevin Holland: I rise today to speak to MPP Clark's motion 82 to halt the 23% carbon tax set for April 1. It's time to spike the hike.

If the federal government proceeds with this carbon tax hike, this will add nearly 18 cents to the cost of a litre of gas and will ultimately increase the cost of everything for the people of Ontario. This, in turn, has significant implications for the Ontario economy. Broadly speaking, we have observed how the negative impact of the carbon tax imposes adverse conditions that hinder Ontario's economic competitiveness in sectors such as mining, forestry and agriculture. We have also seen how this punitive and regressive carbon tax affects all communities across Ontario, but especially rural and remote communities in the north.

In my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan, my constituents depend on fuel to heat their homes, to commute to work or to school and to put food on their table. For example, a constituent has reached out to me in my riding and stated that the carbon tax has increased the cost to heat their home by \$450 annually. The only response the federal Liberals could muster to addressing concerns with heating homes is to purchase a heat pump as an alternative to alleviate the costs. However, this falls short in being a reliable alternative in minus-40-degree temperatures. Heat pumps are ineffective in keeping homes warm, requiring a secondary heating source.

What this indicates is that not only is this carbon tax punitive and regressive, it also imposes as an impetuous tax on transportation, heating and eating, which blatantly disregards the need for readily accessible and viable options for Ontarians to opt out of its burdensome cost to everyday essentials.

Furthermore, with the lack of options to address the associated rising costs for groceries, transportation and heating homes, there are no incentives from the federal level in place that can assist with reducing carbon emissions. As a result, residents in my riding have little to no choice but to spend more and more of their hard-earned dollars on transportation, heating and eating.

What is most striking to me is that there is a severe lack of evidence from the federal government that clearly demonstrates the effectiveness of the carbon tax attaining its economic and environmental objectives. In a recent report produced by the federal Parliamentary Budget Officer, the analysis offers very little insight into the effectiveness of the carbon tax. Simply put, the rebates fall well short of the increased costs incurred by the federal carbon tax.

However, what is clear is that our government remains committed to alleviating the undue financial hardships of the carbon tax by providing support to Ontarians during these difficult economic circumstances. In fact, we have already seen our government's commitment to alleviating the carbon tax by extending gas cuts to the end of this year.

In closing, motion 82 provides all parliamentary members the opportunity of sending an important message to the federal Liberals. The message is an increase to the carbon tax is wrong and must be scrapped entirely to reduce financial hardships on all Ontarians. Spike the hike.

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

Mr. John Fraser: As I respect the member very much, I thought it was important tonight that I put some facts and figures to this motion that we're debating. We haven't really had the opportunity to fully discuss this in this Legislature, albeit this is the sixth motion, both private members' and government, that's been put forward—so we've had hours and hours of debate on it. As a matter of fact, yesterday, in the finance minister's speech, he said "carbon tax" 10 times in the first 10 minutes—pretty impressive.

Now, in the last 41 sessional days since October 25, Conservative members in this House rose 272 times to talk about the carbon tax in question period. Literally almost every question—almost every question.

Interjections.

Mr. John Fraser: Yes, I know that you're proud of yourselves. I know that you're proud of yourselves; there's

no question. Literally every question. The member was talking about an echo chamber—that's an echo chamber, folks.

Anyone here, anybody, anybody at all: How many times did government members raise the environment? Take a guess, somebody.

Interjection: Zero.

Mr. John Fraser: No, not zero; twice—272 to 2.

How about health care? How about health care, folks? Two million Ontarians don't have a family doctor. How many times did they ask about health care? How many times? Too many families are having to take out their credit card instead of their OHIP card to access primary care services. How many times, folks? Twice.

And how many times have they raised the crushing increases that renters are facing in this province? How many times? Anybody, guess. Any one of you. Anybody.

Interjection: Zero.

Mr. John Fraser: You're right: zero, zilch, nada, not happening. The biggest driver of inflation and pressure on families right now is the cost of housing and this government doesn't talk about it at all—doesn't talk about renters, doesn't talk about them being crushed underneath that. So be proud of saying this 272 times, but you know what? You're not talking about what's important to Ontario families.

