

Legislative  
Assembly  
of Ontario



Assemblée  
législative  
de l'Ontario

---

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

No. 151

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

N° 151

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

Wednesday  
24 April 2024

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

Mercredi  
24 avril 2024

---

Speaker: Honourable Ted Arnott  
Clerk: Trevor Day

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott  
Greffier : Trevor Day

### **Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<https://www.ola.org/>

### **Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7400.

### **Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

### **Renseignements sur l'index**

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7400.

---

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

# CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Wednesday 24 April 2024 / Mercredi 24 avril 2024

## Consideration of Bill Pr32

Mr. John Fraser ..... 8685

## ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

### Supporting Children's Futures Act, 2024, Bill 188, Mr. Parsa / Loi de 2024 visant à soutenir l'avenir des enfants, projet de loi 188, M. Parsa

Mr. Terence Kernaghan ..... 8685  
Mr. Trevor Jones ..... 8687  
Mr. Joel Harden ..... 8688  
Ms. Laura Smith ..... 8688  
Mr. John Fraser ..... 8688  
Mr. Wayne Gates ..... 8689  
Mrs. Daisy Wai ..... 8689  
Mr. Wayne Gates ..... 8691  
Mr. Billy Pang ..... 8691  
Mr. Peter Tabuns ..... 8691  
Mrs. Robin Martin ..... 8692  
Ms. Peggy Sattler ..... 8692  
Ms. Peggy Sattler ..... 8692  
Second reading debate deemed adjourned ..... 8693

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉES ET DÉPUTÉS

### Volunteers

Mr. Nolan Quinn ..... 8694

### Health care

Mr. Wayne Gates ..... 8694

### Transportation infrastructure

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal ..... 8694

### Environmental protection

Mr. Chris Glover ..... 8694

### Armenian genocide anniversary

Mr. Aris Babikian ..... 8695

### Don Morin

Mme France Gélinas ..... 8695

### School facilities

Ms. Laura Smith ..... 8695

### Wearing of kaffiyehs

Mr. John Fraser ..... 8695

### Canadian Cancer Survivor Network

Mr. Lorne Coe ..... 8696

### Autism Awareness Month

Mrs. Daisy Wai ..... 8696

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEUSES ET VISITEURS

Hon. Michael Parsa ..... 8696  
Mr. John Vanthof ..... 8696  
Hon. Lisa M. Thompson ..... 8696  
Miss Monique Taylor ..... 8696  
Hon. Doug Downey ..... 8696  
Ms. Bhutla Karpoche ..... 8696  
Ms. Stephanie Bowman ..... 8697  
Hon. Kinga Surma ..... 8697  
Ms. Jessica Bell ..... 8697  
Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon ..... 8697  
Hon. Greg Rickford ..... 8697  
Hon. Todd J. McCarthy ..... 8697  
Mr. Joel Harden ..... 8697  
Hon. Stan Cho ..... 8697  
Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta ..... 8697  
Mr. John Yakabuski ..... 8697  
Mr. Brian Riddell ..... 8697  
Mr. Andrew Dowie ..... 8697

## QUESTION PERIOD / PÉRIODE DE QUESTIONS

### Government accountability

Mr. Jeff Burch ..... 8697  
Hon. Paul Calandra ..... 8697

### Autism treatment / Missing persons

Miss Monique Taylor ..... 8698  
Hon. Michael Parsa ..... 8698  
Hon. Michael S. Kerzner ..... 8699

### Land use planning

Ms. Catherine Fife ..... 8699  
Hon. Lisa M. Thompson ..... 8699  
Mr. John Vanthof ..... 8699

### Taxation

Mr. Mike Harris ..... 8700  
Hon. Todd Smith ..... 8700

### Health care

Mme France Gélinas ..... 8701  
Mr. Nolan Quinn ..... 8701

### Taxation

Mr. Andrew Dowie ..... 8701  
Hon. Victor Fedeli ..... 8701

### Autism treatment

Ms. Chandra Pasma ..... 8702  
Hon. Stephen Lecce ..... 8702  
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong ..... 8702  
Hon. Michael Parsa ..... 8702

<b>Services for persons with disabilities</b>	
Mr. Michael Mantha .....	8702
Hon. Michael Parsa .....	8703
<b>Taxation</b>	
Mr. Will Bouma .....	8703
Hon. Todd Smith .....	8703
<b>Education funding</b>	
Ms. Bhutla Karpoche .....	8704
Hon. Stephen Lecce .....	8704
Ms. Jessica Bell .....	8704
<b>Office of the Premier</b>	
Mrs. Karen McCrimmon .....	8704
Hon. Doug Ford .....	8705
<b>Taxation</b>	
Mr. Dave Smith .....	8705
Hon. Greg Rickford .....	8705
<b>Forest firefighting / Lutte contre les incendies de forêt</b>	
Mr. Guy Bourgouin .....	8706
Hon. Graydon Smith .....	8706
<b>Taxation / Long-term care</b>	
Mrs. Daisy Wai .....	8706
Hon. Stan Cho .....	8706
<b>Tenant protection</b>	
Ms. Jennifer K. French .....	8707
Hon. Paul Calandra .....	8707
<b>Dairy Farmers of Ontario</b>	
Hon. David Piccini .....	8708
Hon. Doug Ford .....	8708
<b>Answers to written questions</b>	
Ms. Jennifer K. French .....	8708
Hon. Paul Calandra .....	8708
<b>Correction of record</b>	
Mr. John Yakabuski .....	8708
Hon. Todd Smith .....	8708

**REPORTS BY COMMITTEES /  
RAPPORTS DE COMITÉS**

<b>Standing Committee on Social Policy</b>	
Mr. Steve Clark .....	8708
Report adopted .....	8708

**PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS**

<b>Special-needs students</b>	
Ms. Chandra Pasma .....	8708
<b>Winter highway maintenance</b>	
Mme France Gélinas .....	8709
<b>Social assistance</b>	
Mr. Terence Kernaghan .....	8709

<b>Social assistance</b>	
Ms. Chandra Pasma .....	8709
<b>Land use planning</b>	
Ms. Catherine Fife .....	8709
<b>Missing persons</b>	
Miss Monique Taylor .....	8709
<b>Hospital services</b>	
Mr. Chris Glover .....	8709
<b>Cancer treatment</b>	
Mme France Gélinas .....	8710
<b>Social assistance</b>	
Mr. Terence Kernaghan .....	8710
<b>Health care</b>	
Mme France Gélinas .....	8710
<b>Organ donation</b>	
Mme France Gélinas .....	8710
<b>Subventions aux résidents du Nord pour frais de transport à des fins médicales</b>	
Mme France Gélinas .....	8711

**ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR**

<b>Supporting Children's Futures Act, 2024, Bill 188, Mr. Parsa / Loi de 2024 visant à soutenir l'avenir des enfants, projet de loi 188, M. Parsa</b>	
Ms. Peggy Sattler .....	8711
Mrs. Daisy Wai .....	8712
Ms. Catherine Fife .....	8712
Mr. Anthony Leardi .....	8712
Ms. Jennifer K. French .....	8713
Mr. Anthony Leardi .....	8713
Mr. Billy Pang .....	8713
MPP Jill Andrew .....	8714
Ms. Jennifer K. French .....	8714
Mrs. Robin Martin .....	8715
Mme France Gélinas .....	8715
Mrs. Robin Martin .....	8716
MPP Jill Andrew .....	8716
Mme Dawn Gallagher Murphy .....	8717
Mr. Terence Kernaghan .....	8717
Mr. David Smith .....	8717
Mr. Nolan Quinn .....	8717
Mr. Anthony Leardi .....	8719
Ms. Chandra Pasma .....	8719
Ms. Laura Smith .....	8719
Mr. Chris Glover .....	8719
Ms. Laura Smith .....	8721
Ms. Catherine Fife .....	8721
Mr. David Smith .....	8721
MPP Jill Andrew .....	8722
Ms. Laura Smith .....	8722
Mr. John Yakabuski .....	8722

Ms. Chandra Pasma .....	8723
Ms. Laura Smith .....	8724
MPP Jill Andrew .....	8724
Second reading agreed to.....	8724

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS /  
AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC ÉMANANT  
DES DÉPUTÉES ET DÉPUTÉS**

**Supporting Mobility, Affordability and Reliable  
Transportation in Ontario Act, 2024, Bill 184,  
MPP Hazell / Loi de 2024 pour une mobilité  
accrue, des prix plus abordables et des transports  
plus fiables en Ontario, projet de loi 184,  
MPP Hazell**

MPP Andrea Hazell .....	8725
Mr. Ric Bresee .....	8726
M. Guy Bourgouin.....	8728
Mr. Adil Shamji .....	8729
Mr. Joel Harden .....	8730
MPP Andrea Hazell .....	8730
Second reading vote deferred .....	8731



## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 24 April 2024

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 24 avril 2024

*The House met at 0900.*

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

*Prayers.*

### CONSIDERATION OF BILL PR32

**Mr. John Fraser:** Point of order, Speaker?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Point of order: the member for Ottawa South.

**Mr. John Fraser:** I seek unanimous consent that the member for Ottawa South be permitted to move second and third readings of Bill Pr32, Allied Contractors (Kitchener) Limited Act, 2024.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Ottawa South is seeking the unanimous consent of the House that the member for Ottawa South be permitted to move second and third readings of Bill Pr32, Allied Contractors (Kitchener) Limited Act, 2024. Agreed? Agreed.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S FUTURES ACT, 2024

#### LOI DE 2024 VISANT À SOUTENIR L'AVENIR DES ENFANTS

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 23, 2024, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 188, An Act to amend the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017 and various other Acts / Projet de loi 188, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2017 sur les services à l'enfance, à la jeunesse et à la famille et diverses autres lois.

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

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** It's my great honour to rise today to discuss Bill 188, Supporting Children's Futures Act.

I'd like to begin with a story. Back in September 2019, I had the opportunity to meet a really inspirational individual, somebody who had founded and created the Child Welfare Political Action Committee. Her name is Jane Kovarikova. It was interesting because when we first met, she informed me, "Oh, I'm a card-carrying Conservative." I said, "What does that matter?" We continued to do some pretty phenomenal work which culminated in a really wonderful event for a number of young kids. You see, Jane told me about her background, and her background was as a former crown ward who had aged out of the system without having been adopted. She shared some very disturbing statistics. Some of the statistics she shared included

that 1,000 Ontario teens each year age out of care without having been adopted. About 400 of those teens will qualify for post-secondary education and 400 will drop out of high school. Of those 400 who do qualify for post-secondary education, only 20%—20%, Speaker; that's 80 per year—will pursue post-secondary education.

But another unfortunate aspect of that is, even of that 80, only eight end up graduating from post-secondary education. It is an enormous loss of human potential, of brilliance of innovation, of some ideas that we may never know because the state has not supported these young people in their dreams and their pursuits for higher education.

Jane discussed many people whom she's had the privilege to work with and how teens in the foster care system have a number of different intersectional barriers, including things like poverty. They may have moved around quite a bit as a young person. They might have, as a result of that, fallen behind in school. Some might just simply not be ready because of these arbitrary age-limit caps that are placed upon post-secondary education. They might be ready after the arbitrarily low age-limit for child welfare support. You see, many also might have other barriers, such as psychological barriers, logistical barriers, where they live, where they want to pursue their studies. They might even run into the barriers of the OSAP application itself, which asks them questions such as, "What are your parents' names and what are their incomes?" I don't know that children who are aging out of the child welfare system are really able to answer that question in a correct way.

From 18 to 21, youth will have an allowance of approximately \$875 per month and after that—and I know there have been changes from this government—unfortunately, these individuals are expected to be ready to enter society and ready to enter the job market. They have to be fully independent. They have to have their credentials. They have to be career-ready for life as fully functioning adults, and I don't think that is necessarily possible. You see, the state is what many have described as a truly terrible parent.

Now, I was inspired after having met Jane because of her work with the MPP for Sudbury Jamie West, and she had indicated that, along with the MPP for Sudbury, they were able to convince Laurentian to offer free post-secondary education for five young people who had aged out of the crown ward system and had not been adopted. It was phenomenal work, life-changing work, and I was really incredibly inspired.

I want to read a quotation from Laurentian from that time. It states, "Jane Kovarikova, a graduate of Laurentian

and currently a doctoral candidate in political science at Western University, grew up in foster care in Ontario. She founded the Child Welfare Political Action Committee, a not-for-profit organization that advocates for change in the child welfare system. It was thanks in part to her advocacy, with the support of Jamie West, the MPP for Sudbury and also a Laurentian alumnus, that Laurentian reinstated its tuition-waiver program this year.” Phenomenal, phenomenal work. The Child Welfare Political Action Committee has gone on. There are at least 71 institute options for children who are exiting the crown ward system to pursue that free post-secondary education.

Jane also goes on to state: “Education levels the playing field for people like me. I am grateful that financial access to university education will no longer be a barrier to social mobility for even more people who were raised in Ontario’s foster care system....” She goes on to state, “If you were or are in foster care, know that Huron, Brescia, King’s and Western, believe in you.”

#### 0910

You see, Speaker, after that initial September 19 meeting in 2019, Jane and I were able to get meetings with Dr. Barry Craig and Dr. David Malloy, and Jane went on to meet with Dr. Alan Shepard, and Huron, Brescia and King’s were each able to offer five positions each for children who had aged out of the crown ward system. Then, main campus ended up offering 15 spots, bringing it to a total of 30.

I want to quote Dr. Barry Craig, who provided some information when they made this announcement on October 27, 2020. Dr. Craig said, “At Huron, we believe everyone, no matter background or socio-economic status, deserves access to education. It’s what defines Huron’s mission of delivering elite, yet accessible education, while challenging our students to be leaders with heart. Having this partnership will ensure a clearer path to education for those crown wards. Now more than ever, our hearts need to be in everything we do, and we must always enable success and opportunities for those in less than ideal situations.”

It was a powerful meeting for me, because, as it turns out, I was a joint student of both Huron University College and Western University. It was really amazing that the leader there, Dr. Barry Craig, was able to see the value in this initiative. It was really inspirational to me.

Jane and I also had a phenomenal meeting with Dr. David Malloy from King’s University College, who stated, “A basic moral test is how our most vulnerable members are faring. All of us at King’s are dedicated to improving the life of the poor by breaking down barriers to education. We are humbled to help enable former crown wards to be fully part of society by aiding them with a King’s education rooted in social justice, equality and the education of the whole person.”

It was yet again another powerful meeting. It was amazing to see, when brilliant minds come together, united in purpose, how they can change the lives of young people who deserve our care.

Dr. Alan Shepard states, “Jane’s success and leadership are inspiring—we want to encourage others to follow in her footsteps. We’re proud to join the growing number of schools committed to helping crown wards achieve their academic goals.”

At the time, I stated, “I am incredibly thankful to Huron, Brescia, King’s and Western for their commitment to our community. This historic leadership illustrates how Londoners care about one another and promote a kinder, more just and brighter community. My heartfelt thanks to the community-building vision and compassion of Drs. Craig, Jensen, Malloy and Shepard, as well as a true leader whose desire to reach backwards brings others forward, PhD candidate Jane Kovarikova. This is life-changing work.”

It was truly an honour to participate in this, and I just want to go over some of the other places where the Child Welfare Political Action Committee was able to secure free post-secondary education. They managed to have work done with the University of Toronto. Université Sainte-Anne created a youth-in-care bursary. Wilfred Laurier announced an updated Learners from Care Academic Success Program. They also were working in Manitoba to try to bring forward tuition-free post-secondary education opportunities.

IBT, I believe, is the first career college to offer tuition waivers to current and former crown wards. The University of Ottawa introduced a financial support program for youth leaving care. Sheridan had also offered a tuition bursary for current and former youth in care. Northern College offered educational opportunities. Nipissing University and Canadore College offered tuition waivers to youth in care. Lakehead University offered a tuition waiver for youth in care. CBU has a tuition waiver program. We also have Seneca.

We also have New Brunswick Community College. It’s the first post-secondary institution in New Brunswick. It could go on and on. It’s across Canada. It is phenomenal. Holland College; McMaster; NSCC, the first college in Atlantic Canada; MSVU; Loyalist—it is truly phenomenal, the work that has happened, and again, this is life-changing work.

So, Speaker, as we look towards Bill 188, I am just so thankful for the work that was able to be achieved and so happy that we were able to cross party lines and were able to work together. We were able to focus on one purpose, and that was to make sure that kids have the support that they need to change their lives because education is the greatest democratizing force. It’s unfortunate, though, that kids in care facing difficulties, facing potentially an incredibly problematic background that we could never possibly understand, for many of us—we should be making sure that the state, as a parent, is providing them with those opportunities to escape cycles of poverty, to really live to their true potential.

When we look at Bill 188, it is interesting: I believe it is something that should be supportable, but it does raise some questions for us in the official opposition. One of the concerns that we had back when the Conservatives first



formed government was how the child and youth advocate was removed as an independent officer of this Legislature, and it does beg the question: Why was this done, and does the government now see the value in reinstating that officer, to make sure that those kids have a contact, have a person—a voice within the Legislature—who is independent? That is incredibly important.

I also think to some testimony that we heard at the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs as we travelled across the province. We heard from the London and Middlesex children's aid society that there were six children whose parents had to put them into care because there weren't spots within the community for them to receive the mental health assistance they required. Since the number was reported in February of this year—it was six—and I believe that number has grown to nine, last I checked, and could potentially be yet more. I can't think of the moral difficulty of a parent who loves their children and wants to give their child every opportunity that this world has to offer, and yet is faced with this situation where they simply can't help their child anymore, because there's no access to mental health supports. Imagine that, Speaker—imagine being in that scenario, where there's no other option for you but to put your child into care. Now, those children aren't necessarily in need of care, which is really the problem here, Speaker. What they're in need of is mental health supports.

Yesterday, the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, in its consideration of Bill 180, the budget bill, heard about how there can be up to a two-and-a-half-year wait for children accessing mental health care. Now, if you think about that alone, in and of itself, that a child who has a mental health need may have to wait two and a half years—that amount of time for an adult is an incredibly lengthy amount of time, but for a young person who is passing developmental milestones, who has an enormous amount of pressure, whether it be from school, whether it be from friends, social media, any number of things—that two-and-a-half-year gap is enormous, especially when one considers the intersection of mental health.

If we do not deal with the root cause of an issue, it ends up growing, it ends up ballooning, it ends up creating yet more issues and, unfortunately, at that point we're not dealing with the root cause, we're dealing with a number of after-effects. Why we don't simply make sure that kids have access to care within 30 days is beyond me.

0920

In discussing this bill, Bill 188 adds a new section to the Child, Youth and Family Services Act. It creates offences and penalties for a child services provider who contravenes sections of the act around restraints of wards, confinement of wards or use of corporal punishment. It makes good sense. Providers can face elevated fines—up to \$250,000—one year of imprisonment or both. Providers that are not an individual, such as group homes, can also be fined \$250,000. I should state there are not also limits on other, more serious offences.

Speaker, I want to think as well about privacy and about how this impacts children who have aged out of the crown

ward system. After having lived potentially a very difficult youth and potentially a very difficult upbringing, these young people didn't actually have access to their own information. That, to me, is unconscionable.

Oftentimes, when we are young people, we are formed by the people we meet and the experiences that we have as we grow up. I can imagine that many young people who have aged out of the crown ward foster system would want to then go into a caring role, go into a role supporting other people who are facing that same sort of childhood that they were in. It's unconscionable to think that that person who might be working with young people in the foster system has access to children's information, but even though they have aged out as a crown ward, can't have access to their own information. That is something that is addressed with Bill 188, and I think it is long overdue.

I also want to think about how horrific and how disturbing it might be that a young person who has aged out of the foster system and is now working within the foster system as a caring person might be working alongside people who can access information about them—private information about them as a young person—without their knowledge. That is something that Bill 188 will seek to circumvent, and I think that is something that is long overdue. The information about us should be a possession of the person alone, not possessed by the system, especially when that person has become an adult.

As I begin to close my remarks, I just want to thank all of the education providers from Brescia University College, Huron University College, King's University College and Western University as well as Laurentian for seeing the value in supporting young people as they seek to improve themselves, as they pursue their dreams. Education is the great equalizer. Education is the great democratizing force.

I'm so proud that I was able to work on this. I know that, many years from now, I will probably look back on this life in politics, and as I consider what might be the things that I am most proud of, this will definitely be one, because it was an opportunity to help, to participate, to advocate, to make sure that these young people—who had a very difficult childhood, who had never been adopted, who have created a chosen family—would be able to pursue their dreams, and to also know that they had the support of these post-secondary institutions; to know that there are people out there who care about them, who want to see them achieve their dreams.

Speaker, this is life-changing work. But first and foremost, I want to thank, I want to congratulate and I want to honour Jane Kovarikova for her tremendous work. She's a force of nature. She's unstoppable. Jane, it was an honour to work with you. Thank you so much for everything that you continue to do.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** It's now time for questions.

**Mr. Trevor Jones:** Good morning, Speaker. I have to 100% agree with the member opposite about his recollection of Jane's story, and I appreciate him sharing that

today. That's an important leader who continues to lead among us.

I know a little bit about the background about the member opposite as a professional teacher and librarian. We have these professionals, like teachers, physicians, social workers; they're relied on to add to the protection of children, and they have a duty to report if they ever suspect that there's harm by a caregiver or by a parent. Bill 188 proposes expanding that professional outreach to include early child educators.

Would the member opposite support having early child educators added to this wraparound support, to take care of the interests of our young people?

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** I'd like to thank my friend from Chatham-Kent–Leamington for a truly excellent question.

As trained educators, we learn within teachers' college that the duty to report is paramount. It is not a matter of telling someone you are next to, it is not a matter of going to an administrator, it is not a matter of going to anyone except to report any suspicions straight away. There's no exception to that rule, nor should there be. If there's any thought that a child has been harmed, is in danger now or is in danger in the future, it has to be reported straight away. Adding early childhood educators absolutely makes good sense.

I don't think that there's much within Bill 188 that I could criticize, that I could talk down about.

I think the more that we do for children—it speaks about us as a society, as a Legislature, as a province, and, quite frankly, as the human beings we are.

We need to make sure that the people who are at the beginning of their lives and at the end of their lives receive more support than the rest of us in between, with some exceptions, naturally speaking.

I want to thank the member for the question. It is something that is—

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Thank you. Further questions?

**Mr. Joel Harden:** I want to thank my friend from London North Centre for his remarks this morning and for his work, and the member for Sudbury—for their work in making sure that educational opportunities are afforded to people who have interacted with our child protection system.

I wonder if the member could take any of the time now in this exchange to talk a little about any stories—we can leave the names out—of which you're aware, where people who had interacted with child protection followed Jane's proud example of using that opportunity to make Ontario a better place. I hear you loud and clear. That's what we should be doing with the treasury in this province—we should be using it to make sure people can have an opportunity. So tell us about those.

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** Thank you to my friend from Ottawa Centre for the question.

It's an interesting thing; I had an opportunity to meet, through Jane, a number of people who, despite numerous challenges and despite so many arbitrary obstacles they

faced as well as obstacles that were placed within their path, were able to achieve the heights of education. Jane has received her PhD. I think of other people who were able to receive their doctorates, as well. I think of one young person who had tremendous problems with their birth family, was told so many things—that they would never succeed. Of course, there were mental health issues within that family, and that is incredibly unfortunate. They entered the foster care system. Despite all of that, despite their young mind being filled with so many words of judgement, of criticism, of setting the bar so low, they succeeded.

I also want to come back to the courses that are often given to these crown wards. Often, these courses are such things as how not to get pregnant and how to apply for social assistance. How are we, as a province, setting the bar so low that we're telling young people who want to live out their dreams how to apply for social assistance? That doesn't—

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Thank you. Further questions?

**Ms. Laura Smith:** This bill has a lot of positive things in it. The creation of a new system contained in this bill so that privacy of these children will help these children when they go into adulthood. It will literally level the playing field for the information-sharing.

Because there's so much information that's out there and we want to provide the best opportunities for these children when they start their care, when they complete their care and after their care—I'm wondering if the opposition member could talk about his interest or his comments on the privacy of youth leaving the CYFSA and some of the administrative changes that we've made to protect those children.

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** Thank you to the member from Thornhill for an excellent question.

We can easily say that there are many children within the crown ward system who have encountered tremendous difficulties and have endured likely quite a bit of trauma. And to think that that information might be available to people after they have become the age of majority or after they have become an adult is simply disturbing.

**0930**

Imagine, Speaker, having experienced trauma yourself and having that spectre hanging around you, above you, at all times, that there are people who could know that about you and have access to that information. That would be tremendously disturbing and upsetting. It would almost be like reliving that trauma. So I do applaud Bill 188 for its changes to privacy as it regards the history of former crown wards.

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

**Mr. John Fraser:** I'm sure my colleague from Ottawa Centre appreciates that. I want to raise something that he raised yesterday—that we both raised yesterday—and that is the independent child advocate. In 2007, the province of Ontario established, as an officer of this Legislature, the child advocate. That child advocate was the voice for

children in care, for wards of the crown. He was able to hear their voices that are very hard to hear.

I would like to know the member's opinion on whether he thinks to it would be a good thing for the government and all of us here to re-establish an independent child advocate so that children who we are responsible for, youth who we are responsible for as the crown, will have a voice and advocacy on their behalf?

