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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 28 March 2024

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 28 mars 2024

Report continued from volume A
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2024 ONTARIO BUDGET

Continuation of debate on the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It is an honour to rise in this place and speak on behalf of the people I represent in London West, to offer some observations, some thoughts and some comments on the government's budgetary policy.

This motion calls on MPPs to approve the budgetary policy of the government, and I can tell you that, from the perspective of Londoners, this is a budget that has failed to address the real issues that people in my community are facing. One of the ironic aspects of this government's budget is that this government is all about fiscal responsibility, cutting red tape, and yet this budget projects a deficit that is historic—a historic amount. We have seen the government increase spending, increase borrowing, but as others have commented, never before has an Ontario budget spent so much and delivered so little. It completely ignores the real problems that people are facing and the solutions that people were looking for in this government's budget document.

So what are some of the solutions that people in London would have expected? Well, they would have expected a real investment in Ontario's publicly funded and publicly delivered health care system. This budget includes some funding to expand interprofessional primary care teams, which is welcome, but it doesn't go nearly far enough to address the reality of 2.3 million Ontarians without a family doctor and, in London—the number of Londoners without a family doctor has actually increased to 84,000 people in the London area. So the measures that the government has introduced will make some baby steps toward dealing with the issue, but they won't actually fix it.

The budget doesn't include any kind of prohibition around the expansion of private health care, and that is something that I hear about regularly from the people I represent. People are very concerned about privatized, for-profit health care. They understand that what that means is that shareholder profit becomes the guiding motive behind the delivery of health care services rather than actual patient care.

People in my community would have liked to see an investment in the health care workforce. They understand

that it is nurses, it is the health care workers who provide the backbone of the system. You can't deliver health care without health care workers, and this government's failure to effectively attract, retain and return health care workers has meant that the government has had to spend \$1 billion on agency nurses, because they don't have the health care workforce in place in our hospitals and in other health care facilities.

People in London would have liked to see the government get back into the business of building homes. We are in a housing crisis of historic proportions, and it is time for the government to recognize its responsibility to ensure that people in Ontario have access to homes they can afford, to supportive housing, to other non-market housing options. The government could have moved forward with an initiative that was proposed by my colleague the member for London North Centre, to create a new agency called Homes Ontario that would do exactly that: It would get the government into the business of delivering on those non-market housing units that are so desperately needed.

The budget does nothing to address staffing shortages in our schools and deal with the deficits that school boards are facing. In the Thames Valley District School Board in London, they are looking at a record high \$18.5-million deficit as they finalize their budget for this year. That deficit is largely caused by this government's failure to address the funding pressures that school boards are facing. The deficit is also reflective of the government's refusal to help school boards deal with their obligations to provide CPP, EI and other mandated programs that have to be provided to staff.

As critic for colleges and universities, I was very concerned to see that this budget did nothing other than reannounce a funding program for the post-secondary sector that had already been announced in February. Not a single post-secondary stakeholder said that the government's funding package that was announced in February that's repeated in this budget went nearly far enough to address the crisis that our post-secondary institutions are experiencing.

This government's funding—as I said, announced in February; reannounced in this budget—was less than half of what their own expert panel, the blue-ribbon panel, had recommended in November. That panel came together to look at what was needed to keep the post-secondary sector stable and sustainable. They had identified a \$2.5-billion investment over three years. This government's response was a \$1.3-billion package, which was a limited three-year package of grants broken up, which will do very, very little to address the real crisis that colleges and universities are

experiencing, and ignores the reality that our colleges and universities are going to lose additional revenue dollars because of the 50% reduction in international student permits.

We know from the government's budget document that they are anticipating a revenue loss of over \$3 billion for colleges over the next couple of years. College budgets are included in the government's books, so we know what that revenue loss looks like. But there is certainly the possibility that universities are going to experience similar revenue losses. Almost half of the universities in our province are already reporting deficits, so the government's lack of support for post-secondary institutions is just going to make those funding pressures much worse.

I want to talk for a moment about another failure of this government. It was something that we talked about today in question period with my colleague the member for Toronto Centre and the two women that she brought to Queen's Park today to share their stories, Cait Alexander and Emily Ager, who were victims of rape, sexual assault, and who had reported their sexual assault to the police. Evidence was collected, charges were laid, court proceedings were initiated, and their cases were dropped because of the significant backlogs in our courts, which meant that they were unable to pursue their case within the time that is required. So their cases were dropped.

These are brave survivors who had the courage to share their story, to pursue justice from their perpetrators and were failed by a court system that is riddled with delays. Yet this government's budget includes no mention of bail, no mention of tribunals, no additional funding to address the backlogs in our court system and reduce those backlogs.

I want to now go into a little bit more detail on what the government has done on primary care and some of the feedback that I am hearing from people in London West. I had just mentioned the post-secondary sector. I will acknowledge that one of the new announcements on post-secondary that was included in the budget was the establishment of a medical school at York University that will be focused on family physicians, which is welcome. However, there is absolutely no timeline for when that medical school will be established. There is no funding attached to establishing that medical school and, most significantly, there is no increase to the operating grants that colleges and universities like York University need to ensure sustainability and stability.

On the issue of primary care, in my community in London I hear all the time from people who are looking for a family doctor. I want to give a shout-out to my constituent Dr. Andrew Park, who is the president of the Ontario Medical Association and who was my guest on a town hall that I held on March 19—a telephone town hall that was attended by about 900 people. The people who called into the town hall, about one quarter of them said they did not have a family doctor but 87% said someone close to them did not have a family doctor.

At the time of that town hall, March 19, the data that I had available to me indicated that there were 65,000

Londoners without a family doctor. Well, since that time, the Ontario College of Family Physicians released new data saying that there are 84,000 residents, actually, in the London area without a family doctor.

I want to just share some of the concerns that constituents have raised with me when they don't have access to a family doctor. Danielle Horst says that she has two sons, both of whom have been diagnosed with a genetic disorder and ADHD. She cannot find a family physician to help care for them. She says, "I don't want to go to a walk-in clinic and get a different doctor every time who doesn't ... know my boys' health history."

Another constituent has a rare autoimmune disease. She says, "I truly cannot be without a family doctor as my condition needs to be monitored consistently. I have prescriptions that are needed for this condition ... and I can't ... be left high and dry with no doctor to fill the prescription."

1510

Another constituent, Lori-Ann Horley, said she lost her family doctor, but she was able to get a nurse practitioner, which is great. However, after only a few months of operating her practice, the nurse practitioner said she was forced to close because she could not afford it. The amount she could bill was not enough to cover her rent and her staffing, her administrative costs, as well as pay herself. And we know the Ontario Medical Association and the Canadian Medical Association have pointed out the incredible burden that administrative tasks place on family physicians who don't have the support of an interprofessional health team. Unfortunately, this budget doesn't include any measures to reduce the administrative burden on family physicians that would help them shift from paperwork to patient care, so that was certainly a missed opportunity.

I also heard from a constituent, Christina, who said she does not have a doctor, which means she cannot get her ODSP application filled out. She says, "I am so scared I am going to lose my home before I am able to get adequate help. I am not receiving enough from OW to pay all my bills and each month I struggle to keep my head above water."

These are the heartbreaking stories that I hear from people in London West who can't get access to a family doctor. Christina talks about being worried that she's not going to be able to keep her head above water, and that is certainly an issue that so many people in London are worried about: the rising cost of living, the cost of housing and what that will mean for their ability to maintain a healthy life for themselves and their families.

And we are seeing in London real pressures with housing, and this budget was an opportunity for the government to make a real difference for people in my community and across the province by introducing changes like bringing back real rent control. In London, we just saw a report from CMHC that says that the vacancy rate in London is just 1.7% and the researchers commented that the annual income required to meet the basic 30% of income affordability threshold is about

\$73,000 for a two-bedroom unit. But they estimate that only about 20% of renter households in London would meet that threshold. We've also seen mortgage default rates up more than 80% in London, which is the second-highest default rate in Canada, as people struggle with cost-of-living pressures.

Talking about rent increases and the missed opportunity and the failure of this government to protect tenants: They've removed rent control off of units that were built after 2018, and I heard from tenants in London West who were hit with a 23% rent increase. They lived at 25 Centre Street. There was an identical building right next door at 45 Centre Street that was constructed before 2018 and did have rent control, and yet the tenants at the building right next door had to face this 23% rent hike, which was totally legal and totally allowable because of the policy decisions of this government.

I heard from a senior from the Fox Hollow retirement complex, Lorna Mills, who was faced with a 5% rent increase. Now, with a 5% rent increases, maybe the landlord thinks that that would be manageable, but she points out that the average age of the seniors living in her retirement complex is about 85 or 86 years. They get a pension, but their pension is not increasing at 5% per year. They are on fixed incomes and that is unaffordable.

We also know how the cost-of-living crisis is affecting the lowest-income people in our community and across the province. The government could have listened to the calls of advocates and agencies who work with people on social assistance and brought in the doubling of social assistance that is needed to enable people to live with dignity and afford just basic essentials, and yet the government is just doubling down on its decision to effectively legislate people on Ontario Works and ODSP and keep them in poverty.

Speaker, as I said at the beginning, this is not a budgetary policy that the people in London West support. It is not a budgetary policy that addresses the needs of the people in London. It is a budget that is a package of reannouncements, half measures and that doubles down on failed initiatives that have demonstrated that they don't work and they actually increase the pressures and the challenges that people in this province are experiencing.

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

Mr. John Jordan: Speaker, I've been having a problem—right since I started this job, I think—with misinformation. Recently on the small radio station in Perth, Ontario, the Leader of the Opposition was on there telling that small community that all our doctors are leaving. I can tell you, it's news to our doctors.

Earlier today the member for Waterloo said there are no efforts to rebuild the workforce in this budget, and yet there's \$2 billion for home and community care to stabilize the workforce, \$743 million over the three years, a new medical school. I'm wondering if the member from Waterloo can tell us what "does nothing" means in her speech.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Well thank you for the question. I think I know what the member for Waterloo meant when

she made her speech this morning, so I'm happy to respond to that question.

Investments in home and community care are not going to stabilize the workforce if it doesn't include the wage increase that those home and community care workers need to be on par with their counterparts who work in the institutional sector. Home and community care workers have been among the lowest-paid health care workers for decades, ever since the Liberals started to privatize the home care sector. We hear all the time from agencies like VON and others about the urgent need to increase those wages to stop those workers from moving to higher-paid jobs in other sectors.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thanks to the member from London West. Particularly on doctors, the Ontario Medical Association at pre-budget consultations confirmed with us that they spend 19.1 hours every week doing paperwork. They have said that if the government provided some administrative support, then they could spend more time with patients, and this would actually provide better health care, and this actually would help retain the health care workers. That is not misinformation, and the fact that the government classifies that in that manner is really disturbing.

This morning I also talked about the OMA's recommendation around getting foreign-trained doctors credentialed here in Ontario. I also mentioned the fact that my concierge at my condo, Mohammad from Pakistan, is a renal specialist. You know what Ontario needs? Ontario needs doctors who are trained and who want to be part of the solution here in Ontario.

Can the member from London West comment on the solutions that are right in front of the face of this government, and yet you choose not to do them?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Thank you to my colleague the member for Waterloo for her question. Certainly, we gave the government a solution that could be implemented immediately that would have an immediate impact on access to primary care in this province, and that is to provide administrative support to family doctors so that they could shift the burden of paperwork. They're currently doing 20 hours a week on administrative tasks. That could be taken on by an administrative staff person who would free up those family doctors to actually provide the care that their patients need.

1520

We need to be working on all levels, on all fronts, and this government—the investment in interprofessional primary care teams is welcome, but, again, we need the health human resources to ensure that those teams are fully staffed. That is a longer-term solution; we need to be moving ahead with things that will make a difference right now.

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

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to thank my colleague from London West for her excellent speech, not only bringing forward the voices of constituents within London,

but also providing those solutions that are centred around homes, health care and hope.

We've seen this government engage in such panels as the Housing Affordability Task Force, as well as the blue-ribbon panel. My question to the member: Is it a fiscally prudent exercise to strike these panels, only to ignore them? Is it socially responsible to strike these panels, only to ignore or reject their advice?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I have to say that there were some concerns when the blue-ribbon panel was struck about what kind of recommendations it was going to bring forward, because it included no representation from faculty, no representation from students. So the fact that the government's hand-picked panel did the work and came up with a recommendation that \$2.5 billion was needed in our post-secondary sector in base funding over the next three years is a real reflection that this was the work of independent experts who made that recommendation. It is concerning that the government strikes these panels—we've heard about the government's complete rejection of fourplexes, which is something that the Housing Affordability Task Force had very clearly recommended.

If the government is going to hand-pick these experts to sit on these panels, to review the problems and come up with recommendations, then it has an obligation to move forward with the recommendations that are made.

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

Mr. Ric Bresee: This government has continued to remain absolutely steadfast in our goal to build at least 1.5 million homes because we need to address the ongoing housing crisis, which is why this government is investing \$1 billion through a new Municipal Housing Infrastructure Program to support those major infrastructure projects, such as roads and bridges, to enable housing in all of Ontario's communities.

Speaker, through you to the member: Can the member please say whether she will be joining us in putting more tools in the hands of the municipalities, of our municipal partners, to help them get shovels in the ground faster on critical infrastructure needs for homes, or will they continue to vote against putting a roof over people's heads?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I can tell you that the official opposition is going to continue to push this government to do what is necessary to actually meet their target of 1.5 million homes. The budget showed that the numbers are still far, far below what would be necessary to meet that target by 2031.

We're watching this government let \$357 million in federal funding that's supposed to go to affordable housing just slip through their fingers because of this spat between the Minister of Housing and the federal Minister of Housing. The federal government has determined that Ontario has only met 28% of its affordable housing goal. If it doesn't have a plan to address that, then those federal dollars are going to be lost.