The irony of this, Speaker, the irony of this whole thing, the irony, folks—irony—is that there is one reason we have a carbon tax here in Ontario, and that reason is Premier Ford opened the door to the carbon tax here in Ontario when he cancelled a made-in-Ontario plan for climate change that didn't put a burden on families. He cancelled it and, as a matter of fact, to put icing on the cake, he fired the Environmental Commissioner. He fired the Environmental Commissioner, and then he put no plan for climate change.

So why do you think we're paying this tax? It's because Doug Ford—

Interjections.

Mr. John Fraser: I withdraw—the Premier. I'm all worked up.

Because you're making this big fuss, but you're not telling anybody the reason is that your boss is the one who opened the door. He opened the door to the carbon tax. So, 272 times? How can you be proud of that when people are paying for basic primary care services? Renters are facing crushing rent increases and you're not even talking about it.

Were you here? What did you do? Where's the plan for climate change? You know, maybe we should think about 30 or 40 years from now. Maybe that's part of our responsibility here. I know you only like to think about today. I know the Premier can only think just up to about the end of his nose. But we've got to do something about climate change.

So what's going on here, what's happening with this government not talking about the things it can do—and actually, I said it this morning and I'll say it again right now: The Premier is quick to point a finger, but he's not LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

able to lift a finger to help families when they're struggling with things like rent increases or having to pay for primary care here in Ontario. That's the truth. The Premier spends his time pointing his finger, but won't lift a finger to help Ontario families when they're struggling. That's what this is all about.

Actually, participating in this debate, participating any further in the nonsense that's going around about this is a waste of people's time, a waste of all of our time, a waste of our constituents' time, because right now, we need to be focusing on things like rent increases and making sure that people don't have to use their credit card instead of their OHIP card just to get basic services.

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

Mr. Dave Smith: I'd like to give some facts as well: 7.7% increase in carbon tax costs in the natural resources and forestry industry. That's the cost of lumber. That is the cost of aggregates like gravel. We need to have lumber. We need to have gravel. We need to have concrete. We need to have all of those things to build the homes that people are looking for.

So to suggest that the carbon tax is not affecting the cost of housing in Ontario would be completely false. We know that the cost of all of those raw materials has gone up significantly as a result of that. And one of the things that we cannot do in Ontario is build someone's home without the use of wood. We have to have it. It's not optional. We know that we need to have cement. We need gravel to make that cement. You cannot build anything without concrete. That means the cost to the consumer has gone up as a result of it.

Let's talk about another fact: The OPP, in 2022, spent \$4 million on carbon tax for their vehicles—\$4 million for carbon tax. Can anyone in here please tell me how that helped with public safety? That's one of the things that we hear about all the time, challenges with public safety. And \$4 million would put 40 more front-line officers on the road, but instead we're paying a carbon tax for that.

In 2022—in the 2022 year alone—Ontario hospitals paid \$27.2 million in carbon tax to heat the hospitals. It's not an option to turn off the heat in the hospitals. What could we have done with health care if we didn't have to spend \$27.2 million in carbon tax just to heat the hospitals?

So for the Liberal independent to my left to make the suggestion that the carbon tax is not causing any of these harms—there's prime examples of it: \$27.2 million wasted on a federal tax that could have been used to perform 104,000 MRIs—104,000 MRIs that were not performed in Ontario because of the carbon tax. **1840**

People in my riding, in Apsley—their grocery store burnt. They were without a grocery store for two years. They just reopened on Monday. Fantastic. Kudos to the Sayers family for getting it rebuilt. But for two years, they had to travel 50 kilometres to get their groceries; they either went to Lakefield or Bancroft. Anyone in North Kawartha had to travel 50 kilometres, sometimes more, simply to get their groceries—17 cents per litre in gas. People driving in Apsley aren't driving electric vehicles because the range isn't long enough for them to do it; the hydro isn't secure enough for them to actually have them charged that way. We figured it was costing about \$2.25 just to drive—in carbon tax—to get your groceries. It's not optional.