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** I'd like to thank the member from Ottawa South for the question. There is no question: I strongly, strongly believe, that we need independent officers of this Legislature, first and foremost, but especially as it pertains to the welfare of young people. We require a child and youth advocate.

I think the removal, the firing, of Irwin Elman was a mistake. I think children who are encountering what are sometimes insurmountable difficulties and tremendous barriers and obstacles need that one person, that one trusted adult they can reach, and that would be realized through the re-establishment of the child advocate. I can't understand why that was ever removed in the first place. I think that was a mistake. I think there's an opportunity to re-establish it and the government should and must take it.

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

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** One thing that hasn't been discussed so far today, and I actually didn't hear it even yesterday when I was in the House: Do we realize that 25% of children now use food banks in the province of Ontario? I wanted to make sure we get that out because it's unacceptable.

Do you believe we need to take proactive steps in the form of increased mental health resources for children and youth?

And, further to that, should inspectors do site visits at night when the kids that are in care are at home?

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** Thank you to my friend from Niagara Falls for the question. You're absolutely right: One in four kids are going hungry. One in four kids are using food banks. It is a deplorable indictment of a province as rich as Ontario that there are young people who are not able to receive the nutrition that they require.

We absolutely need more investments in mental health and support services such as this to make sure that young people are able to live their best lives.

We also do need more inspections. I know that from the Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex. They are running out of spaces for kids. Many of these unlicensed places will take kids into hotels, where the child is staying in a hotel room and the care worker is staying in another room. These kids are vulnerable. These kids could potentially be trafficked. There are so many different issues with this. We need to crack down on unlicensed care placements. We need to make sure that we're buttressing the system by providing supports for care and for mental health.

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

**Mrs. Daisy Wai:** I'm happy to join my colleagues to speak on behalf of Bill 188, the Supporting Children's Futures Act, 2024, currently under consideration by this House for second reading.

Madam Speaker, today, I stand before you to address a matter of utmost importance: the welfare of our children and youth in Ontario's child welfare system. It is a subject that touches the very core of our society, as it pertains to the safety, well-being and future prospects of our most vulnerable citizens.

This bill, if passed, will improve the safety, security and well-being of children and youth in care.

Madam Speaker, we are here because our government will never leave anyone behind. Our government wants the best for every child and young person approaching adulthood. And we are working together to deliver better outcomes for young people and their families and caregivers.

So, as you can see, Madam Speaker, this bill is an important element to the government's ongoing redesign of the child welfare system.

The child welfare sector in Ontario is tasked with providing crucial services to children and youth who may find themselves in precarious situations, whether due to abuse, neglect, conflict with the law or complex special needs. Under the mandate of the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017, these services are administered by children's aid societies, with a primary focus on protection and support.

Out-of-home care, a vital component of the child welfare system, involves providing care to young individuals in settings away from their parental homes. This can range from basic accommodation to specialized programs tailored to meet specific needs. Foster homes, children's residences and staff-model homes serve as environments where children and youth receive the care and support they require.

In Ontario, over 7,000 children and youth are currently in care, overseen by 424 licence holders. Among those, approximately 4,038 foster homes and 301 group homes play a pivotal role in providing a stable environment for these young individuals to thrive.

Recognizing the significance of this issue, our government has embarked on a comprehensive redesign of the child welfare system. Madam Speaker, every child and youth deserves a safe and nurturing environment regardless of their circumstances. Through comprehensive redesign, our government is introducing a new initiative to improve the quality of care in out-of-home care. Some of these changes include:

- developing a new framework of what out-of-home care looks like;

- increasing and enhancing oversight and accountability of out-of-home care;

- supporting that oversight by adding 20 new positions across the province to support the management, inspection and oversight of out-of-home care for children and youth; and

- launching the Ready, Set, Go Program, which provides youth in the care of children's aid societies with life skills

that they need, starting when they are only 13, and financial support when they leave up to the age of 23 so that they can focus on post-secondary, including the skilled trades or pursuing employment.

Through initiatives like the Ready, Set, Go Program, many of the reforms proposed in this bill are designed to better support youth and provide skills and knowledge. They will help youth transition into adulthood.

Moreover, our efforts extend to strengthening oversight and accountability within the sector. The Supporting Children's Futures Act, 2024, represents a milestone in this journey. If passed, this legislation will introduce measures to enhance safety, service quality, oversight, accountability and privacy for children and youth in care.

**0940**

One key aspect of the proposed bill is the reinforcement of the oversight mechanisms to ensure compliance with established standards. Stringent application processes, increased accountability for operators and new enforcement tools are among the provisions aimed at safeguarding the well-being of children and youth.

Furthermore, the bill addresses the crucial issue of privacy rights for former children and youth in care. By restricting access to their records and enabling—

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** I apologize to the member for Richmond Hill. However, pursuant to standing order 50(c), I'm now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there have been six and a half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader directs the debate to continue.

I recognize the deputy government House leader.

**Mr. Trevor Jones:** Thank you, Speaker. Please continue.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the member for Richmond Hill. Please continue.

**Mrs. Daisy Wai:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I just want to say, furthermore, the bill addresses the crucial issue of privacy rights for former children and youth in care. By restricting access to their records and enabling individuals to publicly share their experiences, we are empowering them to reclaim their narrative while respecting their privacy.

Additionally, the bill seeks to establish clear and consistent practices within the Child, Youth and Family Services Act. Measures such as enabling information-sharing among relevant professional bodies and clarifying children's rights to complain to the Office of the Ombudsman serve to streamline processes and ensure uniformity across the sector.

Alongside legislative reforms, our commitment to improving the child welfare system resulted in recent regulatory changes. Mandating increased information-sharing, enhancing visitation protocols and enforcing stricter disciplinary guidelines are just a few examples of our ongoing efforts to prioritize the safety and well-being of children and youth in care.

The Ready, Set, Go Program stands as a testament to our dedication to supporting the youth in their transition to independence. By providing financial support, life skills training and extended care options, we are laying the foundation for a brighter future for our youth.

As we reflect on the progress we've made and the path ahead, it's essential to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of the stakeholders, advocates and front-line workers in the child welfare sector. Their dedication, expertise and unwavering commitment to the well-being of our children and youth are the driving force behind our collective efforts. Moreover, the voices of former youth in care serve as powerful reminders of the challenges and opportunities within the system. Their lived experiences inform and inspire our actions, guiding us toward more effective policies and practices that uphold their rights and dignity.

Looking ahead, our focus remains steadfast on building a child welfare system that is responsive, inclusive and compassionate. Through continued collaboration, innovation and investment, we can create a future where every child and youth in Ontario has the opportunity to reach their full potential, regardless of their circumstances.

Madam Speaker, Bill 188 also proposes changes that will enable the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers to share information with governing bodies and others in particular circumstances. This includes instances to confirm when a member of a college is under investigation or when a member poses public safety concerns.

The changes also seek to expand the list of professional colleges with which children's aid societies and other service providers can share personal information. These measures are all to ensure that every child is safe and protected.

Madam Speaker, I would like to share a quote from a public member that our partners have shared since Bill 188 was introduced:

"As a former youth in care and a lawyer who practises family law and child protection law, I support the proposed amendments set out in Bill 188, which will help ensure greater oversight and accountability for the out-of-home care placements and help protect the safety and privacy of those who have been involved in the child welfare system. I have seen first-hand how childhood histories and records can be used as ammunition when former youth in care become parents themselves or seek employment in the child welfare sector, even though they were in care due to circumstances entirely outside of their control. Individuals who were involved with the child welfare system as children deserve to have their personal information kept confidential so they can have a fresh start as they transition to adulthood. Carina Chan."

Madam Speaker, we have received significant support from our partners since last week. I would like to share a few more quotes:

"The Supporting Children's Futures Act is a significant move in the direction of enhancing the well-being of children and youth with child welfare experience. One's

time in care should never be a source of harm or discrimination years afterward. The protecting the personal histories of this vulnerable community must be high social priority. Ingrid Palmer, Child Welfare Political Action Committee.”

Another one here: “I am writing to express my support of Bill 188, supporting the futures of children and youth act that is currently before the Ontario government. Speaking from my life experience, I believe with all my heart that these improvements to the safety, well-being and privacy of children and youth in care are of vital importance. Many important changes have been made to the system since I was adopted, given up again at age 13 and placed with another family as a ward of the province. However, more issues need to be updated and amended as our social structure changes and social media poses new risks to our privacy and safety. Diana Frances, former foster child.”

Another quote here: “Every child/youth deserves to feel safe and loved in their home environments—whether they are with their family or are in care. That is a fundamental right. It is our government’s responsibility to do everything possible to protect our children, especially the most vulnerable ones. I applaud our Ontario government. Today, they introduced legislation that shows they do care by enhancing protections and accountability for children/youth in care and helping to strengthen the systems that are designed to help them. Leena Augimeri, PhD.”

Madam Speaker, as you can evidently see, these proposed changes are a result of extensive and continuous consultation with our valued partners in the sector.

**0950**

I am personally very thankful that this bill was introduced because every child is important to us. Every individual should have the right—and especially, we are allowing them the right to speak, if they would like to have that right—to recall some of the things that happened to them. They may be good examples, like what I have just quoted, or they may be something that they can share so that this will improve their lives or the children’s aid services down the road.

The other thing that I’m so happy about is that we are making sure that all these services that they receive are of top quality. We are adding more inspectors—20 more people going around just to go and see and make sure that all the services provided are the best for the children or the youth they are taking care of. That is why I urge members on all sides of this House to grant Bill 188 unanimous passage.

In conclusion, the welfare of our children and youth is a collective responsibility that demands unwavering commitment and action. As legislators, advocates and members of society, it is incumbent upon us to prioritize their needs and ensure that every child and youth in Ontario has the opportunity to thrive.

This is why, once again, I urge the House to support Bill 188, Supporting Children’s Futures Act, 2024.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Questions?

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** My question is, how does the government plan to ensure consistent inspection enforcement for largely for-profit, public homes—in the sector of child welfare residences? We know that there are increased concerns—we saw that in long-term care, in particular—when profit is the primary motive for providing a public service.

**Mrs. Daisy Wai:** Thank you very much to the member from Niagara Falls.

This act is really helping children’s aid services to perform their role. In fact, I will say, on behalf of the ministry, I understand that for most of the services, they did a great job. However, I agree there are bad actors, which is why we increased it to 20 people—20 inspectors going at different times and just checking on them.

And also, one of the new tools that we are adding is to have higher penalties, which is the administrative monetary penalties that go up to a \$100,000 limit. The worst kind of offences can be up to \$250,000. So we want to make sure that the bad actors will stop doing what they’re not supposed to do.

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

**Mr. Billy Pang:** To the member: Bill 188 contains a number of great initiatives to ensure the quality of care and the quality of services provided for children and youth in care. The creation of new offences and the introduction of administrative monetary penalties are all important tools to increase and enhance oversight of out-of-home care. Similarly, updating who has a duty to report to include early childhood educators and increasing information-sharing with professional colleges will keep children safer. The privacy provision contained in the bill could help level the playing field for youth formerly in care.

So my question to the member: What are the steps this government has to support children, youth and families?

**Mrs. Daisy Wai:** Thank you to the member from Markham–Unionville. You’re right: We have done a lot of work. Since launching the comprehensive redesign of child welfare in Ontario, we have put many new initiatives and measures in place to improve the quality of care in out-of-home care. These include, just to name a few, developing a new framework for what out-of-home care looks like; increasing and enhancing oversight and accountability of out-of-home care; and supporting that oversight by adding 20 new positions across the province to support the management, inspection and oversight of out-of-home care for children and youth. The most important is launching the Ready, Set, Go Program that provides youth in the care of children’s aid societies with the life skills they need, starting at age 13, and financial support until age 23.

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

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I appreciate the speech and the comments made by the member. I would ask the member, because my colleagues have spoken to this I think quite strongly: the restoration of the position of the child advocate. Will your government be supporting amend-

ments to restore the position of child advocate in this province?

**Mrs. Daisy Wai:** Yes, we are doing the child advocate. From 2008 to 2019, the office of the child advocate wrote 79 reports that total 4,644 pages. That's just from one source. That should have been a spur on the Liberal government to act, and it should have made the NDP demand action from them.

In fact, it is our government that knew that the time for more reports was over. It is our government that took the action and redesigned the child welfare system. The child advocate's investigative function was folded into the Office of the Ombudsman and continues to this day. Children and youth in care have the right to complain to the Ombudsman, and this bill will improve the clarity and ensure that they know about their rights.

Our government is going to continue to improve on the child care welfare system because no one should be left behind in Ontario. I should note also that the former child advocate said, to this bill's privacy provisions: "There are positive changes in this announcement."

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

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Thank you to the member from Richmond Hill for her comments today on this important bill. It's been a good debate. I was here yesterday afternoon as well—I think it was yesterday afternoon—listening to this debate. I think it is an important bill. We've heard from the opposition that there are many things in the bill that they support, and they think it is "a good start" and that after years of neglect, we are seeing some improvements. So can the member just tell us where she thinks the major improvements are in this bill and how we think it's going to help those who are most vulnerable in our society to get a better start and to make Ontario better?

**Mrs. Daisy Wai:** Thank you very much to the member from Eglinton–Lawrence. I agree. I personally think that this is such a great help to children and youth, with this bill that we have, improving on the bill that we already had from before.

After going through this whole bill, the one thing that really touches my heart is the Ready, Set, Go Program. This is something that is not only allowing them to speak on some of their personal experience, but also communicating with them and understanding them, helping them—and it starts from the age of 13, understanding their needs so they know how to start their life and what are the most important things to help them.

The teenage years are the time when they really need the coaching, and we have somebody like this to help them, basically seeing them and getting them ready, get set and go. This is so dear to my heart.

1000

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

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I would like to ask a question of the member about some of the challenges that children's aid societies in this province are facing, and I'm speaking

specifically about the Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex. Fully half of the families that they support are not actually families who are in need of care. They are families who are struggling with the lack of mental health and addiction services in the community. One third of the families have caregivers with a problem. They are dealing with mental illness or drug or substance issues. More have family caregiver-child conflicts.

What is the government doing to ensure that there are services in the community so that these families don't end up in the care of the CAS?

**Mrs. Daisy Wai:** Thank you to the member for that question. We understand that every family is different and every family needs support in its special way, which is why we have this care for the children and youth and their families, even if they have an addiction problem.

We can see some youth face more challenges than others. We get it. We want to ensure that when they get the support they need, they thrive and build to their bright future. When they are in a family that has challenges of drug abuse, we know that these youth or children are facing a complex condition and we are tracking them, supporting them and tackling them at different angles.

We invested \$3.8 billion in the Roadmap to Wellness to increase the focus on children's mental health, as well as supporting families. And in increasing our—

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** I apologize.

It's now time for further debate.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** It's an honour to rise today to participate in the debate on Bill 188, the Supporting Children's Futures Act. This is the kind of legislation that I wish we could see more of in this chamber. It is a bill that we can support. It really speaks to many of the issues that, on this side of the House, we have been advocating for for years. We have been calling for protection of whistleblowers in the sector to protect kids.

We would like to see more action from this government to respond to some of the other priorities that we have identified. Returning the child and youth advocate: That office played a vital role for children in this province, but this government decided to eliminate that position, which has resulted in many children not feeling like they have anywhere to turn if they are experiencing abuse in a placement.

We've also been calling for a total end to all for-profit group homes that take advantage of children. I know that some of those horrendous media reports about the abuse of children in residential group homes and foster care was a big impetus to bringing this bill forward, but that abuse happened in for-profit group homes that were using those vulnerable children as—and they called them this themselves—cash cows or paycheques, which is unconscionable. It is unconscionable that we have a system that enables children to be used in such a way.

But this bill does have some positive measures to strengthen protections for kids, and I congratulate the government on bringing this legislation forward.

I do, however, want to focus on some of the stresses that children's aid societies in this province are facing in their efforts to provide child protection. I want to speak specifically about the London and Middlesex children's aid society. In the catchment area for the London-Middlesex CAS, there are close to 6,000 referrals received annually. More than 2,000 assessments are completed. The last year that there was data, there were 590 children in care, so that's 17% of the caseload. There were 151 new admissions to care. But the majority of the families that the CAS supports do not have children in care. They are not children who are in need of formal child protection. They are children and families who are struggling with the lack of services in the community.

The executive director of the London-Middlesex CAS made a presentation to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs when it was touring the province in advance of the 2024 provincial budget. They held a meeting in London in January, and Chris Tremeer from the London-Middlesex CAS spoke to the committee and talked about the budgetary pressures that this creates on the CAS when they are supporting families who actually should be supported in other areas of the system, who turn to the CAS because they don't have any other options, because the services that would be more appropriate for them to access simply don't exist.

About one third of the families the CAS works with are related to caregivers who are struggling with mental health or addiction issues. Another 17% of the families that the CAS works with are those who are experiencing difficulty managing the behaviour of a child, or, in some cases, a child who is over 12 whose behaviour is such that there is a risk of physical harm to the rest of the family. These are families, these are kids who should be able to access the services that they need in the community.

You can imagine, from the perspective of a child protection worker, how frustrating it must be to see these families in such distress that they come to the CAS to hopefully be able to try to access services, but the CAS doesn't deliver those kinds of services. The CAS is not a front-line mental health service agency; the CAS is a child protection agency.

One of the questions I asked Chris Tremeer when he appeared before the budget committee is, what would be the financial implications for the CAS, what would it mean in terms of resources for the CAS to do that vital child protection work that it is mandated to do, if appropriate services were available elsewhere in system? He told me that, in London, the amount that is represented by the non-child protection services that the CAS is providing is about \$3.5 million. He said they were projecting up to \$5 million by the end of the year in terms of the child welfare budget that is used to house and provide interim treatment support to youth who need a different style of placement. He said across the province, it amounts to more than \$50 million worth of pressure on the children's aid budget envelope because of the absence of community services, leaving the CAS struggling to support these vulnerable families.

#### 1010

And one of the heartbreaking things that we hear as MPPs, and I'm sure that every member in this House has had constituent families who are desperate and they share their stories of the challenges that they've had, trying to get appropriate treatment for their children and they are advised—we hear this often—to relinquish their child to the CAS in the hope that this might fast-track access to treatment for their child, but in fact, it doesn't. The CAS does not have a back door to children's mental health services to enable that child to get the appropriate support they need.

What happens when children are relinquished to the CAS is that the other children in the home are kept safe—or the caregivers. If the behaviours of the child are so violent, then the parents, the caregivers, are also kept safe.

But what are we talking about here? If we were able to provide the supports that that child needed, that that family needed, we could support the child at home. We could prevent that child from being relinquished to the CAS. And, Speaker, I would strongly urge this government to look at the dire gap in acute children's mental health services that we are seeing in our communities.

I did want to highlight the experiences of three London families who approached my office to talk about what it means when there are no intensive mental health services for children and youth in crisis. Over a short period of time, Speaker, I had three separate families approaching my office whose stories were quite similar, related to the lack of acute mental health support services for their children.

One family had been searching for intensive mental health treatment for their daughter since that child was at least 12 years of age. They contacted me when their daughter was about to turn 18 because they were frantic with worry that their daughter would never be able to access the children and youth mental health treatment that she needed and would become ineligible for the services that she was on a wait-list for. That child ended up at London Health Sciences Centre for months in a hospital room, which was not an appropriate placement for her, when she should have been able to access a community-based treatment.

Another family was told that their child would have to go on an indefinite wait-list and was told by ministry services, "There is no provision in the existing model that facilitates a crisis response if/when one is indicated. We are reliant on community-based ministry-funded services to address the needs of community youth to the extent that they are able." So, if there are no ministry-funded services to address the community needs of youth, then those youth are out of luck and they're told, "Well, one option is to relinquish your child to the CAS," but the CAS doesn't have the—as I said, they're not a front-line mental health—

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** I apologize to the member from London West, but it is now time for members' statements.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### VOLUNTEERS

**Mr. Nolan Quinn:** Today, I want to highlight the importance of volunteers. I recently attended a couple of fundraisers in my riding to raise money for important causes.

I attended the second annual Dairy Cares event, where local dairy farmers, stakeholders and agribusinesses across Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry come together to celebrate and thank our three local hospitals: Cornwall Community Hospital, Winchester District Memorial Hospital and Glengarry Memorial Hospital. This year, the event raised over \$234,000 for these three hospitals.

I participated in a fashion show for the House of Lazarus, in co-operation with St. James Anglican Church, that raised over \$10,000 for the organization. They operate a warming hub where the community can access a shower, laundry services, a bed, breakfast and lunch once a week, and can get legal advice, and get advice from a nurse practitioner at no cost.

I also visited the St. Vincent de Paul food bank, followed by a volunteer appreciation luncheon at the Royal Canadian Legion across the street.

Speaker, volunteers are essential to the functioning of many organizations and communities. Volunteers contribute their time, skills, passion and love, and they are driven by a desire to make a positive impact, without expecting monetary compensation. They bring billions of dollars to the economy by volunteering their time at local events and charities. Their unpaid contributions have a significant economic impact through cost savings and enhanced community well-being. Volunteers play a crucial role and are the heart of strong, tight-knit communities.

### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Private, for-profit agency staff in health care cost our province nearly \$1 billion last year. That's the reality of how broken our health care system has become under this Conservative government. As we watch the government take front-line health care workers to court to suppress their wages, it's not hard to imagine why this province is struggling to find and retain staff.

In Niagara, we've learned that these costs have exploded. After attempts to get the information directly from Niagara Health, we learned the details of nursing agency costs through our legislative library research team. In 2019-20, Niagara Health spent approximately \$1,400 on nursing agency staff. In 2023, Niagara Health spent approximately \$2 million on agency nurses. That's a drastic change in only a few years. Niagara Health reported a \$12-million deficit last year.

The government must invest in stabilizing staffing, recruit full-time staff, and we must all fight the privatization of our health care system. Private, for-profit health

care services will further reduce staffing resources and cost Ontarians more—and maybe even their lives.

Let's invest in front-line staff, respect our health care workers and support publicly funded, publicly delivered, not-for-profit health care in the province of Ontario.

### TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal:** After a lengthy battle with the federal government over environmental assessments, we're finally one step closer to getting it done and building the much-needed Highway 413.

Speaker, Halton, Peel and York regions are all set to grow at incredible speed. Our government is saying yes to building the roads and highways that will keep our communities thriving and moving.

We see first-hand the frustrations of individuals struggling to make it home to see their family or missing important moments while stuck in congestion. With gridlock costing our economy over \$11 billion every year, it has never been more important to build this new highway.

Highway 413 will save drivers up to 30 minutes each way on their commute, and that's one hour per day and five hours per week in people's schedules. The relief will be the difference between sitting in bumper-to-bumper traffic and spending quality time with your family and your loved ones at home.

In addition to reducing time on the road for drivers, Highway 413 will link growing regions, enhance accessibility to housing and employment opportunities and attract the future of the automotive industry here in Ontario.

Our government, under Premier Ford's leadership, is committed to getting it done. In the coming months, we'll continue to move ahead and get shovels in the ground as part of our plan to build Ontario by expanding highways and public transit to fight congestion, create jobs and prepare for the massive population growth that's coming in the next 30 years.

We're getting it done. We're building Highway 413.

### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr. Chris Glover:** On Saturday, I was at the Earth Day cleanup in Liberty Village, and I was talking to a couple who had a little three-year-old girl. I said to the three-year-old girl, "Hey, you've got a firefighter's hat on, and there's a fire truck over there. Is that your fire truck?" She looked at me, and she looked at the fire truck, and then she said, "Yeah."

#### 1020

I want to thank the Liberty Village Residents Association, TPS division 14 and the firefighters for coming out and cleaning up Liberty Village.

I also want to thank the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association and Friends of Berczy Park, the Garment District Neighbourhood Association, the Waterfront BIA, the Toronto Island Shoreline Cleanup and A Greener Future for organizing Earth Day cleanups across Spadina—



Fort York. You've made our riding a little bit greener and a little bit cleaner over the weekend.

I also want to note that on Earth Day, Ontario Place for All released a study that showed that the mega spa on the waterfront is estimated to emit 100,000 tonnes of carbon, and a similar Therme spa in Manchester is estimated to consume the same amount of gas per hour as 3,000 homes in a year, the same amount of electricity per hour as 7,000 homes in a year, the same amount of water per day as 5,000 homes in a year.

As we enter this climate emergency, building a tax-subsidized, giant glass-dome mega spa on a bird migration route without an environmental assessment is an environmental disaster. So we are asking the government, in the spirit of Earth Day, cancel the mega spa on the waterfront.

#### ARMENIAN GENOCIDE ANNIVERSARY

**Mr. Aris Babikian:** Today, April 24, Armenians in Ontario, in Canada and all over the world will observe the 109th anniversary of the Armenian genocide perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire.

On the night of April 24, 1915, the Ottoman authorities gathered Armenian intellectuals, members of Parliament, clergy, teachers, writers, civic and political leaders and marched them to the concentration camps for slaughter.

The Armenian genocide claimed the lives of one and a half million and over one million Greeks. Among the victims were my great-grandparents on my Armenian grandfather's side and my maternal Greek grandmother's side. Who would have thought that one day the grandson of survivors of two genocides would be serving as a Canadian citizenship judge and be elected to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario? This is the promise of Canada to the persecuted people of the world.

In March 1980, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario recognized the Armenian genocide. On April 24, 1986, the Premier of Ontario declared April 24 as Armenian Memorial Day in Ontario.