That is a shame. We're going to keep pushing the government to come up with a plan that is going to actually meet the target.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Quick question?

MPP Lise Vaugeois: Thank you so much to the member from London for what you've had to say about the university situation. I note that the Ontario colleges and universities faculty association was here just a few days ago and that the Minister of Colleges and Universities chose not to meet with them. I'm wondering where they're getting their advice from and if you could speak to that.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: One of the reasons that the college sector in particular is in such crisis is because the government was getting advice from private colleges who were saying, "Let us partner with public colleges. Let us bring in unprecedented numbers of international students. And then, we can run the colleges on the basis of those international student revenues instead of the public funding that the government should have been providing."

The federal government burst that bubble and forced the government to have to look seriously at how to ensure the sustainability of this sector, and they—

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It's always an honour to rise, today to speak to the budget motion.

Speaker, I want to ask you: What if I told you there was a place where 16,000 people are living unhoused on any given day, a place where the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment is \$2,200, a place where nobody working on minimum wage can afford an apartment working only 40 hours a week in this province?

What if I told you there was a place where the average young person working full-time had to work 22 years just to save for the down payment on a new home, where the wait-list for social housing is longer than the number of social housing spaces available?

What if I told you there was a place last year where 700 fires burned over a million acres and cost our health care system \$1.28 billion in just four days due to toxic air pollution?

What if I told you there was a place where our electricity grid was getting dirtier, not cleaner, where 2.3 million people do not have access to a family doctor, and the number of emergency department closures last year reached unprecedented levels, where hallway medicine was now the norm, and hospitals are actually applying for lines of credit in order to keep the lights on and the doors open?

What if I told you there was a place where one third of secondary schools face daily teacher shortages, and the school repair backlog had ballooned to \$16.8 billion, a place where 60,000 children with autism are on a wait-list, and 30,000 children are on a wait-list to access mental health services, sometimes waiting as long as two years?

What if I told you there was a place where programs for people with development disabilities are closing and being cut, where 717,000 people lived in legislated poverty?

Then, Speaker, what if I told you that place is where everybody in this House lives? Because that place is Ontario.

This budget of no said no to fixing these challenges. With this budget, this government said no to fixing the housing crisis, no to addressing the climate crisis and making sure we're prepared for it and no to increasing supports and funding for so many of the social services each and every one of us rely on every day.

1530

Let's start with some solutions about how we get to yes. It starts with a government that's going to legalize housing—legalizing gentle density, missing middle and mid-rise housing so we can quickly increase housing supply where we already have infrastructure built so we can actually quickly and cheaply build homes that people can afford in the communities they know and love without paving over our farmland, forests and wetlands.

The Premier said no to that opportunity where we can quickly make the dream of home ownership available once again for young people.

The budget said no to rent protection, no to helping renters be able to access the Landlord and Tenant Board quickly, no to rent control, no to vacancy control, no to tamping down on above-guideline rent increases.

The budget said no to investing in deeply affordable, non-profit co-op and social housing. Did you know that 93% of the deeply affordable homes built in the province of Ontario were built before 1995? That's when a previous Conservative government pulled the province out of supporting co-op and non-profit housing, and the Liberal government and this Conservative government have never brought it back.

No wonder 16,000 people are unhoused every night in the province of Ontario. Scotiabank—we're not talking somebody radical here—says that, over the next decade, we need governments supporting co-ops and non-profits to build 250,000 deeply affordable homes. There is nothing in this budget to build a pathway to get there.

Speaker, I will concede one thing the government did say yes to on housing, I will concede this—something I've been advocating for for months in my community: operational funding for a 32-unit supportive housing space that provincial, federal and local money built. The budget did include funding for that. I see the two members opposite here, the Associate Minister of Mental Health and the Associate Minister of Housing, who helped me advocate for that funding. So 32 people will now have a house, 76 people will get health care supports to maintain their housing, and that's a good thing for Guelph. It really is, and I'm proud of that. But we need that across the province, and we need to scale it up if we're going to have any hope of solving the housing crisis.

I want to move to climate. Last year, 700 fires burned a million acres in this province. As I said earlier, over a four-day period, it cost our health care system \$1.28 billion and increased emissions due to toxic air pollution. There was nothing in this budget except for a little minor bit of funding for firefighters—not enough, but there was a little bit there, so I'll say a little bit. The budget had nothing to deal with the scale of the challenge.

According to Ontario's Financial Accountability Officer, the additional cost of public infrastructure damage this decade alone, just over the next six years between now and 2030, will be \$26.2 billion. On average, Ontario is going to have pay an extra \$4.2 billion a year to maintain and protect public infrastructure in the increasing severity and frequency of climate-fuelled extreme weather events. There was nothing in this budget that provided a dedicated funding stream for municipalities to pay for those costs, to prepare for it, to ensure that we don't have things like the derecho that hit eastern Ontario last year and left so many communities for weeks without electricity.

Imagine trying to run a business or to run health care equipment in your home without electricity for weeks on end. At the very least, the government could have provided a funding stream to prepare municipalities to deal with these disasters.

If they really wanted to get ambitious, they could have actually delivered a climate affordability plan to cut pollution and help people save money at the same time, like a building retrofit plan that would create jobs, help people save money by saving energy and lower climate pollution at the same time.

If they truly were serious about affordability at the pumps, they would help people just get rid of the pumps by having rebates for new and used electric vehicles and rebates for electric bikes, so people have opportunities either to drive or other methods of commuting that are far cheaper. It costs one tenth to fill an electric car up with electricity than it does to fill a car up with high-priced gas—that they're being gouged by the fossil fuel companies. As a matter of fact, last year, 18% of the increase in gas prices was due to excess profits from the oil and gas sector, and 2% of the increase came from carbon pricing, which these folks rail on about every day. So why not go after the real culprits increasing the affordability crisis for the people of this province by helping them pull the pump and get rid of it?

Speaker, I want to close today by talking about the services people rely on each and every day. Some 2.3 million Ontarians don't have access to a family doctor, unprecedented closures of emergency departments last year—and yet, this government provided a below-inflation increase to the health care sector. That's not going to fix the problem. We have hospitals applying for lines of credit to keep the doors open, and yet this government is not going to provide them with the funds they need to ensure that when you take your child to an emergency department, they're going to get the care they need in a timely way. There's not adequate money in this bill to ensure that the 2.3 million people who don't have access to a family doctor actually can have that access.

On education—real, inflation-adjusted for education actually went down. So our education system got a cut, even though a third of schools have teacher shortages.

Our post-secondary education had a real cut—not even just an inflation-adjusted cut—at a time when universities and colleges are cutting programs, when researchers are struggling to produce the kind of research we need to

ensure that we remain globally competitive in a highly competitive global economy driven by innovation.

Mental health services: This budget doesn't have a plan to reduce the 20,000 young people on a wait-list to access mental health services or developmental services. I can't tell you how many developmental services organizations in my riding—and, I'm guessing, the ridings of the members opposite—are coming to me and saying, "We're closing and cutting programs for people with developmental disabilities."

I want to close with people living in legislated poverty. If you're on Ontario disability support in this province, you are forced to live on \$1,300 a month—Ontario Works, \$731 a month—at a time when average rent is \$2,200 a month. We have to ask ourselves—and this isn't just the government; this is all of us, collectively, as Ontarians—if we're, morally, going to stand for that, if we think it's right for people to be forced to live in legislated poverty, when, if we made the investments, we could fix it.

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

Mr. Rick Byers: I thank the member for his comments.

I want to touch on a couple of areas. Firstly, regarding housing, one of the many, many things I like about this budget—the water and waste water funding and new alternatives for municipalities that are part of this budget are, really, frankly, I'm not overstating when I say revolutionary, in the potential for funding water and waste water infrastructure and getting those houses built. Isn't that something the member can support?

Secondly, I heard the comments on climate. The world is changing. Climate is a mainstream issue now, I believe. But \$67 billion on transit—biggest ever—doesn't that accommodate and contribute to the climate solution down the road?

1540

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I'm going to try to respond to both of those.

First of all, on housing infrastructure, I'll just look to what the chair of the Ontario Big City Mayors said: "Yes, we welcome some additional funding from the government. But this is the same government that, a year and a half ago, through Bill 23, took \$5.1 billion away from us, and they've replaced about half of that." So we're still facing an infrastructure deficit at the municipal level. Replacing half of it is a step in the right direction, but it doesn't make them whole.

I would also say this is the same government that said no to legalizing gentle density and missing middle housing. We could quickly ramp up housing supply where we already have infrastructure built. As a matter of fact, according to CLIP Homes, if only 18% of single-family homes in Ontario became a fourplex, that would be two million homes—far exceeding the 1.5 million homes we're looking at.

On the climate file: Transit is great, but what this government is spending on transit is pretty much the same as what the previous Liberal government was going to spend

on transit. And if you'll give me another question on climate, I'm happy to expand on that.

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

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Thank you to the member, as always. He's always well-informed, and he gives great debate and speeches here in the chamber.

We were both elected at the same time, and at the time of that election, I remember the government members would often say the following phrase—that we were the most indebted sub-sovereign jurisdiction in the world. And they said it with such gusto. In recent years, I've noticed that they haven't said it as much. Why do you think that is?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I appreciate the member's question.

I think it's because Ontario is the most indebted sub-sovereign jurisdiction in the world right now. As a matter of fact, the debt-to-GDP ratio is the same now as it was when the Liberals were in power—so I don't know if we've had a government spend so much to get so less than what we have right now.

I won't go through the litany of things I talked about, the challenges we're facing. But I want to put one thing on the table right now, something started by the Liberals and continued by this government. We're spending \$7.3 billion a year—the only jurisdiction in North America to subsidize electricity prices. We're subsidizing electricity prices for people who earn six- and seven-figure incomes. I'm all for subsidies for low- and middle-income folks; I'm good with that. But why are we spending \$7 billion on subsidies that disproportionately benefit people who earn six- and seven-figure incomes?

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

Hon. Stan Cho: Let's rewind to 2018, when we took office—so, yes, a \$13-billion deficit with no plan to balance, missing six of eight financial reporting periods. That's the Liberal legacy. What did they build? Did they build transit? Did they build roads or highway infrastructure? Did they invest in long-term care? No. Kathleen Wynne is on record saying her biggest regret is not investing more into long-term care.

We can't take debt and deficits and look at them in a vacuum. That's not equitable to the taxpayers. There are huge investments into infrastructure; most notably, because you love the environment, to the member opposite, \$70 billion into transit expansion—the largest, in fact, in North American history.

The question to the member opposite: Do you acknowledge that there is a difference in the deficit spend today, which is into generational infrastructure investments, into health care—50 hospitals under development and redevelopment, 18,000 long-term-care beds in your own riding built and on the way. Do you agree that there's a difference in this deficit?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Well, I'm certainly not going to defend the Liberals' fiscal record in any way.

I want to say to the members opposite: When you build hospitals, when you build long-term-care homes, when you build schools, people have to staff them. And the challenge you have is paying the people who care for our loved ones. Your wage-restraint legislation has led to early retirements and people leaving—especially the health care system. So I'm going to ask you all to invest in the people, as well. It takes people to staff them.

And I'm going to ask you, when it comes to climate, because this is directly related to our economy—\$1.8 trillion invested in the green energy transition last year alone, half of it in wind and solar, because they're now the cheapest forms of electricity generation. The government does not have a plan for how Ontario can be a global leader in wind and solar, in this green energy transition where literally hundreds of billions of dollars are being invested. Let's work together to make us a global leader to attract those investment dollars and to create the jobs that come with it.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: To my colleague from Guelph: Thank you for your presentation today.

You touched on the whole issue of gentle density, fourplexes. Given that my own riding in downtown Toronto, which has some very high real estate values, has a lot of triplexes and fourplexes and seems to still be an attractive place for people to live, can you explain why, or do you have an analysis as to why this government seems to be allergic to actually putting in place a solution that would make a huge difference to people?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I appreciate the question. I wish I had an answer for you because it's such a common-sense solution.

I just look up the street and about five blocks from my house is the largest mansion in Guelph, owned by the wealthiest person in Guelph, and right next door to it—we're not talking two doors down; we're talking next door—are three fourplexes on a single lot housing multiple families affordably, literally right next to the most expensive house in Guelph. It hasn't deteriorated the neighbourhood, it hasn't made it worse; I would argue it has made it better.

The only thing I can conclude is, when you focus on opening the greenbelt for development so a handful of wealthy, well-connected insiders can cash in \$8.3 billion, those same wealthy, well-connected insiders aren't going to cash in when it comes to fourplexes, because fourplexes are about people; they're about citizens; they're about people in our local communities being able to build homes they can afford so they can stay in the community they love.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Quick question?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank the member for Guelph for his speech today.

I know you were talking about incentives for EV vehicles. The member knows I used to work for Ford Motor Co. Most of the vehicles that are electric today

come from jurisdictions that use coal to produce these vehicles; not only that, the cobalt comes from the Congo, where they use child labour.

But we've changed this. We're going to produce electric vehicles here in Ontario—\$28 billion of automotive investment in Ontario. We're going to be using our own natural resources from Ontario, which will create Ontario jobs in this province. Isn't that much better—that we can supply the world with electric vehicles from the cleanest electricity in the world? And that's due to Elizabeth Witmer, a former Conservative MPP, who started getting rid of the coal plants here in Ontario.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: We certainly want to revitalize Ontario's automotive sector and be a global leader in the EV revolution. We absolutely want to have a mining-to-EV supply chain—doing it in a way that respects Indigenous rights and sovereignty, by the way. But we also want the people of Ontario to be able to afford those electric vehicles.