I strongly encourage all members to vote in favour of this motion because it's something that we need to do. We need to stop the carbon tax.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to thank all members in this House who participated in the debate on motion 82.

Again, it doesn't matter what corner of my riding, what event, what opportunity to engage with my constituents, they've been crystal clear, these past few months, that when it comes to Justin Trudeau's cruel April Fool's joke, his 23% increase to the carbon tax, they want our government and they want members of this Legislature to spike the hike. They can't afford Justin Trudeau's cruel April Fool's Day joke.

There were some members who talked about costs. I will, like my colleague from Thunder Bay, quote the independent federal Parliamentary Budget Officer, who has made it clear that most Canadians will pay more in tax than they receive in a rebate. This year, Trudeau's carbon tax will cost families in Ontario \$627; in Alberta, \$911; in Saskatchewan, \$525; in Manitoba, \$502; in Nova Scotia, \$537; in Prince Edward Island, \$550; and in Newfoundland and Labrador, \$377.

I want to repeat something, Speaker, that I said in debate of motion 82: 70% of Premiers and 70% of Canadians are opposed to Justin Trudeau's April Fool's Day hike of the carbon tax. We do not need another hike on gas and on groceries and on heating our homes

I ask all members to support motion number 82. We need to send a message to Justin Trudeau. We need to spike the hike and scrap the tax.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

Mr. Clark has moved private member's notice of motion number 82. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, it will be deferred until the next instance of deferred votes.

Vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): All matters related to private members' public business having been completed, we now have two late shows.

Pursuant to standing order 36, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

LONG-TERM CARE

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member from Niagara Falls has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Minister of Long-Term Care. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the parliamentary assistant or minister may reply for up to five minutes.

I recognize the member from Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Recently, we learned that nearly 300 seniors—300 families in this province—have been moved to homes not of their choosing, without their consent. These patients were moved under threat that if they did not move, they'd be charged up to \$400 a day by this government. In some instances, this law, Bill 7, can lead to patients being moved up to 150 kilometres away from their homes and their families. And when I questioned the Minister of Long-Term Care—who I will note is the fourth minister on this file in five years—instead of answering these concerns and apologizing to the families, the minister quite simply dodged the question and instead gave his usual stump speech about the investment this government is making in long-term care.

I want to talk about this government's record on the long-term-care file and about this legislation, Bill 7, that this government passed in haste and without any form of public consultation. We know that, over the course of the pandemic, we lost 6,000 seniors in long-term-care homes the vast majority of those, 78%, in private, for-profit homes.

We know that this government's long-term-care inspection system completely fell apart during the beginning of COVID. In fact, there was no inspections—zero, none of long-term-care homes during the first seven weeks of COVID in the spring of 2020.

We know that this government is rewarding some of the worst for-profit, private companies in long-term care, companies like Southbridge Care Homes which owns Orchard Villa where more than 70 residents died during the first wave of the pandemic. Things got so bad at the Orchard Villa that the military had to be called in residents being left in soiled diapers, residents sleeping on bare mattresses, insects, dying of dehydration and some instances of choking to death.

But instead of holding Southbridge accountable, the government chose to give them a new 30-year licence and an expansion. We know, hearing directly from stakeholder groups, that this government is just refusing to invest in what is needed in public homes. They have refused to fully fund the Fixing Long-Term Care Act.

Now, we have news about seniors, 300 of them: our moms, our dads, our aunts, our uncles, our grandparents the people who built this great province—being moved out without their consent to facilities hundreds of kilometres away from their families and their homes, under the threat of \$400-a-day fines. This is simply unacceptable. And it's unacceptable that this minister—again, that the fourth long-term care minister in just over five years—is refusing to answer direct questions or to apologize to these families.