Finally, in his annual commemoration statement, Premier Doug Ford stated, "Today, we remember the strength and bravery of the Armenian people and honour the memory of those who perished during this dark chapter in human history. In remembering, we ensure that present and future generations reject hatred, intolerance and injustice in all its forms."

Mr. Speaker—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Thank you. Members' statements?

#### DON MORIN

**Mme France Gélinas:** Last Friday, my riding, my team and I lost a good friend, Mr. Don Morin. Don advocated for workers' rights before and after his retirement from the United Food and Commercial Workers Union.

Don strongly believed in the NDP as the best choice for the working people of Ontario. Don was the president of the NDP Nickel Belt riding association in 2007, when I

was first elected, and he continued as my president until 2015. We called him Best Prez Ever due to this constant involvement whenever and wherever he could help, whether it was putting up signs, bringing T-shirts, hats, snacks, tools. Whatever was needed, Don was always happy to help.

He also helped support my predecessor, Ms. Shelley Martel, while she was in office.

During the last election, he was really active with my team, pointing out all of the sign locations where NDPs had put up signs. He knew the size of it, the locations of it. He would grab the sledgehammer and start nailing the sign just like he had done for the last five decades. But that was against his wife's instruction; there was supposed to be no sledgehammer for Don, because he was 81 years old at the time.

Don leaves behind his smiling wife, Diane, two sons and three grandkids. He was extremely proud of his family and what they have achieved.

Thank you for sharing Don with us. We've learned so much from him, and I can assure you his lessons will not be forgotten. I will miss you, Don.

#### SCHOOL FACILITIES

**Ms. Laura Smith:** Last week, I had the great pleasure to announce that our government is investing \$47.2 million to build two new elementary schools in my riding of Thornhill.

These schools are going to be built in an area known as the VMC, also known as the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre. This is the fastest-growing community, the VMC: Two new schools—Catholic, public—one roof, creating 1,134 new student spaces and 49 new child care spaces. This new emerging area is a transit community linked with easy access to the GTA, a vibrant area that's already home to a beautiful YMCA, a library and so many local businesses. This school will be a much-needed and strong addition for the families in the VMC, no doubt.

As a mother who has also sat on school council for so many years, I know first-hand how important it is to have a solid education, including back-to-basics, hands-on learning, including STEM and after-school opportunities—all of this closer to home. This is part of our government's plan to support the new school construction and expansion to existing schools, including child care spaces. Our new school strategy involves prioritizing shovel-ready projects, working with school boards to speed up construction through design standardization.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Minister of Education for his leadership on this project, and I will continue to work alongside my community partners and government to support these critical investments for our children's future.

#### WEARING OF KAFFIYEHS

**Mr. John Fraser:** We all know the world is a crazy place right now, and we all know in our communities

we've seen the rise of anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and all forms of hate. We also know in our communities there are people trying to build bridges.

So, last week, when all four party leaders agreed that allowing the kaffiyeh was a good thing in this Legislature, that was building a bridge. That was rare. It was unanimity.

And when we couldn't achieve that in here, I heard from thousands of people—thousands of people—who were disappointed, discouraged and some of them hurt. And I also said to a colleague here who felt the same way last week, "Don't worry. It will be fixed by Monday." It's Wednesday. It's not fixed.

Our job is to bring people together here, to be leaders, to build bridges. I think it's important that we do that, and I would like all of my colleagues to consider just how important that is in each and every one of our communities. I encourage the government to bring forward a substantive motion in that regard.

#### CANADIAN CANCER SURVIVOR NETWORK

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** The Canadian Cancer Survivor Network is at Queen's Park this afternoon for its annual reception. The network provides those faced with a cancer diagnosis and their family members and friends with educational tools and a place to have their voices heard in planning and implementing treatment. It's a collaborative effort, Speaker, involving a range of community partners all working together to promote the very best standard of care and support.

At the reception, I'm going to share information about the cancer treatment centre at Lakeridge Health in Oshawa and programs and services provided by Hearth Place Cancer Support Centre in Durham region.

1030

Speaker, as reluctant as I was in 2006, prior to the municipal election—and, to some extent, now—to speak about my cancer diagnosis and subsequent recovery, I do so this morning to emphasize the importance of the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network to the lives of so many in Whitby and other parts of the region of Durham, and thousands of other people across Ontario.

To my colleagues here this morning, please join me at this reception to learn more about cancer care.

#### AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

**Mrs. Daisy Wai:** As we come together to recognize Autism Awareness Month, I am compelled to share the profound impact of our recent attendance at the opening ceremony. It was a poignant reminder of the importance of raising awareness and fostering support for individuals on the autism spectrum.

In reflecting on this event, I cannot help but draw from my own personal experiences. Before assuming my role as MPP for Richmond Hill, I had the privilege of serving special-needs children within my community. I vividly

recall the early years, when I nurtured these young minds as they embarked on their journey, often starting at the age of five or six. Today, as they stand on the threshold of adolescence, I am humbled by the progress that they have made and the individuals that they have become.

Our commitment to autism awareness is not merely a gesture, it is a testament to our culture and collective responsibility to foster understanding and inclusivity. Let us continue to champion initiatives that celebrate neurodiversity and ensure every individual has the opportunity to thrive.

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Michael Parsa:** Good morning, colleagues. I'd like to welcome Alina Cameron, Tony Stravato, Kate Dudley-Logue, Bruce McIntosh and the many families from the Ontario Autism Coalition who are here for their advocacy day. Welcome to Queen's Park and I look forward to meeting with them.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I'd like to welcome the Dairy Farmers of Ontario here today, especially my constituent Steve Runnalls, and invite you all to their reception this evening.

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** I too would like to welcome the Dairy Farmers of Ontario, and in particular chair Mark Hamel, who hails from Elmwood, Ontario, and Roger Boerson, who represents the dairy farmers in Huron and Perth counties.

I would like to join the member opposite in inviting everyone to the reception later this evening, hosted by the Dairy Farmers of Ontario. And I promise you, there might be some really good curds for everybody.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** And hopefully milk too.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** With April being Autism Awareness and Acceptance Month, I would also like to welcome the Ontario Autism Coalition: president Alina Cameron; VPs Tony Stravato and Kate Dudley-Logue; founding member Bruce McIntosh; board members Leah Kocmarek, Ashley Ferreira, Madison Hughes, Jodie Craig; and advocates Meghan Graham, Bernadette Rilloraza, Michau van Speyk and Chong Le Zhu.

The Ontario Autism Coalition is inviting all members of the chamber today to a luncheon, which will be held from 12 till 2 in room 228, and they're hoping to see you all there.

**Hon. Doug Downey:** I just want to note that page Aura Sarin from Barrie-Springwater-Oro-Medonte is page captain today, and she's joined by her mother in the gallery.

**Ms. Bhutila Karpoche:** I am pleased to welcome the Girls Government group to Queen's Park this year from Parkdale-High Park. We have from Runnymede public school: Hazel McGillivray, Stella Calandrino, Isobel Kenny, Lori Yalcin, Tori Nishi, Isidora Eror, Noelle Falconer, Chloe Lucas-Torres Barbieri, Isabel Meana,

Baribelle Rands, Ella Henderson, Olivia Hollis, Meara Doran and teacher Anastasia Maniatis.

We also have from Swansea public school: Alexandra Arata Roman, Sierra Bender, Beatrix Cairns, Zoe Devlin, Teagan Kosmalski, Tessa Laceda, Chloe Lauzon, Avni Ramwani, Kaia Ratajczak, Stella Ratajczak, Jayda Richards, Naomi Sheahan and teachers Julie Gutierrez and Lisa Stewart. We also have a parent joining us, Emily Hollis.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Stephanie Bowman:** I'd like to welcome Chris Markham from my riding. He was here to attend the Ontario Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance breakfast this morning. I thank him for his good work as well with the Ontario Autism Coalition.

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** I would like to welcome Justin Thompson to Queen's Park today. He's from my constituency, and I hope he enjoys the tour of the building.

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** I'd like to welcome parents from Kensington junior public school here today: Pouya Hamidi, Anna Gutkowska, Ricardo Junco Reinoso, Diana Laura Pech Mis, Julia Dorfman, Christopher McElhone, Nate Kreiswirth, Angie Gammage, Rebecca Osolen, Sepideh Shahi, Robyn Armstrong and Pete Wen. Thank you so much for joining us here today.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** I'd like to thank the Ontario Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance for the most delicious and nutritious breakfast this morning. I met some beautiful Beaches-East Yorkers: super Sabrina Scarcello from Ophea—thank you for keeping kids healthy all over Ontario and Canada—and sensational Susan Flynn, the director of cancer prevention at the Canadian Cancer Society. Welcome to your House.

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** Trudy Sachowski, the executive member of the board of health for the Northwestern Health Unit, joins us today in the gallery. I appreciate her advocacy. She's a real champ for northwestern Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** If there are no objections, I'd like to continue with the introduction of visitors, if there are more.

**Hon. Todd J. McCarthy:** I'd like to introduce and welcome to the House this morning Lawrence Berg, one of His Majesty's counsel, called to the bar in 1968, a leading Ontario trial lawyer practising for over 50 years in Durham region and appointed originally QC by the Honourable Roy McMurtry and the government of Bill Davis. Welcome, counsel.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** It's a great pleasure to see my friend Kate Dudley-Logue in the chamber here from Ottawa. Thank you for all the advocacy you do for autism. It's much appreciated.

**Hon. Stan Cho:** Two visitors: Spencer and Lucas Fair. They're Canucks fans, so on behalf of the government: Go, Leafs, go.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I guess Ottawa is not in the playoffs.

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta:** I'd like to welcome Sudershan Lohana, who's an MBA student from Windsor. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Later today, I'll be welcoming students from Whitney Public School in my riding—their first visit to Queen's Park. I'm looking forward to meeting with them. But what is really remarkable is that I actually spent one day as a supply teacher at Whitney Public School many years ago—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Only one day, only one day.

**Mr. Brian Riddell:** I'd like to welcome my new intern, Josh Green, who's up there in the gallery, to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity to wish my colleague from Cambridge, Brian Riddell, a very happy birthday today.

1040

## QUESTION PERIOD

### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** Good morning, Speaker. This question is for the Premier. In August, the Premier's friend, greenbelt developer Shakir Rehmatullah, told the Integrity Commissioner under oath that he did not socialize with Amin Massoudi, the Premier's former principal secretary, and that they had never been in each others' homes.

Earlier today, the Trillium revealed strong evidence that Mr. Massoudi had visited Mr. Rehmatullah's mansion on multiple occasions. The Trillium previously revealed that Mr. Massoudi had a massage with Mr. Rehmatullah in Las Vegas, also contradicting their testimony.

Why did the Premier's friend and his former principal secretary repeatedly give misleading testimony to the Integrity Commissioner under oath?

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

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Mr. Speaker, I suspect that if the Integrity Commissioner has any questions, he will undertake a review of that with Mr. Massoudi.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Order.

Supplementary question?

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** During the time when Mr. Massoudi was the Premier's principal secretary, the government handed out minister's zoning orders to Mr. Rehmatullah like they were candy. And shortly after he attended the Premier's daughter's wedding, Mr. Rehmatullah benefited from changes to the greenbelt, as well as various ministerial amendments to municipal official plans.

A document obtained through freedom of information shows that on the day the government announced changes to the greenbelt, the Premier himself had demanded proof that Mr. Rehmatullah would be able to develop his greenbelt property in Nobleton. Through you, Speaker: Why did the Premier give such preferential treatment to his friend?

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Mr. Speaker, what we're trying to do across the province of Ontario, which the member should know, is get homes built in every part of the

province. I know the member is opposed to this, because in his own community, where they had the opportunity to build affordable homes for people—the council turned it down in his own community.

Now, that's not our approach. Our approach is that we're going to do whatever it takes to build housing for people, and that includes all across those regions. In our five fastest-growing regions, what they need is sewer and water capacity. We're going to give them that, Mr. Speaker. We're going to remove red tape that is stopping homes from being built, despite the objections of the members opposite. We will get it done for the people in the province of Ontario, because the dream of home ownership shouldn't just be for the people who have been here for decades, it should be for the people who are here now and the people who want to contribute to helping Ontario be a bigger, better province.

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

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** That's quite an answer to a greenbelt question, Speaker.

Government officials used code terms like "special project" when discussing the greenbelt grab. Government emails were altered to replace references to the greenbelt with terms like "G\*" in an apparent attempt to conceal what they were doing.

Now, we have further evidence that the Premier's friend and his former principal secretary repeatedly gave misleading testimony to the Integrity Commissioner under oath.

Speaker, how will the Premier explain all this to the RCMP?

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** As I said, if Matlock has any additional information that he would like to provide the Integrity Commissioner, he can do that. It is not for the government to make those types of investigations. If the Integrity Commissioner requires additional information, I suspect the Integrity Commissioner will ask for that information. If the member opposite has additional information that he would like to provide, I can give him the address of the Integrity Commissioner so he can provide that information.

Because what happens in this place consistently, Mr. Speaker, is the drive-by smear without any evidence. That is what the NDP does. And do you know why they do it, colleagues? Because they have nothing to offer the people of the province of Ontario. They're opposed to housing. They're opposed to transit. They're opposed to education. They're opposed to building new hospitals. They're opposed to everything, and that's why the people of the province of Ontario oppose them and shrink them every single election. They're irrelevant and the people of Ontario know it.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'll remind members that we refer to each other either by our riding name or ministerial title, as applicable.

The next question.

## AUTISM TREATMENT

### MISSING PERSONS

**Miss Monique Taylor:** My question is for the Premier. Today, the Ontario Autism Coalition is here at Queen's Park, calling for action. They have brought solutions to issues that our children, youth and adults are facing in the autism community across the entire province—issues like wait-lists, determination of needs assessments, funding, housing and health and safety for our loved ones; issues that keep families up at night, forced with hard decisions to be made about education, therapies and finances.

In 2018, the Premier promised that no family would have to protest on the front lawn. There were 24,000 kids waiting at that time; today, there are 67,000 children waiting.

I ask you: Will you and your government listen and hear the calls to action today and truly help the autism community?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

**Hon. Michael Parsa:** I thank my honourable colleague for the question. We have been listening to the families from day one, when I became a minister in this portfolio, in this very important file for the government and for the Premier. I reached out to the families, to everyone who's involved, to listen to them, to get that feedback from families, from service providers, from experts and from those with lived experience. That's why this government doubled the funding of the Ontario Autism Program moving forward.

At that time when we formed government, there were 8,500 families receiving supports and services. Today, thousands and thousands, tens of thousands, are receiving supports and services through multiple streams. The family foundational service, the urgent response, the entry to school and the caregiver-mediated programs are programs that families can have access to the second they reach and register with AccessOAP. None of these programs were available before. Even core clinical service—

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

The supplementary question?

**Miss Monique Taylor:** They may have doubled the funding, but they tripled the wait-list. There's a problem there, Minister.

Time and time again, I have asked about the wait-list for core services, which is now 67,000 kids and counting. Every time your minister responds, he uses words and phrases like "world-class" and "no child left behind." In this year's budget, autism was mentioned once, and yet it fell very short of world class. It was not much more than a reannouncement of the previous year's funding, a scramble to try and cobble together your broken program.

AccessOAP provides no indication of where kids are in the queue. This is the number one question all of our offices receive from families who are desperate to find the support their children need.

Premier, I ask again on behalf of the 67,000 kids waiting: When will they be told it is their turn and that they're not going to be left behind?

**Hon. Michael Parsa:** I didn't have enough time to be able to finish my first answer. After we doubled the Ontario Autism Program, thanks to the Premier and thanks to the Minister of Finance, this year, we announced an additional 20% to the funding to now \$720 million compared to the \$300 million of the previous government, which the NDP supported.

Mr. Speaker, I 100% back the program. Do you know why? Because this program was developed by the autism community. It was members of the autism community, those with lived experience, family members, clinicians and experts who are the ones who put this program—and even the implementation team was made up of those from the autism community.

So, yes, I'm absolutely supportive of the program that we have in place. I will continue to meet with families. And I said this from day one, that we will come to work every day to make sure we improve their lives and go home to do better the next day every time we come to work.

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

**Miss Monique Taylor:** In June 2022, Draven Graham, at the age of 10, went missing from his home. Draven was autistic. His family and his community were desperate to find him. Draven never returned home. Since that time, over 100,000 people have petitioned and called for an alert that would have notified the community to his disappearance.

1050

In March 2023, I tabled Bill 74 that would have offered another solution to bringing missing people home safely. Later that same month, your House leader discharged the bill to the justice committee with a promise to Draven's family and community that it would be brought back swiftly. Over a year later, Speaker, we are still waiting. People are still signing petitions, and the OAC is here today asking for the immediate passing of the Missing Persons Amendment Act.

Premier, will you finally honour your government's word and ensure a quick passage of Bill 74?

*Interjections.*

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

To respond, the Solicitor General.

**Hon. Michael S. Kerzner:** To be very clear: We are concerned when a vulnerable person goes missing, and nothing is more important than the safety of everyone in Ontario. The issue of missing and vulnerable people is serious and deserves careful attention. That's why we have acted. That's why our government has funded initiatives like Project Lifesaver in the riding of Sarnia–Lambton and in Essex and in other towns in Ontario. This project, as an example, provides vulnerable people with bracelets that help police find them, using radio signals when necessary.

Mr. Speaker, the opposition does not have an exclusive for vulnerable people. We take this matter seriously.

#### LAND USE PLANNING

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** My question is for the Premier. The agri-food industry in Ontario contributes \$4 billion to Ontario's GDP each year, and more than 750,000 Ontarians are employed throughout the agri-food supply chain. Farmers play a vital role in Ontario. They are the backbone of this province. We are losing 319 acres of farmland a day in Ontario, and yet this government continues to advocate for undisclosed industrial sites located on prime agricultural land like in Wilmot township, where developers offered to buy the land before any official rezoning information happened, just like the greenbelt scandal.

My question is to the Premier: Why is this government prioritizing putting money in the pockets of developers rather than supporting Ontario farmers?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** To reply, the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** Mr. Speaker, I have to be honest here. I just met with Dairy Farmers of Ontario this morning. The fact of the matter is, time and again in this House I rise to talk about the investments that, under the leadership of Premier Ford and the support of this entire government—we are making historic movements forward in support of our agri-food industry. One example is the \$1.7 billion that we're investing over five years in partnership with the federal government through the Sustainable Canadian Agriculture Partnership. Another example is what we are hearing from the Dairy Farmers of Ontario today, because they're ready to grow, and they know it's with our government, with our leadership that their industry is going to continue to grow and flourish for generations to come.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The supplementary question? The member for Timiskaming–Cochrane.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Let's make this clear: What's happening in Wilmot could happen in any farm community in Ontario. A developer shows up, offers you a deal, you don't take it, and then the government comes along: "If you don't take the deal, we're going to expropriate it." That could happen anywhere in Ontario, just like it's happening in Wilmot for an undisclosed project. And then what will happen, if this undisclosed project is a factor, all of a sudden the land that was taken from the farmer will quadruple, will go 10 times in value, and that money will go to the speculator, to the developer, not to the farmer.

Is that the Ontario that you support, Minister of Agriculture?

*Interjections.*

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

Once again, I'll remind members to please make their comments through the Chair.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Order.  
Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** I have to tell you, Speaker, that I am so incredibly disappointed to hear the rhetoric and the drama coming from that particular member opposite—because that’s all it is: It’s complete rhetoric, because the fact of the matter is we’re laying down the groundwork and the pillars to grow Ontario.

Again, the meeting I had this morning with the Dairy Farmers of Ontario points to our Grow Ontario Strategy, where we’re going to be increasing the consumption and production of Ontario-produced food and beverage by 30% by the year 2032. The Dairy Farmers of Ontario were identifying how they can support that strategy, because I can tell you specifically the dairy farmers in southwestern Ontario, they’re ready to grow, and I am going to do everything I can to make sure that they understand they’ve got the full support of our Ontario government.

The thing that the members opposite could really do if they were sincere about helping farmers throughout Ontario is fighting that carbon tax, because—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** —happening in this province—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Stop the clock. Thank you very much.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Order.

I apologize to the Minister of Agriculture and Food. I couldn’t hear you.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Order.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Your time is up, yes. Thank you.

There’s another member who would like to ask a question, just in case anyone is interested.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Order.

Start the clock. The next question.

## TAXATION

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Speaker, and let’s talk about that carbon tax. My question is for the Minister of Energy. People in my riding of Kitchener–Conestoga continue to express concerns over the federal carbon tax and how it will make their lives more expensive. Since the introduction of this regressive tax, the costs of food, transportation and people’s everyday essentials have reached a new high.

Speaker, contrary to what the Liberal members in this House believe, the carbon tax is not—and I repeat, not—in the best interests of Ontarians. Its sole purpose is to take money out of people’s pockets. The punishment and the never-ending tax increases under the federal Liberals are propped up by the carbon tax queen herself, Bonnie Crombie, every step of the way. It’s shameful, Speaker.

Can the minister please tell this House why the federal government must immediately cancel this punitive tax?

**Hon. Todd Smith:** Mr. Speaker, the federal Liberals seem like they’re unwilling to listen to farmers across Ontario or across Canada. The current queen of the carbon tax, Bonnie Crombie, the leader of the Liberal Party here in Ontario, is happy to have the federal carbon tax in place.

If the NDP really wanted to stand up for farmers, like our dairy farmers who are here today, they would join us—Premier Ford and our team—in fighting the carbon tax all the way to the Supreme Court. It’s just activities here in the Legislature to get attention. They’re not actually standing up for farmers in Ontario, while our Minister of Agriculture is and our Premier is by fighting the federal carbon tax, Mr. Speaker.

Now, if you don’t think the carbon tax is having an impact on our dairy farmers, you’re crazy, because everything they do requires natural gas or propane or some other type of heating oil, Mr. Speaker, and the cost is enormous to heat the barns. The cost is enormous to transport the milk to the processing facility and then onto the distributors. It’s a huge, huge impediment. I’ll tell you more—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Waterloo will come to order.

Supplementary question?

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Thank you to the minister for his response. At a time when the cost of living is at an all-time high, the federal government decided to hike the carbon tax by 23% earlier this month. According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, even the rebates that were promised for families and businesses did not cover the cost that people have had to pay.

It is disappointing to see the federal and provincial Liberals simultaneously turn a blind eye to experts’ warnings as we continue to see the hardships that people face here in the province.

Unlike the Liberals, our government is taking action to reduce the risks and impacts of carbon emissions through our clean energy advantage while prioritizing affordable and reliable energy for everyone.

Speaker, can the minister please explain how our government is securing clean, reliable and affordable energy for Ontarians without needing the carbon tax?

**Hon. Todd Smith:** By investing in clean, reliable, affordable nuclear energy, by investing in affordable, reliable, clean hydroelectric power like the Sir Adam Beck facility down in Niagara Falls—historic facilities that we’re implementing across the province.

**1100**

We saw what the Green Energy Act did when the Liberals were in charge of our energy sector here in Ontario. It drove people into energy poverty. And the federal carbon tax, which the queen of the carbon tax, Bonnie Crombie, supports, is doing the same to farmers like the Dairy Farmers of Ontario today. And not just the dairy farmers, Mr. Speaker. What our agriculture minister wanted to get in was the impact on just the grain farmers alone. The carbon tax is going to increase costs to just the grain farmers by \$2.7 billion by 2030.

That's what the NDP stands for. That's what the Liberals stand for. We don't. It's time to scrap the tax.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Stop the clock. Members will please take their seats.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Order. Restart the clock. The next question.

## HEALTH CARE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé.

The health care staffing shortage has reached crisis level. The government has the data that shows this, but they are actively hiding that information from the public. The government was elected six years ago, and what have they done, Speaker? They have been disrespectful and harmful to our health care workers.

Is the minister so ashamed of her work on health care that she is hiding the workforce numbers?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry and parliamentary assistant.

**Mr. Nolan Quinn:** Let's be clear: That was a forecast in 2022, and that is why our government is investing record amounts into our health care system, including \$743 million in this year's budget over the next three years to address immediate health care staffing needs. That's on top of the 63,000 new nurses that have registered to work in Ontario since 2018. An additional 80,000 nurses will join the health care workforce by 2028, increasing the number of post-secondary education seats, as well, by 2,000 registered nurses and an extra 1,000 registered practical nurses.

Our government will continue to do what is required to ensure that we have the best publicly funded health care, when and where the people need it.

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

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** The government can brag about how many nurses and health care workers have registered. They can continue to spend millions of taxpayers' dollars to pay for advertising across social media, during the hockey game and on the radio bragging about the numbers of health care workers, but they are refusing to show us the numbers because they know that it is much worse under their watch.

So can the minister explain to the people of Ontario why the government is pulling the wool over our eyes?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I heard the comment. There's a reaction in the House. I'm going to ask the member to withdraw.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Withdraw.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Order.

Member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

**Mr. Nolan Quinn:** The member opposite is well aware that we are investing \$85 billion into our health care

system this year alone, which is a 30% increase since 2018, when the NDP propped up the Liberal government at the time.

It's important to remember where our health care system was when Minister Jones was sworn in as the Minister of Health in 2022. Ontario and the rest of the world was only beginning to recover from the global pandemic, a pandemic that showed the holes in Ontario's health care system caused by over a decade of neglect by the Liberal government, propped up by the NDP.