Right now, most electric vehicles are purchased in Quebec and BC, because those governments actually support making them affordable for middle-class people. That's what I'm calling on this government to do. The other thing I'm calling on them to do is—the grid was 96% clean when they took office; it's down to 87% clean now. Let's reverse that and make our grid clean again.

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

Hon. Nina Tangri: It truly is my honour to rise today to speak in strong support of our 2024 budget entitled Building a Better Ontario. This fiscal blueprint lays out a bold, forward-thinking vision to drive sustainable economic growth, create good jobs, build modern infrastructure and secure Ontario's future prosperity.

I do want to start, though, by thanking our hard-working Premier, Doug Ford, and of course our Minister of Finance, Peter Bethlenfalvy, for their leadership in listening to the people of our province and meeting their needs through our strong plan for growth.

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Speaker, I was particularly touched by Minister Bethlenfalvy's speech on Tuesday. I have an immense amount of respect for all members of this House, and it really takes courage every time any of us stand up. We all deserve the same level of respect, no matter what our different backgrounds are.

This fiscal blueprint goes far beyond just numbers on a page. Minister Bethlenfalvy's powerful opening tribute to his father's immigrant story driving his dedication of this building Ontario budget really sets the tone. As someone who came to this country very young, I can resonate with the passionate retelling of his father's arriving in Canada with nothing as a teenager after World War II, yet still achieving the Ontario dream through hard work. This truly encapsulates the very spirit of optimism and opportunity our ambitious plan will provide current and future generations.

As the Associate Minister of Small Business, I'm tremendously excited by the investments and supports for

our entrepreneurs and job creators contained within these pages. We are injecting an additional \$6.8 million over the next two years to enhance critical grant funding through proven programs like the Summer Company initiative and the Starter Company Plus Program. These outstanding platforms directly empower our province's young people to start their own businesses, nurture their entrepreneurial ambitions and pursue their dreams of building something right here in Ontario.

Meanwhile, this budget also provides an additional \$500,000 in funding for la Fédération des gens d'affaires francophones de l'Ontario. This added support will ensure our vibrant and deeply rooted francophone business community has the resources required to innovate, to grow and to thrive in the years ahead.

Speaker, these measures put forth in this transformative budget represent an ambitious, historic vision to unleash the full potential of Ontario's small businesses and entrepreneurs. For too long, the dreams of hard-working risk-takers seeking to build something for themselves have been stifled by red tape, high costs and a lack of meaningful government support. But with this government, those days are over.

By injecting millions into proven initiatives like the Summer Company initiative and the Starter Company Plus Program, we are directly empowering the next generation of entrepreneurs. We're giving them the capital, mentorship and launch platforms they need to transform those business ideas and ambitious visions into reality, right here in Ontario. From Kenora to Cornwall, Windsor to Ottawa, this budget will be the catalyst for countless new start-ups, new grants, new services and new good-paying jobs created by vibrantly innovative Ontario companies. And by boosting funding for vital organizations like la Fédération des gens d'affaires francophones de l'Ontario, we're investing in the long-term vitality of our deeply rooted francophone business community as an integral part of Ontario's economic fabric.

But, Speaker, this budget goes far beyond just funding programs. It's a signal to our province's courageous entrepreneurs and trailblazers, a pledge to partner with them on their journey, especially after the 15 years of neglect our businesses endured under the Liberals. By lowering taxes, cutting red tape, expanding infrastructure and controlling costs, we're creating the ideal environment for Ontario's small businesses and start-ups to emerge and scale up and achieve breakthrough success in markets across Canada and around the globe. This budget makes them the focal point of Ontario's economic renewal, rekindling our province's entrepreneurial spirit.

So to all the Ontario entrepreneurs who have an amazing product or innovative service just waiting to be unleashed, who wake up every morning with a fire in their belly to build something meaningful, this budget is for you. To those young entrepreneurs turning visionary ideas into reality, we have your backs like never before.

To all the small businesses currently struggling with costs, desperately trying to keep their doors open and good people employed: We're rolling up our sleeves to make

your lives easier through lower taxes and targeted supports. With this budget's powerful measures, we're giving them the tools, the infrastructure and the opportunity to chase their ambitions, to think bigger, bolder and to take those risks, because when Ontario's small businesses and entrepreneurs succeed, our entire province succeeds—new jobs, new growth, new investments and new prosperity emerge.

This budget plants a flag proudly affirming that Ontario is once again pro-entrepreneurship and pro-small business. So I urge all members to join us in empowering our province's brilliant entrepreneurs and small businesses visionaries by voting for this game-changing plan—support their ambitions; support their dreams; support their courage to build something special right here in Ontario.

Speaker, we know that in today's challenging economic environment, small businesses need far more than just grants and funding opportunities. They need substantive, meaningful action to lower their operating costs and ease their burden. That is precisely why this government has stepped up with a comprehensive suite of measures designed to increase competitiveness and provide over \$3.7 billion in urgent savings and support. This includes lowering the corporate income tax rate to 3.2%, a full percentage point reduction that will allow businesses to retain more of their hard-earned profits to reinvest in growth and expansion.

Meanwhile, by decreasing WSIB premium rates, raising the employer health tax exemption to \$1 million and reducing gas and fuel taxes, we are injecting significant payroll and transportation cost relief directly into the operations of Ontario's entrepreneurs. These measures, coupled with our government's efforts to reduce manufacturing costs through the Ontario-made investment tax credit, represent tangible steps to ease the pressure of inflation.

Ontario's small businesses have been crystal clear: Operating costs from all levels have become untenable and are hampering their ability to create jobs. I'm proud that our government has listened and responded with an affordability action plan tailor-made for the small business community. By implementing these long-overdue reforms and removing systemic cost drivers beyond their control, we are ensuring that Ontario remains the best place in Canada to start up, to manage operations and to propel growth.

But this budget goes far beyond just pocketbook commitments. It also lays out an ambitious, fully costed vision for sustainable, responsible economic expansion, powered by game-changing infrastructure investments.

As the MPP for Mississauga–Streetsville, I'm incredibly honoured to represent a world-class community that exemplifies the very best Ontario has to offer in terms of economic prosperity, opportunity, rich diversity and an unparalleled quality of life. That's why I'm thrilled to see this budget making significant regional investments to support Mississauga's future growth by expanding the Hazel McCallion LRT, delivering new GO rail service and

injecting \$49 million to help put criminals involved in auto theft behind bars where they belong. By preparing and enhancing local infrastructure to handle increased demand, we are solidifying Mississauga's reputation as an attractive, dynamic place for businesses and families to put down roots and call home for generations to come.

Of course, the cornerstone of this budget remains an ambitious, \$190-billion capital plan branded the building Ontario initiative, a plan to construct the highways, transit lines, hospitals, schools and housing infrastructure required for long-term prosperity. This includes accelerating critical highway projects long demanded by commuters, like the new 413 and the Bradford Bypass, to tackle gridlock and finally get trucks off residential streets.

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Furthermore, we're expanding existing highways like the 401 and Highway 7 that have become unacceptably congested due to decades of underinvestment and a severe lack of oversight by the Liberals. At the same time, this capital plan funds the design and construction of new highway interchanges, overpasses and improvements to give communities across Ontario safer, more efficient roadways that foster economic linkages.

Crucially, this budget supports the largest transit expansion anywhere in North America, improving GO train frequencies, connecting light rail systems and finally advancing four priority subway projects for the greater Toronto area, a region crying out for high-order transit solutions.

On another critical infrastructure file, we are rewarding those municipalities who achieve their housing targets through an innovative new \$1.2-billion Building Faster Fund. By incentivizing cities and towns to prioritize an adequate supply of homes, this program will help ensure we not only build more housing more quickly but create a sustainable pipeline of customers and end-users for Ontario's small businesses to sell their products and services to. And, at the same time, we are turbocharging growth in rural and remote regions through the new Municipal Housing Infrastructure Program, dedicating \$1 billion for core infrastructure projects in smaller communities and quadrupling the Housing-Enabling Water Systems Fund to \$825 million. These are real, meaningful investments to support and complete our communities and livable cities across our province's full economic ecosystem.

But, Speaker, the infrastructure commitments contained in this budget extend far beyond just the roads, rails and residential construction sites. Our government recognizes that prosperous local economies are built upon a foundation of world-class community amenities that enhance livability and attract top talent. That's why we're allocating \$200 million for a new Community Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Fund to strengthen all regions through investments in new and upgraded sport, recreation and public facilities. I know in Mississauga, that's something that we've been asking for.

It's also why we've included \$23 billion over 10 years for building, expanding and renewing schools and child

care spaces through capital grants and renewal projects. This investment in the next generation of workers and citizens fundamentally recognizes that equipping Ontario's kids with modern, technologically connected learning environments today will pay dividends in productivity and growth for many decades to come.

At the same time, we're doubling down on economic diversification and the industries of the future to secure shared prosperity into 2030 and beyond. We're cutting the corporate tax rate from 3.8% to 3.2% and broadening eligibility to increase access to this powerful incentive for far more businesses. And through enhanced funding for the Critical Minerals Innovation Fund and the Invest Ontario organization, we are attracting investments and jobs in the booming EV manufacturing, battery production, mining and life sciences sectors. With electric vehicles comprising 8% of all new auto sales in Ontario last year, it's clear that our province has carved out an early mover advantage across the entire EV supply chain.

Speaker, our generational \$50-billion investment into the hospital renewal and expansion program will create thousands of new health care jobs while providing the care infrastructure required for Ontario's aging population. This includes \$620 million to allow our health system partners to address urgent infrastructure repair backlogs and keep core facilities in a state of good repair.

On the long-term-care front: We remain squarely focused on delivering 58,000 new and upgraded beds across our province by 2028, including an additional \$155 million to fast-track projects for completion just this November. We made an ironclad commitment to Ontario seniors to finally end the long-standing capacity crisis after decades of systemic neglect. We will not waver until that promise has been fully realized.

Speaker, fiscal sustainability and prudent financial management represent another key pillar underpinning the strong foundations of this budget. While we are investing heavily in infrastructure, job creation and cost-of-living relief, we're doing so in a targeted, carefully balanced manner.

My friends and colleagues on this side of the House know all too well that budgets are about setting priorities. That's why our government is making the choice to look after the long-term best interests of the province and its residents. When it comes to critical areas like housing, transportation, education, health care and sustainable economic development, the cost of continued neglect, inaction and dithering would be catastrophic for the future of Ontario.

You know, Speaker, the opposition had their chance, for 15 long years, and they squandered it through reckless overspending, ideology over evidence and sheer incompetence when it came to getting projects built. Sometimes it's mind-boggling when the opposition bring up deficits and spending. The Liberals choked off investment through endless tax hikes and ran up the province's debt to record levels through relentless overspending. All the while, Ontario fell behind in critical infrastructure like transit and highways, as the Liberals repeatedly missed construction

deadlines and procurement targets. That's why the people of Ontario said yes to this PC government and our plan to unleash our economy.

Here is what the opposition will be voting against if they vote no to this budget: They'll be voting no if it means voting to preserve the unacceptable status quo of crumbling infrastructure, gridlock and an inability to build housing. They'll be voting no on a plan that means resigning Ontario to a future of deterioration and decline. They'll be voting no, then they're depriving generations and newcomers for generations to come.

This budget lays out bold economic vision that matches unprecedented infrastructure spending with critical policies to make Ontario more competitive for businesses and residents alike. It makes strategic investments in the industries of the future. It controls costs through reasonable fiscal management, while leveraging growth to narrow the deficit over time. Most importantly, this fiscal plan represents an unwavering commitment to finally get vital and long-overdue housing, transportation and economic development projects built across our entire province.

So I encourage all members to vote in favour of the strong foundation this budget establishes. The choice is clear: Support these game-changing infrastructure investments. Support policies that attract jobs and lower costs. Support a better future for all Ontarians. Support this visionary infrastructure investment that will build a better, more prosperous Ontario and Mississauga for generations to come.

By working together and passing this visionary plan, we will build a more prosperous Ontario for generations to come, so I urge all members of this House to vote yes.

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

Mr. Chris Glover: I want to thank the minister for small business for her comments today. It's always interesting to listen to you, especially about this budget.

One of the issues that small businesses in my community face is the homelessness crisis. It impacts our communities. In fact, what it feels like is the government is forcing small businesses and local communities to deal with a housing crisis that this government is not dealing with.

This government, in the last six years, has only built 1,187 affordable homes. It has done nothing to build the supportive housing that we need to deal with the housing crisis. We've got homeless encampments in every city across this province that have exploded under this government. So what is in this budget so that you will bring an end—and when will this government bring an end to homelessness in Ontario?

1610

Hon. Nina Tangri: I do want to thank the member opposite for his question, because it is critical.

In my previous role as the Associate Minister of Housing, I travelled this province, and I saw first-hand the devastation. Nobody—nobody—wants to see anyone that is homeless. That's why our government invested an additional \$200 million in our Homelessness Prevention

Program to give to our service managers, who then supported our service providers so that they can get more housing built, get more people off the street. It's a process where we have our shelters, transitional housing and leading up to having permanent homes for everyone. That's why we supported massive record investments to help try to get people off the streets and into a home.

But there are many other components to that. Sometimes there is mental health and addictions involved, where we need to help them get wraparound supports. We need more supportive housing. In my community, in Mississauga–Streetsville, we have put together a plan where we're going to make sure we have supportive housing built. It's almost complete. But we're also going to provide the wraparound supports for all those people who really need it.

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

Mr. Deepak Anand: Madam Speaker, you know, uncertainty continues to grow around the world. We know Ontario is not the only place where the consequences of global economic challenges are being felt. We also know that people all over the province are feeling under pressure from the disruptions to supply chains, inflation and high Bank of Canada interest rates, and looking towards their government for the leadership and the support which the government has been always providing them.