So I'm asking this government and this minister, will he repeal Bill 7, apologize to these families and start holding these bad actors in private, for-profit care accountable, make the investments that stakeholders in public care are saying are necessary to take care of our seniors, and, finally, treat seniors with the respect and dignity that they deserve?

And I want to answer two things. The minister also said that I don't support long-term care. I think most people in my riding would know that's a mistake, but I just happen to have this headline: "Gilmore Lodge to Expand on Former Mall Property." It's a picture of myself, the Chair Alan Caslin, the mayor of Fort Erie and at that time the Councillor Sandy Annunziata—who was a Conservative, by the way. "Future home of Gilmore Lodge"—it's a picture of me standing there. Do you know when that was? Thursday, July 20, 2017. That is before you guys even came into government that I have been working with longterm care.

And he mentioned some other things. Oakwood manor— I'm not sure the home he was referring to in his comments: Millennium Trail Manor or Oakwood Park Lodge. Nearly 100% of the residents and staff got COVID; 35 seniors died in just two months at Oakwood—23% of the residents; 25 seniors died at Millennium Trail Manor—16% of the residents. The situation got so bad at those two homes, Niagara Health had to come in.

Crescent manor—I believe he means Crescent Park Lodge—14 people died from COVID, 68 beds at the home. Close to one in five residents died of COVID.

At Oakwood manor on Christmas Day, I was talking to the families, because they had died on Christmas Eve can you imagine losing your mom or your grandmother? Those 40 people, they were calling my house on Christmas Eve and Christmas morning.

So I absolutely proved—hopefully he understands that since 2017, we have been fighting for long-term care for publicly owned homes.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Response? The member for Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston. 1850

Mr. John Jordan: I'm happy to respond to the member from Niagara Falls and expand on our government's success in building Ontario's long-term-care sector. In his question on March 21 and again today, he raised concerns about Bill 7 and the previous condition of some of our long-term-care homes. I say previous because the homes that this government inherited in 2018 are not the homes of today. The homes of today have more staff. They have the highest standards in the country, best practices per IPAC supported by a designated staff in every home and held to account with a rigorous inspection system.

As the member opposite knows, our government has made historic investments and continue to make longterm-care homes the best homes in the country. Just yesterday, in our government's plan to build Ontario, the Minister of Finance announced a further expansion of the construction funding subsidy and additional staffing initiatives to increase our health human resources. This will allow our government to continue to build long-term care for everyone in this province.

We have committed to build 58,000 new and reconditioned homes; 18,000 of these either have the ribbons cut or shovels in the ground. I can compare that—and the member opposite mentioned one—to the 611 that were built while he was here supporting the Liberal government. This is important. As we know, after decades of underfunding by the previous Liberal government, supported by this member and his party, Ontario had a capacity crisis in long-term care.

The member raised concerns about Bill 7. In fact, he just asked again for it to be repealed. Let me tell you a little bit about ALC and educate the member from Niagara Falls. In addition, due to the priority funds, ALC, Bill 7—the member opposite needs to think about our seniors. Laying in a hospital bed waiting to go home, even if it is a new home, a long-term-care home, that's no life. For most in ALC, that is exactly what they are doing—waiting. This government, since Bill 7, has moved 17,000 people into a long-term-care home; changed them from being a patient in a hospital to being a resident in a home.

So, Speaker, what does this mean? It means going to a dining hall and talking to friends, making new friends, social interaction; so important. It means physical activity and access to many programs and services. It means, due to this government's investment of \$4.9 billion to increase staffing by 27,000 health care staff, that they are going to get attentive care.

In addition, due to the priority funds, they will have access to a growing number of diagnostic services and additional services right in their home. I want to emphasize the word "home." A person's deconditioning while waiting in a hospital is a major concern for all health care providers—deconditioning while they're waiting in the hospital. It's so important that people get the right care in the right place in a timely way. This government is getting it done.

Under the previous Liberal government, hallway health care was the norm. This is what our government is fixing. The member for Niagara Falls continues to vote against initiatives: initiatives for more staffing, initiatives for more homes, initiatives for higher standards. Seventeen thousand ALC patients are now residents in a home, and only 293 of those patients have been placed in a home not on their list, but they remain on a priority lists to get in a preferred home. They're waiting in a home to go to a home, not in a hospital bed.