Since Minister Jones was sworn in as the Minister of Health, our government has registered a record number of new nurses two years in a row, registering a total of 32,000 nurses in Ontario. Our government recognized that the status quo was no longer working for Ontarians, and that is why, under the leadership of Premier Ford, we have taken action to build a more connected and convenient health care system.

## TAXATION

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, who's done phenomenal work bringing investment to Windsor-Essex like we've never seen before.

The carbon tax affects every single worker in Ontario. It doesn't matter what sector you work in or how much money you make, the carbon tax is hurting everyone. Workers see it when they go to the pump to fill up their car with gas or when they go to the grocery store to buy food to put on the table for their families.

At the same time, it's taking money away from business owners who want to invest in their workers. We want our businesses to succeed so we'll have great-paying jobs. We need them in our country, in our communities all over the province. But we need the Liberals to stop burdening them with the carbon tax.

Can the minister explain how the carbon tax is hurting Ontario's economy?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, we have been saying this for quite some time: The Liberals don't realize the importance of leaving the people of Ontario with more money in their pockets. Think of the entrepreneur who wants to undertake a new business venture. That extra dollar in their pocket means being able to bring their ideas to life. It gives them the ability to scale up by hiring new workers and entering new markets. That extra dollar can be the difference in what makes their dream become a reality. That is what the Liberals are trying to take away when they hike taxes at every opportunity they get.

They missed an opportunity to correct course and scrap the carbon tax in their budget last week.

Speaker, we urge them to scrap this terrible tax today.

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

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** Certainly, we've revitalized our province's business environment after the previous Liberal government's failed economic experiment. We witnessed that in my community first-hand.

When the Liberals keep hiking taxes, they are pushing away entrepreneurs and businesses and stifling innovation. We want businesses to see Ontario as the place where they can succeed, but the Liberals are telling them not to come here, with their carbon tax.

Unfortunately, Bonnie Crombie and the Liberals in this House endorse the Trudeau Liberals' approach. They want to see the carbon tax hiked every single year, to try to undo the progress we've made in Ontario.

We need the Prime Minister to stop listening to his Liberal friends and start listening to the hard-working people of this province.

Can the minister let the Liberals know the risks that accompany their carbon tax?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** The Liberal approach of higher taxes just does not work. It has been tested time and time again, and every single time, it fails.

Look at the previous Liberal government, Speaker. Their high taxes chased out business. It cost us 300,000 manufacturing jobs in the past years. Businesses were looking everywhere but Ontario to invest and expand. Now the federal Liberals are trying to do what they did here in Ontario all over Canada, all over again, with their 17-cent-a-litre carbon tax. And now they're doubling down on their budget disaster of last week.

We've built up Ontario's global reputation as the best place to do business. We did it by lowering taxes, not by raising taxes.

Scrap the tax today.

#### AUTISM TREATMENT

**Ms. Chandra Pasma:** This government's underspending on special education means that children with autism are going without badly needed supports in school. This is not only impacting their learning; it is putting their safety at risk.

More than half of principals in Ontario say they've had to ask parents to keep their child with special needs at home because staff shortages are putting their safety in jeopardy.

Why does the Premier not believe that children with autism deserve a safe, high-quality education in Ontario?

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

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** First off, we've worked very hard to ensure all children are in school for the next three years with stability. Children with special education needs are the ones with the greatest exceptionality, are the ones who need stability in schools, and our party alone stood up and delivered deals with every teacher union, providing some stability in their lives.

We also increased the funding for special education. We're talking about an increase of nearly \$540 million since 2018, \$125 million more this year compared to last year—3,500 additional EAs in school boards, as reported by our school board associations.

Mr. Speaker, we know there's more to do. It's why in this year's budget we announced additional funding for

additional staffing in addition to supports for co-op education to help ensure these young individuals are able to put their talents to work in the labour market and seek employment and build skills.

**1110**

We'll continue to be there every single year to increase funding, staffing and supports for our kids with the most exceptional needs in Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The supplementary question? The member for London—Fanshawe.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Premier, I wrote the minister in June of last year on behalf of families like Bethany's. Her daughter has been waiting for years for autism core services and is still waiting. Bethany tells us that at her daughter's school there is only one EA for three kids with special needs, and without OAP funding her daughter is falling further and further behind because she cannot get the ABA or the speech therapy she needs.

Under your government, autism services are only getting worse for this family and all the families here today. Premier, why are kids waiting for years for the OAP core funding they need and deserve so they can thrive?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

**Hon. Michael Parsa:** I thank the honourable member for the important question. As I said earlier, when we formed government, 75% of the families were waiting with no prospect of support at all. Today, because of the supports and services under the leadership of this Premier, we have increased the funding to more than double, \$600 million, and this year, as a result of the budget—which, unfortunately, so far you've voted against, and I hope you vote in favour of it when you have the next opportunity, because in the budget there's an increase of \$120 million more to support families. That will help us more with getting tens of thousands of families enrolled in core clinical services, like the member alluded to.

Unlike before, when families had one route to service—IBI—today, they have multiple opportunities through family foundational services, through urgent response, through entry to school and through care-mediated therapy, and tens of thousands of families are accessing these services because of our decisions.

#### SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** My question is to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services—a busy morning for you. Developmental services remain woefully underfunded in Ontario. In the run-up to the 2024 budget, developmental services organizations across Ontario led the #5ToSurvive campaign, calling for a 5% increase to their base funding to make up years of frozen budgets. The 2% they did receive is totally inadequate.

I wrote two letters to the minister outlining the strain on groups like Community Living Algoma, Community Living Espanola and Community Living Manitoulin. These organizations work tirelessly to serve people with develop-



mental disabilities while working on increasingly tight budgets.

My question to the minister: Why did he ignore the needs of the developmental services sector once again in this budget?

**Hon. Michael Parsa:** I thank my honourable colleague for the very important question. In fact, quite the contrary: I will remind the honourable member that, under the leadership of Premier Ford and this government, we have increased support and funding for developmental services in Ontario by over a billion dollars since we formed government. We have increased funding for supportive living for those who require those supports and services by more than \$2.2 billion in the province of Ontario.

In our most recent budget, which I hope the member and all my colleagues in this House support, we increased funding by \$310 million for the sectors who are doing—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Member for Hamilton Mountain, come to order.

**Hon. Michael Parsa:** These organizations are doing fantastic work in every corner in our province, and we have their back.

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

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Again to the minister: The fact is that this government has never lived up to their word for adults who have developmental disabilities.

Here's an example from people in my riding: Karen and Jacques Ribout in my riding were forced to set up their own micro-board to support their daughter Emily through the Passport Program. They work full-time coordinating support for their daughter in making sure that she gets the services she needs. This year, they were informed that they will receive a 0% increase to their Passport funding, putting them behind inflation once again.

Karen and Jacques wrote to my office saying, "This just piles on from previous years of lower-than-inflation increase and even years when 0% increases and cuts were the norm."

People with developmental services deserve to have the resources to live healthy and full lives. My question again to the minister: Why is this minister refusing to make that a reality for people that are in need in this province?

**Hon. Michael Parsa:** Again, I thank the honourable for the question. When we formed government, we heard from families and service providers who were telling us—and the member would know this—that they are facing the same challenges as they had done 10, 15 and 20 years prior too, because nothing was done to support these families. This is why, through our long-term vision, with the help and support of the sector and families, we introduced Journey to Belonging, because we want to make sure every single person in our province, regardless of where they are, is able to participate fully in their communities. That's why, as I mentioned earlier, we increased the funding more than \$1 billion in developmental services in the province of Ontario to \$3.4 billion today.

The member talked about supportive living. We increased supportive living funding by more than \$2.2 billion. Journey to Belonging is our long-term vision, but we're making the process easier and more streamlined for families so that they can access services and supports digitally, regardless of where they are in the—

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

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Order. The next question.

## TAXATION

**Mr. Will Bouma:** My question is for the Minister of Energy. Across the nation, Premiers from all political stripes are speaking out against the federal carbon tax and its detrimental impacts on families and businesses. Inflation has already reached devastating levels, resulting in many households not being able to make ends meet.

Every day, I receive emails and phone calls from constituents who are struggling to get by as a result of the carbon tax. I know that's the case for members all across this great Legislature. The message from the people of Ontario is clear: They feel betrayed and punished for having to pay more at the pumps just to go to work and feed their families. This carbon tax must be scrapped immediately.

Can the minister please tell this House why the carbon tax queen, Bonnie Crombie, and her Liberals must come to their senses and join us in calling for an end to this disastrous tax?

**Hon. Todd Smith:** This is what happens when you leave the Liberals and the NDP in charge of energy policy. The Green Energy Act tripled our electricity rates. By 2018, they were booted out of office and remain the minivan party that we see today.

The federal Liberal government is doing the exact same thing, only they're doing it with their carbon tax. They're making life unaffordable for the people of Ontario and the people of Canada.

The member from Brantford–Brant just mentioned the price at the pumps. It's up around a buck 80 a litre right now, and the federal Liberals want to triple the carbon tax. Holy mackinaw, in the words of Joe Bowen. That's going to make it completely unaffordable for the people of Ontario.

We have to do the right thing. The queen of the carbon tax, Bonnie Crombie, does have to come to her senses. The NDP have come to their senses. We can't afford this carbon tax. We have to scrap it today.

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

**Mr. Will Bouma:** Thank you, Minister, for that response. The carbon tax pushes up prices across the board, affecting everything from fuelling our cars to building homes for Ontarians. And this is not the end of it, Speaker: This tax is going to triple by 2030. People cannot afford to pay their bills now, how are they going to afford it then? Ontarians need more financial relief, not additional taxes.

While our government has consistently opposed the carbon tax from the start, the NDP and Bonnie Crombie's Liberals continue to support further hikes to this punitive measure. That is unacceptable.

Can the minister please explain why Ontarians cannot afford more NDP-Liberal taxes?

**Hon. Todd Smith:** It's pretty simple, Mr. Speaker. We've seen this movie before, and it doesn't end well. When the Liberals and the NDP teamed up on energy policy in Ontario, we saw 300,000 manufacturing jobs, including many in the automotive sector, leave for other jurisdictions. We came in in 2018. The current Minister of Northern Development was the Minister of Energy. He stopped the Green Energy Act madness, and we brought stability to our energy sector. As a result, we've seen jobs flooding back in to Ontario at a record rate.

1120

But the federal Liberals want to do it all over again. It's unbelievable that they want to triple the carbon tax, which is already crippling the people of Ontario and crippling the people of Ontario.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Todd Smith:** And they chirp over there. They say, "Oh, where's your plan?" We have a plan, Mr. Speaker. It's called Powering Ontario's Growth, investing in our nuclear reactors at Pickering and at Darlington and at Bruce, building small modular reactors in Darlington, investing in our water power—

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

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Stop the clock. Order. Start the clock. The next question.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** My question is to the Minister of Education. The Toronto District School Board is facing a \$26.5-million budget deficit. This is after \$17 million in cuts to programs and services for the upcoming year. The Conservative government has cut \$1,347 per student since 2018. The chair of the board has written to the minister, saying programs students rely on are in jeopardy.

Will the minister address the TDSB's structural deficit to avoid further drastic cuts?

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** I think the priority of parents in this province is that governments land deals that keep the kids in class, and that's exactly what the government has done—not a peep from the New Democrats or Liberals who couldn't do that when they were in government. We signed deals that provided stability.

The first principle of your question is that you've got to keep kids in front of their teachers, focused on the basics of education, which is why we hired 7,500 more education workers. It's why we hired 3,000 more teachers. It's why we just doubled the funding to build more schools in this province for families in Toronto and the smallest towns and villages of this province.

We are investing more in public education than at any time, but we're doing it alone. When we brought forth a

budget that added billions of investments to publicly funded schools, Liberals opposed that investment. When we hired thousands of additional teachers to help our kids get back on track, you opposed the investment.

But, Mr. Speaker, we're not going to rely on the opposition to do what's right, we're going to continue to go back to basics and demand better for the people of this province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The supplementary? The member for University–Rosedale.

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** Back to the minister: These are the facts. Schools in our riding are facing cuts, because the Conservatives are refusing to properly fund our public school system. We have 15 parents from Kensington school today. Kensington is losing two teachers. They just learned their kids will be in a grade 4/5/6 class. That means a teacher will have to explain and teach three lesson plans each and every day. That is not a recipe for student success, that is a recipe for kids being left behind.

My question is to the minister: Will you commit to more school funding so students in this province, including the kids of these parents who are here today, can succeed in school?

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** See, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite seem to conflate that funding is the barrier to a qualified teacher in that classroom, but you know that there's a retired educator in Toronto, as we speak, ready to get in that classroom. But because of your ideological aversion—like, it is just crazy, that you would rather a babysitter. Those parents would rather—you should tell the parents that the official policy of Liberals and New Democrats is to rather a babysitter, instead of leveraging a retired educator in classrooms in this province. It's inconceivable, and it's frankly shameful. We have a solution right now, supported by the principals' association, the trustees' association and the common-sense parents of this province.

Get off this ideological aversion to leveraging people with experience and stand up for what's right: qualified educators in the classrooms of Ontario.

#### OFFICE OF THE PREMIER

**Mrs. Karen McCrimmon:** When you ask the people of Ontario if they're better off now than they were six years ago, the answer is a resounding no. Patients, nurses, doctors, teachers, students—including the autism community—farmers and renters, all dealing with restrictions, slowdowns and cuts to essential services.

But I will tell you who isn't dealing with cuts. This government has the largest, most expensive cabinet ever. This Premier's office is also the largest, most expensive Premier's office in history, doubling in size and salary. If this isn't the gravy train, I don't know what is.

Mr. Speaker, can the Premier please explain what exactly his 28 extra staff members, each earning over \$100,000 annually, are doing for the people of Ontario?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Order.

The Premier may reply.

**Hon. Doug Ford:** “Wow” is right. It’s a wow. I can’t believe what I just heard the member say. The people are not a little bit—they’re a thousand times better. There are 700,000 people collecting a paycheque who never collected a paycheque under them. There’s \$28 billion of investment in the auto and EV sector that under their government—they ran them right out of our province. And wait until tomorrow: one of the largest investments in Canadian history in the auto sector. We’ll be announcing that.

So talk to the hundreds of thousands of people who have a secure job for years to come. Talk to the people who are in the tech sector—over \$20 billion of investment. We’ve overtaken Silicon Valley and the San Francisco Bay area. We’re going 365% faster than that region when it comes to the tech sector.

Talk to the people who are employed with the \$3-billion investment in life sciences, who have a stable job. Talk to all the businesses that we reduced \$8 billion from—we have never raised a tax on the people or—

*Interjections.*

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

The member for Ottawa South, come to order. The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, come to order. Start the clock. The supplementary question?

**Mrs. Karen McCrimmon:** This government has the largest, most expensive cabinet ever. This government has the largest, most expensive Premier’s office ever. And now we are being told that the Premier’s former principal secretary visited a developer’s home several times, contrary to what was told to the Integrity Commissioner.

What exactly is the Premier paying this enormous staff to do?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Let’s just remind everyone: This is the member who said we’re better off with a carbon tax, following the queen of the carbon tax, Bonnie Crombie: “This province is better off.”

Tell the people who are filling up their gas tanks and looking at 17.5 cents more as we reduced gas by 10.7 cents. Talk to the kids behind me about the new schools that they’re seeing built across the province. You closed 600 schools; we’re building \$16 billion of schools. Talk to the 12,500 doctors who are now registered right here in Ontario. Talk to the 80,000 nurses. When they were firing nurses, we registered 80,000 nurses.

Mr. Speaker, we have become an economic powerhouse, not just in North America but around the world. We’re going to continue growing Ontario—

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

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Order. The next question.

1130

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Dave Smith:** My question is for the Minister of Indigenous Affairs. The Liberal carbon tax is punishing

Ontario families and businesses. After this month’s 23% tax hike, Ontarians are paying 18 cents more per litre at the gas pumps, and that is just unacceptable. This costly tax drives up the price of everything, but especially in remote Indigenous communities across northern Ontario, where the cost to transport goods is already much higher compared to anywhere else in the province.

Speaker, we know the opposition NDP and independent Liberals are more than happy to see this tax nearly triple by 2030. But the people of Ontario have had enough. They want to see this tax scrapped today.

Speaker, can the minister please tell the House how the Liberal carbon tax is adversely impacting on rural, remote and northern Indigenous communities?

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** Yesterday and today, the Minister of Energy and I got a real perspective on the cost of this carbon tax. There’s a couple of isolated First Nations communities who operate their own independent power authorities, and between the shortened winter road season and the impact of the carbon tax, what would otherwise be years that they would break even—several years, in fact—they’re now running significant deficits that they don’t know how to pay for.

These are serious issues, and so far, the NDP position has been nothing short of gallimaufry. And I can’t help but wonder, when Bonnie Crombie was in the House of Commons, standing shoulder to shoulder with Justin Trudeau, whether she imagined she’d take the throne of the Ontario Liberal Party and become the queen of the carbon tax and live up to the provincial Liberal standards of their understanding of northern Ontario: that it’s a wasteland.

It’s not. We’re proud of our vast region. We want affordable living in northern Ontario, and it’s this—

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

The supplementary question?

**Mr. Dave Smith:** Thank you to the minister for his response.

The carbon tax is a tax on everything: your groceries, your gas, heating your home and so much more. It’s disgraceful that the federal Liberals and their provincial counterparts are forcing this burdensome tax on individuals and families all across northern Ontario.

Speaker, the Liberal record speaks for itself. The previous Liberal government, that was propped up by the NDP, neglected the north for years and actually called it “no man’s land.” Unlike the opposition, our government will always support northern communities, and that’s why we’re the only party in this Legislature that’s standing up to the federal government and demanding that they scrap this tax.

Speaker, can the minister please elaborate on the detrimental effects that the carbon tax is having on the people, the communities and all of the businesses across the north?

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** Not too long ago, the Minister of Small Business federally attended an event in Sudbury, and she was pressed by business owners like Kelly Scott of Barrydowne Paint on what they planned on doing to

mitigate the effects of the hard-hitting carbon tax. Of course, the nervous Minister of Small Business managed to absquatulate every time the question was put to her. But we know the truth: Any attempts by the federal government to mitigate the costs of the carbon tax will not flow to the consumer. That means more prices for gas, more prices for everything in a fully integrated supply chain, from food to steel to mining to forestry.

This tax is expensive. The opposition needs to stand with the government, who's working to reduce the cost to these communities and make life affordable in northern Ontario, and just scrap the tax.

### FOREST FIREFIGHTING LUTTE CONTRE LES INCENDIES DE FORÊT

**Mr. Guy Bourgouin:** My question is to the Premier. NOMA municipalities are meeting this week. On their agenda: forestry, resilience and partnership with Indigenous communities. We know there will be forest fires. First Nations communities will be most impacted, and municipalities will welcome evacuees with the means they currently have. Yet we never seem to be quite ready for wildfire season.

Premier, can you tell NOMA members today: Are we ready for the fire season?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** And to reply, the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

**Hon. Graydon Smith:** Thank you for the question. Absolutely, we are ready for fire season here in Ontario. I've talked to this House on multiple occasions about our recruitment efforts for forest fire rangers here in Ontario, supporting those front-line workers, supporting all those that work the logistics to make sure that the system is ready, supporting those in the air, those on the ground, those at the outbases all throughout Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, this government has made it a priority to be ready for forest fire season in Ontario. In fact, we raised the budget from a paltry \$69 million back in the Liberal days to \$135 million today to make sure that we are keeping people safe all throughout Ontario. That is our mission, Mr. Speaker, and we are not stopping. We are going to make sure that every community in Ontario is safe and we are ready for forest fire prevention every single day.

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

**Mr. Guy Bourgouin:** Oh, I disagree with the minister. We're down \$81 million from last year's budget. We have 50 crews missing. That represents 200 forest firefighters.

Monsieur le Président, ma question est pour le premier ministre.

Il nous manque déjà 50 équipes, donc 200 pompiers forestiers. Ce gouvernement est toujours dans l'état de réaction plutôt que de préparation.

Monsieur le Premier Ministre, les municipalités du Nord ont besoin de savoir : allez-vous envoyer du finance-

ment dès maintenant pour que les municipalités soient prêtes à accueillir les évacués des feux de forêt?

**Hon. Graydon Smith:** I'm not sure if my voice carries far enough across to the other side of the House, but I'll reiterate again: \$69.8 million is what was being spent on forest firefighting when we took over as a government. Today, it is \$135 million, and that's just the base, Mr. Speaker.

The reality is that forest firefighting in Ontario is a proposition where we spend every dollar that is needed to get the job done, and that is our promise to communities all throughout Ontario: that not only will we have the resources, again, on the ground, in the air, wherever it needs to be, but we will spare no expense to make sure that communities stay safe here in Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, we are committed to the safety of communities, individuals and infrastructure in this province. We show it every single day with our actions. I call on the opposition to support us as we make sure that Ontarians remain safe.

### TAXATION LONG-TERM CARE

**Mrs. Daisy Wai:** My question is for the Minister of Long-Term Care. The Liberal carbon tax is adversely impacting every sector in Ontario. It drives up the cost of building expenses, from the cost of materials and transport to the cost of operations.

Speaker, people in my riding of Richmond Hill and across Ontario want to ensure that family members in long-term-care homes receive the best possible care. They are concerned that the regressive carbon tax is negatively affecting this vital sector.

Our government must continue to ensure that residents in a long-term-care home receive the quality of care and the quality of life they need and deserve.

Speaker, can the minister please tell this House what our government is doing to protect Ontario families, especially our seniors, from the negative impact of the carbon tax?

**Hon. Stan Cho:** Speaker, that member sits about two seats away from a Liberal member, so she had to have heard earlier, during question period, while the Minister of Economic Development was talking about all the progress we're making in our economy—that he said, “You sure talk about the carbon tax a lot.” And he's absolutely right.

Because we're not milking this, unlike our dairy farmer friends. This is a major problem here in the province and it affects long-term care because Bonnie Crombie, the queen of the carbon tax, continues to support this regressive tax that's going to triple by the end of 2028. This is a problem for long-term-care homes because we are facing the ever-increasing cost of construction, as that great member said.

We're still going to fight back. That's why we've increased the construction funding subsidy as well as doubling the Local Priorities Fund to \$35 million,

Speaker. We're going to help our homes get more training, more equipment, better-quality food to our residents in our homes, Speaker, because this is the right thing to do. Our province was built by the hard-working seniors in our communities. We're going to take care of them.

1140

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

**Mrs. Daisy Wai:** Thank you, Minister, for your response and especially for the respect and the care you give to our seniors. It is encouraging to hear that our government is taking action to ensure that seniors are able to receive the care they need and enjoy the high quality of life that they deserve within the very community they helped plan and develop.

For 15 years, the previous Liberal government neglected the long-term-care sector. Now, under the leadership of carbon tax queen Bonnie Crombie, they are turning a blind eye on how the carbon tax is negatively impacting our seniors. Speaker, they did nothing to stop the 23% hike earlier this month.

Unlike the NDP and Liberals in this Legislature, our government will continue to fight the carbon tax and protect Ontario seniors. Speaker, can the minister tell the House what our government is doing to support our long-term-care sector?

**Hon. Stan Cho:** Well, Speaker, we are doing a lot and I appreciate that question. Let's just look at the most recent budget, right? I mentioned the \$155 million for the construction funding subsidy 2.0. That's going to allow for thousands of more spaces to get online. But above and beyond that, the highest increase to level-of-care funding—this is operational support for staffing, for food for our seniors—in history of 6.6% annualized.

And Speaker, a one-year support of \$202 million. That's \$2,543 per space in long-term care so that seniors can get the repairs they deserve, whether it's a leaky faucet, new televisions, new supports, new equipment, new rec room. This is a government that said we are taking care of our seniors.

Now, the Liberals can heckle the carbon tax all they want, but their record on long-term care is clear. When they exited government in 2018, they built 611 net new beds. We have 18,000 built with shovels in the ground, well on our way to 15,000. We're getting it done for our seniors.

#### TENANT PROTECTION

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The cost of rent is out of control. Oshawa has experienced some of the most dramatic rent increases in the province. Between 2014 and 2023, the cost of renting increased by 61%. These aren't just numbers. These are real people.

I met with Mark who was relieved that his family found an apartment so they're not on the street. But now they're facing a steep rent increase and they already can't afford

groceries. People are hurting. Will the government bring back real rent control for real people?

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** That's the difference between the opposition and us, Mr. Speaker. What we believe that will help the challenge that people have with finding rental housing is to actually build more purpose-built rental housing. I feel that that will work, and we're showing that it does work because under the policies of this government, we have the highest level of purpose-built rentals not in one year, not in two years—but ever, Mr. Speaker. And that is giving more people more options and that is what will bring the price of rental housing down across the province of Ontario.

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

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** This government has failed to fix the soaring cost of housing, and renters in my community are paying the price. Oshawa has faced steeper rent increases than even Toronto, nearly four times the provincial guideline.

We used to have real rent control in Ontario. Now, all we have are loopholes for big corporate landlords. People are spending 50%, 60%, 70% of their income just to keep a roof over their head. That's money they should have for activities with their family or a night out at a local restaurant, money to save for the future. But instead, they're in such a mess.

Will this government deliver real rent control, please, so that people can get back to their lives?