Through you, Madam Speaker, can the minister of small business tell Ontarians what steps this government is taking to provide much-needed relief to Ontarians through this budget?

Hon. Nina Tangri: Thank you to the member from Mississauga–Malton. From day one, we've been listening to the people of this province. For six years, we've been seeing how inflationary pressures, supply chain issues and high interest rates have really been devastating to so many people in this province. That's why our government stepped up with record investments.

We know that without building critical infrastructure, without having the roads to get our goods to market, without having transit to get people out of their cars to be able to commute to work, without the One Fare program from the Associate Minister of Transportation, who has worked tremendously hard to help Ontarians, to try to make life more affordable for the people of this province—we're stepping up. We're taking measures within this budget and beyond. We're making sure that we can make life more affordable for all people across this province.

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

Ms. Jessica Bell: My question to the member from Mississauga–Streetsville: This week we've learned that the federal government is looking at taking away \$357 million in federal money for affordable housing because this government has built just 1,187 affordable homes in the last six years, at a time when we have over 200,000 people waiting for a subsidized home. It's like a drop in the bucket.

The federal government has said pretty clearly to you, this government, that this government needs to submit a far better, more credible, realistic affordable housing plan for them to get the funding. You have 24 hours. Are you going to submit a better affordable housing action plan or not?

Hon. Nina Tangri: I want to thank the member opposite for the question.

Speaker, as we heard earlier today in question period, a housing affordability plan was put together. It was accepted by the federal government. A plan was ready, implemented, and all of a sudden, as we're reaching the deadline, the federal government decides to change the parameters around that, which is, quite frankly, despicable, that we potentially could be losing that funding, which is desperately needed by the people of Ontario.

They should be supporting us in calling on the federal government to try and help us make life affordable for the people of our province. Not only do they not step up and talk to their federal colleagues about not having this 23% increase in the carbon tax, which affects everything that we look at each and every day—but calling on them to scrap the tax altogether. Help the people of this province make life more affordable. Help us get food on our table. Don't make people choose between heating and eating.

We desperately need to make life more affordable for all of the people, and they should step up and help us make the call to the federal government to do that.

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

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: The minister has done excellent work with connecting small businesses to the opportunities. I just wonder if the minister can speak to the importance of having a strong economy and how a strong economy impacts small businesses, especially the thousands and thousands of women in Ontario who have small businesses, to take care of their families, and that, when you have a strong economy, you're helping these same women move their side hustles into their full-time gigs, helping them create more opportunities for leadership, for other women who they're mentoring.

Can you please speak to the things that we're doing in Ontario to help make it better for women in Ontario and their ability to grow their businesses?

Hon. Nina Tangri: I want to thank the minister for the question because she's absolutely right. We've done many events together and met with many women who have amazing ideas; they just want to bring them to market. They just need a little bit of help. So this government is investing in our Small Business Enterprise Centres, which help provide mentoring, grants, guidance to help them open and start their business. Throughout this province, I've been working with most of those—we call them SBECs—on how they're helping especially women.

When I was visiting Niagara, they have a phenomenal program out there which had women-led programs where they were all coming together and supporting each other and putting a place to put their projects and sell them. They rotate every few months so that a new group of women can

come in and showcase their products. It's been unbelievably successful and something that we're trying to have across the whole province.

When women succeed, all of Ontario succeeds. I want to thank the minister for the great work that she's been doing to really promote women in entrepreneurship.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Quick question?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I appreciated listening to the Associate Minister of Small Business's remarks. When I ran my small business, I'd sharpen the pencil and really dig in the numbers, and so I'm wondering—this government is spending \$7.3 billion to subsidize electricity prices; according to the Financial Accountability Officer, that disproportionately benefits wealthy households—at a time when you have 16,000 people on any given night not having a place to sleep, you have 2.3 million people waiting for a doctor, how the government can justify subsidizing electricity prices for people with six- and seven-figure incomes?

Hon. Nina Tangri: I want to thank the member from Guelph for the question. We know that in the 15 years prior to the PC government getting elected, that we were driving away manufacturing jobs, we were driving away businesses. We had no economic growth because that was the legacy of the Liberals of the day. Without economic growth, with the programs that they put into place that made our electricity prices skyrocket, we were not competitive anymore. When we came into government, we brought electricity costs down, we brought down business taxes, we're building infrastructure, and, right now, we are not only the economic engine of Ontario, we're the economic engine of Canada and North America. I think that's something to be very proud of.

When we look at the investments that we're making and helping make life affordable for all Ontarians, it's by keeping electricity rates low so that we can make sure that no one has to worry about whether they can feed their families, and keep the costs as low as possible.

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

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It's always an honour for me to rise in this great House to add the voices and the perspectives of the wonderful people of London North Centre.

Today I rise with a heavy heart, and I beg your indulgence, Speaker, to take a brief moment to recognize the life and service of Tom Hennessy, who passed away at 101 years old. Tom, also known as Patsy Fagan, or Mr. T to his grandkids, was born in Dublin, Ireland. He served as a flight lieutenant in the RAF and was a World War II Spitfire pilot, and made Ontario his home in 1947. He was a principal for the Ministry of Education's summer courses in physical education. Tom was a mentor, and he was the kind of guy who believed in the importance of every child. In his obituary, it states, "For Tom, there was no most valuable player, every player in the game was valuable."

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At the age of 100, still cutting a dashing figure in his decades-old service uniform, Tom walked 100 miles to raise money and awareness for younger, less fortunate veterans. Tom's Walk of Gratitude raised well over \$55,000 and captured the heart and minds of all Londoners.

During his walk, I remember asking him what his secret was to good health and long life. He told me, with a glimmer in his eye, "Eat prunes every day," and followed that with a hearty chuckle.

Tom is survived by his wife of 45 years, Joyce Hetherington; children Maureen, Stephen, Kathleen; grandchildren Kaleigh, Colin, Katie and Christie; and great-grandchildren Tommy, Nathan, Henry, Spencer, Hannah and Lucy.

Tom was passionate about protecting democracies from fascism. He supported evidence-based journals, and his obituary even called for donations to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

Tom, may the Irish hills caress you. May her lakes and rivers bless you. May the luck of the Irish enfold you. May the blessings of Saint Patrick behold you.

To Joyce and family: Death leaves a heartache no one can heal. Love leaves a memory no one can steal.

Rest in peace, Tom.

As I begin my remarks about this budget motion and the budget that this government has put forward, I'm thinking that never before has a government done so little with so much. This budget really makes the Liberal Party blush, for heaven's sakes. It is quite an accomplishment.

I had the opportunity to travel the province with the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, and we heard from people struggling in all corners of this province. Ontario is the richest province in Canada, yet we spend the least amount of money on the services that people require. We are also dead last in so many different metrics, and this was brought to the committee's attention again and again and again, whether it's the number of nurses, the number of health care practitioners, the number of beds in hospitals.

This government would claim that it is focused on housing. By the government's own numbers, they have only achieved 8% of their promise for building housing up to 2025. Speaker, 1,100 affordable units since this government took power in 2018 have been created—1,100 units for a province as vast as Ontario.

Housing is foundational. Housing is fundamental. Without it, not much else matters. The CMHC predicts that by 2030, Ontario will still be 1.48 million homes short of its required supply. If that weren't bad enough, this government has ignored the many and repeated calls for the re-establishment of rent control for buildings first occupied after November 2018, as well as plugging the vacancy decontrol loophole that the Liberals plowed into renters' rights. They've simply ignored it. It's shocking to think that during an affordability crisis, this government would remove protections and make people pay yet more for that vital thing called housing.

Speaker, we heard from a number of different organizations, such as Community Living Ontario and Community Living London. They had engaged in a really powerful campaign called #5ToSurvive, where they were calling for, as well as many different organizations, a 5% base budget increase. You see, in the developmental services sector, they have had no significant base budget increases for over 30 years.

Michelle Campbell, the executive director of Community Living London, mentioned how she has taken on multiple ED-ships in order to make sure that this system stays afloat. They support over 1,000 people with their services, and they employ 500 people within the area.

There are 20,000 people on the wait-list in London for respite care. There is a 25-year wait for appropriate housing for these people. It's unconscionable that there are seniors who are in their golden years still looking after their children with developmental disabilities because the province has let them down. This is the history of Ontario, that the Liberal government has ignored the need to create housing, and now this Conservative government, in their second term, is ignoring it yet again. The numbers speak for themselves.

I also think about all of the talented people within the developmental services sector who are crying out for an increase in wages, and who do wonderful work, who do excellent work, and yet are treated incredibly poorly by this government.

We also heard from the Alzheimer Society. Despite stated promises by this government back in 2019 to continue to fund their First Link care navigation program, the money has never materialized. You would think that this government that prides itself on—that makes claims of accountability and transparency would actually follow through with the funding that they promised. It's rather disturbing that an organization that does such wonderful work as the Alzheimer Society would have to come to the government and ask them just to do what they said they were going to do.

Within the ALS Society—they had powerful presentations in multiple places in the province—they say that ALS is a disease that is not measured in years or months, it's not measured in weeks, it's measured in hours and days. I think of my constituent Matt Brown and his wife Cathy, as well as their sons Jayson and Colin. The Brown family had to make multiple changes to their home to make sure that Matt can have the time with his family as he battles this horrible disease. They have had to make those modifications out of pocket.

The ALS Society was asking for \$6.6 million, and they haven't heard anything from this government. It wasn't mentioned in the budget. They have put out press releases saying they have not heard anything from the government either. How can we, as a province, turn our back on people in their final stages of life?

We also heard from community care support organizations. There are hospices in Ontario that have to fundraise for 50% of the beds that are in there. And while I am aware there is some money mentioned in this budget for hospice

care, it certainly doesn't address the entire need within that.

Arts and culture is yet another sector that has suffered. They were the first to close during the pandemic and they were the last to open. Many of these dedicated arts workers are the lowest paid. They're working multiple gig-work jobs, and they have asked this province for funding—what is it, \$2.5 million? This would not be much for this province to invest in the arts. The arts are what lift us up. They show us different ways of thinking, different ways of being. They show us someone else's perspective. They allow us to step outside of ourselves and perceive the world in a new way. And, yet, in a time of fiscal uncertainty, they are the first thing that governments cut and they're the thing that people, I would say, need the most.

In education, we heard across the province about students who are struggling in classrooms because of dysregulation, because of violence, because of mental health needs. This government has talked about how they are providing mental health resources, but no one who appeared at committee was able to access those resources—certainly not within schools, and certainly not within the community.

The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario Thames Valley Teacher Local has indicated that school violence and dysregulation is at an all-time high, with an average of 600 incidents per month. It is absolutely off of the charts. We think first about the child who might be subject to this violence, or the adult or the educator, but we also think about everyone else within that environment who is impacted by that. Number one, there is a child who is not receiving the supports that they deserve and that they need, and that this province is legally and morally obliged to provide, but that is a situation that impacts everyone within the school. And, yet, this government turns a blind eye.

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In education, as well, we heard from many diverse stakeholders about this government not doing its part, not upholding its responsibility to fund education properly. When we look at the mandatory increases to EI as well as CPP, this government has left school boards adrift. They've left them on their own. In London alone, the Thames Valley District School Board has an \$18-million deficit. They have an \$18-million hole in their budget, and do you know what \$12.2 million of that is? That's the statutory benefit increase of \$12.2 million that this government refuses to give them. TVDSB is legally required to provide this, and this government refuses to do what they are legally obliged to do. That's shocking. The Council of Ontario Directors of Education mentioned this. The Ontario Public School Boards' Association mentioned this. Many different stakeholders mentioned how this province is ignoring their legal responsibilities to provide that statutory benefit increase for EI and CPP.

The Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex brought a harrowing story about young people who have been put into care because their parents can't access mental health supports within the community. It's not that

that child was being released into care because that was an appropriate placement for them, it was simply because there weren't the mental health resources within the community. I hope that gives the government pause, to think of the heart-wrenching, morally difficult decision for any parent to have to hand over their child because the community and the province isn't supporting them.

When we look at post-secondary education, we as a province—as I've said, Speaker—are the richest province in Canada, yet we are dead last when it comes to post-secondary education funding. There were stakeholders who came to committee, and they weren't asking to be first. They weren't asking for something unreasonable. They were simply asking that Ontario stop scraping the bottom of the barrel in the country and just be brought up to average. What kind of province do we live in, Speaker? What kind of care and attention are we giving towards our young people, towards our future economy, towards all of the innovation and all of the lives that are going to be improved by access to post-secondary education when this government cuts the budget on the backs of young people? To be begging to be brought to average—this is your legacy. This budget does not answer that.

This government would twist itself in knots and pat itself on the back for cutting tuition. I'm not saying savings for students is a bad thing, but they did that at the expense of institutions. They did not make up that cost, that 10%, to institutions whatsoever. They expected them to find a way. And what did they do? That led to a dramatic over-reliance on international students as a revenue stream. What a dehumanizing thing that these young people, who are also entitled to pursue their dreams, are being treated like a revenue stream. It's often been said that post-secondary institutions are so reliant on international students, it's almost like they're addicted to a drug. If that were to be taken away, what would happen? And here we are, Speaker. It's absolutely unconscionable.

OCUFA has brought forward many solid recommendations that this government could do. And actually, I want to recommend Tom Hennessy's favourite journal, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Ontario. I want to read their quote into the record. They said that cuts to post-secondary education have put the financial stability of Ontario universities at serious risk, and students are paying the price. It found that the province would have to double current funding to Ontario universities to reach the average funding level of other provinces. They would be increasing funding from just under \$8,300 per student to more than \$16,000 per student. That is money well spent. Investing in young people, in changing their lives, is the kind of thing that this province should and must do.