Speaker, our government will always protect and care for Ontario seniors. They built Ontario. It's time we pay them back. This is why, just yesterday, our government continued to make historic investments into staffing and capital but, more importantly, we are investing into care historic investments that were desperately needed long ago but failed to be made by the previous government, the government that member supported. The member opposite speaks of respect and dignity yet votes against the very programs and services that benefit his community. It doesn't stop him, as he mentioned, from showing up at the announcements. I challenge the member opposite to finally do the right thing when the time comes and stand up—

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

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Excuse me. You know that that language is unparliamentary.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'll retract it, but it's true.

ONTARIO BUDGET

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member for Ottawa South has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Minister of Finance. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the minister or parliamentary assistant may reply for five minutes.

I recognize the member from Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: I want to thank the table and you, Speaker, for being here, and all my colleagues. It is a late show. But I was truly dissatisfied, and I'm pleased to have the opportunity to say a few words.

I think I said this this morning: Never has a government in Ontario spent so much, borrowed so much, incurred so much debt to accomplish so little. There is no relief for families facing an affordability crisis. There's no relief for renters facing massive rent increases. And the Premier's NIMBY "I'll take care of my friends first" approach is not making affordable housing a reality for anyone in this province.

Almost two million Ontarians don't have a family doctor, and too many of them, right now, are having to use their credit card instead of their OHIP card to access basic primary care services. That's not good. That's not a province that any of us want. That's not why we have publicly funded health care. And I'm talking about basic primary care services.

So I asked the Premier this morning, "Why didn't you do anything?" Well, I didn't get an answer. Minister of Finance answered me—didn't get an answer there either. So I asked him again.

In the budget, the meagre increase for health care amounted to a cut. And back to those two million Ontarians who don't have a family doctor—it left them, when they saw that budget, without hope. They need access to primary care; we all do. Our sons or daughters might need to go to the hospital—our grandchildren, ourselves. We might have to go see a family doctor so we don't go to the emergency room.

Under this Premier, too many families are now having to use their credit card and not their OHIP card to access those basic primary care services. The Premier, the government and the minister know about this. And there was nothing to address that in the budget. The Premier knows this is happening, and he's just watching. And by all accounts, that's just fine with him. So in this place, the Premier is ready to point a finger, but he's not able to lift a finger for those families who are facing those things that I just talked about. Ontarians need a Premier who's going to do that—who's going to lift a finger to make sure that they don't have to take out their credit card when they go to get primary care; that they're not going to be crushed under the weight of massive rent increases because there's no rent control; or that they're not like the 200 seniors in Mississauga who are going to lose their home because their home is being sold to somebody else. People need the Premier to lift a finger to help them, to do something.

He's not lifting a finger to help the hundreds of seniors in Orléans at the Promenade who are facing \$800, \$1,000 rent increases. They can't afford to live there. They don't know where they're going to live. They're being threatened by their landlord.

That's what we needed to see in this budget. We needed to see those measures that were going to help Ontario families, that were going to give Ontario families confidence that the challenges and the struggles they face every day with affordability were somehow going to be addressed. They weren't in this budget. It leaves them without hope—without hope that they're going to be able to put food on the table when their rents are getting jacked up or that they're not going to have to make a choice when they go to get primary care, because they've got to spend some money on that instead of something else for their kids.

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Ontarians don't need a Premier who wants to point a finger. Ontarians need a Premier who's going to lift a finger to help them with the struggles that they face every day.

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

Mr. Stephen Crawford: Great to be here this evening. I must say for the record, however, that I'm a little surprised I'm here. I thought the Minister of Finance did a terrific job answering the question today in question period.

In fact, the question was all over the place. It didn't really have any rhyme or reason. But I'm going to nevertheless try and answer the question that was all over the place. I'll focus on what you did touch on, which was affordability and what our government is doing for affordability.