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** As you know, there are rent controls. The other things that help affordability, Mr. Speaker, is when you reduce taxes for the people of the province of Ontario. Of course, we have done that. Of course, we removed the tolls on roads in the member's area. We have delivered a One Fare system that allows people to save about 1,600 bucks a year per person, Speaker. That is a massively huge benefit for the people of her community.

I was speaking to the mayor of Oshawa, and he could not have been more supportive of the things that we are doing to help his community grow. That includes the groundbreaking investments that we've made in the automotive sector in that area.

So let's see: We're building more purpose-built rental housing than ever before. We're getting more shovels in the ground for housing than ever before. We're saving the automotive sector in Oshawa and making it bigger. We're expanding the GO trains. We're building more hospitals in that part of the region. We've got more jobs. We've reduced the cost of transit and transportation. We're building more schools, more long-term-care homes, reduced the costs to the people in Oshawa and all of Durham region. I'd say we're on the right path, Mr. Speaker.

## DAIRY FARMERS OF ONTARIO

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Point of order. The Minister for Children, Community, and Social Services was the first one up.

**Interjection:** Labour.

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

**Hon. David Piccini:** It's no cabinet shuffle. Ask the Premier.

Speaker, I just want to recognize the dairy farmers and Adam Petherick who's here and to recognize someone who's not here. I've not had the opportunity—and I feel it's important to read their name into the record. That person is Sid Atkinson, who we tragically lost at the end of last year.

Sid was a giant in the dairy space. He was never afraid to tell you a story, to give you his opinion. He advocated for dairy farmers in our community across Ontario, and was a former member of the board. He will be dearly missed by our community, by dairy farmers across Northumberland–Peterborough South, and I just want to recognize that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Thank you, and again, I apologize to the minister.

The Premier is next.

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Well, first of all, I'd like to invite the dairy farmers over to my office for a cold glass of chocolate milk.

And I'd like to invite the class up there. If you have time—I don't know your schedule—come by and say hello and we'll get a picture in the office.

## ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Oshawa has a point of order.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I tabled written question number 165 to the Minister of Transportation on February 26. Today is April 24. I've waited nearly two months to get an answer that requires a response after 24 sessional days. The response regarding transportation enforcement officers was due yesterday. When should I expect that answer from the minister?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I have to remind the minister that ministers are required under standing order 101(d) to file a response within 24 sessional days. The responses are now overdue. I ask him to give the House some indication as to when the response will be forthcoming.

Government House leader.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Thank you for that, Speaker. I will confer with the Minister of Transportation, and we'll make sure that the response is presented to the House by the end of day.

## CORRECTION OF RECORD

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Point of order, the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Yes, Speaker, I want to apologize. I got caught up in my own excitement. Whitney Public School is coming tomorrow. I'm a day ahead of myself and I apologize. I apologize to Whitney Public School. I've been waiting a long time for them. And I apologize to the House for my error.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Todd Smith:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker. I just want to correct my record. Yesterday, when I was talking about the multi-million dollar expansion at BWXT, I inadvertently said they were creating 200 million jobs at BWXT. While I wish that were true, it's 200-plus jobs that they're creating.

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

*The House recessed from 1149 to 1500.*

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
SOCIAL POLICY

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Speaker, I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Social Policy and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Meghan Stenson):** Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 166, An Act to amend the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act / Projet de loi 166, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le ministère de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

*Report adopted.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

## PETITIONS

## SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

**Ms. Chandra Pasma:** It's my honour today to table a petition that was collected by members of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, with over 500 signatories across Ontario. These petitioners express a concern about what is happening in Ontario's provincial schools. They note that we have an obligation under the Human Rights Code to equal treatment of all students. Therefore, they call on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to require the Minister of Education to improve

transparency and funding for these schools, and to call for a provincial audit into these schools.

It's my honour to support this petition. I wholeheartedly endorse it, will add my name to it and send it to the table with page Aura.

#### WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to present this petition called "Improve Winter Road Maintenance." I thank Jon Berube from my riding for these petitions.

The petition is quite simple, Speaker. The winter road maintenance in northern Ontario has been privatized by the previous government. The private contractors—some of them do good jobs; some of them do horrible jobs. I can tell you that, in my riding, I can tell you where one snow-clearing contractor ends and the other one starts, because where the other one starts, it's perfect pavement, and before this, we're in a foot of snow.

People are signing the petition to say: If you're going to continue down the path of private contractors doing winter road maintenance in northern Ontario, then you have to have an oversight of it. If they don't do a good job, they are putting northern Ontario drivers at risk. They should have an oversight, and if they don't correct this, the government should take it over.

This is what they want. I want it also. I will sign it and ask Armaan to bring it to the Clerk.

#### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** It's my honour to present the following petitions on behalf of Sally Palmer, professor emeritus, school of social work in the faculty of social sciences at McMaster University. The petition is entitled "To Raise Social Assistance Rates."

Within this petition, it talks about how deeply in poverty people receiving social assistance are in Ontario. It points out that it's inadequate to cover the rising costs of food and rent, that individuals on Ontario Works receive \$733, whereas those on ODSP receive \$1,308. But I'd also like to point out that OW has been frozen since 2018.

It also points out about the CERB program and how it was determined that the basic income of \$2,000 per month was adequate for people. It raises and begs the question why we have people on social assistance so deep below that as well as the poverty line.

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature and deliver it with page Emerson to the Clerks.

#### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Ms. Chandra Pasma:** It's my pleasure to rise and present this petition to the Legislature with signatures that were collected by Dr. Sally Palmer at McMaster University, who has been a tireless advocate on behalf of people in Ontario who are experiencing poverty and income insecurity.

The petition makes reference to the fact that levels of Ontario Works and ODSP in Ontario are far below the poverty line and do not provide enough income for people actually to be able to support themselves, especially compared to the income security program that we had during the pandemic which was provided by the federal government, the CERB program. Therefore, the petitioners call on the Legislative Assembly to double social assistance rates for people in Ontario.

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

#### LAND USE PLANNING

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It's my pleasure to present a petition around protecting farmland and sustainable growth in Waterloo. It's signed by hundreds of people from Waterloo, Kitchener, Wilmot and Cambridge.

Essentially, this petition calls upon greater transparency around the proposed industrial site in Waterloo region. Most people are not against this site. They just don't want it on 770 acres of prime farmland.

They also have concerns that developers approached those farmers even before the land was rezoned industrial. They also have some concerns around a non-disclosure agreement that has been made public with, we assume, the proposed industrial site. People want transparency, they want democracy, and they want to be part of the process.

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature and give it to page Simon.

#### MISSING PERSONS

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I have a petition titled "Vulnerable Persons Alert." With the autism coalition being here today and them being the co-sponsors of this petition, I thought it was a fantastic day to be able to read more names into the Legislature. This petition goes hand in hand with an online petition that has well over 100,000 signatures to it.

This petition strictly speaks about Draven Graham, who was a young boy with autism who went missing and never came home safely; as well as Shirley Love, who was a senior with dementia and, again, did not make it home to her family safely. This would definitely only be one tool in the tool box to ensure that police have access to all available tools necessary to ensure that vulnerable people come home to their family safely.

I wholeheartedly support this petition and will give it to page Ryder to bring to the Clerk.

#### HOSPITAL SERVICES

**Mr. Chris Glover:** I've read this petition in the House before. It's to save the Minden emergency room—or actually, to reopen the Minden emergency room. We've been reading these for well over a year now, ever since it first came out that the emergency room in Minden was going to be closed. It was a horrific decision to make. It's

the nearest emergency room for thousands of people and the next nearest one is in Haliburton Highlands.

The petition talks about how Haliburton's health services board of directors, without consultation with the affected people, with the affected communities, closed the emergency room on June 1, 2023. What we've heard since then is about people not being able to get the care that they need when they need it. That's the model of this government.

One case was a girl at a summer camp who had a fishhook stuck in her eye and had to travel 20 minutes from Minden to Haliburton in order to get emergency service. There was another case where a person died of cardiac arrest five minutes out from the Haliburton hospital. If the Minden emergency room would have been open, they would have received care 15 minutes prior to that because they were going from Minden to Haliburton.

So this petition asks the government to reopen the Minden emergency room, restore the funding and provide the funding that's needed. It will save lives. We're coming up to the summer season right now, so I will add my voice to this. Save and reopen the Minden ER because it will save lives this summer.

1510

#### CANCER TREATMENT

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to thank Gisele Raymind from Hanmer in my riding for this petition. It's called "Coverage for Take-Home Cancer Drugs."

Basically, cancer drugs, if they are administered in a hospital, are covered with no out-of-pocket expenses. But for more and more cancer drugs, you don't need to be in a hospital anymore; you can take them at home, which is great for patient care, but that means that you have to pay for them. For many people, that's a huge barrier to care.

In other provinces, whether we look at British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba or Quebec, they all cover take-home cancer drugs so that you can focus on getting through your cancer treatment and getting better as fast as you can. The Canadian Cancer Society has called on the government to cover take-home cancer drugs. I think it is high time for Ontario to join other provinces in Canada and make sure that every patient facing cancer can put all of their energy into getting better, not into trying to get coverage for the drugs that will help them do better.

I am happy to add my name to this petition and I will ask my good page Aura to bring the petition to the Clerk.

#### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** It's my honour again to present the following petitions on behalf of Dr. Sally Palmer, professor emerita at the school of social work in the faculty of social sciences at McMaster University. The petition is "To Raise Social Assistance Rates."

This petition speaks about how Ontario's social assistance rates are well below Canada's official Market Basket Measure poverty line. They do not cover the cost

of food. They do not cover the cost of rent. Ontario Works rates have been frozen for six years, and the small increases this government would pat itself on the back for for ODSP are leaving people below the poverty line. The fact that they have indexed it means that they have kept people below the poverty line.

This petition recommends the doubling of social assistance so that people can live with dignity, people can buy food that is healthy and have a safe place to call home.

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature and deliver it with Ruby to the Clerk.

#### HEALTH CARE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to thank Mrs. Helene Boily from Blezard Valley in my riding for these petitions. They're called "Health Care: Not for Sale."

Basically, medicare is a program that defines us as Canadians and as Ontarians, where the care we get is based on our needs, not on our ability to pay. Under this government, we have seen more and more of the publicly paid-for care being delivered by for-profit companies. The for-profit companies are there for one reason: to make money. It is really easy to make money off of the backs of sick people. Once you are sick, nothing else matters.

We have to make sure that our health care system is protected, that we do not want people to make money off of the backs of sick people, and people are signing this petition by the hundreds every single day. I get big stacks of it coming to my office to make sure that the services we get will be based on our needs, not on our ability to pay.

I support this petition and will ask Shiara to bring it to the Clerk.

#### ORGAN DONATION

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I would like to thank John Marion from Sudbury, but the part of Sudbury that is part of my riding, for these petitions. They're called "Saving Organs to Save Lives."

Did you know, Speaker, that right now there are more than 1,742 people on the wait-list for an organ in Ontario? And that, of those people, every third day one of them will die waiting for an organ? It doesn't have to be that way. Over 81% of Ontarians want to be a donor. If you ask 81% of us that want to be a donor, only a fraction of this—36%—have signed their donor card.

I have a bill in the name of one of my colleagues, Peter Kormos, who would change this. We would basically copy what has been done in Nova Scotia, where we would assume consent, give people many, many chances to opt out, all the way until after death—their loved ones will have an opportunity to opt out—but I can guarantee you that that will increase the number of organs available for people who need them and would bring a lot of relief to our health care system at the same time.

This is something that I strongly support. Peter Kormos started it, and I would be very happy to see it become a



reality. So I'll be happy to add my name to it and give it to page Simon to bring to the Clerk.

### SUBVENTIONS AUX RÉSIDENTS DU NORD POUR FRAIS DE TRANSPORT À DES FINS MÉDICALES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** J'aimerais remercier M. Claude Gagnon, qui demeure à Val Caron dans mon comté, pour ces pétitions. C'est une pétition pour améliorer le service de subventions aux résidents du nord de l'Ontario pour des frais de transport à des fins médicales.

Il y a plusieurs programmes du système de santé qui n'existent pas dans le nord de l'Ontario. On doit se déplacer, soit à Toronto, Ottawa, London, pour les recevoir. Le gouvernement nous rembourse les frais de transport, les frais d'hébergement, étant donné que les services ne sont pas disponibles dans le Nord. Par contre, les frais n'ont pas été mis à jour depuis très longtemps.

Et là, je vais faire un petit paragraphe, parce que dans le budget qui vient d'être déposé, il y aura une augmentation des frais d'hébergement, qui passeront de 100 \$ par nuit à 175 \$ par nuit. Mais les frais de transport, les autres frais, n'ont pas changé depuis les années 1990. On a besoin de mettre ce programme-là à jour, parce qu'il y a des gens qui vont choisir de ne pas avoir de traitements parce qu'ils ne peuvent pas payer pour se rendre dans le sud de l'Ontario.

Je suis d'accord avec cette pétition. Je vais la signer et je demande à Simon de l'amener à la table des greffiers.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S FUTURES ACT, 2024

#### LOI DE 2024 VISANT À SOUTENIR L'AVENIR DES ENFANTS

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 24, 2024, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 188, An Act to amend the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017 and various other Acts / Projet de loi 188, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2017 sur les services à l'enfance, à la jeunesse et à la famille et diverses autres lois.

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

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** When I had to end my debate this morning, I was sharing some of the pressures that are facing the Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex, and I had talked about the fact that fully half of the families that the children's aid society is working with are those who are struggling with lack of access to mental health and addiction services in the community.

One third of the families are struggling with mental health or addiction challenges for caregivers and an additional 17% of families are struggling with a child's behaviour or conflict in the home that could be endangering other children. These families are struggling because they

can't access the community-based services that these caregivers or their children need, and the consequence, particularly for those young people with the most critical needs, is that sometimes those families feel that they don't have anywhere to turn; they don't know what to do next. What we are seeing in London, and we are seeing across the province, are young people, children, being surrendered to children's aid in the desperate hope that this might be a way to get their children the treatment they require.

**1520**

The children's aid society—their data system to keep track of the children in the system, they've actually created a new category called “youth in need of treatment” or “not otherwise in need of protection,” because the children who are being surrendered are not being surrendered because of child protection reasons. They're being surrendered because they need mental health treatment and they don't have access to that.

The reason for this is that community-based agencies in the province that support children and youth mental health services are not mandatory services. They are funded to a certain level, and that is the amount of support that they provide. When they run out of resources, young people are put on a waiting list, and that's what we hear more and more from families in the province.

But the mandate of the CAS is that children who are surrendered to that agency are taken into protection. The CAS does not have the ability to turn these families away. In London, we heard that nine youth have been voluntarily surrendered to CAS, and that is a more significant increase than we had seen in the community previously. It's frustrating for the staff at CAS, who know that these young people who are being surrendered aren't going to get the treatment that they need after being surrendered to the children's aid society. The problem is the lack of services in the community.

When the government launched this bill, that was one of the responses of the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies. They said that the bill addresses the back end of child welfare. We have to address the back end of child welfare. We have to ensure that when kids are housed in group homes or foster families, they are safe, but we also need to act proactively to keep kids out of care in the first place.

The Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies said that the issue is that the government is not dealing with causation. They're not dealing with those factors that lead to children going into care in the first place. And so, I would encourage this government to look at the community-based treatment options that are available to young people in this province and provide the funding that those services need so that young people can get the support, the treatment that they require in order to move forward.

Another issue that I would encourage the government to address and that has been brought to my attention in London is the issue of kin families. In the London CAS, there are 135 foster homes, but there are 72 kin homes. Kin

placements are really—where they are available, that is a preferred option for CASs when they have to take kids into protection. It is much better for the child to be with kin family, rather than to be in a foster family or a group home. And yet, we do not provide the same support for kin arrangements as we do for foster families.

This again makes it frustrating for those child protection workers at the CAS when they have a kin family, a willing family who wants to take that child in, but can't afford to do so because the amounts that kin families are reimbursed are so far less than the amounts that foster families or adoptive families receive. Kin families receive \$280 a month for a child, whereas families that adopt or take legal custody receive over \$1,000 per month per child until the child turns 21. I have heard from kin families or potential kin families who would like to support that child, who would like to take that child in, and simply can't afford to do so. That should never be the case, because that is in the best interests of the child.

So, Speaker, this bill that we have before us today, Bill 188, as I said at the outset, it's actually a pleasure to be able to participate in a debate on legislation that all sides of the House seem to agree on. But it's also an opportunity to highlight some of the other issues that need to be addressed to fully support young people in this province to enable them to reach their full potential and to prevent young people having to go into care in the first place.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** We'll now have questions to the member for London West.

**Mrs. Daisy Wai:** Thank you to the member from London West. I appreciate your remarks, but I was also reading reports—there were 79 reports totalling 4,644 pages from one source alone that the Liberal government, propped up by the NDP, missed the chance to improve child welfare in Ontario. I am thankful that Bill 188 is addressing a lot of these things, but I'm sure there's still more to be done. But don't you think what we have with the welfare redesign and also the Ready, Set, Go Program and a lot of other things that we have improved on is a big improvement from what we had before?

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Thank you to the member for the question. I want to assure the member that the NDP would never prop up the Liberals, just as we would never prop up any government that was going to undermine the rights of vulnerable children. The NDP has been calling for the reinstatement of the child and youth advocate. That is something that is missing from this bill that there was an opportunity for the government to move ahead with. The NDP has been calling for years for an end of for-profit group homes that exploit loopholes, that take advantage of children, that are abusive to children. We saw that horrendous exposé of what is happening to some of the most marginalized and vulnerable children in a for-profit group system.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Questions?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Thank you to the member from London West for such an impassioned speech on the Supporting Children's Futures Act. One thing that really struck me is her talking so passionately about parents

having to surrender their children to access services and really giving their children up to the children's aid because they have no other options. The fact that in Ontario, children's aid societies now have a youth in need of treatment but not in need of care really tells the story of how broken this system is. I wanted to give you an opportunity, please, to talk about why this is happening and really how desperate and dismal a state of affairs it is that parents have to give their children up for them to access mental health supports.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Thank you to my colleague for the question. Certainly, I need more than a minute to describe how very broken the system is. But one of the things that I've heard from families that have come to me in London West desperate to get help for their children is the available agencies are telling them, "Your child's needs are too significant for our agency to be able to serve," or "There is a wait-list of months and months and months." Or they are being told that their child is not the right fit. So there are all kinds of reasons that community agencies are not able to respond to the needs of some of these very complex and vulnerable children who need to be in treatment. But if we can provide those treatment services at the start, if we can get that child the support that child needs, then we're opening up the possibility of a future for the child, which is what we want for every young person in this province. That's why we have pushed so hard for that investment.

1530

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the member for Essex.

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** One of the things that this bill proposes to do is extend what I will call the mandatory reporting requirement. That mandatory reporting requirement also exists for some professionals, such as teachers, physicians and social workers. They have a duty to report if they have a reasonable suspicion of child neglect or a child being in need of protection. The proposal in this bill is to extend that reporting requirement to early childhood educators.

You might think that's a responsibility or a burden, but actually, it's meant to protect the early childhood educator, who now doesn't have to make the call. They have an obligation to do it, and therefore that gives them certain legal protections in view of the fact that now that the law has placed them under the obligation to report, they are now protected. I think that's a very good development. I would like to ask the member to express her opinion on that.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** We agree that is a very good development. It's too bad that it has taken this long for such a development to be put in place, because we have been calling for whistle-blower protections in this sector for a number of years. Certainly we have an obligation to ensure that people—teachers, educators—who are employed in the care of children can report suspicions of abuse without fearing that they will not be protected. This is one of the reasons that we do support this bill. We do recognize that this is important, but it's sad that it is so long overdue.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Questions?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I am pleased to be able to ask a question of my colleague from London West, who talked about the importance of keeping children safe who are in care, but also the need to keep them out of care in the first place, as she had mentioned that the government is not dealing with causation in a way that they ought to be with so much at stake and mentioned some of the community-based treatment options generally.

I'm wondering if, specifically, the member could give us some examples of ways to support children so that they're able to stay out of care and be served better in the community.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I appreciate the question from my colleague the member for Oshawa. I think what too many families in this province have experienced is a revolving door. They go from police to CAS to custody officials to hospital staff to medical professionals, family physicians, paramedics, and their child never seems to get the care and treatment that child needs.

We do not have a children's mental health system that is coordinated, that is easy for families to navigate, that ensures that young people who are in deep crisis get the mental health treatment that they require. We really need to take a systemic look at the mental health system and make sure that the services are there for parents and children who need them.

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

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** Another one of the enforcement tools—I'll call it an enforcement tool—that this legislation proposes to introduce is to place more information about the track record of service of various agencies and to post them on a government website. That, I think, is a transparency issue. I think it's a positive move forward. That way, the agencies who actually place children and the public at large would be able to access the history of any enforcement measures being taken against a particular service provider and judge for themselves whether this service provider has provided the service that should be provided. I think that's a positive step in the right direction, and again, I simply invite the member to express her views on that.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Certainly. Speaker, as I said, there are a number of important steps forward in this legislation, which is why we are supporting it. But one of the most effective things I think this government could have done to really support children and youth in this province is to restore the office of the child and youth advocate, not just post information on a website.

We had heard the former provincial child advocate—he had said that he received roughly 19,000 serious occurrence reports, a quarter produced by group residential homes. The government has failed to enable that kind—

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** It is now time for further debate.

**Mr. Billy Pang:** It's my honour to speak on Bill 188, the Supporting Children's Futures Act, 2024. Before I begin, I would like to thank my colleague the Minister of

Children, Community and Social Services for bringing forth this crucial bill. This bill, if passed, would significantly enhance the safety, security and well-being of children and youth in care across our province.

Speaker, our government stands firm in its commitment to ensure that no one is left behind. We are working towards a province where all children, youth and families, including those getting support through Ontario's children and youth services sector, have the resources and support they need to thrive. This bill is all about stepping up to better protect the rights of children and youth, enhancing the quality of services and improving the accountability of service providers.

Since 2022, our government has been working hard at redesigning Ontario's child welfare system. We're focusing on early intervention, improving outcomes for children and tearing down barriers to support. We did that because every child and youth deserves a decent start in life and a safe and stable home, regardless of their circumstances.

This bill is packed with initiatives aimed at ensuring quality care and services for children and youth in care. We are talking about introducing new offences and administrative penalties to boost oversight of out-of-home care. We're expanding who is responsible for reporting concerns, with better information sharing to keep our kids safe. Plus, we are levelling the playing field by strengthening privacy provisions for youth formerly in care.

Since launching the comprehensive redesign of child welfare in Ontario, we have put many new measures in place. This includes, just to name a few, developing a new framework for what out-of-home care looks like; increasing and enhancing oversight and accountability for out-of-home care, and supporting that oversight by adding 20 new positions across the province to support the management, inspection and oversight of out-of-home care for children and youth; and launching the Ready, Set, Go Program, which provides youth in the care of children's aid societies with the life skills they need, starting at 13, and financial support when they leave care up to the age of 23.

Speaker, transforming child and family services is a significant undertaking, and it takes time. Many of the reforms proposed in this bill are designed to better support youth and provide the skills and knowledge that will help them transition to adulthood. The changes also build on the Ready, Set, Go Program, which we launched back on April 1, 2023. This program represents another significant step coming out of the Child Welfare Redesign Strategy. The Ready, Set, Go Program provides youth transitioning out of care with life skills and supports they need to pursue post-secondary education, skilled trades training and employment opportunities.

Under the new program, children's aid societies will begin focusing on helping children plan for their future at an earlier age. Starting at 13, they will begin learning practical life skills and planning education goals. At age 15, the emphasis will expand to financial literacy and preparing for the workforce, including managing personal finances, setting up a bank account, grocery shopping,

résumé building, and how to access social services and other supports.

#### 1540

The Ready, Set, Go Program is a game-changer for youth transitioning out of care. We have increased the financial assistance, raising it from \$850 to \$1,800 a month at the age of 18, gradually decreasing to \$1,000 by age 20. Those staying in care at 21 receive \$1,000, and at age 22, \$500. Plus, they can work up to 40 hours a week without losing support. And for those pursuing education or training, we are providing an extra \$500 monthly from age 20, ensuring they have the resources to thrive. These monthly financial support increases will provide youth better quality of life and safer housing opportunities so that they can focus on their studies or work. By extending care until 23 and increasing financial support, we are giving these youth a solid foundation for their future.

The Ready, Set, Go Program, developed with input and advice from former youth in care, child welfare advocates, partners, and informed by research, has a three-year, \$170-million funding commitment from the government. In addition, we are expected to support more than 4,000 youth this year as they prepare for adulthood. It's a great start to support the transition from being a youth in care to becoming a young adult.

Speaker, at its core, the Supporting Children's Futures Act, 2024, is all about looking out for the children and youth in Ontario who need our support the most. It's about putting measures in place to make sure they're safe, well cared for, and have the opportunities they deserve to succeed. If this bill passes, it's going to make a real difference. We are talking about strengthening oversight and enforcement tools for out-of-home care, ensuring that our kids' privacy is respected, and updating our laws based on what we have learned since they were first put in place.

These changes aren't just about the here and now; they are about setting our children up for success in the long run. In the short term, it means safer and more consistent services for those living away from home. But in the long term, it means preparing them for adulthood and giving them the tools they need to succeed.