Once upon a time, high school education was something that had to be paid for, and the province realized at the time that that was the basic entry level for employment. And so the province took it upon themselves to fund secondary education. Now, we know that post-secondary education is the bare minimum entry level for adequate employment within our society and, yet, we have governments that seem to be really concerned with how elites

behave. They seem to think that, “Well, those children will just be able to ask their parents for money.” What was it Prime Minister Trudeau said during the CERB pandemic? That if students were struggling, they could just go ask their parents for some more money. Would that life were that easy for everyone. Unfortunately, not everyone is born with a silver spoon in their mouth.

Now, when we take a look at some of the recommendations from the Ontario Medical Association—we brought forward a powerful solution to make sure that physicians are spending more time doing what they love, which is caring for their patients by reducing that administrative backlog. This government has made promises. We’ve heard this for a number of years from the OMA and physicians at committee, and yet this government chooses to continue to have them do administrative labour up to 19.1 hours per week instead of actually providing the care that is necessary. And 2.3 million Ontarians lack a primary care physician right now. That number will balloon to 4.4 million Ontarians without a family doctor by 2026.

This government, as well, has shown some very imprudent fiscal decisions when it comes to the health care system. We on the side of the official opposition understand, as we brought forward the Canadian health care system, that public funding and public delivery are the best bang for your buck when it comes to health care provision. And, yet, this government has seen fit to invest millions and millions and millions of dollars in recreating the infrastructure we already have—the world-class infrastructure operating rooms that we have within our publicly funded and publicly delivered hospitals—so that a few people can make a buck off of people’s ill health. How un-Canadian is that, Speaker?

The member from London West and the member from London–Fanshawe and I had the opportunity to tour with the official opposition leader the Nazem Kadri Surgical Centre, where they had a pared-down operating room, where they didn’t have the entire suite of tools. It was pared down; they had fewer people. But they showed that, within that model, which they are groundbreaking with, that cost 50 cents to the dollar. And when we asked the government that question—I should point out, as well, upon our tour, we learned that the Premier, as well as the Deputy Premier, the Minister of Health, toured that site. They had never admitted it publicly until we questioned them, and, yet, even though we’ve shown that, here is a publicly delivered and publicly funded model which saves money, they still seem ideologically arrested by allowing people to squeeze folks for money to make a profit off of their health care dollars. What a foolish investment that is.

The CMHA called for a 7% base funding increase, 2% of which would be used for supportive community housing. What a wise investment. And yet this government ignored that.

We’ve been calling for doubling of ODSP and the merciless rates that keep people below the poverty line and will for time immemorial.

We also heard a beautiful plan from grade 10 students from Red Lake who have been asking for \$5 million to \$10

million for their community centre. We heard government members grill them about numbers and tell them to do their homework. We heard others say, “What if you accepted just half of this plan?” That’s what you’re getting from this government, Speaker. You’re getting half attention, you’re getting half of what Ontario deserves.

To the government: Try to be basic. Try to be average. Do better by the people of Ontario and just stop scraping the bottom of the barrel.

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

Mr. Deepak Anand: When we talk about housing, in order to build the housing, we need infrastructure. This government is increasing its investment in the Housing-Enabling Water Systems Fund from \$200 million to four times that: \$825 million over three years to help municipalities repair, rehabilitate and expand drinking water, waste water and stormwater infrastructure needed to build homes. As our colleagues in the NDP well know, this is a critical part of the construction process. It’s needed to get more homes built.

Other than a typical answer which I’ll hear from you—“It’s not doing enough; it’s not enough investment”—my question to the member opposite is: Do you think it is an important investment being made, and would you support this investment?

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Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I’d like to thank the member from Mississauga–Malton for the question. We had the opportunity to tour on the finance committee together. I’m sure that the member will remember that the Association of Municipalities of Ontario talked about this government’s own cuts with Bill 23, which really awarded lots and lots of money to wealthy developers. I believe the number is around \$5 billion.

This is the kind of shell game that this government is doing, with an illusionist’s sleight of hand, in which they’re giving money away to one person and then they’re pretending to give some back to municipalities. Taxes in London have gone up 8.6% as a result of this government and their cuts and their downloading to municipalities, removing development charges. So really, I’m surprised that the government is trying to pretend this is an investment, when it is really just something that is to make up for a cut.

I’m worried about the people in London, especially seniors who are precariously housed, who will see their taxes go up nearly 30% over four years because of this government’s cuts. They need to do more to make sure that there is rent control, that there is vacancy decontrol and that seniors will stay housed because I think of the ones who are afraid of living in their car in their golden years.

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

MPP Jill Andrew: Thank you to my colleague. In St. Paul’s and across the province of Ontario, we know that we are experiencing an affordability crisis. In our community, it is not uncommon to find food banks that are running on empty, stocks empty. Folks are circling around

the churches, around the community spaces, for food. These folks are not only in some cases experiencing homelessness, these folks are also middle-class. These are folks who are sometimes the employment counsellors at work counselling clients, and the client and the employment counsellor are in the food bank line.

So I guess what I'd like to ask my colleague is: Can you share with me how this budget addresses the affordability crisis? How does it address the unfair workers' wages that we see across so many public sectors? How is it addressing the housing crisis? Because you can't afford food, you can't afford to pay for rent—what are Ontarians supposed to do? What are we supposed to do in our communities?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to thank my colleague from Toronto—St. Paul's for an excellent question, because these are foundational, fundamental issues that this government has chosen to ignore. We heard them time and again at committee, about how people were struggling. In my community of London, one in four children are going hungry. People who have never considered a food bank are visiting a food bank for the first time again and again, and you're absolutely right.

When it comes to wage parity, this government could answer it. It's something that we've been calling for for years. A nurse is a nurse is a nurse. A PSW is a PSW is a PSW. But you're absolutely right: Community mental health workers and those in the mental health and addictions sector are visiting food banks, often seeing the clients that they serve. They're in those roles because they care for their community, but their good hearts should not be holding up the system. It is within this government's power to make sure that people are paid appropriately, according to their value and according to the value that they provide to our community. Wage parity across sectors: You can do it, government.

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

Mr. Ric Bresee: To the member across: I appreciated your presentation. I think we all recognize that the process of building a budget is one of finding the right choices and where to put money and where to not put money. That is a long and very complex process over a very large budget.

But one thing that I think all members of this House would be united in is the desire to help our seniors, especially those who are struggling and those who have low incomes. We know that there are people across all of our communities who deserve our support as they're getting older in many ways—a crucial part of our community—and we need to be there to provide the support that they need.

My question to the member is actually quite simple: Do you support this government's expansion of the Ontario Guaranteed Annual Income System, the GAINS program, to make sure that it provides more support to seniors across the province?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to thank the member from Hastings—Lennox and Addington for the question because, in my remarks, I addressed the precarious housing that many seniors are facing right now. This government

has incentivized the private market to such a degree that seniors are now at risk of becoming homeless. When a purpose-built rental building can be sold to another company, there is an incentive, created by the Liberals, upheld by the Conservatives—just like that—which is vacancy decontrol. It allows a landlord that unwritten incentive of kicking long-term tenants out so they can jack up the rent to whatever the market can withstand. Seniors who have lived in buildings for decades, who have paid for the building that they are in, are now at risk of being ignored, of being mistreated and of being renovicted, demovicted, you name it.

We need to look after that. We need to make sure that they are able to look after their housing, that they're able to stay in the place where their heart is, where they're happiest, where they're healthiest and where they deserve to be.

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

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: It is always a pleasure to rise and speak in this House, specifically on behalf of the good people of Toronto Centre. I want to ask the member from London North Centre, specifically around the issue of business supports—we certainly know that it's important to support our small businesses. They are the livelihood and the major economic producers of GDP as well as of jobs in every single community, and many of them are not out of the pandemic with respect to having made up lost revenues. Many of them are significantly in debt and we're seeing, in the forecast, a blooming and growing number of businesses going under and declaring bankruptcy.

Is there anything in this budget that specifically provides targeted support for small businesses trying to recover from the pandemic or anything in the budget that will boost wages to create good jobs as we transition to a greener economy?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: You know, that's an excellent question from my colleague for Toronto Centre. It is no surprise, because as a former small business owner themselves—I really appreciate the way in which you advocate for small businesses when we see so many governments that really look after these large corporate entities, such as Staples and Walmart, providing them millions of dollars in tax money—money from all of us—so they can end up taking some of our services.

We saw a government that had a very itchy pen, writing letters to Prime Minister Trudeau again and again and again, and yet we've never seen this Premier write a letter on behalf of the backbone of Ontario's economy, our small businesses, who comprise 80% of our economic activity.

Within this budget, we really don't see any targeted business supports to help with ongoing recovery—something the official opposition advocated for and something that was supported by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. This government really is looking after the Galen Westons of the world. They're allowing MedsCheck for them to take yet more money, through Shoppers Drug Mart, out of our public system. We see them really looking after these

large corporate interests rather than looking after the real job creators, the real lifeblood of our economy, the real people who provide those jobs and make our communities wonderful, thriving places: the small businesses.

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

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: It's an honour to rise this afternoon to speak in support of government motion 22, moved by the Minister of Finance. Speaker, as the former parliamentary assistant to the President of the Treasury Board, I just want to thank the President of the Treasury Board for working with her for the last few years. It was an honour for me to be there, as I move to the Ministry of Energy now.

I had the opportunity to work together with the minister and with our colleagues to help ensure that the 2024 budget is a fiscally responsible plan for a stronger Ontario. I want to thank the minister and his staff, and also the President of the Treasury Board and the team at TBS, for all their hard work on this.

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The minister and our team held pre-budget consultations in January at the Churchill Meadows Community Centre to listen to the people of Mississauga, including many from Mississauga–Lakeshore. This afternoon I'd like to speak about how the 2024 budget reflects their priorities and also provide some context about what our investments in the 2024 budget will mean for my constituents in Mississauga–Lakeshore.

Speaker, when I've been out knocking on doors recently, the top issue I've heard about is the cost of living. The Bank of Canada's interest rate hikes, the high inflation and the federal carbon tax have all made life more difficult and less affordable for Ontario families and small businesses. With April 1 just around the corner, the federal tax increases will add to the burden on families and small businesses.

I want to take a moment to thank all members for their support of my motion 81 calling on the federal government to stop the alcohol tax increase on April 1. As all members know, many of our local breweries and restaurants are still struggling to recover from the pandemic, and this is not the time for another tax increase.

I want to thank my colleague from Leeds–Grenville–Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes for his motion 82 calling on the federal government to stop the 23% increase to the federal carbon tax, which just passed earlier today. As the independent Parliamentary Budget Officer reported last year, this will cost the average Ontario family almost \$1,700. This will increase the price of gas, groceries and almost everything at a time many families can't afford it. And the federal Liberals are planning carbon tax increases every year until 2030.

As I said this week, I got my first job, when I was 18, at the Pioneer gas station in Port Credit. At the time, the price of gas was 33 cents per litre. By 2030, the federal carbon tax would add 37 cents per litre—more than the price of gas when I worked there.

Speaker, the Premier and the Minister of Finance have taken a very different approach. We have made it our top

priority to help keep costs down for families and businesses across Ontario. That is why we're extending the provincial gas and fuel tax cut until the end of this year. This means savings for the people of Ontario every time you go to the pump—about \$320 for the average family. That's a total of about \$3 billion, one of the largest tax cuts in history of this province and the largest in over 20 years.

But as I heard yesterday, the queen of the carbon tax, Bonnie Crombie, would cancel this policy and raise the gas tax. She won't call on the federal Liberals to cancel their carbon tax increase on April 1, but she would cancel the relief that we are providing here to help keep costs down for families and small businesses.

That's why, when the queen of the carbon tax, Bonnie Crombie, says she won't bring in a provincial carbon tax, it's hard to take her seriously. We've heard it all before. In 2014, former Premier Kathleen Wynne promised not to bring in a provincial carbon tax. In 2015, just one year later, she brought in cap-and-trade.

Earlier this month, Crombie said cap-and-trade was a great program, so I want to remind the members what the Auditor General wrote about it at the time. She wrote that cap-and-trade would have cost Ontario families and businesses over \$2 billion every year, with hundreds of millions of dollars sent to California and Quebec. In a news release on November 30, 2016, the Auditor General wrote that the former Liberal government did not study whether this would actually contribute to reducing emissions in Quebec or in California. In other words, she wrote, "These funds may be leaving the Ontario economy for no purpose other than to help the government claim it has met a target."

The Liberals also claimed cap-and-trade would cost only \$5 on your natural gas bill each month, but two of my constituents, Bill and Muriel Chudiak, found their actual costs were at least triple that. This was hard for seniors living on fixed incomes. As Kathleen Wynne admitted, some of them were forced to choose between paying their electric bill or buying food or paying rent because of her mistakes on energy policy.

In December 2015, the Auditor General reported that because of those mistakes, Ontario consumers were paying for electricity that was overpriced by \$170 billion. For a typical family, that's a power bill about \$1,200 higher than it should have been every year.

Again, Bonnie Crombie said this was a great program. As the Minister of Energy said, Ontarians didn't agree. In 2018, we promised to cap taxes and trade Kathleen Wynne, and that's what happened in this province. But when TVO asked the queen of the carbon tax, Bonnie Crombie, what she would do differently than Kathleen Wynne, she didn't mention the carbon tax. She said Wynne's government spent too much on health care. So I'll turn to this next.

Before the government was elected in 2018, 15 years of Liberal mismanagement left us with infrastructure deficits, overcrowded hospitals and outdated facilities that were not up to the challenges we faced in the COVID-19 pandemic. As the former Liberal Deputy Premier and

Minister of Health George Smitherman, said, “Ontario Liberals starved health care for five years and that is not spoken enough.” In 2017-18, in the last full year of the Liberal government, Ontario’s health care budget was \$59 billion. Our 2024-25 health budget is \$85 billion, including an increase of \$10 billion since 2022-23. That’s an increase of over 13% over the last two years alone.