I just want to highlight just some of the initiatives that our government has taken with respect to helping the people of Ontario get through an affordability crisis that the independent Liberals and the federal Liberal government put their hands in the sand and pretended doesn't exist.

One of the initiatives that the Minister of Transportation and the associate minister have touched on here in the Legislature is the One Fare plan. The One Fare plan is saving commuters \$1,600 a year, people who are taking multiple transit systems, whether they're taking Oakville Transit and then the GO train, or York transit or TTC and GO train. That's a substantial savings for a lot of people who work right here in this Legislature: \$1,600 per year. Our government has increased ODSP by 5% and indexed it to inflation, for the first time ever in the province of Ontario, to help those individuals get by through these tough times.

The member opposite touched on some of the seniors in Orléans. Well, perhaps he hasn't read what we've been doing here with the government with the increase in the GAINS program, which will extend to another 100,000 seniors in the province of Ontario.

We've eliminated the licence renewal sticker fees— \$120 per year. I would encourage the member opposite to go talk to his constituents and see how many people would like to pay that fee every year.

Of course, we have lowered, and continue to lower through the budget, the gas tax cut—over five cents a litre—continuing to save commuters and drivers in the province of Ontario.

Recently as well, we've increased the minimum wage to \$16.55 an hour, which is among the highest in Canada—in fact, one of the highest in North America helping those low-income workers.

It's not just about affordability. It's also about having a job. Because if you don't have a job, you can't afford things. You can't afford the essentials in life, let alone the luxuries. Our government has been laser-focused on creating jobs, but more importantly, creating the right opportunity for jobs in this province. We've attracted \$26 billion in auto investment from \$0 three years ago. That is going to create thousands upon thousands upon thousands of goodpaying jobs, union and non-union, throughout Ontario.

We've created 900,000 jobs since being elected in 2018—900,000. The previous Liberal government unfortunately gave up on the manufacturing sector. The member opposite will know that. He was a part of the government. They said, "Ontario is going service sector. We don't need manufacturing in the province of Ontario anymore." Nothing could be further from the truth.

We've created 300,000 manufacturing jobs in Ontario. We are in a manufacturing renaissance in Ontario, and that didn't happen by accident; that happened by design. Not the government creating jobs, but the government creating the environment for businesses and investment here in the province of Ontario. We are witnessing a manufacturing renaissance. All those jobs, those high-paying jobs are going to help the people of Ontario through the affordability crisis.

Finally, I would add not only what's in the budget but what's not in the budget. Under the previous Liberal government, taxes went up; corporate taxes, income taxes. The party opposite, with the carbon queen herself, Bonnie Crombie, still seem to be supportive of the federal carbon tax, which is the largest punitive tax on the people of this country, businesses, consumers, families, everybody. It's a tax on everything. Everything is going up in price. The member opposite talked about affordability of housing. Part of the reason, among others, that housing is getting more expensive is that interest rates have gone up because of inflation, which is caused by the carbon tax. What I can say, Speaker, is that he is correct. In this budget we have a record spend of over \$200 billion in this province. But guess what, Speaker? We didn't do that by raising taxes. You know why? There are zero tax increases in this budget. That's something I can't say for the party opposite, which is the party of tax-and-spend. The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): There being no further matters to debate, pursuant to standing order 36(c), I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried.

This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1906.

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(PC)	Nord	aînés et de l'Accessibilité
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	XX7 (1	du Commerce
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	Weston	civiques et du Multiculturalisme
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Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton Smoding Fort Vorts	
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		Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe
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MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean	•
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
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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
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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
Or starl off Com (DC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	-
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Thagara h obt Thagara o ator	

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Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)		/ Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
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Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
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Kasheed, Kaleed (IIVD)	Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
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Riddell, Brian (PC)	Cambridge	winister of indigenous Analis / winister des Artaires autoentones
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
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	Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
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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) Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre Toronto—Danforth	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
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	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Vaugeois, 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	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	
Vacant	Milton	