Our government is committed to making life better for all children and youth in Ontario, especially those in care. Some examples of these measures include:

- mandating information-sharing between children's aid societies and the ministry about specific health and safety risks to children in licensed out-of-home care settings;

- requiring children's aid services to visit children placed in out-of-home care more frequently: every 30 days, instead of every 90 days;

- requiring unannounced, in-person visits by children's aid societies in certain circumstances; for example, if a visit cannot be scheduled because the society was unable to contact the child or the caregivers, or if there are concerns related to the well-being of the child; and

- requirements that give youth in children's residences and foster homes greater guarantees of privacy.

These measures may seem small, but they add up to big changes that will make a real, tangible difference in the lives of our most vulnerable youth. And that is something worth fighting for.

In closing, the passage of Bill 188 would bring us closer to our vision of an Ontario where every child, youth and family has the resources they need to thrive. Our children and youth are the future, and it is our responsibility to ensure that they have the support they need to succeed. I urge all the members of this House to support this bill as we continue to strengthen families and communities across this great province.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** It's now time for questions.

**MPP Jill Andrew:** My question to the government with regard to Bill 188, the Supporting Children's Futures Act: There are immediate steps that you can do today to advance the futures and keep safe and well the children and youth of Ontario.

One of those things is to pass Bill 174, the Missing Persons Amendment Act. That would really help protect vulnerable people, especially those with disabilities. This is a bill that I understand the member from Hamilton Mountain has put forth. This government has said yes to this and yet you have not delivered.

Another thing to help our children and youth: bring back the provincial child and youth advocate so there can be a voice, an independent non-partisan voice, in this Legislature speaking on behalf of children and youth. Don't do it for the NDP; do it for the kids. Do it for the family. Do it for the people who feel down and out and betrayed by the care system.

**Mr. Billy Pang:** On the contrary, I think it is telling me that the NDP speaker's priority seems to be giving their defeated candidate from Don Valley West a job. I've also noticed that she said of this bill's privacy provisions, there are positive changes in this announcement.

From 2008 to 2019, the office of the children's advocate wrote 79 reports that total 4,644 pages. It is just for one source. It should have been the spur of the Liberal government to act, and it should have made the NDP demand action from them, from the previous government.

In fact, it's our government that knew the time for more reports was over. It was our government that took action and redesigned the children's welfare system. The child advocate's investigative function was folded into the Office of the Ombudsman and continues to this day.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Question?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Earlier in the debate, we heard about kin placements, which is a preferred option for children being placed in temporary custody, but the money reimbursed to those families—so a family placement, a kin placement—is \$280 a month versus the \$1,000 that is for adoptive families. That's a huge difference.

And when we know being placed with family is a better option with better outcomes, why is that not something we see in this bill? And would the government be willing to make that change based on the recommendations from

those in the know making decisions in the best interests of children?

**Mr. Billy Pang:** Thank you again to the opposition for this question. At the end of the day, we know that every child deserves safety, stability and access to resources to help them to succeed and thrive. That's why, since 2020, our government has been redesigning Ontario's child welfare system to enhance early intervention, improve outcomes for children and address barriers to support. That's why our government has introduced this Supporting Children's Futures Act, a bill that proposes changes, including new and enhanced enforcement tools. These changes will support better compliance with requirements designed to protect the safety and security of children and youth in out-of-home care.

The changes also aim to better protect children and youth with a history in the child welfare system that would further restrict access by others to their welfare records.

These changes—

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Question?

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Thank you to the member for Markham–Unionville for his comments. I know I don't have much time, but we're hearing a lot of positive feedback from even the opposition on this bill. They've said it's a good bill, that it's a good start. They're happy to see some changes after years of neglect.

Do you have some parts of this bill that you think are going to be really important to improve the lives of vulnerable children in Ontario?

**Mr. Billy Pang:** One thing is on the strengthening of the oversight of out-of-home care, which is very important because our children and youth in care deserve safety, security, and high-quality services that are culturally appropriate and meet their unique needs. That's why, as part of Ontario's child welfare design strategy, our government is proposing changes to the Child, Youth and Family Services Act that would allow for modernized enforcement measures. Through these measures, Ontario will improve, modernize and standardize—

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** I apologize to the member. It is now time for further debate.

1550

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I'm happy to have a few minutes to talk to Bill 188, An Act to amend the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017 and various other Acts.

It has been a long time coming, Speaker. We have known of horrific situations in the child welfare system for a long time. The children's aid societies have come forward, telling us, asking us, begging us to make changes, and I'm happy to see that some of those changes have been incorporated into this bill. But there are other big asks that have been there for a long time that are not in the bill, and I'm sorry that they are not there.

When you look at child protection, you have to look at the continuum of it. You start with: How do you protect them? How do you make sure that they do not end up in care? How do you make sure that they do not end up having to be cared for by the children's aid society and

cared for in residential care in different parts of the province?

I can tell you that in Nickel Belt, for the people who I represent, the number one reason why the children's aid society goes in and takes the child away from the family for the protection of the child is the lack of mental health services. In my community, first of all, 40,000 people do not have access to primary care, so they cannot go see their family physician or their nurse practitioners because they are on the wait-list for Health Care Connect for years on end.

Their child that they love, that they want to support—they are good people who want to do good for their children—develops a mental illness. The child will be admitted into the hospital. After you wait for 36 hours in the emergency room, your child will finally be seen. He or she may be admitted and then get discharged, and they say he needs or she needs to have follow-up in the community. The average wait time for community-based mental health services for children in my community is 18 months. It used to be 12 months, which was way too long; 18 months is a lifetime when you're a child facing mental illness. During that 18 months, Speaker, the family will fall apart.

We are not mental health experts. They don't know what's good to do for the child. One parent will say, "We should do this"; the other one will say something else. Then the child starts to act up in school, and the school sends the child back home and calls the children's aid society because they can see that there's something going on. Those are good families who want to care for their kids; they just don't know what's the right thing to do when the kid starts to act out, when the kid starts to be sick and there's no way for them to access care, so the kid eventually will fall into the protection of children's aid.

The good thing, if there's ever a good thing when a child is taken away, is that the children's aid will have access to intensive children's mental health services and the kid will gain access. That access will not be in our community; that access will be hundreds of kilometres away, where the child will be sent.

For the family, it is extremely difficult. They will continue to have visiting access to their child, but it's not obvious to drive 400 kilometres away for a two-hour visit in person with the child. It becomes really, really difficult. The family will fall apart; most of them will end up in divorce.

When the child gets the treatment he or she needs, comes back to northern Ontario, their life will be completely different. There's no more mom and dad. There's no more family. The family has fallen apart.

None of those working up front to support children, to support families so that we don't end up needing children's aid services are addressed in the bill. What is addressed in the bill is residential, group and foster homes, and believe me, Speaker, there is a lot of room for improvement at that end.

There are quite a few First Nations families in my riding. I'm proud to say that Wahnapiatae First Nation, Atikameksheng Anishnawbek and Mattagami First Nation

are all in my riding. There are quite a few First Nations around Bisco, Westree, Shining Tree etc.

You will have seen in the news a report that was done about children from First Nations who are in care. This report was really hard to read. There was a most serious allegation involving one of the biggest for-profit residential care providers, Hatts Off. The investigation showed that the privately run group home had, as a profit model, First Nations kids from northern Ontario communities. Those kids are called “cash cows.” They’re called “bread and butter.” One of the children who was in one of those homes asked a First Nations social worker if she had come to rescue him—this is how poorly.

I can also talk about Connor Homes in eastern Ontario, which were kept in a state of disrepair. The kids in care were left with few resources, while the owner amassed a personal fortune in real estate holdings. Some of the people who worked there would tell you that you knew that the owner had money, but it wasn’t the kids who saw that money or saw the care that should have come with it. The homes frequently used physical restraints on the kids in their care. And the story goes on—that goes from bad to worse.

There are steps in this bill that would help. One of the big ones is that every child in care will know that they can call upon the Ombudsman. Don’t get me wrong; I, like every member on this side in my caucus, in the NDP—we want the child and youth advocate to come back. The child and youth advocate was the one telling us where the complaints are coming from, and of the—I forgot the numbers—roughly 19,000 serious occurrence reports, a quarter of them were produced from group residential homes. We’ve known about this for quite a few years. The special task force on residential care is several years old. The time to act was years ago. But I’m happy that some steps are being taken so that every child who is in a residential, group or foster home will know that if they feel something is wrong, they will be able to call the Ombudsman. This is one part of the bill that I support—make it readily available so that children can call out for help.

I would have liked to see more protection for whistleblowers. Everybody who holds a health professional licence in Ontario—we have a mandate to call a children’s aid society the minute that we suspect that a child is in need. We don’t have to have any proof. If we suspect that a child is in need, everybody who holds a licence in Ontario has a mandatory obligation to call. This mandatory obligation to call will now be for people who work in our schools; it should have been there way before, because every kid in Ontario goes to school. They are our eyes and ears as to what’s going on with the children, and they should not have to amass a proof big enough to get a police officer to look at the case. If they suspect something, call the children’s aid society and let them do the investigation to make sure that the child is safe rather than amassing enough proof to show that the child has been abused. This is something else in the bill that I’m more than willing to support.

1600

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** We have time for questions.

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Thank you to the member from Nickel Belt for her comments today on this bill. I’m very happy to hear that the opposition members have said things like it’s a good bill, it’s a good start and, after years of neglect, we’re starting to see some progress. We all think this is an important area to make progress in.

On April 20, 2021, your leader said, “The research is clear and it is exhaustive. It shows that the system needs to be overhauled to prepare youth better to transition into adulthood. Kids now are aging out with no transitions or supports past the age of 18.”

Our government, understanding that challenge, set up the Ready, Set, Go Program, a program for youth leaving care across the province, which I was pretty excited about. I think I heard Jane Kovarikova talking about that on TVO’s *The Agenda*, but the members of the opposition voted against that. Does the member now regret that vote?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Well, I’m happy to share that for children who are crown wards who are transitioning out, Laurentian University in Sudbury has a program where they offer free tuition. My colleague the MPP for Sudbury as well as my colleague the MPP from London North Centre have worked with the university around London. We have worked with Laurentian University where children who are aging out, who are crown wards, get free tuition, and they get supported while they go to university. That has been life-changing for every single one of them who has been able to take advantage of this program.

We are talking 25 young people in London and—

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** Thirty.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Thirty? Oh, we’re up to 30 now in London and five in Sudbury that I know of. This is beautiful and life-changing.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Question?

**MPP Jill Andrew:** Back in 2012, when we had a Provincial Advocate for Child and Youth here in the province, that office recognized the disproportionate needs for children in care who identify as Black and Indigenous.

I wanted to quote from this book called *HairStory: Rooted—A Firm Foundation for the Future of Black Youth in Ontario’s Systems of Care*.

“Benefits of Kinship Care

“Children in kinship care can maintain their racial, cultural and religious ties. They are living with families where they are, for example, speaking the same language, getting the same kind of food they are used to, and the family traditions are very similar, if not the same. It strengthens their identities and allows them to remain connected to their community.”

My question to the government is, if you purport to care about all children and youth in Ontario, why not ensure we have kinship care in this bill that’s supposed to support children and youth, knowing how important it is to Black and Indigenous—

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Back to the member for response.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I can tell the member that in my riding and the people that we represent, we now have two branches of the children's aid society. One is specifically for First Nations children. They do fantastic work in making sure that the child is identified and he or she gets to be cared for by a First Nations family. They support First Nations kin families so that they are able to take the children. You can see a whole lot more use of First Nations languages and the way of life of healing through Mother Earth, and you will see them coming to powwows and coming to different celebrations. Sometimes it will be a celebration specifically for the child who has been in care to help with the transition. They do fantastic work.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Questions?

**M<sup>me</sup> Dawn Gallagher Murphy:** To the member from Nickel Belt: With the new enforcement tools proposed in this bill, there's going to be more information about the track records of service providers, with all the history of non-compliance. This will be transparently posted on the government's website. Now, agencies placing children and the public at large would be able to access the history of enforcement actions taken against a particular service provider, including new compliance orders right up to the new administrative monetary penalties.

So my question to the member is: I'm assuming that you would prefer that this information about service providers definitely be publicly disclosed.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** La transparence, l'imputabilité, c'est tout le temps quelque chose d'important quand on parle de populations vulnérables. Lorsqu'on parle d'enfants qui font affaire avec l'aide à l'enfance, on parle d'une population très vulnérable.

Le plus de transparence, le plus d'imputabilité que tu as avec ceux qui s'occupent des enfants, ceux qui s'occupent—de continuer leur accès, c'est toujours important. C'est quelque chose de bien. C'est quelque chose qui aurait dû être fait avant, mais, je te dirais, j'aimerais amener ça une étape plus loin, où on est certain que c'est seulement des compagnies à but non lucratif qui s'occupent de nos enfants.

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

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** I'd like to thank my friend from Nickel Belt for an excellent presentation.

When you're speaking about mental health and children's mental health, a statistic that's disturbing which was shared by Children's Mental Health Ontario at the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs was that four of the top 10 reasons for the hospitalization of children and youth are for mental health challenges.

Particularly, I'd like to hear the member comment about wage parity, because mental health care workers in hospitals make 50% more than someone in community-based mental health services. As well, mental health workers in the youth justice sector haven't seen an increase in over 17 years. Would you care to comment

about the importance of wage parity and how that will help children receiving mental health services?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Remember, Speaker, I was talking about the 18-month wait-list to have access to community-based children's mental health services? The number one reason is that children's mental health agencies have not seen a base budget increase in the last 12 years.

This government has been in power for six years, and the previous government six years, the Liberals—no base budget increase. Think of everything that has changed. It is almost impossible for those agencies to give the people who work there a pay increase because the cost of heating, the cost of electricity, the cost of Internet, the cost of cellphones, the cost of everything has gone up, but their base budget has not. They cannot recruit and retain a stable workforce because they cannot offer good jobs.

All of this could change instantly if we had pay parity, if we realized the importance of community-based children's mental health workers and paid them what they are worth. It would attract more people to the profession, keep them in the children's mental health system for the good of all kids.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Questions?

**Mr. David Smith:** Freedom of expression is a core Canadian value. Beyond that, it is a fundamental freedom in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Currently, individuals with a history of child protection in Ontario are prevented by the Child, Youth and Family Services Act from telling their own stories of their childhood in care. That was doubtless an oversight, but it is significant. Does the member opposite believe that children who leave care are less deserving of freedom of expression themselves than others?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Freedom of expression is one of the core values of a democratic society. It is one of the core values of our country, of our province. And it doesn't matter if the child has been in care. It doesn't matter if they were a crown ward. Everybody should have the same rights. I see that in the bill. There have been some changes to help this. This is something that people who have been in care have been asking for—that change—for a long time. As I said, some of the special task force on residential care—that task force put their report forward several years ago. We could have done that several years ago. But I guess I will say to this that it's never too late to do good, and this is a step in the right direction.

1610

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** It's now time for further debate.

**Mr. Nolan Quinn:** It's an honour to rise today to join in this afternoon's debate. Before I begin, I'd like to thank the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services and his entire team for the tremendous work that has gone into Bill 188, the Supporting Children's Futures Act, 2024. Their hard work and strong leadership does not go unnoticed, and it was a privilege to work alongside the minister, the staff and the member from Markham-Thornhill as the former parliamentary assistant to the Minister of

Children, Community and Social Services. I'd also like to recognize the foundational work put into this bill by the now-Minister of Colleges and Universities when she was in her former role as the Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues, in collaboration with the now-Minister of Energy in his former role as the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

I'm pleased to stand here today to offer my complete support for Bill 188. Speaker, I'm proud of our government's record in this area, and not just because I was the former parliamentary assistant. Since our government has taken office, we have undertaken a comprehensive redesign of the child welfare system in Ontario. We did this because we want the best for every child and youth living in Ontario. Every single child and youth deserves a decent start in life and a safe, stable home, regardless of their circumstances. Our government wants to ensure that nobody in our province is left behind.

Speaker, as a direct result of that redesign, our government has introduced numerous new initiatives to improve the quality of care in out-of-home settings. For example, we have increased accountability to these settings by adding 20 new positions across the province to support the management, inspection and oversight of out-of-home care for children and youth. Another example includes the launch of the Ready, Set, Go Program, which commenced last April. Our government has invested \$170 million into this innovative program, which provides youth with crucial life skills and supports they need to pursue post-secondary education, skilled trades training and employment opportunities early in their journey, to prepare them for eventually transitioning out of care.

Dr. Rebekah Jacques, who was a survivor of the Sixties Scoop, shared her view of the importance of this program, stating, "The Ready, Set, Go Program is a great start to support the transition from being a youth in care to becoming a young adult. By offering an opportunity of gradual independence as well as softening the abrupt effects of being ejected from the foster system, youth are going to be better prepared to enter adulthood."

As you can see, Speaker, the Ready, Set, Go Program is just one example of the critically important work that this ministry does, and a testament to the fact that the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services is there for people throughout their entire lives.

Speaker, in regard to Bill 188, the Supporting Children's Futures Act, 2024, at its core, it seeks to protect children and youth in care by establishing new measures for safety, oversight, accountability and privacy. It also seeks to provide better opportunities for children and youth in care so that they can thrive as adults later in life and contribute more fully to their communities.

Strengthening oversight and enforcement tools for out-of-home care works to ensure that all children and youth in care will receive safe, high-quality services. Through new high-impact enforcement tools, bad actors can be rooted out and held accountable. Some of these tools include compliance orders, administrative monetary penalties and enhanced charges with larger fines.

Speaker, Bill 188, if passed, will also work to protect the privacy of children and youth once they leave care. Access to records held by children's aid societies regarding a child or youth will be restricted once they are no longer in the care. To further support privacy and autonomy of these individuals, another proposal of Bill 188 is to enable adults with a history of child protection involvement to publicly identify themselves and speak about their experiences, supporting them in sharing their story, if they choose to do so. Through Bill 188, access by others to personal records of former children and youth in care will be restricted, while also supporting their ability to speak freely regarding their own lived experiences.

This bill also proposes to establish clear and consistent practices in the Child, Youth and Family Services Act through a number of measures. One proposal of this bill is to enable information sharing between children's aid societies and the College of Early Childhood Educators as well as the Ontario College of Teachers, which would allow for timely action in the event of an allegation of risk to children that involves a teacher or early childhood educator.

Moreover, if passed, the bill will clarify that early childhood educators also have a duty to report children in need of protection and introduce penalties for those who fail to report such cases. All of these measures are to ensure that every child and youth in care in Ontario is safe and protected.

I'd like to now share some feedback from our valuable partners in the child and youth sector. Valerie McMurtry is the president and CEO of Children's Aid Foundation of Canada. Valerie states, "We commend the Ontario government for their work to increase clarity regarding the care of young people placed in out-of-home settings through the Supporting Children's Futures Act, 2024. Our collective priority should be to ensure that young people remain in the care of their families and communities. However, when this isn't feasible, it's critical that young people have access to the high-quality supports they need, including understanding their rights and assistance available to them through Ontario's Ombudsman. We value government's commitment to making sure young people receive this information and ensuring their voices stay central in shaping this act and next steps with respect to child welfare redesign."

According to Susan Somogyi Wells, CEO of Family Service Ontario, "The Supporting Children's Futures Act, 2024, enhances the safety, privacy and rights of children and youth. Family Service Ontario strongly supports this legislation for its commitment to safeguarding the well-being of our children and youth, mitigating the risks of developmental trauma."

Speaker, this is proof that the proposed changes within Bill 188 are the result of extensive, continuous consultations with our community partners and service providers. The staff at the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services held over 30 virtual engagements with various stakeholder groups, including youth with lived experiences. Stakeholders through the Ontario Regulatory Registry were also engaged with, and 35 written submissions were received on the proposed changes.



Bill 188 is a testament to this government's commitment to partnership. The progress we have made in this sector has only been possible with the support and efforts of our countless partners and front-line workers. We commend them for their commitment to supporting children and youth across the province.

This government will continue to work in tandem with our vital community partners and stakeholders to bring our joint vision of ensuring that all children, youth and families across our province can access the supports they need to thrive. The children and youth that this bill seeks to protect are our future. We need the children and the youth of today to thrive so that the adults of tomorrow have the tools they need to succeed. For our youth to realize their true potential, we need to be there to support and guide them at each step of their journey.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** It's now time for questions.

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** The member who just spoke I think did a fine presentation on the bill that's before us today and outlined some of the very important and positive measures that are being taken in this area. I want to congratulate him for his comments.

I do have a question that I'm going to ask him about the obligation of early childhood educators to report if they have a reasonable suspicion of child neglect. I think that's an important obligation. As I was saying earlier to another member, I think the obligation actually protects the professional, the early childhood educator, from having to decide one way or another whether they should. Because now that the obligation is placed on them, they have a certain protection under the law because now they are obliged to report. I just invite the member to offer his observations on that.

**Mr. Nolan Quinn:** It is extremely important. The timeliness of reporting that is extremely important. That's what this bill is ensuring, that it's closing the gap in between when there's an accusation as well as the time that it's reported. In the school system, our early childhood educators are extremely important, my wife being an elementary school teacher.

1620

Since 2020, our government has been redesigning Ontario's child welfare system to enhance early intervention, improve the outcomes for children and address barriers to support. As we all know, this is a process, and the minister is committed to ensuring that our children are set up with the right tools to ensure that they have the best childhood and futures possible.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Questions?

**Ms. Chandra Pasma:** Thank you to the member opposite for his thoughts on this bill. I think one thing we could all agree on in this House is that it's not great when children end up in care. That's not the ideal scenario. One thing that stakeholders have said is that while these are good measures in the bill, there is absolutely nothing here to actually prevent children from being taken into care in the first place.

We're seeing a really disturbing increase in the number of families who are having to relinquish their children solely because they can't get the supports they need—the mental health supports, the supports with developmental disabilities and other health care problems—and the parents are in a place of desperation where they are having to relinquish care in hopes that they can get this care, or because they really can't take care of them at home anymore without this care.

It costs 10 times more to take a child into care than it would to just provide the care when they're with their family, and it has significant detrimental impacts on the outcomes for the child. Does the member not agree that it would be an important addition to this bill to actually provide the supports and resources to prevent children from needing to be in care in the first place?

**Mr. Nolan Quinn:** I thank the member opposite for allowing me to answer the question. She touched upon the mental health; we've invested \$3.8 billion in the Roadmap to Wellness with an increased focus on children's mental health, increasing our investment by 25% to a half a billion dollars, which includes innovative programs. Currently, 120,000 children see this mental health support annually.

For children with special needs, our government took significant action. We're investing an additional \$105 million annually into children's rehabilitation services. Our government will continue to ensure that the children are looked after for the future.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Questions?

**Ms. Laura Smith:** Through you, Speaker: This bill contains a lot of positive things for youth, and members opposite are talking quite a bit about things that are not in this bill, but the fact of the matter is that they seem to be missing the point. This bill is just one means of our government to provide a better standard of care. We can always do better, and we're progressively moving forward so that we can provide better services for our most vulnerable.

I used to work in this area. I worked under the Child Protection Act for countless years. The fact of the matter is, consultation happened in this. I'm just wondering if the member could possibly provide information on how they came to some of the decisions that were made?

**Mr. Nolan Quinn:** Thank you to the member from Thornhill for that question. Through exhaustive consultation, both online and in person, we ensured that we are closing the loophole and making sure that the Supporting Children's Futures Act is a bill that will propose new and enhanced enforcement tools, changes that would better protect the privacy of children and youth and would further restrict access by others to their childhood welfare records.

Listening to the children with lived experiences and the adults with lived experience was extremely important to ensure that we're pushing this in the right direction.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** It's time now for further debate.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** It's an honour to stand up and speak on Bill 188. It's a bill about taking care of children in

foster care. This is an issue that's pretty near and dear to me. A good friend of mine was raised in foster care. When she was 11, she and her sister were removed from their family because the father was sexually abusing them. She ended up in foster care, and she was being shuffled from foster care home to foster care home with all of her possessions in a garbage bag.

By the time she was 14, one of her friends on the street realized that she needed some money, so he gave her some speedballs to sell and a gun to protect herself, so at 14 she was standing on a street corner with a gun and selling drugs. The next decade and a half of her life was just one horrific nightmare, but somehow, she came out of it and she's a wonderful mother. She's an advocate for children. She's a counsellor to young children. She has taken her pain and turned it into purpose.

If anybody's interested in reading a book, the book is called *If You Played in My Playground*, and it's about growing up in downtown Toronto. When I read the book, I was shocked because I had no idea that things like she describes happened in the city of Toronto. It's amazing how different our realities can be from somebody you sit next to and the nightmare that they might be living with.

Getting foster care right saves lives, and we've seen that over and over again.

In 2022, the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network and Global News launched an investigation, and the reports in the investigation showed pretty clearly that for-profit care providers were terribly abusing their charges, the children in their care. Hatts Off was one of these large, for-profit residential care providers. The media investigations included details about one young First Nations woman who had run away, and her disappearance was not reported in a timely way by the provider, and she became a victim of human trafficking.

This should not be happening. The most vulnerable people in our society are children in care, and as a government, as a society, we have a responsibility to make sure that they get the best care that's possible.

On the other hand, these for-profit corporations look at these children not as charges, not as a huge responsibility, but as the words they actually use to describe—particularly First Nations children from northern communities. They get paid more for looking after those children. They call them cash cows, and they describe them as being the bread and butter of their business model.

One First Nations social worker visited a First Nations child in one of these for-profit homes, and the child asked the social worker, "Are you here to rescue me?"

What's happening to children in some of these homes is absolutely appalling.