In his budget speech, the Minister of Finance took us on another tour around the province and ran out of pins marking his map for some of the greatest projects that we are investing in. This afternoon, I’d like to take us on another trip, around Mississauga–Lakeshore.

We’ll start at the Mississauga Hospital. This hospital opened in 1958. I was born at that hospital. My two sons were born at that hospital. My mother worked at that hospital. My sister worked at that hospital. My niece was a volunteer there. But the truth is, Mississauga needed a new hospital 15 years ago, and the former Liberal government never approved the funding.

Our 2024 budget includes a historic multi-billion dollar investment to support the complete reconstruction of this hospital. When it is completed, this will be the largest and most advanced hospital in the history of this country. It will be almost triple the size of the current hospital, with 22 storeys, three million square feet and almost a thousand beds. Work has already gotten under way on the new eight-storey, 1,500-vehicle parking structure, and later this spring, the old administration building and Camilla Care will be demolished to make space for the new hospital, with construction expected to begin next year, in 2025.

Just over the Etobicoke Creek, the urgent care centre has reopened at the Queensway Health Centre, where we’re building a new nine-storey, 600,000-square-foot tower, with over 350 new hospital beds, in a modern centre for complex care.

In total, the 2024 budget includes \$50 billion for hospital infrastructure. That is an increase from \$40 billion in 2022-23 and \$30 billion in 2021-22. That is an increase of 67% in the last four years.

When I was elected five years ago, there were over 4,500 people on the wait-list for long-term care in Mississauga alone. We had 20% fewer long-term-care beds than the provincial average, with many of them badly out of date, because, from 2011 to 2018, the former Liberal government added only 611 long-term-care beds for the entire province. In November, 632 new residents moved into the new Wellbrook Place, which is now the largest long-term-care home in Ontario, larger than the Credit Valley Hospital when it first opened 38 years ago. It will be part of a new campus of care for seniors, with a new health services building and the first residential hospice in the city of Mississauga.

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This is part of a historic investment of \$6.4 billion in the largest long-term-care building program in Canadian history, to add 31,000 new beds and upgrade 28,000 beds. And this includes 1,144 new and upgraded beds in Mississauga–Lakeshore alone—more than any other riding in this province.

Again, I want to thank the Minister of Long-Term Care and his team and Tess Romain and her team at Partners Community Health for all their work on these projects.

Our other local long-term-care homes will receive \$14 million this year to ensure they can provide four hours of direct resident care per day.

The 2024 budget also includes \$68 billion for transit infrastructure, including several projects in Mississauga–Lakeshore, from the new 20-kilometre Hazel McCallion LRT line on Hurontario, which now includes the downtown loop, and an expansion into Brampton to the Lakeshore BRT line, and expanding GO train service along the Lakeshore and Milton lines. Speaker, we are building a modern, reliable inter-regional transit network across the GTA.

The 2024 budget also includes \$27 billion to support highway expansion, maintenance and repair projects right across the province to improve our highway network. In Mississauga–Lakeshore, this includes the QEW improvement projects at the Credit River and Dixie Road. The first phase of the QEW/Dixie improvements is now complete, and the \$314-million QEW/Credit River project is well under way, with traffic now open on the new twin bridge over the Credit River. It also includes Highway 413, which will connect Peel, Halton and York regions to support the movement of people and goods across the entire region.

Speaker, Ontario grew by over half a million people last year. We’re on track for at least another half a million people this year. That’s more growth than any US state, including the fastest-growing states, like Florida and Texas. We don’t have the highway capacity that we need to support this growth. All the major highways in the western GTA, including the 407, will be overcapacity within the next 10 years. Highway 413 will finally bring relief to an area that clearly needs it, saving drivers up to 30 minutes on their commute each way. Speaker, that’s five hours per week, 260 hours each year and a total of 11 days every year.

The 2024 budget includes the most ambitious capital plan in Ontario’s history, including investments of \$190 billion in infrastructure over the next 10 years, including \$29.2 billion this year alone and almost \$32 billion next year in 2025-26. This is a real investment and a real commitment to the growth and the prosperity of this province in the future. We’re getting shovels in the ground to rebuild our hospitals, modernize our long-term care and to build new transit and other critical infrastructure and lay the foundations for a stronger Ontario.

Speaker, I also want to take a moment to thank the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Infrastructure and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for the new billion-dollar Municipal Housing Infrastructure Program and the \$825 million for the Housing-Enabling Water Systems Fund.

I joined the Minister of Finance last fall in Lakeview for the original announcement at the Arthur Kennedy water treatment plant. This fund will support new housing, including the homes in Brightwater and the new Lakeview Village, which will add about 20,000 new homes on our

waterfront. And, again, I want to thank the ministers for all their great work on this file.

Speaker, again, my constituents are excited about these investments in health and long-term care, transportation and municipal infrastructure. But it's also worth taking a moment to ask, how have we been able to do this? We've been able to do this because this Premier and this Minister of Finance have made Ontario open for business again.

When we were elected in 2018, after 15 years of Liberal mismanagement, companies were leaving Ontario. Sergio Marchionne at Fiat Chrysler told us that Ontario was the most expensive place to do business in North America. Ontario had lost over 300,000 manufacturing jobs, including many in the auto sector.

Since 2018, we've cut taxes and energy costs, we're reducing the burden of red tape and we're building a world-class skilled workforce. These policies have produced an economic recovery that leads North America, and it's given us the revenue we need. Since 2018, Ontario has added over 715,000 new jobs. In fact, in 2023, Ontario created more manufacturing jobs than all 50 US states combined. In the last three years alone, we have been able to attract over \$28 billion of investment from global automotive manufacturers.

As the Premier said last month at an event at a Pioneer gas station in Port Credit, provincial revenue in 2017-18, in the last full year of the former Liberal government, was \$150 billion. Next year, in 2024-25, provincial revenue is projected to be almost \$206 billion, a \$56-billion, or 37%, increase over just seven years. And we've done this without raising taxes on the people and the families here in Ontario. Under this Premier and this Minister of Finance and the budgetary policies of this government, we're putting money back into people's pockets while also building the infrastructure we need to support our growing communities.

Again, Madam Speaker, I just want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak here today.

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

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: My question is about postal code discrimination in auto insurance.

First off, I appreciated the speech by the member opposite. I always enjoy speaking with him here at Queen's Park. He's a good man.

For more than 10 years, this issue has existed. It's been talked about exhaustively. There are people in Peel, York region, northwest Toronto, Scarborough and many other places that are paying so much for where they live, even though they have clean driving records. And each budget, it's mentioned as a priority for the government, and all we ever get is, essentially, further assurances that they're going to look into it. Now we're hearing that in another two years, they'll come back, possibly, with recommendations. My question to the member is, what's taking so long?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank the member for that question on auto insurance. I'm the first to complain about auto insurance. I have two young boys, and you

know how expensive it is for auto insurance. It was expensive when I was growing up as well.

We're reforming the auto insurance system. As well, we're going to give the opportunity to opt out of certain parts of insurance if you're willing to, if you have other coverage in other areas. So that is what we're doing to reduce the costs of insurance.

But there's much more work to be done on that, and it's a hard process. If you remember, the Liberals had their stretch goal that they never achieved on auto insurance. I notice the member over there laughing because he remembers that very clearly. So it's hard—insurance has always been difficult, and we're going to work on it to reduce costs as much as we can for the people here in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Next question?

Mr. David Smith: I want to thank the great member for Mississauga-Lakeshore for his hard work in his community and the work he presents here all the while.

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My question to that very member is: We know that the previous Liberal government failed to build—well, almost anything—and left Ontario with crumbling infrastructure everywhere. Our government was clear that we wanted to do things differently and build where other governments left neglected. We have been delivering on that over the last five years, but at this critical moment and with the release of budget 2024, what is our government doing to build more in Ontario?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank that member for that question. It is true: The previous Liberal government neglected everything in this province.

I'll even just take on one issue alone. Look at long-term care: 611 beds from 2011 to 2018 in the province of Ontario. I want to thank the Minister of Long-Term Care here for opening our new long-term care in Mississauga-Lakeshore with 632 beds. Thank you, Minister, for doing that. As I mentioned in my speech, 1,144 beds just in Mississauga-Lakeshore alone—that's almost double what the Liberals built from 2011 to 2018.

I could talk about hospitals. I could talk about transit. I could continue talking, but I know I don't have much time to talk about everything right now. But I want to thank you very much for that question.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Next question?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: To my colleague: Thank you for your presentation today. The question that occurs to me is the whole matter of long-term care and the fact that apparently long-term-care operators who had dismal records during COVID continue to get substantial investments from your government. Can you tell us why you're funding bad actors and what you're doing to protect the people who are in those homes?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank the member for the question on long-term care. It's like I mentioned before: Under the Liberals—and you propped them up during that time—they only built 611 beds through the

whole province of Ontario. Calculate 124 ridings and 611 beds. What is that? Four beds per riding. That is disgusting, to be here as the Liberals—and say that they only built four beds per riding during their time.

We're going to build 30,000 new beds and rebuild 28,000 existing beds—getting rid of the quads—into semi-private or private rooms. This is unbelievable to this Minister of Long-Term Care. And do you know what? We're going to continue building beds in this province.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutila Karpoche): Next question?

Hon. Stan Cho: “Today’s budget includes important investments aimed directly at the priority needs of long-term-care homes, including staffing, resident care and getting more homes built and redeveloped to serve our aging population.

“Long-term care is facing significant financial pressures. We are very pleased that government has recognized those needs and responded to them in this budget. This is good news for Ontario seniors.”

For the member from Toronto–Danforth, that’s a quote from Lisa Levin, the CEO of AdvantAge Ontario, who represents not-for-profit long-term care. That member’s question explains exactly why they failed to build long-term care in this province.

My question to the member is, what other important investments are included in this budget that also help seniors and everyone else in Ontario?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I really want to thank the Minister of Long-Term Care for that question. As you said, long-term care was not built under the previous government, and do you know what? I felt sorry for the seniors, and that’s why I came into office here: to help our seniors.

But I want to talk about our hospital system. I look at Mississauga–Lakeshore alone. We are building the largest hospital in Canadian history in the riding. That will start in 2025. This will be the largest hospital, with 22 storeys. Can you imagine 22 storeys? That works out to 35 storeys of an apartment building, at the corner of Queensway and Hurontario. This will take care of most of the people in Peel region, as well as people from Toronto who will be coming to our hospital.

And that’s just one project. We have 50 projects like this going on around the province, investing over \$50 billion just in building infrastructure for hospitals. That’s not including the \$85 billion that we’re spending in health care alone, compared to the \$59 billion that the previous Liberal government spent.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutila Karpoche): Next question?

Mr. Chris Glover: I appreciate the remarks from the member from Mississauga–Lakeshore.

You just mentioned that you care so much about seniors, and your government’s boasting about building long-term-care-home beds.

I’ll just read you a report from the news. It says, “A man pitted with gaping bedsores, one even revealing bone. A woman left writhing in agony on a washroom floor with a broken ankle after being told to ‘clean up her own mess.’

Another woman with a festering leg wound filled with wriggling maggots.” These are the experiences of seniors in Sienna and Extendicare long-term-care homes.

These are companies that this government has extended contracts to to build these long-term-care homes. If the member and this government actually care about seniors, why are you providing funding to for-profit long-term-care homes which have such a horrific reputation for abusing seniors?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank the member for that question, but you heard the Minister of Long-Term Care quoting the CEO of—long-term care in the province of Ontario.

As I said, you’ve got to look at what was built in the province before we were elected. In six years, with a pandemic, we were able to build this much in long-term care. Imagine if we did not have the pandemic here, we would be over our quota right now of what we needed in the province. But I want to thank the member very much for that question.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutila Karpoche): Next question.

Mr. Trevor Jones: In my offices in Chatham, Kent and Leamington, probably the number one concern is affordability. The member from Mississauga–Lakeshore articulated very succinctly some of the items we’re doing to tangibly improve affordability. Can the member highlight, perhaps, to end this excellent dialogue, what tangibly we can do—one item—to provide affordability for people in your community, my community and communities throughout Ontario?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank the member for that question. What we’re doing for affordability: We’re lowering the gas tax 10 and a half cents until the end of the year, as well we removed the stickers from our vehicles, as well as tolls on the 412 and the 418.

You know, we continue to do things for seniors and for everyone across the province. But not only that; we’ve asked the federal government to reduce the interest rates as well, because at 8%, no one can afford to buy a home in the province of Ontario. I’m worried about that, moving forward, because we need to build homes for the people here in Ontario, because affordability is one of the main concerns that we are having right now.

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

Ms. Jessica Bell: The Ontario budget was released this week, and I’m proud to be standing here, representing the residents of University–Rosedale, to speak to it.

I want to thank the many people who attended our pre-budget consultations. The Conservative government decided to not hold any pre-budget consultations in Toronto, so we hosted our own. I also want to thank the many people who have spoken to me over the past few months to share what they would like to see in this budget that would help them serve the people of Ontario.

It is certainly a big budget. There is \$214 billion in spending, with a surprise deficit of \$10 billion, largely due to a reduction in tax revenue because the economy is

struggling. But what we don't see in this budget is any real measures to make it easier to get a doctor. We don't see anything in this budget that will make it easier to find a home that you can afford to rent or buy, or help your child in school. It does spend an awful lot on roads and infrastructure, but I think that Ontarians are worse off because of this budget.

I want to go piece by piece into some of the sectors and summarize what some of the stakeholders in my riding raised with me over the last few months.