There's one company called Connor Homes; it has been under investigation by children's aid societies. The report said that the group homes run by Connor Homes in eastern Ontario were kept in a state of disrepair, and the kids in care were left with few resources, while the owners amassed personal fortunes in real estate holdings.

So these for-profit homes are getting tax dollars to look after these children, but instead of looking after the children,

the children are left in rundown homes while they amass a fortune.

One of the staff members from Connor Homes said, "You knew that (the owners) had the money but it wasn't in the home(s)." He said that they're—actually, sorry; this person is not being identified for fear of reprisal. He said, "The kids didn't see that money."

So the solution that came out of this report and what the child advocates were saying is that we need a fundamental change in the system—and the first recommendation they said was to take profit out of caring for kids. A for-profit corporation exists to make profit; it doesn't exist to look after children. If a corporation existed to look after children, it wouldn't be for-profit. That was the first recommendation. So one of the biggest disappointments of Bill 188 here, which this government is introducing, is that it doesn't get rid of the for-profit care model.

There's a long history coming up to this legislation, and I'll just quickly go through it. In 2008, the former government created the Ontario child advocate office. This was to be an independent office for children and youth, including those with disabilities as well as Indigenous children and youth. Irwin Elman, the first director of the child and youth advocate office, was motivated by a case that some people will remember was in the media in 2008. A little girl, Katelynn Sampson, seven years old, was horribly abused, and she was killed by her foster parents, who were charged with murder in her case. There were a number of changes that were recommended, that came out of the inquest into her death, including whistle-blower protection, and a second bill, Bill 57, called Katelynn's Principle Act, and these were both introduced by my colleague from Hamilton Mountain in 2015 and 2016. So, almost 10 years ago, she introduced this legislation for whistle-blower protection, and it's finally in this bill. So there are some good things in Bill 188, and the NDP will be supporting this bill, but we would like to see a lot more because what's at stake is the lives and well-being of children.

**1630**

I would say also that one of the biggest mistakes this government made was, in 2018, they shut down the child and youth advocate office. The argument was that they were trying to reduce the deficit. The Conservative MPP at the time who was the child and youth minister—and I can't remember what riding she's from.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Nepean.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** Nepean, okay, Ottawa-Nepean—

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Just Nepean.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** Thank you to my colleague. The MPP from Nepean, when she was in opposition as a Conservative MPP, said that we needed to strengthen the child and youth advocate office. They needed greater powers to protect children.

When she got to be the minister, she was in charge of actually breaking down and closing the child and youth advocate office, and she said that she would be responsible, she would be the greatest child advocate that they could have. What we saw and what I mentioned when I

started my speech was the Global News and the APTN investigation which shows that the abuse in foster homes is continuing. So the question is, does the member from Nepean actually take responsibility for all of the abuse that's taken place, in part because of the loss of the child and youth advocate office?

I've only got a minute and a half left and I want to get to the solutions that we're proposing. What we would like to see in this bill is getting rid of for-profit delivery. There should be no profit in looking after children. Profit should not be the motive. If you are going to dedicate yourself to looking after children or dedicate a company to looking after children, the children's welfare has to be the first and only priority.

We also need to restore the child and youth advocate office. That's an important thing to do. And we need to, as my colleague from Ottawa—

**Interjection:** Ottawa West–Nepean.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** Ottawa West–Nepean—was mentioning, we also need to protect children before they're taken into care. One of the flaws in this bill is that it's too much. It does do some good things. It increases the fines, the penalties for people who abuse children in care, but what they need to do is look further upstream. They need to work further upstream so that if a child is in danger or is not getting the care that they need in their home, then we need more supports to help that family to function and help keep that child in their home where they can get the best and so that they can get the care and the raising that they need.

I think this bill—as the members opposite have said, there are some good things in it, but it does not go nearly far enough. With this bill, if this is the only action this government takes, there are going to be many more children like the one I started the story with, who are in foster care, who end up in very, very dangerous situations.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** It's now time for questions, and if the member has a copy of that book, I'd love to read it.

I recognize the member for Thornhill.

**Ms. Laura Smith:** Thank you, and through you, Speaker, I was just going to add that the measures contained in the Supporting Children's Futures Act would, if passed, create a safer environment for every child out of home care. We won't get into the specifics of profit or not-for-profit. It helps every child.

I was going to talk about the Ontario Ombudsman. It's an important safeguard that provides rights to children of youth in care. Young people in care already have the right to contact the office of the Ombudsman; however, that's contained in the Ombudsman Act rather than the Child, Youth and Family Services Act. And since children's aid societies and service providers are governed by and most familiar with the CYFSA, the status quo leaves a potential gap where a youth may not even be aware of their rights.

This bill proposes to entrench details about this right and remove any lack of clarity for the rights with respect to the Ombudsman. Does the member opposite not support

giving young people a stronger understanding of this right to the Ombudsman?

**Mr. Chris Glover:** To the member: I think it's a good step to inform children of their rights. That's an important step, but the Ombudsman's office does not have the same powers that the child and youth advocate had—that this government dismantled.

There were 200 complaints in 2023 to the Ombudsman's child and youth unit by children in care. When the child and youth advocacy office was in play, they received an annual 2,000 cases per year. So there's 1,800 fewer cases reported to the Ombudsman's office than there were to the child and youth advocacy office. And the question is: What is happening to those children?

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Question?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Thanks to the member from Spadina–Fort York for his question. He raised several points that are of interest to me. Our local children's aid society has come to me and said, "We cannot find foster parents for high-needs children. It's too hard." And let me be really clear: There are some really good foster parents out there who are compassionate and caring, and this is not an easy, easy job.

So they've had to either create their own model of care for these high needs, which they're not funded for, or they become reliant on these privatized agencies who say they specialize; however, we don't have eyes on those agencies. And that's the key piece: the oversight piece.

There are good intentions with this legislation. It may be good, but at the end of the day, you need to have eyes on these homes and eyes on these children. What does the member say to that?

**Mr. Chris Glover:** First of all, I will echo what the member just said, that there are many wonderful foster care families out there. My aunt and uncle were foster parents many times over and they provided incredible care. They're an incredible loving family for the children in their care.

What you're saying about high-needs children—high-needs children require a lot of care, and depending on the needs of those children, it can be very expensive to look after them. The funding for those children is simply not there. You cannot ask a family to take on a high-needs child and dedicate themselves to that if it's not possible to do it and if the child needs more care than what's possible to deliver, especially if the funding is not there.

One of the other recommendations coming out of this for this bill is an increase in funding, particularly for the care of high-needs children.

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

**Mr. David Smith:** Professionals in Ontario such as teachers, physicians, and social workers have an ongoing duty to directly report a child suspected to be in need of protection. These would include children that have been harmed or neglected by parents or caregivers or suspected to be at risk to be exploited and subjected to trafficking.

Bill 188 proposes expanding this responsibility and obligation to apply to enter early childhood education—

addition to a number of professionals who share in the responsibility of looking out for children who are at risk of being harmed.

Does the member opposite support adding additional eyes to look out for the best interests of young people?

**Mr. Chris Glover:** I think that is one of the good things in the bill. When I was a high school teacher, the government imposed a responsibility on teachers to report to the children's aid society if we suspected that a student may be being abused. We didn't have to know and we didn't have to have evidence, but if there was reason to suspect, we had to report to the children's aid society, and every teacher in the province had to go through training.

That the government is expanding that to include ECEs and other professionals who are in care of children, that makes good sense. But at the same time, the government needs to provide funding and also restore the children and youth advocacy office so that those children have an advocate on their side when things happen.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Questions?  
1640

**MPP Jill Andrew:** If this government wants to support children, they need to end Ontario's for-profit child residential care. We cannot forget the case in 2021, while this Conservative government was in power, when a teenager living in a for-profit home was murdered by another teenager. And guess what? This Conservative government still gave that for-profit care home its licence.

So at this point in time, in 2024, we really want to be able to believe that you care about children and youth. But it's hard to when we see our schoolboards consistently gutted. And which kids are getting hurt the worst? Kids with disabilities. It's the kids who are at the margins of the margins. It's the BIPOC kids. It's the kids living in poverty.

So is this government going to actually end for-profit residential child care?

**Mr. Chris Glover:** I hear the member's passion in this, and absolutely, we must end for-profit child care. There's a litany of abuse that's been happening. There's the reports that come out about what's been happening, that these for-profit child care providers are generating profits, that they're actually making money on this, on the backs of these children, and they call the children "cash cows." They're accumulating real estate assets from the taxpayer dollars that are supposed to be going to children's care.

We need to get the profit out of child care, foster care. We need to make sure that all organizations that are looking after children, that their first and only responsibility is the care for those children, not for generating profits for their owners.

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

**Ms. Laura Smith:** Through you, Speaker, there are new enforcement tools with Bill 188 intended to hit at the finances of service providers who choose to provide poor-quality care. This bill takes critical steps towards making sure there's no profit in providing poor care to children and youth in this province.

One of the measures of the bill is to provide an order that funding be returned when a child in care has not received the level of service expected, so this is providing a better outcome. This measure would be supported and strengthen the financial record-keeping. Does the member opposite agree that measures such as these put children first by making sure that every dollar invested in this care results in high-quality care?

**Mr. Chris Glover:** The challenge with what the Conservative government is doing is, they're trying to deal with this after the fact. If you have a big stick, then you will make these for-profit care organizations take better care of the children. They could be fined, they could have some of the funding withdrawn or they could lose their licence. But the idea should be that you don't deal with a big stick; you actually provide organizations and create organizations whose primary goal is to look after the children rather than trying to regulate them with a big stick and saying, "Oh, if you're abusing the children we've put in your care, you're going to be fined." That's not a way to operate. That's prioritizing profit over children, which this government does over and over and over again.

We're seeing it also with Chartwell, the seniors' home in Mississauga that's being shut down. We've got 200 seniors being evicted because this company, a real estate investment trust, wants to renovate those seniors so they can make more profit. It's appalling. The government should not be supporting, either for children's care or seniors' care, for-profit corporations.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** It's now time for further debate.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It's a pleasure and honour to be able to speak to this bill today, Bill 188. Certainly, I don't profess to be an expert in children, but I've had some experience. Some people say I'm still living that experience, working my way up to adulthood, but that's a debate for another day.

I want to, first of all, commend the minister for bringing forward this initiative because obviously I've known this minister for some time now and I've got to see how he works, and I really appreciate, in his work in this ministry, how he continuously and incrementally has always put the welfare of children and youth at the top of the priority list.

We do appreciate that, Minister, and this bill is no exception to your commitment, and that is appreciated not just by myself and all of the members in this caucus, but, I do believe, the members on the other side. I think that I heard, if I'm not mistaken, notwithstanding the comments from the member from—is it Spadina—Fort York?

**Mr. Chris Glover:** Yes, Spadina—Fort York.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Spadina—Fort York—he seems to have some issues with it. But I think in general—which is not uncommon; we don't think that we're going to put forth bills that they're going to like every single word in the bill, and sometimes they might believe that there's something that they'd like that isn't in the bill, but that's not how it works. We do what we can, and the sun will rise again tomorrow, and there may be a bill that addresses some of those concerns maybe some other time, but not in

this case. However, I do understand that the opposition is supporting the legislation, which is wonderful, and we look forward to seeing that bill go to committee as well.

I say this as a person who came from a family—or comes from a family; it's not like the family has kicked me out or anything. I come from a family of 14 children. Well, you can imagine all of the dynamics that exist in a family of 14 children. You know they say it takes a village to raise a child. Well, we were a village unto ourselves, with all of the challenges and the pleasures and everything else, and the wonders that come with that, growing up in a large family like that.

One thing that you do learn is that even when you don't want to, you'd better get along. You'd better try to get along, because there are enough battles in a large family. It's just like a big caucus. You're supportive of one another, but there is a competition as well. That's the way teamwork plays out. It will happen tonight on the ice in Toronto, as well, as the Leafs take on the Boston Bruins in game 3. I'm looking for another big performance by world-class superstar Auston Matthews.

One thing that my wife and I have always agreed on—we don't agree on everything, and she always wins the things that we don't agree on, but that's another story too. But one thing we do agree on is the importance and the absolute priority of our children. We've talked about it. You do a lot of things in this world, and at some point you leave this world. We've often talked about it, that the only really amazing, wonderful, important thing that we have done is brought our children into this world and we have raised them, because when we leave this world, that is literally the only thing that Vicky and I will leave behind.

It doesn't matter what I did here. It doesn't matter what she did; it doesn't matter what I did. It doesn't matter if I even won the 1977 home run championship in the North Renfrew baseball league—

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Did you?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Oh, yes, I did. Well, I wouldn't make it up.

Those things don't really matter. It doesn't matter that I released a couple of CDs to support hospitals and long-term-care homes in my riding. What matters is our children, and without our children, there wouldn't be our grandchildren, and so on and so forth—we have no great-grandchildren yet; as you can tell, I'm not that old.

But I really like what I'm seeing in this bill from the point of view of prioritizing the protection of children and youth. One of the items in the bill, one of the clauses or whatever in the bill, is requiring early childhood educators to have the same reporting requirements as teachers would have, for example, in reporting suspicion of abuse. Because if we're not going to protect the children, then we don't have much of a future, do we?

Now, I can tell you that I'm old enough—and, Speaker, you're not that much younger than me—that we know of instances growing up where people have failed to report issues of abuse because they're afraid of the repercussions upon themselves, particularly in small communities where everybody knows each other. This requirement that will

become legislated under Bill 188 takes away that fear because it's now an absolute requirement. It isn't because you wanted to do this, to report so-and-so or whatever that you suspect there may be abuse; it is because it is now the law. You are required to report the fact that you suspect that there's abuse going on in this group home or some other facility. That is a huge step forward in protecting the children and the youth in our society, those that are under care.

**1650**

I know we don't have a lot of time when we're speaking on these issues, but there's another aspect that I wanted to touch on as well, Speaker, and I hope I get this right. Let's just say that you and I were in a group home at one time, that we were in care. Today, you and I are not allowed to talk about that. We are not free to talk about our experiences while under care.

I can talk all I want about my childhood experiences, about all the good, the bad and the ugly—oh, there was a movie under that name; I think I was the “ugly” part. Absolutely, Speaker, we can talk about those. We have that freedom to speak on any of those subjects we want and divulge what we choose to and withhold what we choose to. But if we were in a home, in a care setting, under the current laws we're not allowed to talk about that. I mean, it's like wiping out—how many times have people who know me in here heard me talk about experiences I had growing up?

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** A few.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** And I don't just mean in the debate chamber here, but I mean sitting in a social setting, in the caucus lounge or whatever. You've heard me talk about those many, many times, because I have many experiences to talk about when you come from a family like mine with 14 children. We have four children and 12 grandchildren; those are not my childhood experiences, but I can talk about anything I choose to.

Well, in the case of someone who is under care, they can't talk about them. But, should this bill pass, Speaker, they will be free to talk about those and speak about those experiences to anyone they choose. That is like having a yoke and a cone of silence all at one time lifted off your shoulders, so that you are now free to speak about your childhood experiences.

Speaker, I know I only have a little bit of time. I thank you for this time and appreciate the minister bringing this bill forward.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Steve Clark):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Chandra Pasma:** It was with great interest that I listened to the member's debate, because the member spoke quite a bit about accountability. I think it's important that we have some accountability for what's happening in the child welfare sector, because we have a funding formula that's completely broken.

The children's aid societies across the province have a deficit this year that's not being eliminated. Last year, they got one-time funding only to eliminate the deficit, and they don't have the resources they need to provide sufficient

quality care to children who need care. So across the province, we have kids who are in hotel rooms, Airbnbs and even offices, which is not a good place to provide care for a child, especially not when the child has complex mental health or physical health needs.

My question to the member opposite is: Where is the funding to actually provide good-quality care to children who are in care in the province of Ontario?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I thank the honourable member opposite for her question. Boy, I'll tell you, I guess in some worlds, more is never enough. But I can tell the member that from our perspective, we have increased funding for children with special needs and all across the spectrum of this ministry to ensure that no child is left behind. This is something that our minister is absolutely committed to: no child is left behind.

I get the rhetoric from the other side. This is the way they work. It doesn't matter how much we invest in children; according to them, it will never be enough. But the next question in question period will be: "Why do you have a deficit of \$9.8 billion? You're spending too much money."

Speaker, children are our priority and will always be. Thanks for the question.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Steve Clark):** Further comments or questions?

**Ms. Laura Smith:** I thank the member for his very energetic comments. And 14 kids—wow.

He talked about something that actually touched me. He talked about the ability to speak freely. Imagine being a child in care, or once in care, and not having the ability to speak or provide personal information about their life, which is so impeding, when you think about rights as a human being. I'm just wondering if you'd like to talk about that a little bit more—about having their rights kind of taken away from them.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I want to thank the member from Thornhill for that question.

Isn't the ability to speak freely really what democracy is all about? Isn't the freedom to speak freely what our founding fathers and people like my father went to war to defend?

I say to the member, in our house, the kitchen table really was the place of all conversation. You could have a conversation just about anywhere in the house, but the kitchen table was where people really spoke freely and where all the best decisions were made. I grew up in a home where I had the ability to speak. And our children have always been able to speak about their experiences and their concerns.

Being able to speak freely—that's something we are giving to children who grew up in care. This bill gives them that freedom.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Steve Clark):** There's time for another quick question.

**MPP Jill Andrew:** There are some good aspects of Bill 188, the Supporting Children's Futures Act.

I want to share a statistic in this House from a few years back: 44% of youth in care graduate from high school

compared to 81% of their peers. I think that speaks loudly to the lack of supports that we have both in the care system and also in the education system.

I will say it over and over again: Mental health has to be a priority here in Ontario. And how do we do that? We do that by having the caring adults, the caring professionals in place who also have culturally relevant training to support our diverse Ontario youth.

Will the government commit to more funding for our education system and our care system so it can actually care and function—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Steve Clark):** Back to the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Thank you to the member from Toronto–St. Paul's for the question.

She's right: 44% is an unacceptable number. That's why we've got \$3.8 billion in the Roadmap to Wellness and other monies—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Steve Clark):** Thank you. That concludes our time for questions.

Further debate? Further debate?

Mr. Parsa has moved second reading of Bill 188, An Act to amend the Child, Youth and Family Services Act, 2017 and various other Acts. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Steve Clark):** Shall the bill be ordered for third reading? I heard a no.

Minister?

**Hon. Michael Parsa:** To the Standing Committee on Social Policy, please.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Steve Clark):** Agreed? Agreed.

Orders of the day. The member for Chatham–Kent–Leamington.

**Mr. Trevor Jones:** Speaker, if you seek it, you'll find unanimous consent to see the clock at 6.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Steve Clark):** Agreed? Agreed.

1700

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

### SUPPORTING MOBILITY, AFFORDABILITY AND RELIABLE TRANSPORTATION IN ONTARIO ACT, 2024

### LOI DE 2024 POUR UNE MOBILITÉ ACCRUE, DES PRIX PLUS ABORDABLES ET DES TRANSPORTS PLUS FIABLES EN ONTARIO

MPP Hazell moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 184, An Act to amend the Metrolinx Act, 2006, the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act and

the Shortline Railways Act, 1995 with respect to transportation / Projet de loi 184, Loi visant à modifier la Loi de 2006 sur Metrolinx, la Loi sur l'aménagement des voies publiques et des transports en commun et la Loi de 1995 sur les chemins de fer d'intérêt local en ce qui concerne les transports.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Steve Clark):** Pursuant to standing order 100, the member has 12 minutes for their presentation.

**MPP Andrea Hazell:** Mr. Speaker, I am so honoured and delighted to debate my second piece of legislation in this House. I was elected to this chamber to bring positive change to Ontario, to present good policies that would improve people's lives, to bring new ideas that would make Ontario a safer and kinder place—ideas that are bold, ideas that move the province forward, ideas that are smart.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this bill has not one, not two, not three but four smart ideas to improve transportation in our beautiful province. This legislation, if enacted, would address four sections where the government could be doing more. These are the promotion of active transportation, construction of affordable housing near public transit, improving safety standards on dangerous northern highways, and protecting crucial rail infrastructure with support to the economy and impact to the environment.

Here's my first smart idea: People are cycling more than ever, particularly in more urban environments. In 2023, Toronto saw over 5.7 million bike-share riders, and that number is only growing. We are on the brink of a new golden age of cycling. It is the healthiest form of transportation. You can get your daily exercise just through pedalling. It is environmentally friendly, with zero carbon emissions, unlike gasoline and diesel cars and buses. And often, cycling can be faster than public transit, so it is no surprise that people are pedalling more every single day.

One of the biggest advancements in cycling is this bike-share system implemented in Toronto and Hamilton. These systems are game-changers, providing convenient and easily accessible transportation for thousands of people. This system is expanding quickly, with plans for every riding in Toronto to be connected by the system. It is time to move forward into the next phase of it.

As it stands, there is minimal coordination between bike-share systems and public transit. That interconnectivity is hampered by a lack of fare integration or discount for using both, meaning that commuting with both bike-share and public transit is more expensive than just by public transit. For example, someone who commutes from Hamilton to Toronto for work would pay \$11.44 to take the Hamilton bus to West Harbour, take the GO train to Union and take the subway to their office. They might prefer to use the bike-share to and from the GO system, but that would cost them \$20.50. Just imagine: \$9 more for the healthier and often quicker option, which does not make sense, especially when it would likely be cheaper for the province to cover the bike-share fare and the Hamilton Street Railway and TTC fares.

My legislation would amend the Metrolinx Act to require them to consider bicycle infrastructure in route and

fare integration planning. Bike-shares are public transit, and we need to start treating it as such. The SMART Ontario Act makes Metrolinx adopt that viewpoint. A policy shift to integrate fares will not only benefit the 5.7 million-plus riders in Toronto, but it will also encourage commuters to use a healthier and more environmentally friendly transportation option.

The second part of the SMART Ontario Act also amends the Metrolinx Act to require 20% affordable housing whenever Metrolinx sells land to residential property developers. Metrolinx is one of the largest landowners in all of Ontario, and it currently has multiple properties up for sale. Let's get this right.

I'm going to use Scarborough for an example: 4142 Sheppard Avenue in Scarborough—this location is a five-minute walk from Agincourt GO, as well as the future Sheppard East TTC extension. This is prime real estate to redevelop for transit-oriented living, and we need to see some proactivity from Metrolinx to ensure that the redevelopment includes an affordable component.

I have seen the impact that this housing and affordability crisis has on the people of Scarborough–Guildwood. We are in a generational housing crisis, and when we sell government land off for housing, we should be ensuring there is an affordability component. But you don't have to trust my words, because this government's very own Housing Affordability Task Force recommends the same measure. Requiring 20% of units to be affordable at these sites is a slam-dunk way to get affordable housing built, but this government has already missed the boat on this at a number of sites. Metrolinx sold land in Beaches–East York and Mississauga–Lakeshore that will not have an affordable component, and that is a major missed opportunity.

The Housing Affordability Task Force report has been out for two years now, but this government has stalled or refused to implement the vast majority of its measures. By voting for the SMART Ontario Act, this government can fulfill one of those crucial measures to address the housing crisis.

The third part of the SMART Ontario Act is new standards on Highways 11, 17 and 69, which form the backbone of the northern road network. These roads are dangerous and not well maintained; it is putting drivers and transporters at risk every single day as they drive on these highways.

As part of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, I travelled through northern communities such as Sudbury, Thunder Bay and Dryden, where I heard not just about the difficulties regarding these highways but how this government has stalled on their promises to complete the twinning of these highways. Much of the routes in these northern communities are single lanes going in each direction. When one of those lanes closes because of a snowstorm or a car accident, travel is crippled, which means people can't see their families, businesses can't make their deliveries and residents cannot access crucial services like the hospitals when they need it the most. There have been an alarming

number of deaths caused by horrific accidents on these highways because of poor road conditions.

The new standards through the SMART Ontario Act will mean that potholes are fixed sooner, and snow and ice are cleared quicker, allowing for safer and more reliable roads. When you are driving down along northern roads in the dead of winter, you need to trust the asphalt beneath you. People's lives are threatened and even lost by the poor standards of these roads. Mr. Speaker, the standards that are held for the 400-series highways should also be held for Highways 11, 17 and 69. Let's fix that by voting for the SMART Ontario Act.

The last part of the SMART Ontario Act is about protecting shortline railways. It's not difficult. This is not a hugely visible part of people's lives, but it's a major part of this economy. These rail lines connect business to the main freight lines, support thousands of jobs across the province, and could be used towards advancing transit in the future. These rails provide first-mile and last-mile connectivity to customers and industries that are located in rural and remote communities.

Many local businesses would not exist or could not survive without access to shortline freight rail services. When a shortline rail shuts down, businesses are forced to either close up shop or move, often to other jurisdictions, including the United States. Let's not forget that.

The sales of shortline railways are not protected right now, which puts our economy at risk and limits our options for the future. If we protect these railways, we could repurpose them for public transportation, such as for the GO, which would save millions of dollars. Existing rail corridors are unique assets, and building new transit on them is much more cost-effective than building LRTs or subways. We are allowing shortlines to be abandoned and sold off, which means Ontario is losing vital opportunities to expand our transportation sector.

**1710**

The almost funny thing is that there used to be great protections for shortlines in this province, until this government removed it in 2019 in a misguided so-called red tape reduction measure. That's why, in my bill, we are just bringing back the old law—very easy to fix. Bringing back these protections doesn't just protect jobs; it is also protecting the shortline right-of-way of future generations, which keeps the door open to future passenger rails on these routes.

We as MPPs do not need to just plan for a better Ontario. We need to make sure we are planting the seeds for a brighter future too. I strongly encourage every member of this chamber to support this bill. These proposed changes are simple and non-controversial, and will improve peoples' commutes, bring good homes to the families of Ontario, support businesses big and small, and save lives on northern roads.

Let's get it done with the SMART Ontario Act.

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

**Mr. Ric Bresee:** I'm pleased to rise today and take this opportunity to discuss the Supporting Mobility, Afford-

ability and Reliable Transportation in Ontario Act, as proposed by the member from Scarborough–Guildwood.

I'd like to start by addressing the proposal for Highways 11, 17 and 69. We are working with those communities and listening to their feedback. The Ministry of Transportation ensures that Highways 11, 17 and 69 continue to receive investments that strengthen their safety. Ontario has nation-leading standards in place when it comes to winter maintenance, and our government will never compromise on safety. Operations are active 24 hours a day, seven days a week, until bare pavement is restored, so road safety will always be a priority for this government.

The member opposite's bill also proposes to introduce more integration between transit agencies. However, this is the same party that voted against removing double tolls for transit riders. That will save commuters up to \$1,600 a year per person. There has never been a government that has invested more in our transportation network than under the leadership of Premier Ford.

Our government has the most ambitious infrastructure plan in Ontario's history. We're making historic investments, including over \$100 billion over the next decade to build roads, highways and public transit that our growing province desperately needs. This includes more than \$70 billion as part of the largest public transit expansion in Ontario's history.

The people of Ontario re-elected our government to build Ontario, and under the leadership of this Premier, we're getting it done. Unlike previous governments, we're getting shovels in the ground faster than ever before.

In 2020, our government brought forward the Building Transit Faster Act, which introduced measures to streamline and accelerate the construction of critical transit projects. I will remind the Liberals and the NDP that they voted against the Building Transit Faster Act. But again, that's why the people of Ontario turned their backs on the Liberals and the NDP: They have no solutions to make life better.

As a part of the Get It Done Act, our government is proposing changes that will allow us to get shovels in the ground faster on new housing projects for cities all across Ontario. Under the leadership of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, we will continue to work with our municipal partners as we build a better future.

After years of inaction by the previous Liberal and NDP government, our government is working hard to build new infrastructure as fast as possible. The Liberals and the NDP left people crowded on subways and buses and failed to deliver critical projects like two-way all-day GO, or a new subway for downtown Toronto.

They sat by as our population grew over a decade. Their record is clear: They do not support public transit. They voted against the largest expansion of public transit in Canadian history. Speaker, we are the only party that is serious about building Ontario.

When the Liberals were in office, they cut passenger rail service for northern Ontario. They abandoned communities like Timmins and Cochrane who absolutely



relied on that Northlander. We know how important the Northlander is for families in the north, and that's why this Premier and our government are bringing back the Northlander with brand new trains and passenger coaches.

The Liberals had a chance to reverse their mistake, but instead, they doubled down and they voted against our plan to restore public transit in the north after they cut it. So whether it's the Ontario Line, GO expansion or the Ontario Northlander, Ontario Liberals vote against building transit time and time again.

Since our government took office, we have made it a priority to get things done for the people of Ontario. That's why we introduced the Get It Done Act, which will allow us to plan, approve and build projects faster than ever before. The Liberals and the NDP, they seem to love red tape, and it's part of the reason they got nothing built when they were in office. That's why Ontarians rejected the Liberals and the NDP overwhelmingly in the last election.

The people of Ontario want to see new infrastructure built and built without delay. We can't let more red tape get in the way of our getting shovels in the ground on the roads, the highways and the public transit that our province so desperately needs. Unlike governments of the past, we're not just talking about transforming our transportation network; we're getting it done.

Thanks to the leadership of Premier Ford, Ontario's economy is strong, attracting investment and attracting new families from around the world. In fact, Ontario is one of the fastest-growing regions in North America. It's predicted to grow by five million people over the next 10 years. The greater Golden Horseshoe alone is expected to grow by a million people every five years, reaching almost 15 million people by the year 2031.

The Liberals knew this growth was coming, and yet they did nothing and left our highways in gridlock. That's why we're building generational projects like the Bradford Bypass and Highway 413, both of which will be toll-free and bring much-needed relief to some of the most congested traffic corridors in North America, shortening commuter times by 30 minutes per trip.

The reality is, the gridlock commuters face every day costs us more than \$11 billion a year in lost productivity. Gridlock not only increases the cost of things we buy, but it also makes it harder to access good jobs and affordable housing. Highway 401 is already the most congested highway in North America, and with other major highways quickly reaching their capacity, doing nothing is simply not an option. That's why we're building roads, highways, bridges and public transit to get people where they need to go and keep our economy moving.

Unlike the Liberals, we're investing in every corner of this province, including northern Ontario. When it comes to highway safety, our government will continue to take action. That's why we're the first government to introduce new maintenance standards for Highways 11 and 17. Under our government, Highways 11 and 17 is cleared four hours faster after a winter storm.

And we're making critical investments to improve highway safety. We've added more winter maintenance

equipment to our fleet. There are currently over 1,100 pieces of winter maintenance equipment ready to be deployed to keep our highways clear even on the harshest winter nights.

Over the past few years, we've hired 20 new inspectors and coordinators and provided them with the tools to effectively ensure that our contractors are meeting those high standards. These are investments that the Liberals and the NDP voted against. They voted against funding to complete the twinning of Highway 69. They voted against funding to build the first 2+1 highway in North America. They voted against funding to twin the Trans-Canada outside of Kenora. This is typical for the Liberals. They say one thing but then do another. We are the only party that's taking real action to improve the highways in the north.

**1720**

Speaker, when it comes to investing in our transportation network and in housing, we won't take lessons from the opposition. As the former mayor of Mississauga, carbon tax Crombie balked at thousands of units next to the future Hazel McCallion LRT. Let me repeat that: Bonnie Crombie said no to 4,690 units next to an 18-kilometre transit line that would connect Mississauga to Brampton. It's because of policies from NIMBY politicians like Bonnie Crombie that costs continue to rise.

Our government is about saying yes to building. Unlike the queen of the carbon tax, Bonnie Crombie, we're saying yes to homes, to transit and to the highways that we need. My colleague Minister Surma is leading the way when it comes to connecting communities to transit. Our Transit-Oriented Communities Program will ensure that people have access to jobs and to transit while being closer to home. We're going to see new communities along the Ontario Line: 1,490 units in Corktown, nearly 4,000 units in East Harbour and over 2,600 units in Thorncliffe Park. These are only some of the communities that we're building through the TOC Program.

And yet, Speaker, again, the Liberals and the NDP voted against this plan. They voted against building new homes for families next to transit. They voted against housing projects that increase transit ridership, reduce carbon emissions and provide much-needed housing in the GTA.

Since day one, our government has made affordability our number one priority for the people of Ontario. Now, more than ever, we need policies that help Ontario families keep more of their hard-earned money in their pockets, and we're giving them the confidence that they will continue to keep that money.

That's why we introduced legislation which, if passed, would ban any new tolls on provincial highways. This would not only apply to the Don Valley Parkway and the Gardiner Expressway once both of those highways are uploaded to the province, but also to the province's 400-series highways. Any future government would be required to conduct public consultations before enacting tolls because the public has a right to know if it's going to enact tolls that can cost up to \$5,000 a year for a family.

But it's not only families that benefit from fewer tolls. The tolls add to the price of commercial goods because it adds to the cost of trucking, and that cost is reflected in the prices that we see on store shelves. Hard-working Ontario families deserve better than that. Preventing new tolls on provincial highways will connect communities across the province, making jobs more accessible, and drive our economy forward.

We know from experience that making highways toll-free provides significant savings to Ontarians. In April 2022, we eliminated the tolls on Highway 412 and Highway 418, a move that will save drivers \$68 million between 2022 and 2027. By introducing a ban on any new tolls on provincial highways, we're going a step further to make sure it stays affordable.

Speaker, on average, with the new One Fare, average transit riders will save up to \$1,600 per person, and yet again, the Liberals and the NDP voted against it. I don't understand.

As many Ontarians struggle to make ends meet, now is definitely not the time for the federal Liberal government to raise taxes, so we will continue to fight the government of Canada on the carbon tax.

Now, more than ever, we need to build infrastructure to save people money. We're the only party that is serious about that. We were elected to get it done, and we will.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** It's now time for further debate.

**M. Guy Bourguin:** Je remercie la collègue de me permettre—puis c'est tout le temps intéressant quand on parle en Chambre de la sécurité sur la route et la 17. Les changements qu'elle propose, qu'elle amène, qui vont aider—mais il faut se rappeler que ça fait longtemps que le NPD se bat pour sécuriser les autoroutes.

Je sais que moi, j'ai amené à maintes reprises de nettoyer les routes, de mettre ça dans le standard de la Queen Elizabeth et la 401—le standard 1. On sait que le gouvernement ne voulait pas faire ça. C'était de nettoyer les routes après huit heures. Ils ont même créé un autre standard : c'est 12 heures. Même avec l'hiver qu'on a eu, le peu de neige, nos routes ont fermé. Qu'ils se pètent les bretelles ou que le gouvernement se vante que ça va si bien sur nos routes—il y a plus de monde qui meurt aujourd'hui sur la 11 et la 17 qu'il n'y en a jamais eu. Ça fait que, nos routes ne sont pas aussi sécuritaires qu'ils le disent. Nous, on le vit au jour le jour.

Je voulais remercier la collègue d'avoir amené ça. Je sais que ce qu'elle propose, c'est que le pavé soit nettoyé après quatre heures, quatre heures d'une tempête de neige. Je trouve ça un petit peu irréaliste. C'est certain, pour moi, que quatre heures, ça va être bienvenu, mais je ne crois pas qu'ils vont être capables de délivrer le quatre heures, parce qu'ils sont déconnectés sur la distance qu'on doit parcourir dans le Nord. C'est pour ça que le huit heures était beaucoup plus réaliste que le quatre heures, mais elle propose quatre heures. C'est sûr que si c'est passé, ça va améliorer nos conditions, ça va sans dire.

Aussi, quand on parle de nettoyer la glace, on parle de « ice clearance » et « clearance standard ». Mais souvent,

ce qu'ils ne réalisent pas, nos autoroutes—c'est pour ça qu'il y a une réalité que souvent le monde du Sud ne comprend pas. Dans le moins 40, ça ne fond pas, même si tu mets du sel. Même si tu mets ça, la glace reste permanente jusqu'à temps que ça devienne une température où le sel peut faire effet. Sinon, la glace va rester sur l'autoroute. Puis, ça, je peux vous dire, c'est certain cet hiver on en a eu moins, parce que c'était beaucoup plus clément. La température était beaucoup moins froide. Ça fait que la glace ne restait pas, parce que le sel agissait beaucoup plus vite.

Mais c'est clair qu'on doit adresser la sécurité sur la 11 et la 17. C'est pour ça que je l'ai remercié de l'avoir amené. Mais je pense qu'il faut qu'on dise c'est quoi la réalité du Nord : demander quatre heures, ça serait bienvenu, mais je ne crois pas que c'est réaliste.

Comme je disais, ça fait des années que le NPD demande plus de priorisation sur le déneigement. Mais je ne peux pas parler de déneigement sans parler d'un peu d'historique, là. Puis, je veux parler de l'historique et aussi des libéraux et des conservateurs.

La privatisation qui est venue dans le déneigement, c'est les libéraux qui l'ont faite quand ils étaient au pouvoir. Ils ont privatisé le déneigement. Puis, on a vu que la baisse de l'entretien des routes est descendue au point de ce qu'on vit aujourd'hui. Les conservateurs n'ont rien fait. Ils n'ont changé rien. Ils ont gardé ça privé. On sait, c'est un gouvernement qui est fort sur la privatisation. Puis, on a entendu du collègue du gouvernement qui parlait que nos routes sont sécuritaires, que tout va bien.

On s'en est sorti cet hiver—même avec un hiver clément, comme j'ai dit, comme on a eu, c'est que nos routes ont fermé pareil. Puis encore, il y a du monde qui sont morts sur nos routes. C'est quoi le prix d'une vie, là? On semble oublier qu'il y a du monde qui meurt sur nos routes aujourd'hui. Puis, on prend ça pareil comme si c'était normal. On normalise du monde qui meurt sur nos routes à cause des conditions hivernales. Il y a quelque chose qui n'est pas correct dans ce portrait-là. Il y a quelque chose qui ne sent pas bon, et le monde est tanné.

Les communautés du Nord demandent qu'on devrait mettre un standard. Elle propose un standard de quatre heures. Nous, on veut poser un standard de huit heures. Le gouvernement a mis un standard de 12 heures, mais qui était 16 avant.

Mais je veux revenir sur l'historique, puisque je sais qu'il faut que je donne la parole à mon collègue. Les libéraux l'ont privatisé. C'est important de le dire, puis je vous le dis-là : sous le gouvernement libéral, il y a eu un rapport de l'auditeur général en 2015 qui montrait que le niveau de déneigement des Ontariens avait diminué depuis la privatisation du service. Et ce rapport dit—je vous en lis un extrait, là : « The bottom line is that the ministry has been successful in reducing and containing escalating winter maintenance costs, but this has been achieved at the expense of a reduction in the timeliness of ensuring Ontario highways are safe for motorists in the winter. »

Ce que ça dit ici, en français, c'est que le ministère a réduit ses coûts, parce qu'il l'a privatisé. Mais aux dépens

de quoi? De la santé et la sécurité du monde sur l'autoroute. C'est qui, ce monde-là? Mais c'est des personnes comme moi. C'est ma famille. C'est les jeunes, parce qu'il ne faut pas oublier, les routes 11 et 17—on a une artère, là. On n'est pas comme vous autres qui bâtissez des routes partout, que vous avez accès pour vous faire des détours. Nous, on a la 11 et la 17.

On a la 11 pour se rendre à nos rendez-vous de médecin. On a la 11 pour se rendre à nos écoles. On a la 11 pour se rendre au travail. On a la 11 pour tout faire. Puis, aujourd'hui, j'entends le gouvernement se péter les bretelles encore, et dire que nos routes sont sécuritaires. Moi, je peux vous le dire : je le vis au jour le jour. Vous avez une réalité que vous ne comprenez même pas. Les municipalités vous le disent. Ils passent des motions pour que vous l'ameniez à huit heures, ce qui est standard, comme la 400. C'est une Transcanadienne; ce n'est pas une « trail » à vaches, ça, là. Ce n'est pas ça qu'on a. C'est une Transcanadienne.

1730

On parle de millions. Quand la route ferme, ce sont des millions que la province perd puis que le Canada perd. Mais c'est qui qui l'a privatisé? Ce sont les libéraux, mais ils aimeraient qu'on l'oublie, cette partie-là. Et là, on dit, on nous propose de quoi de même, et je trouve ça un petit peu sarcastique, mais c'est une amélioration qu'il faut considérer.

Mais ceci dit, les conservateurs n'ont pas fait mieux. Même, ils ont empiré la chose parce que je peux vous dire que pour nous, les personnes du Nord, quand moi, j'ai mes commettants qui viennent, qui ont peur de voyager ces routes—on a rien qu'à voir les vidéos sur la 11 et 17 qui tuent, que les camions dépassent où ils ne devraient pas dépasser. Puis le ministre de la transportation nous dit que nos routes sont les plus sécuritaires de l'Amérique du Nord—mais qu'il sorte de sa tour d'ivoire, qu'il vienne se promener chez nous, qu'il vienne sur nos autoroutes l'hiver, qu'il fasse face à deux trucks qui s'en viennent sur la même ligne.

Mon commettant, de Chad's Law, a quasiment perdu sa voix quand je lui ai dit qu'on voulait juste mettre les lignes solides, les mettre comme dans tout le reste des provinces au Canada, puis ils ont voté contre. Puis ils disent qu'ils sont là pour notre sécurité. Réveillez-vous. Réveillez-vous. Venez dans le Nord puis venez vivre ça au jour le jour, venez dire au gars comme Chad, mon commettant, qui a quasiment perdu sa vie, qui est arrivé face à face avec un truck dans une côte. Puis vous dites que c'est sécuritaire, les routes les plus sécuritaires? Vous êtes déconnecté pas à peu près.

Je veux donner la parole à mon collègue.

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

**Mr. Adil Shamji:** Good afternoon, Madam Speaker. I'll begin by making a confession: It was hard to keep my lunch down while listening to the comments from the member for Hastings–Lennox and Addington. He completely ignored the substance of this legislation, and it was rich hearing those comments from a government that has

been forced to walk back nearly every major piece of policy that it has put forward, whether it's the greenbelt, development charges, urban boundary expansion—and all of that within the context of a government that is so preoccupied with talking about the gravy train that it has become the gravy train, and even that in the midst of an RCMP criminal investigation so dire that it has required the appointment of a special prosecutor.

But now I'd like to talk about something that can actually bring a smile to our faces, and that is Bill 184. I want to acknowledge that Bill 184 is an ambitious and important piece of legislation, and for that I want to acknowledge the hard-working, dynamic and relentless member for Scarborough–Guildwood, who is bringing this forward to represent not just her constituents but hard-working Ontarians province-wide, and even—nay, especially—in rural, remote and northern areas.

I want to touch on a few things that this bill will accomplish, if passed. It enhances integration between bike-share services and public transit, and it does so through fare integration, so that people can take advantage of options that are cheaper, healthier and more environmentally friendly. Along the way, it does this and promotes the uptake of public transit by making it easier for people to get to and from bus and train stations, because that is often the biggest barrier to uptake for public transit.

The bill also does a fabulous job of beginning to address the affordability crisis in housing in Ontario. Specifically, it ensures that at least 20% of housing units on provincial land sold to developers are mandated to be affordable. This is crucial because, historically, valuable land that is near transit lines, such as the space near 8 Dawes Road in Beaches–East York, steps from the Danforth GO and Main subway stations, has been sold under this government without any requirements for affordable housing. This kind of lack of oversight has previously allowed private interests to maximize profits while leaving some of our most vulnerable people in this province behind.

If passed, this bill would ensure that, moving forward, developments—such as those at the West Don Lands, East Harbour, Thorncliffe Park and along the new Ontario Line—incorporate essential affordable housing that benefits all Ontarians and all those people living in those communities. We are in the midst of an affordability crisis, Madam Speaker, and this legislation is a critical step to showing that finally someone in this province is ready to take this seriously.

The bill also seeks to establish mandatory, enhanced maintenance standards for Highways 11, 17 and 69. This will ensure rigorous snow and ice removal within hours of weather events as well as timely pothole repairs. These will not only ensure that we maintain our infrastructure but guarantee the safety and efficiency of our transportation systems.

Now, I have spent many years travelling and working in the north. I have seen the consequences of inadequate highway maintenance. When snow and ice is not removed in time, it puts people at risk in the following ways: It

increases the risk of accidents; it slows emergency response times; it prevents people from accessing vital services, such as hospitals and fire departments; and when the road conditions are poor, it cripples transportation and, in particular, trucks that are vital for delivering things important for our economy.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, Bill 184 addresses critical gaps in our transportation and housing policies. It ensures that our infrastructure serves the economic and social well-being of our province. It secures the livelihood of our communities and it maintains the integrity of our environment.

I urge all members of this House to support this legislation for the future of our great province of Ontario. Thank you for allowing me this opportunity—

*Interjections.*

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

**Mr. Joel Harden:** I want to thank the member for Scarborough–Guildwood for introducing this motion for the floor today. I also just want to remark, in the time I have, Speaker, on the reality of the matter for transit and for safety in the province. This is something near and dear to my heart.

So, what we know from facts, Speaker—facts that are gathered—is that today, on average, 20 vulnerable road users will be brought into emergency rooms because of collisions with people who are not driving their vehicles safely. Those could be road construction workers. They could be pedestrians. They could be cyclists. They could be seniors. They could be people with disabilities. But that continues to happen, and I will join the member from Mushkegowuk–James Bay in expressing my frustration, too, that the government continues to live in an alternate universe where they don't see these families whose loved ones have been struck down, hurt or even killed every single day, all year.

So, I want to thank the member for promoting active transportation through the integration with public transit, but I want to note for the government that we are still having people leave this earth, leave this world, or live their life in critical pain far too often.

I want to also reflect on the fact that the member has noted the need for affordable housing and transit-friendly communities, and has set a mark of 20% of new developments if Metrolinx were to get rid of property for affordable housing. When I followed up with the member, she remarked to me that, for her—as is the case for all housing experts I'm familiar with, Speaker—affordable housing is something that is 30% of one's disposable income, not 80% of market rent, which has been the gimmick I've often seen from the government here and governments elsewhere, where people are priced out of their own homes. I want to salute the member for bringing that metric forward because that's actually affordable housing.

And that leads me, Speaker, in the time I have left, to talk about the agency at question in that aspect of the member's bill, and that is Metrolinx. Can I please say, in

the time that I have left, Speaker, that I still fail to understand how this government can be happy with an agency that has tripled its number of vice-presidents in the last six years—under its watch, 27 in 2018; 82 today, Speaker. A marketing department at Metrolinx of over 400 people—a CEO that makes over a million dollars that has a reputation for bullying in the workplace, Speaker.

I want to know—just shout it out, members of the government. Can anybody name me one transit project that has been built and finished under your watch? What about the Eglinton Crosstown? What about the Finch extension? What about bus rapid transit in the member's community of Scarborough? Can anybody name and shout out a single project that has gotten done? You can't. You can't, because you know what's happened, Speaker, sadly, under the government's watch? Ontario has become the most expensive place to build public transit in the world—in the world.

The Ontario Line right now is on schedule to cost a billion dollars per kilometre. There's a comparable project in South Korea right now that is costing a third to build a light rail transit system. What has happened, sadly, is that the raven's nest of consultants has descended upon Metrolinx, and they are siphoning the hard-earned taxpayer dollars of this province for their own benefit, and the meter is still running. I was joking with the member the other day. It's like we're all in a taxi and the meter is running and we're not allowed to get out of the car. But I would expect a Conservative government to not only vote for this member's bill, but to finally bring Phil Verster and the profiteers at Metrolinx to heel to get public transit built—not to finance massive paycheques to them, but to finance public transit. Thanks for bringing the bill forward.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** The member from Scarborough–Guildwood has two minutes to respond.

**MPP Andrea Hazell:** I want to reiterate again to the members across the floor, here in Toronto, we have seen remarkable growth in the bike-share system, and there is a current disconnect between the bike-share system and the TTC and GO systems, like they almost exist in two different worlds. Bikes are a great first- and last-minute transit option, giving riders a healthier and more flexible method to get towards subway and GO stations than just buses. This legislation would compel Metrolinx to adopt that viewpoint, both in how it plans its transit routes as well as for fare integration.

We are also in a major housing crisis. How do they not know that? We are lacking housing for middle-income and lower-income residents alike. Governments have an interest in disposing of surplus land to be built into housing, particularly affordable housing for those of lower incomes. The best place to build new housing is by transit stations, as it reduces those residents' reliance on automobiles. From the perspective of income equity and also cohesion, there is an interest in requiring affordable housing by transit stations in order to avoid driving low-

income residents to far-away car-oriented communities. Let's not forget our low-income earners.

The third part of this act is the stronger maintenance standards for Highways 11, 17 and 69. I sympathize with my member across from me—the passion, the pain that the people in the north feel, and members on the opposite side not agreeing with this bill. I feel very sorry—very sorry—for the people who are living in the north. This bill is all about having a long-term plan for transportation.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

MPP Hazell has moved Bill 184, An Act to Amend the Metrolinx Act, 2006, the Public Transportation and Highway

Improvement Act and the Shortline Railways Act, 1995 with respect to transportation. 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 to the motion, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

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

*Second reading vote deferred.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** All matters relating to private members' public business having been completed, this House stands adjourned until 9 a.m., Thursday, April 25, 2024.

*The House adjourned at 1744.*









**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Edith Dumont, 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	
<b>Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)</b>	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
<b>Barnes, Patrice (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)</b>	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
<b>Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)</b>	Scarborough North / Scarborough- Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
<b>Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)</b>	Willowdale	Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée
Clancy, Aislinn (GRN)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds— Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
<b>Collard, Lucille (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)</b>	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)</b>	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
<b>Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)</b>	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	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Flack, Hon. / L'hon. Rob (PC)</b>	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Associate Minister of Housing / Ministre associé du Logement
<b>Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)</b>	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
<b>Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Michael D. (PC)</b>	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	
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	
<b>Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)</b>	Parkdale—High Park	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Ke, Vincent (IND)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
<b>Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)</b>	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
<b>Khanjin, Hon. / L'hon. Andrea (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)</b>	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
<b>Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)</b>	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	
<b>McCarthy, Hon. / L'hon. Todd J. (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)</b>	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	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Skelly, Donna (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)</b>	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Smith, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)</b>	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
<b>Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)</b>	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
<b>Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)</b>	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Small Business / Ministre associée déléguée aux Petites Entreprises
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain	
<b>Thanigasalam, Hon. / L'hon Vijay (PC)</b>	Scarborough—Rouge Park	Associate Minister of Transportation / Ministre associé des Transports
<b>Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)</b>	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
<b>Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)</b>	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

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
Vaugois, Lise (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
<b>Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)</b>	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	