On health care: There are a million people in Toronto who do not have access to a family doctor. Some of these people have reached out to us. They're worried. They're concerned. They see family doctors move to the for-profit sector and they're left without. Some of these people are seniors. They've got health issues. They need to regularly see a family doctor in order to stay healthy or manage their chronic conditions.

When we look at the health care budget, what we see is a cut when you factor in the payout to Bill 124 in last year's budget. That makes me very worried about the state of our hospitals in University–Rosedale, from Toronto Western to Mount Sinai, and it makes me very worried about primary care.

I recently met with Planned Parenthood. Planned Parenthood is one of only three community health centres in the city that have a city-wide mandate, and one of their centres is in my riding. I'm very happy that they choose to be in my riding, because they focus heavily on primary care and family planning, with a focus on racialized people and young people. Why that's so important in my riding is that people who go to U of T have got health care when they're at U of T, but then the minute they graduate, they're left to fend for themselves in the city. So there need to be family doctors and primary care providers around our area to provide service to these young residents, and I'm very worried when I hear that Planned Parenthood is simply not receiving the funding that they've requested and what they need, even though demand for their services just keeps going up.

1720

I think about the Taddle Creek Family Health Team. They are one of the biggest family health teams in my riding. I recently met with them. They serve over 20,000 patients. They are a model of how care should be provided. When they met with me, they brought some of their patient advocates, people who had been going to see their family doctors for many years. They love Taddle Creek, and they wanted to explain to me how their health conditions would be far worse off. In fact, some of their family members who also go there would have been dead, they said to me, if they did not have access to primary care.

But when I spoke to the executive at Taddle Creek Family Health Team, she had a really tough story to tell. She told me that they don't have enough base funding to provide competitive wages to their staff, which means that many staffing positions are unfilled and they cannot meet the overwhelming demand for care. I think that is really terrible.

Now, I hear the Minister of Health make many announcements about how primary care funding is coming: "It's coming. It's all good." It's not good in my riding. I don't know where this funding is going. The minister should make that very clear. But I'll tell you that very clearly, whatever the government is doing right now is not meeting the needs of the residents of University–Rosedale, and I'm not seeing a lot in this budget that would fix that.

I want to talk about long-term care. I see that in this budget there is a plan to increase funding to build new long-term-care homes. In my riding, we're losing long-term-care homes left, right and centre. We just lost Vermont Square. We know that Belmont and St. George's long-term-care-home licences are expiring because they don't meet the accessibility standards that are going to be rolled in. It's good; they should upgrade. However, I fear that they are not going to upgrade. They are going to sell their land to a developer, who is going to not replace this long-term-care home with a long-term-care home, but with something else. What does that mean for the residents who live in my riding, who have family in my riding? What does that mean for them? Where are they going to go? I'm not seeing an influx of long-term-care-home beds in my riding. I'm seeing an exodus, and I'm worried about this.

I think about Mon Sheong. I regularly talk to the family council at the Mon Sheong long-term-care home. It's a long-term-care home; it's a non-profit. They had some of the worst COVID outbreaks during the pandemic. Many of their residents died. It was a tragedy, and it was a tragedy that continued after the worst of the pandemic moved on because they continue to have COVID outbreaks in that home and people have needlessly died.

When I meet with the family members, what they are calling for is improved infection control measures, including an isolation room, so that their loved ones can stay safe when there is an outbreak. That will require investment. They're not getting it from this government. What they're also calling for is a guarantee that every resident in that long-term-care home has access to the four hours of daily care that is mandated by this government. But I don't see the funding in this budget that would ensure that that standard of care is met. And the residents in my riding, the kids who look after their elderly parents, are wanting it, but they're not seeing it.

When it comes to the environment, there are no surprises here from this government. There is no real funding for the environment, for green energy, for retrofits, for heat pumps, for making our building stock and our housing stock more energy efficient. There are no surprises there. It is a shame that there are no surprises.

I want to talk about schools. When we look at the budget on the school file, what we see is that funding is not being kept up with inflation. What we're also seeing is that the provincial government is taking all the child care money that comes from the federal government—it's not even your money—and you're putting it into the education budget and saying, "Wow, look, funding is going up," when anyone who is following this file closely knows that

that's simply not true. It's federal funding, and school boards know that, because school boards are desperately trying to balance their budgets, like they're legally required to do, over the coming weeks and months, and what they're finding is that they're falling short.

The TDSB has just released their budget. It's likely it will pass early next week, and what we are seeing with this budget is no increases to staff, no increases for educational assistants, no additional supports for kids who are struggling or kids who are bored in class and who are just falling behind—they're lost and they're missing, because they're not getting the attention that they need. What is so tough is that they have a \$27-million deficit, and it looks like they are going to cut adult learning. It looks like they are going to reduce the amount of language classes that are available to kids after school. I think that's a shame. We shouldn't be seeing cut, we should be seeing investments. We all benefit as a result of that.

I want to talk about child care a little bit more. In my riding and in the ridings around University–Rosedale, we are seeing daycares really struggling to get by. We've had Ola Day Care say, "Look, we cannot be a part of the federal government's affordable child care program, because we just can't make it work. We can't raise fees. The money isn't enough. We're leaving."

St. Alban's in my riding, a beloved child care provider, is looking at leaving the program. They want to make it work. They're so desperate to make it work, but they don't know if they can. When I met with their staff, they said to me that they have lost more staff in the last year than they lost in the previous 25, because they can't keep and retain their staff with the wages that they have to pay them, and their staff are looking at them and saying, "I love this job. I love looking after kids, but I can't afford to live in Toronto anymore and I'm moving. I can't afford the rent. I want to buy a home. I'm out." They're struggling, and they're looking at leaving. I think that's a shame.

Once again, the government has made some bold announcements in this document, saying that they're going to invest in child care and invest in schools. Well, I'll believe it when it actually happens, because there are specific funding proposals that have been presented to this government to increase the number of child care spots in Toronto, and they're not being funded.

The Toronto District School Board and the Toronto Catholic District School Board have presented practical proposals to ensure that there is before-school child care and after-school child care in schools, so that a parent can drop off their kid in the morning, they go to child care, they go to school and they go to child care at the end of the day: seamless care. It works for parents. It works for everybody. They've presented this government with practical, cost-efficient proposals for 3,000 child care spaces, and government has said, "No, thank you." So when I see all these big announcements, what I think about is, "Well, where is that money going?" because at this point, it's not going to child care spaces in Toronto.

I also think about Beverley School. I recently had a call from a parent at Beverley School. Beverley is a very

special school. Beverley is a school for kids who need a whole lot of extra support. They're very high-needs kids. The school is wonderful, and the parents are stressed out, exhausted and tired, as you would be when you're looking after a child or children with high needs.

But the challenge they have for me is, "Why don't we get child care, too? Why isn't there child care available at Beverley, so that high-needs kids can get access to child care, too?" Great question. It's a question I'm asking the government: Is there funding available in this new budget for child care for high-needs kids? Because right now, they're left out. Sometimes they don't even get access to a full day of school. The principal says, "We don't have the staff. I'm sorry. You just get two hours a day. You don't get the full day." Well, the parents of Beverley are asking for child care for their high-needs kids, and I think that makes a lot of sense.

I want to talk about home care. When I see this budget, once again, I see some big, bold numbers. You don't always spend it all, but right now, I'm seeing some big, bold numbers, and there's potentially an increase in home care funding. The first question I had when I saw that was, will this be going to for-profit care providers that can take a cut or will it be going to non-profit and publicly funded home care where the funding goes to ensuring staff get paid properly and that Ontarians get the maximum amount of care and the kind of care they need for the conditions they have?

1730

Great question—and the reason I ask this question is because, in my riding, we have home care providers who are really struggling to make it work with the budget freezes that they have received from this government. I think of Community Living Ontario and Community Living Toronto. They're in my riding. Many members and MPPs have raised the issues that Community Living Toronto and Community Living Ontario have raised. What they told me when I met with them is that they have 120 positions that are vacant because they can't fill them, because their wages are so low, because they don't get enough money, they don't get enough funding, to provide people with the wages that are going to recruit and keep qualified people. They have a \$4.2-million gap in funding and, as a result of that \$4.2-million gap, they have had to cut back and provide less support to some of the 4,000 people they serve.

When we're talking about what kind of people these people serve, they serve people who have disabilities, who are seniors, who can't leave their home, who need help with cooking and cleaning, who need help getting dressed, who need help just to get through the day. It's essential, and everyone I have talked to has said, "I don't want to go to a long-term-care home; I want to live at home. But in order for me to live at home, I need help." Well, Community Living Ontario, Bellwoods, these are the kind of organizations that provide this help, and they need more support from this government to make it work.

I want to talk about universities: the University of Toronto, St. George campus—it's in my riding. I've met

also with OCUFA, the federation that represents faculty associations, and they had some very alarming things to say. They reminded me once again that Ontario receives the smallest amount of per-student funding out of all the provinces and territories across Canada—the lowest amount. The average is \$15,807. That's the average, and what we get in Ontario is just \$9,890. What they're asking for—which makes a lot of sense—is they just want to be average. They just want to get the average amount of funding, just like every other province, and that makes a lot of sense.

If you are in high school today, you know full well that in order for you to get a good job that's going to help you pay the bills and the rent and one day save up for a home, live a good life, you are going to need to get a post-secondary education. It is essential, and it is a major problem that this government is not providing enough investments to universities when they are in a very, very tough situation right now because of the cap on international student enrolments.

When I spoke to OCUFA, they talked about universities that were consolidating courses, cutting departments and also the wage pressure on staff, and that is especially important because, yes, there are faculty—permanent tenure-track faculty—but when you actually go into a university, you begin to understand that there are thousands and thousands of workers in a university who don't earn a lot of money.

I met with USW Local 1998, CUPE 3261 and CUPE 3902, and these are the people that are in the cafeterias cooking food. They're in the U of T Starbucks serving people coffee—a massive line. You wouldn't believe it. They don't even have time to take a break to go to the restroom. The demand, the pressure in that job is immense. These are the people that clean rooms, that maintain the Athletic Centre, that teach and mark. Class sizes get bigger and bigger and bigger year in and year out. These people aren't paid a lot of money. These people don't have permanent, full-time jobs. They don't have a pension. They deserve to be paid fair wages, too, but that is only going to happen if the Conservatives properly fund our post-secondary education sector, and I do not see that in this budget.

I want to conclude by talking about housing. I went through the budget, and it's safe to say that this budget does not address the housing crisis. It is not going to make it any more affordable to rent or buy a home in Ontario. Even the budget admits this. The budget says that it has never been more expensive to own a home in Ontario. The monthly mortgage cost of an average home in Ontario now stands at \$4,600 a month. Can you imagine? It's \$4,600 a month, after saving up well over \$100,000—probably \$200,000 just to get that 20% down. Who can do that in this economy? That is so much money. But that's the snapshot of how much it costs to buy an average home in Ontario today.

When I look at the budget, this is what it tells me: It tells me housing starts are down. They're down. BC's are going up; Ontario's are going down. Even when the

government got really creative and lumped long-term-care-home beds into their overall housing starts, this government is still behind on meeting its goal of building 1.5 million homes by 2031. You're still behind.

I look at funding for municipalities, which is essential to building new homes, and the government has had to realize this. You've got Bill 23. You realized you made a mistake. Now you're trying to give more money back to municipalities because they're saying, "Oh, well, we can't actually build the homes unless we build the infrastructure as well." I see some headway in addressing the \$1-billion-a-year funding gap that's been created because of Bill 23. I see some headway in this budget with providing municipalities with that needed infrastructure, but it still falls short. It still falls short. When you crunch the numbers, it still falls short.

I hear that a vacant home tax might be coming. Okay. Why not just do a provincial one? Why wait for municipalities to do it? I'd like to point out that the minister and this government likes to say that a vacant home tax is coming. This is not the first time you've said that, so I really would like to see the details and see it rolled out.

And then finally, to conclude, I think it is really just a shame that the government has built just 8% of the affordable homes they said they'd build back in 2018. That 1,187 affordable homes is a drop in the bucket when there are nearly 200,000 people waiting for a subsidized housing spot. That's the need, and 1,187 doesn't cut it. My hope is that, come tomorrow, this government does submit a credible, strong, realistic affordable housing action plan so that we can start building affordable homes in towns and cities across Ontario. It is essential.

I want a budget that's good for our economy, that's also good for the environment, that's good for our kids, that's good for public services. I don't see it here, and I would like to.

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

Mr. Stephen Crawford: I appreciate the opportunity to speak. And thank you to the member opposite.

Crime is a growing issue of concern in my community of Oakville, and I think it's safe to say throughout the province of Ontario. There are daily break-ins in Oakville, auto thefts. In fact, just this week, one of my neighbours' house was broken into, and they were tied up and pistol-whipped, car stolen. I'm not kidding. This is right down the street from me.

Our Premier has called on the federal government to get tough on criminals. The Criminal Code is obviously federal in nature. He's also called on them to get tough on the borders—for example, the border of Montreal, where cars are being shipped out of.

My question to you is, while some members of the opposition are supporting defunding the police, our government in this budget has put through a \$47-million investment in four new helicopters for police forces. My question to the member opposite is, is this a part of the budget—supporting the police, giving them the tools they need to fight crime—can you support this?

Ms. Jessica Bell: I had the unfortunate experience this year of having a rental car stolen within 24 hours of me renting it. It was a 2024 Jeep Wrangler. After it was stolen, I quickly went online and realized that Jeep Wranglers are one of the top 10 cars that are stolen, so I will never rent that kind of rental car again. It was a really terrible experience.

Yes, car theft is a huge problem. When I've looked into the issue—as you do when you have a car stolen—one thing that interested me is what Quebec is doing to address the auto theft crisis. I think that it would make a lot of sense for us to look at what Quebec is doing on that measure and apply some of those measures in Ontario, especially around effectively tracking cars and having some kind of registration system.

1740

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Next question?

Mr. Tom Rakocvic: I listened intently to the member, my friend, who does so much research and is such a passionate speaker for housing in this province.

This government has talked a strong talk about building homes, but we really haven't seen the kind of homes they said they would build. We haven't seen the neighbourhoods; we haven't seen the communities. But what we have seen under the leadership of this government throughout many cities has been tent cities, actually, and this is not a legacy to be proud of.

Can you tell us how this budget doesn't serve some of our most vulnerable Ontarians and how much more needs to be done?

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you to the member for Humber River–Black Creek. I would like an Ontario where we did not have encampments in towns and cities from the south to the east to the north. It's everywhere, and these encampments are becoming permanent, because people have nowhere else to go.

In order to address the homelessness crisis, this government needs to come up with a plan. The Auditor General has told this government very clearly that they have no plan to address homelessness, and it's been two years since then and the government still has no plan. When this government writes a plan, I would like this plan to include strong rent control and rent stabilization measures, so that people aren't evicted out into homelessness.

I would also like this government to get serious about building and buying and financing the construction of affordable housing and supportive housing, so we can give people the help they need and a home, because that's where the help must start.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Next question?

Mr. John Jordan: Thank you to the member from University–Rosedale. Early on in your presentation, you mentioned the community health centre in your riding. I'm a big fan of community health centres. I worked in that sector for 21 years and the characteristic I'm most fond of is interdisciplinary care because it really allows all the providers to work to their full scope of practice and it

builds capacity and takes pressure off our emergency departments and pressure off our physicians.

This budget includes a lot of health care investments, particularly for interdisciplinary care, as well. Do you not agree that this is a good budget relative to expanding those services in health care?

Ms. Jessica Bell: We have got calls from residents recently who have ended up in the Toronto Western emergency room for a non-urgent condition because they don't have access to a family doctor and they've had to wait in the emergency room for upwards of seven hours, only to be turned away. I think that family health teams and integrated primary care are a very good model that we should expand across Ontario and I do see some increases in primary care funding.

My questions are this: Is it going to go to for-profit, primary care, which is on the rise in Ontario? Or is it going to go to non-profit and public primary care? And who is going to get this primary care funding? Because I've heard this Minister of Health speak up and say, "Oh, this funding is coming. This funding is coming," and no one knows where it's going. I want to know where it is going and if people are going to benefit from it.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Next question?

MPP Jill Andrew: In my riding of St. Paul's and neighbouring ridings like my colleagues' in University–Rosedale and Toronto Centre—the list goes on and on—we've seen a lot of our neighbours who are being demoted out of their homes. Many of them are young families with kids in our schools, who are dealing with mental health crises without enough staff in our schools to support the mental health crises that our students are in.

I guess I'm just wondering what the member thinks about this budget in terms of supporting families. They're struggling with rent; we don't have rent control. They're struggling with kids in school who are acting out and having mental health crises without funding from the government to support the mental health crisis in our schools. What's happening in this budget? Is it really addressing families in crisis today in Ontario?

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you to the member for Toronto–St. Paul's. I want to speak a little bit about the questions you had and the concerns you raised around demovictions. There are many buildings in your riding and in my riding and in the member for Toronto Centre's riding that are being targeted by developers. They're being slated to be demolished and then replaced with a condo. And these are not buildings that are three storeys, these are buildings that are 20 storeys, 12 storeys—these are big buildings.

What we find so problematic is that the Conservatives have turned around to municipalities and said, "Don't you help them. Don't offer them compensation. Don't guarantee their right to return to that building once construction of the new building is complete." Some municipalities have those rules, and what this Conservative government is doing is they're turning to these municipalities and

saying, “Don’t help,” and I think that is a real shame. I would have liked to—

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

Next question?

Ms. Natalie Pierre: Thank you to the member from University–Rosedale for their remarks.

Speaker, this government is acting quickly to alleviate pressures facing the health care system in our province. The creation of a new medical school with York University in Vaughan is a major step towards our continued goal of attracting and retaining more doctors in the midst of a family physician shortage—that, in addition to the new medical school at Toronto Metropolitan University that’s opening up in Brampton in 2025.

This is exactly the kind of action the province needs in order to continue building healthy communities in the future. So, through you, Speaker, I ask the member if they can tell us whether they intend on voting in favour of doctors tomorrow, or will they continue to play partisan politics and vote against our government’s budget to build a better Ontario?

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you to the member for Burlington. Expanding the number of medical residency positions for people who intend to become family doctors is absolutely necessary. And it is essential that we complement that mid-term and long-term solution with practical things that we can do now, like increasing the wages of support staff, social workers, RPNs and RNs, investing in primary care health teams, investing in administrative support so that doctors’ time can be freed up to see more patients and—and this is really critical—clamping down on this gaping loophole that’s been created which is leading to the creation of for-profit medical clinics that are charging people upwards of \$100 to \$5,000 to get access to primary care. That needs to be addressed.

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

Mr. Deepak Anand: Madam Speaker, some moments of your life are frozen and they stick with you forever. Whether I was in grade 12 and writing my engineering exam—there were 1,300 people in the room; I still remember that time—or whether it was coming to Canada, coming out of the greater Toronto airport on January 15, 2000, I still remember. Or meeting my wife for the first time in the library—I still remember. And I do remember my nomination. When I won the nomination, I wasn’t even expecting it, but I do remember the excitement. And I do remember the excitement when I met the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development Monte McNaughton for the first time and he told me I would be working with him, as a PA to him.

So, today, as I move from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, I want to reflect back. I want to say thank you to Minister McNaughton for all your mentorship, and I want to say thank you to Minister Piccini and my good friend PA Smith. In such a short time, we bonded so well, so thank you for your love.

Thank you for your support. I will never forget those moments; these moments are frozen as well.

So, Madam Speaker, now let’s talk about the important topic we are having a conversation about, the 2024 budget. As Ontario continues to navigate through unprecedented times, this 2024 budget serves as a road map that will guide Ontario towards a more prosperous future. This budget reflects our government’s commitment to strengthen our communities in health, education, infrastructure, housing and economic development.

1750

I want to acknowledge the past challenges that we all came together and overcame. The COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented disruptions to our lives and economy. However, in the face of adversity, I want to say thank you to each and every Ontarian for coming together and fighting together. Today, when we look back on the tough times we had, I want to say this budget reflects our unwavering dedication to recovery, renewal and resilience.

And that’s what we’re doing—we have a plan to build, a plan to build centred around the workers, who are the backbone of our province. They represent our greatest asset and the driving force behind investments we’re receiving in Ontario. We are actively investing in our workers because we know the value they bring in to the province.

Having worked in the manufacturing industry myself for many years, I recognize the value of skilled workers and the vital role training and education play in ensuring that workers can safely and effectively perform their duties. Since its inception in 2021, Madam Speaker, the Skills Development Fund has empowered over 500,000 workers with training intended to help secure better employment opportunities and larger paycheques. This includes individuals in professions like carpentry, plumbing, health care, benefiting from almost over 600 specialized training projects.

This year, thanks to the advocacy of SCOFEA, our committee, and all the residents that we met along that line, the ministry is receiving an additional \$100 million, ensuring continued support for job seekers in advancing their careers. It is the hard work and the advocacy of the people we met along the way, so I just want to say thank you.

Not only this, Madam Speaker, but we’re allocating \$62 million towards enhancing Ontario’s fundamental skilled trades programs, an investment with over \$21 million for a youth apprenticeship program for our youth so that they can get into the skilled trades, so that they can have better jobs and bigger paycheques. These programs aim to provide young individuals with first-hand job experience, paving the way for rewarding careers in the skilled trades.

Recognizing the importance of retirement security, we’re taking proactive steps to implement a target benefit framework. This framework will safeguard the retirement savings of workers in the skilled trades and other sectors, Madam Speaker. Our plan is designed to ensure that Ontario’s economy flourishes, so that they have better pay for our hard-working employees.

In the riding of Mississauga–Malton, I want to say thank you to the residents. We are making sure that their voices are heard. They repeatedly talk about the Hazel McCallion Line. Thank you for your advocacy. Again, this budget will have a transit loop connecting the LRT on Hurontario Street to Square One, with additional stops through to Confederation Parkway in the city's downtown core, so that we can better connect our transit.

The 2024 budget, Madam Speaker, reflects our government's steadfast commitment to health care spending. Through strategic investments in infrastructure, workforce development, access to care and medical innovation, we are laying the foundation for a healthier, more resilient Ontario.

As an alumnus from York University, as a Schulich MBA graduate, I'm proud to talk about the investments the government is making to support York University in the launch of its new medical school. This investment aims to tackle the demands for family physicians and hopes to enhance Ontario's primary care capabilities by broadening medical training opportunities. The establishment marks the inaugural medical school in Canada with a primary emphasis on training family practitioners. Such an investment complements the ongoing expansion of medical education and training initiatives throughout Ontario. Madam Speaker, you can see Ontario soon will have another medical school—and look at the parents. They're going to see their children. They don't have to travel far. They can become doctors right here.

Affordability and cost of living remain at the forefront of concerns for many Ontarians. The government has proactively taken steps to enhance affordability with various measures, implementing a total of \$8.4 billion for families and individuals in the fiscal year. I'm pleased to mention that the Ontario government has seen a steady increase in revenue, from \$153 billion in 2018 when the government was formed—today it is \$204 billion. Imagine increasing the revenue from \$154 billion to \$204 billion without raising any taxes or fees.

Madam Speaker, do you know what is missing in this bill, what is missing in this budget? There are no taxes. There are no extra fees. There's no burden on the people of Ontario. In fact, in this budget, what we have is more investment. We see the benefits given to the people who deserve this:

—proposing to extend the cuts to taxes on gasoline and fuel so that they—as we know the trouble with the affordability people have, we're proposing to extend these cuts to December 31, 2024, saving Ontario households \$320 on average over two and a half years since July 2022;

—extending the tuition fee freeze for Ontario students and publicly assisted colleges and universities for at least

the next three years—we understand the pressure students have;

—keeping costs down for public transit riders through the One Fare program, saving \$1,600 each year;

—moving forward with auto insurance reforms, which would empower Ontario drivers with more affordable options;

—proposing to ban new tolls on new or existing provincial highways; and

—protecting people and businesses from the high cost of a new and unexpected provincial carbon-pricing program by introducing legislation that would require the provincial government to first ask the people of Ontario before implementing a provincial carbon-pricing.

I'm excited to talk about all these things we will be doing.

While we're doing this, we're investing in workers, we're investing in key public services, and that is without raising any fees, without raising any taxes, Madam Speaker. This 2024 budget reflects our commitment to building a brighter future for our entire province through strategic investments such as the Municipal Housing Infrastructure Program and increasing funding for water systems. The government aims to facilitate the construction of more homes and improve critical infrastructure.

Additionally, significant investment in health care, community sports, recreation and public safety underscore the commitment to enhance the quality of life and safety for all. We're doing this by lowering the gasoline and diesel taxes, reducing the financial burden on individuals and businesses, especially in light of the impending federal carbon tax.

Madam Speaker, we're increasing funding for housing supports and mental health initiatives, demonstrating the dedication of aiding the vulnerable population and fostering inclusive communities. Together, these measures represent a holistic approach to building a stronger, more resilient Ontario for generations to come.

As we're doing this, our work is far from over. We must continue to collaborate, innovate and adapt to the challenges that lie ahead. Let's continue to work together and seize the opportunity towards a better and a stronger Ontario. Madam Speaker, this is the bill which is going to bring prosperity for our residents and make sure that we continue to invest in their abilities, to be able to help them to live better and build a better, stronger, prosperous Ontario.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): It is now 6 o'clock. There being no item for private members' public business designated for debate today, the House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. on Monday, April 8, 2024.

The House adjourned at 1800.

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	
Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Barnes, Patrice (PC)	Ajax	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Bowman, Stephanie (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Brady, Bobbi Ann (IND)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Bresee, Ric (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Byers, Rick (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement Minister of Legislative Affairs / Ministre des Affaires législatives
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough- Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)	Willowdale	Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée
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	
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Dixon, Jess (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Dowie, Andrew (PC)	Windsor—Tecumseh	
Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flack, Hon. / L'hon. Rob (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Associate Minister of Housing / Ministre associé du Logement
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
		Premier / Premier ministre
		Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Michael D. (PC)	York South—Weston / York-Sud—Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiques et du Multiculturalisme
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Grewal, Hardeep Singh (PC)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hazell, Andrea (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Holland, Kevin (PC)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Hsu, Ted (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Jama, Sarah (IND)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
		Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre
Jones, Trevor (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Jordan, John (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Ke, Vincent (IND)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
Khanjin, Hon. / L'hon. Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
		Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	
Leardi, Anthony (PC)	Essex	
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean	
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Mantha, Michael (IND)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
McCarthy, Hon. / L'hon. Todd J. (PC)	Durham	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises
McCrimmon, Karen (LIB)	Kanata—Carleton	
McGregor, Graham (PC)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York	
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
		Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Pierre, Natalie (PC)	Burlington	
Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)	Timmins	Minister of Mines / Ministre des Mines
Quinn, Nolan (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Kaleed (IND)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Northern Development / Ministre du Développement du Nord Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Riddell, Brian (PC)	Cambridge	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Saunderson, Brian (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shamji, Adil (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	Deputy Speaker / Vice-Présidente Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, David (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Smith, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Small Business / Ministre associée déléguée aux Petites Entreprises
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Hon. / L'hon Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	Associate Minister of Transportation / Ministre associé des Transports
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Vaugois, Lise (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity / Ministre associée des Perspectives sociales et économiques pour les femmes
Wong-Tam, Kristyn (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Vacant	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	
Vacant	Milton	